



Co-Parenting 101

PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Helpful Resources and Daily Practices:

1. Self-Care: Do four nice things for yourself each week
2. Read *Detaching with Love*
3. F.A.L.L. Exercise
4. Take the Co-Parenting Pledge
5. NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE: Take action today!
6. Communicate Powerfully: Write a letter
7. Use Self-Quieting instead of Time Out
8. Learn how to redirect hurtful behavior
9. Have a weekly Family Meeting
10. Dating Checklist
11. Real Love Give up the pain
12. Stay connected at LWPT.org



Self-Care:

Do four nice things for yourself each week

Review the following list of self-care items. Rate your level of self-care.

5 – Frequently 4 – Occasionally 3 – Rarely 2 – Never 1 - It never occurred to me

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL
☐ Eat regularly, eat healthy ☐ Exercise ☐ Get regular preventative medical care ☐ Take time off when needed, get a massage ☐ Dance, swim, walk, run, bike, garden, sing, act, boat, surf, fish, do something fun ☐ Get enough sleep ☐ Wear clothes you like ☐ Take vacations ☐ Take a mini vacation: day trip, beach, movie, dining ☐ Make time away from screens	☐ Make time for reflection to feel and <i>be</i> with nothing ☐ to do or fix ☐ Rapid gratitude: Make a list of everything you are grateful for, in your mind or on paper ☐ Say Positive Affirmations: 20 I AMs daily ☐ Write in a journal ☐ Decrease stress in your life ☐ Choose to think in a positive way: <i>We are all learning, instead of good or bad</i>
EDUCATION AND GROWTH SELF-CARE	SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE
☐ Take a parenting class ☐ Attend a weekend personal growth program (<i>Landmark</i> or <i>Tony Robbins</i> , etc.) ☐ Read a book that inspires you ☐ Do something that you are not an expert at or something you have never tried before that requires lessons (horseback riding, parachuting, scuba diving)	☐ Join an organization (community, religious, activist) ☐ Spend quiet time in nature ☐ Believe in a power higher than yourself ☐ Attend AA or similar meetings



Detaching with Love:

Adapted from Melanie Beatty *Language of Letting Go*

- Sometimes people we love do things we don't like or of which we approve.
- We react.
- They react.
- Before long, we're all reacting to each other, and the problem escalates.
- When do we detach? When we are hooked into a reaction of anger, fear, guilt, or shame?
- When we get hooked into a power play and attempt to control or force others to do something they don't want to do?
- When our reaction isn't helping the other person or solving the problem?
- When our reaction is hurting us, often it is time to detach.
- Even if detachment appears to be the least likely, or possible thing to do, it is time to detach.
- The first step towards detachment is to understand that reacting and controlling doesn't count.
- The next step is being peaceful, getting centered, and restoring our balance.
- Take a walk and leave the room.
- Go to a meeting.
- Take a bath.
- Call a friend.
- Meditate or pray.
- Breathe deeply, find peace.
- From that peace and centering will emerge an answer, a solution.

**It is Not Enough to Know How to Ride
One Must Also Know How to Fall**



Don't rush this. Wait until you're ready to get back in the saddle and Co-Parent Successfully. SELF-CARE FIRST.

Forgive yourself and the other parent.

Accept ... new role

Let go of blame

Learn to co-parent successfully

Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment. He served 27 years of that life sentence, nearly three decades spent locked away in a South African prison.

He later wrote, "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." Nelsen Mandela

It might be easier if you realize that no one did anything to you. Hurtful behavior is pain. Letting go of the pain is refusing to drink the poison. Hurtful behavior is pain. Don't drink the poison.

Where did we ever learn pain? "You have to make people suffer to learn?" Childhood! What are your kids learning? What if they could learn? "People do better when they feel REAL LOVE!

Stretch yourself commit to forgiving the other parent and let go of the pain. You will feel ten years younger!

From nothing ANYTHING is possible!!!!!! I encourage you take care of yourself, so you feel better, do better and parent smarter!

Co-Parenting Pledge:



- ✓ I will let go of the past and focus on the future.
- ✓ I will not ask our children to deal with situations they cannot control.
- ✓ I will not ask the kids to deal with adult issues.
- ✓ I will listen powerfully to every family member. First to understand and then to make them feel understood.
- ✓ I will talk directly with the other parent about serious issues involving finances, time-sharing and schedule changes.
- ✓ I will not disagree with the other parent in front of the kids.
- ✓ I will agree to disagree and schedule a time when we can focus on a solution.
- ✓ I will tell our friends, family members and especially grandparents to support our co-parenting roles and keep all conversation around the children positive and encouraging.
- ✓ I will model self-care and do four nice things each week for myself, so I feel better and parent better.
- ✓ I will parent our children using discipline methods that teach a better way of problem solving, and use consequences that are reasonable, related, respectful, and teach responsibility.
- ✓ We agree to use the dating checklist before introducing anyone to our children.
- ✓ We will agree to settle difficult issues with a professional who can guide us in the direction that is in our children's' best interest and avoid conflict and costly litigation.

Co-Parent

Date



No Excuse For Abuse:

3 Steps To A Better Life For You And Your Kids

1. Call 911 or abuse hotline **800 962 2873**
2. Contact Safe Space to join a support group now at:
myflfamilies.com safespace.fl.org
3. Do four nice things for yourself each week

Find A Local Support Group

24 hours 1 800 500 1119	800-4 -A-CHILD 800-422 4453	National Domestic 800 799-7233	DCF Abuse Hotline 800 962 2873	DCF Abuse Hotline 800 962 2873
What if the other parent is verbally abusive? Call Our Family Wizard 866 755-9991 or visit Appclose.com				

- Create an Emergency Plan
- Educate yourself about abuse
- Call 211 and find a support group like Safe Space
- Sign up for Our Family Wizard or AppClose
- Read books. *Heal your Life* By Louise Haye.
- Say 20 “I ams that empower you. Say them every night before bedtime
- Play the “I am” game with your kids back and forth on the way to/from school



Communicate Powerfully:

Write a letter

Dear _____ (mother or father of child),

I forgive you for _____

I am grateful
for _____

What you can count on me for from this point forward is _____

What I request from you is to co-parent successfully. What that looks like is _____

Something I want to thank you for is _____

Something I want to forgive you for is _____

Something I want you to forgive me for is _____

Sincerely,



Self-quieting is something that helps Moms and Dads too!

Self-quieting is different from time out because you are doing something to make you think better so you can act better. Time out is external control. Self-quieting is internal control. The child gets to choose what is calming for them, and they get to decide how long it will take for their brain to be ready for problem-solving.

To solve problems, you must be able to access the cortex part of the brain. If you are emotional and not in control, you are probably in the brain's Limbic system. Back when Saber Tooth tigers were real. Fight or flight could save our life. Today trigger thoughts cause us to overreact and say things that are hurtful rather than helpful.

Self-quieting allows the child and the adult to calm down until they can focus on a solution or a better way to behave. It is a normal thing to overreact. Back in the caveman days, it was part of our survival. Today we need more help from our cortex frontal lobe area. In this part of the brain, we have empathy, can listen intently, affirm feelings, and solve problems peacefully. Do you want your children to grow up and know how to solve problems? Then we have to model self-quieting and use it often.

I refer my self-quieting time as going on a mini vacation. When I was getting stressed out, I would tell the kids, "I am going on vacation. When I get back, I hope to see a clean kitchen, so we can start the movie." Then I would go lay down for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, the kitchen was clean, and we started our movie.

Play the When then game.

Anytime you want to get something done without nagging just make it contingent. Feel free to turn the TV on when you show me your homework.

When the dog is walked then you can go play. When dinner is over you can call your friend.



Self -Quieting Rules:

- Ask the child to go to their room and do something that will make them feel better. The child gets to choose what to do in their room, how long it will take them to calm down and be ready to behave in a better way. It may take 2 minutes or 2 hours. You have no preference as long as the behavior improves or if it involves another person that they are ready to work it out and communicate powerfully.
- It is not a punishment. Self-Quieting is a life skill.
- Parents must teach self-quieting by modeling and showing your kids what you like to do when you're stressed. Then ask them to show you what they will do.

Create Contingencies:

Give up yelling and just say quietly and calmly, for example, "When your homework is done, I will give you back your phone," or "When you help me in the yard for an hour, I will give you my car for a couple of hours."

This teaches children to work first and then have fun.



Redirect hurtful behavior:

When your child does something hurtful, use Self-Quieting and ACT to redirect.

If your children are crying and you aren't sure what happened, or maybe you do:

- First, don't assume one child is to blame.

Instead, you might say: "It looks like something happened here. Your sister is crying and you look really angry. Go in your rooms, calm down, and when you are calm, I will come in and find out what happened."

- Separately Use ACT

Acknowledge Feelings

"I hate my sister!"

"You are really angry with your sister." (Respond to feelings not words.)

"Yes, she's always messing with me! "

"She can really make you mad, huh? I can see how you might feel that way. What else are you feeling?"

"I just wish she wasn't so mean. She is always trying to get me mad so I hit her then she fake cries and goes and tells on me. Then I get in trouble. "

"I can see why you are so upset and the hitting thing really isn't working. Is it? "

Communicate limit

"Hitting is not safe. What else can you do?"

Target: Target what they can do with anger instead of the limitation.

"You can use your words. You can say, I am angry! Get out of my room. But you cannot hit. Hitting is ABUSE and it is not safe. Would it be ok if I hit you when I get upset? No, that would be child abuse and scary. It is not ok to hit your sister. Hitting doesn't solve problems. It sounds like it makes more problems if you keep getting into trouble. Relax for a while and I will talk with your sister."

- Go to the other child and repeat.



Misbehavior is an Opportunity to Teach Problem Solving and Communication Skills

After speaking with each child and when they come out of their self-quieting area, post these three questions in your house so they know how to solve problems on their own next time. One at a time, teach the sender to answer the question and the receiver repeats what they heard and checks to make sure they understand the sender.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

RECEIVER - "How do you feel Casey?"

SENDER - Casey responds, "I don't like it when you come into my room and mess with my stuff. You annoy me and make me angry."

RECEIVER: Kelly (listens and repeats what she heard without adding anything else to it or leaving anything out)

1. She repeats back. You don't like it when I come into your room and mess with your stuff and I annoy you.

2. Checks for Understanding, "Do I understand you?"

SENDER - Casey replies yes.

SWITCH

RECEIVER - Casey asks Kelly, "How do you feel?"

SENDER - Kelly responds, "I don't like it when you hit me. Hitting Hurts."

RECEIVER - Casey responds, "You don't like it when I hit you, because it hurts." Is that it?

SENDER: Kelly responds, "Yes"

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

RECEIVER: Casey asks, "What do you want Kelly?"

SENDER: - Kelly says, I want you to use your words and stop hitting me

RECEIVER: You want me to use my words and stop hitting you.



SENDER: Kelly responds, yes.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

RECEIVER: Casey what will you do?

SENDER: - Casey responds, I will tell you to get out of my room. If you don't, I will get mom instead of hitting. (Parent steps in with a consequence if Casey hits)

RECEIVER: - You will tell me to get out of your room and if I don't you will get mom and she will have us hang out in our rooms for a while. Do I understand you?

SENDER: -YES

SWITCH

RECEIVER Casey asks Kelly, what will you do?

SENDER: -Kelly responds, I will stop messing with your stuff and leave your room.

RECEIVER: - Casey repeats, "You will stop messing with my stuff and leave my room. Do I understand you?"

SENDER: Yes, Let's go play.

THE KEY IS TO PUT THE CHILDREN IN THE SAME BOAT

Do this once or twice, and the next time it gets out of control, stop the fighting and say do you want to go to your rooms and chill out or can the two of you work this out? Watch how fast they work it out to avoid the three questions! Encourage them for working it out and fire yourself from being the judge the juror or the referee.

These tools will help them to build healthy relationships throughout their whole life.



Have a Weekly Family Meeting:

Family meetings are essential to establishing ground rules, maintaining communication, and creating a team-like atmosphere in your home. But the trick to making them work is simply having them weekly, without fail.

Weekly Family Meetings Are a Time to:

- Sync everyone's calendars
- Confirm social and family commitments for the coming week
- Discuss transportation needs and visitation schedules
- Talk about upcoming school projects
- Voice concerns
- Plan family time
- Create closeness and workability
- Plan meals for the week
- Get help solving problems, chores,
- Use I Statements. Practice effective communication "I feel...when... I want...I will..."

Special Family Meetings Can Be a Time to:

- Create your family rules together
- Discuss future plans: Time Sharing, Smooth Transitions
- Solve Sibling Issues
- Establish Routines: bedtime, homework, hygiene
- How to make morning's time fun
- Face-to-Face family time (unplug from computers, cell phones, TV)
- Share weekly goals and accomplishments
- Plan fun events, family field trips

How to Hold Your First Family Meeting:

- Post agenda to add topics (dry wipe board on the refrigerator or central area)



- Set a weekly time so everyone can plan to be there. If someone is not there, they don't get to vote
- Bring your family calendar, as well as a weekly planner (if applicable)
- Keep a family notebook, to jot down solutions and consequences
- Always start with an encouragement feast- one member goes first and everyone says what he or she loves about him or her. Then they say what they love about themselves. Repeat till everyone has a turn. (Make this be all you do for the meetings)
- Practice actively listening to your kids throughout the meeting.
- Leadership changes each meeting the leader reads agenda and calls on people to speak (Use toy or something to pass. Practice one voice rule)
- Allow each person to speak freely without being interrupted.
- Assign a sender and receiver to solve problems between two people. The sender starts with I have a problem with _____ (the receiver) listens intently then repeats back what the receiver said, and asks, "Do I understand you?" If they say yes. Then they switch roles. Once they both feel understood they focus on solution. Or sometimes just feeling understood is the solution. This teaches listening skills and problem solving.





Dating Checklist:

Make a list of five deal breakers and end it before it starts.

Before you introduce anyone to your kids. Make sure you know how they handle their own life:

1. Background check
2. Financially stable
3. Able to have fun without a drink or drug in his or her system
4. Likes kids
5. Good communicator
6. Patient
7. Handles anger
6. Gets along with his own family
8. Handles money
9. Understanding of your commitment to your kids
10. Believes in not spanking

Warning signs of an Abuser

1. She lies to you – Relationships can't survive without trust
2. He won't let you talk to other guys-This is control "RUN"
3. He loses his temper quickly- If he snaps over the tiniest thing and then blames.
4. If she embarrasses you in public you name, acts loud, not caring
5. She threatens to hurt herself if you break up with her; fear, guilt, manipulation
6. He forces you to have sex-anything physical by force, fondling
7. She keeps you from your kids, friends or family
8. If he does anything to scare you in anyway, reckless driving
9. She checks you phone constantly
10. He act jealous and controlling
11. He showers you with gifts, flowers, and attention- after doing something on this list.

Make sure you date someone long enough to see if any of these things show up before you introduce them to your kids.





Stay connected!

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www.lwpt.org

[Want to chat? Schedule a time!](#)

We appreciate you! Wishing you well! Courageous Brave and Strong!

[Pay it forward by sharing the most important thing you learned.](#)

[Join our CBS Facebook Group](#)

Dear _____

