

CO-PARENTING

TOOLS, TIPS, & TACTICS

REMAINING
CHILD-FOCUSED



47 QUESTIONS FOR
CO-PARENTS

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CO-PARENTING

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"Helping families before, during, and after divorce."

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FORENSIC SERVICES

(ALL require a court order)

Reunification Therapy
Family Integration Therapy
Court-Qualified Parenting Coordinator
FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator
Expert Witness Services
Professional Consultation
Collaborative Divorce Coach / Neutral Facilitator
Specialized Treatment & Consultation with Court-Involved Children & Families
Court-ordered Mental Health Evaluations / Psychological Evaluations
Competency Evaluations (Juvenile & Adults)

CLINICAL SERVICES

(no court order required)

Individual Therapy
Family Therapy
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Giftedness Evaluations
Co-Parenting Divorce Consultant

***Accepting New Clients**

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Introduction

Divorce and co-parenting relationships often bring out the worst in people. Most parents, if they didn't share children, would simply part ways and never interact again. However, when couples with children divorce or separate, they remain tethered as co-parents even though their romantic relationship has ended.

As a result, parents can easily lose sight of what truly matters—the best interests of their children—due to various factors such as emotional turmoil, power struggles, ego, unresolved conflicts, poor communication, new relationships, legal battles, and lack of self-awareness. Recognizing these challenges and actively working to overcome them is crucial for fostering a child-centered approach to co-parenting and promoting the well-being of the children involved.

What You Will Learn:

- Reasons why co-parents can easily lose sight of what is truly important—the best interests of their children—due to various factors that arise during the coparenting journey.
- Questions to ask yourself to make sure you are making co-parenting decisions that are in the best interest of your children.
- What other co-parents have done to remember to use these questions.

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By regularly asking themselves these questions and reflecting on their coparenting decisions, coparents can ensure that they remain child-focused and prioritize the best interests of their children in every aspect of their coparenting journey.

Here are some reasons why this can happen:

1. Emotional Turmoil: Separation or divorce often brings about intense emotions such as anger, resentment, sadness, and fear. Coparents may become so consumed by their own emotional turmoil that they lose sight of their children's needs and best interests.
2. Power Struggles: Coparenting dynamics can sometimes devolve into power struggles, where each parent seeks to assert control or dominance over the other. In such situations, the focus shifts away from the children's well-being and towards winning or maintaining control.
3. Ego and Pride: Stubbornness, pride, and ego can get in the way of effective coparenting. When parents prioritize their own desires or agendas over the needs of their children, they may lose sight of what is truly important.

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4. **Unresolved Conflict:** Lingering resentment or unresolved issues from the past can cloud judgment and hinder effective coparenting. Coparents may allow their personal grievances to overshadow their ability to make decisions in their children's best interests.



5. **Lack of Communication:** Poor communication between coparents can lead to misunderstandings, disagreements, and conflicts. Without open and honest communication, it becomes challenging to prioritize the children's needs and coordinate parenting effectively.



6. **New Relationships:** The introduction of new partners or stepfamilies into the coparenting dynamic can complicate matters and shift priorities. Coparents may become preoccupied with their new relationships, leading them to neglect their responsibilities to their children.

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7. Legal Battles: Legal disputes over custody, visitation, and child support can escalate tensions and divert attention away from the children's best interests. Coparents may become entrenched in legal battles, losing sight of the emotional and psychological impact on their children.

8. Lack of Self-awareness: Coparents who lack self-awareness may struggle to recognize how their actions and behaviors affect their children. They may inadvertently prioritize their own needs or desires without considering the consequences for their children.



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8. Lack of Self-awareness: Coparents who lack self-awareness may struggle to recognize how their actions and behaviors affect their children. They may inadvertently prioritize their own needs or desires without considering the consequences for their children.



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To ensure that coparents remain child-focused and make decisions that prioritize the best interests of their children, they can ask themselves the following questions:

1. Is this decision in the best interests of our child?
2. How will this decision impact our child's emotional well-being?



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3. Have we considered our child's individual needs, preferences, and developmental stage?
4. Are we fostering a sense of stability and consistency for our child?
5. Will this decision promote a positive relationship between our child and both coparents?
6. Have we communicated openly and honestly with our child about this decision, taking their perspective into account?
7. Are we modeling respectful and cooperative behavior for our child?



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8. Have we considered alternative solutions or compromises that may better meet our child's needs?

9. Are we prioritizing our child's safety and security in this decision?

10. How will this decision impact our child's relationships with extended family members, friends, and other important individuals in their life?

11. Are we willing to set aside our personal differences or conflicts with the other coparent for the sake of our child?

12. Have we sought input or guidance from professionals, such as therapists or mediators, to ensure that our decision is in the best interests of our child?

13. Are we willing to reassess and adjust our decision if it becomes clear that it is not serving our child's best interests?

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14. Have we considered the long-term consequences of this decision for our child's overall well-being and development?
15. Are we actively listening to our child's thoughts, feelings, and concerns about this decision and incorporating their input into our decision-making process?
- 16.) Am I meeting my needs or my child's needs?

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17.) What would it be like to be my child at this moment?

18.) Is this the memory I want to create for my child?

19.) What will be your children's memories be of your divorce?

20.) What will be their best memory of how you handled the conflict?

21.) What are you doing well to help your child to get through this time?

22.) What would you like to do differently for them? 23.) Are we putting our child in the middle of our conflict?

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23.) How does it help my child to know this information about our conflict?

24.) Who is helping our child with the confusion, fear, and sadness that all children feel at this time?

25.) Am I taking or making opportunities to talk with my child openly about how they are feeling?



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26.) What are the hopes we share for our children and their future?

27.) How would I react if my Ex did or said what I'm about to do?

28.) Would this be information I would want to know as a parent? If yes, then share it.

29.) How does it help my child by putting down their mom/dad?

30.) How does it help my child by causing their mom/dad to struggle financially?

31.) If I do this, will I regret it later?

32.) Would I be embarrassed if I said this or did this in front of my friends, "the judge" or someone you look up to or admire as a person?

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33.) Is fear making this decision or am I making it?

34.) Will I like myself after this decision? Or Will I be able to look in the mirror and be ok with what I see?

35.) Have I thought of the consequences for my behavior? Not just for me, but for my children, the co-parenting relationship, and others who may be involved? Will I be able to deal with the consequences of my behavior?

36.) A year from now (or later), if I decide to do X, what might this look like?

37.) What's the worst-case outcome by doing or not doing_____?

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38.) What is the best-case outcome by doing or not doing _____?

39.) What is my goal, is this behavior moving me closer or farther from my goal?

40.) What would I tell a friend to do?

41.) Will my actions negatively impact my child's relationship with their mom/dad?

42.) Are my actions true to who I am?



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43.) This is not a question to ask, but more of a technique to use to ensure your decision is the right one for your children and/or you. “Wait 48 hours before taking action”.

If it’s a good decision now, it will be a good decision in 48 hours. While you’re waiting use the time to run your thoughts by trusted friends or family members to get their insights.

44.) Is my behavior going to attract the kind of people I want in my life?

45.) Will this matter 5 days,
5 months, or 5 years from now?
If the answer is no, then it is
probably not worth your time.

46.) What are other options,
even ones I would not want?

47.) Am I doing this so that my
EX won’t win?



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How Clients Have Remembered To Use These Questions:

- Picked one or two questions and uploaded them as the screensaver on their computer
- Used question(s) as their lock screen for their cell phone.
- You can use a sticky note app
- One client used a pad of sticky notes as a coaster for their morning cup of coffee. Each note had a question on it and they would remove the sticky note each day to reveal a new question.
- Wrote down a question(s) and used them as a mantra that they would repeat daily or when they interacted with their EX.
- Wrote questions on the mirror in their bathroom, so they would be reminded every day.
- Recorded themselves reading the questions on their cell phone and then would play it back when needed.
- Posted questions on the inside of their car visor.

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In summary, by regularly asking themselves these questions and reflecting on their coparenting decisions, coparents can ensure that they remain child-focused and prioritize the best interests of their children in every aspect of their coparenting journey.

