

David Knox is one of the authors of The Divorced Dad's Survival Book : How to Stay Connected With Your Kids and is Co-Host of The Divorce Room at <http://HEARTCHOICE.COM> .

Getting Along with your Ex-Partner David Knox, Ph.D.

First, you may not be able to get along with your ex-partner. A good relationship requires the cooperation of both partners. If your ex isn't interested in getting along with you, it won't happen. What you can do is to stay in control of how you react to your ex-partner. This is the salvation of your relationship with your ex. You can be at peace with or without your ex.

Yes, ex-partners can create havoc with your relationship with your children, frustrate your finances, and bad-mouth you in the community. Their doing so only confirms the value of your no longer being married to this person. Rejoice. But also do what you can to not escalate the conflict with your ex. This translates into being cooperative when your ex needs you to switch weekends, being on time when you are to deliver or to pick up the children, and always being on time with your financial agreements/responsibilities.

Getting along with your ex-partner also implies keeping focused on why it is important to do so. Nothing is more valuable to the adjustment of your children as they experience your divorce than that you get along with their mother/father. You don't need to be the best of buddies with your ex; but you do need to have as civil a relationship as possible.

Something specific you can do to help nurture a positive relationship with your ex is to never speaking negatively of her or him to your children. Doing so not only shows disrespect for your children's mother/father, but can be devastating to your relationship with your ex. Daddy said you were the cause of the divorce, said to an ex-wife by her children will haunt the ex-husband forever. Do not speak ill of your ex-partner.

In those cases where your relationship with your ex is already shaky, minimize the time you spend talking with them. Ex-spouses on the edge with each other are vulnerable to exploding and getting into an abusive verbal exchange with each other. Avoid such an encounter at all costs. Make your contacts infrequent and brief. Use polite written notes when necessary to communicate. For example, when you need to switch weekends, rather than call and ask, write a brief note such as the following: Since I need to be out of town on and cannot be available to be with the children, would you consider switching the weekend of the with me? Your ex may still say no but you are

much less likely to get into a heated exchange on the phone if you communicate in writing.

In summary, no other factor is more important to the adjustment of your children to your divorce than the relationship you have with their mother/father. It is not divorce but a bitter and hostile relationship with your ex-partner that will damage your children. Get along with your ex and make doing so as important as maintaining a positive relationship with your children. You, your children, your ex, and society all win by your efforts to accomplish this goal.