

# Relationship Advice: Is Friendship After Divorce Possible?



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Headlines are filled with photos of happy celebrities vacationing in remote places with their children in tow. It's a picture perfect story—almost. For some celebrity exes such as Miranda Kerr and Orlando Bloom and Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon, the marriage ended long ago, but the family unit remains. It's not uncommon to hear stories of former couples vacationing together, living by each other and spending family time together. With such a high-profile breakup, how can co-parenting be such an easy transition for them? My [relationship advice](#) for you is to emulate these famous relationships because the success largely depends on the parents' ability to move forward.

## Relationship Advice Navigating Friendship Post-Divorce

Though the success of co-parenting is largely dependent on the circumstances of the split, these celebrity couples are proof that children can still grow up with the positive influence of both parents, even after the marriage or longtime relationship and love has ended. Here is my relationship advice for how to successfully transition from a married household to shared parenting between two households.

**1. Focus on long term.** A swift dose of reality should remind you that carrying anger or other negative feelings won't

change the outcome. Your marriage died. Mourn the loss of that part of your life then move forward to create a new future for yourself and children. “I am always impressed when I see couples who manage to stay friends, as it takes strength in character and an understanding of the bigger picture to rise above the hurt,” wrote Seth Myers, Psy.D., in the article, *Stay Friends After Divorce: Why, Coping, and Moving On*. “While we can’t do much to change the state of affairs in other couples, you can reflect on your own relationship.” Recognize that your former partner must make the same effort. This often means a new relationship—and you need to be okay with that.

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**2. You are not defined by your divorce, so don’t allow it to dictate your actions.** Your role as a spouse may be over, but your parenting role continues. Don’t allow the end of your marriage to overshadow the positive, future memorable moments you owe your children. By making the choice to fill your life with positive and hopeful plans for the future, you’ll have a solid base on which to build new relationships. But, you do need a plan. A personal strategy will lessen the potentially negative effects if you witness your partner moving forward. It will also remind you to stay focused on the plans you have prepared for your progress. This transition requires a great deal of discipline and compromise since you’re putting your feelings aside for the sake of contributing to a positive parenting environment for your children. A large part of this growth is recognizing that was then, and this is now. Your actions will be a lasting example for your children. What message do you hope they remember? Whether positive or negative—it’ll make an impact.

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**3. Relationships are life’s classroom.** Seth Myers described it best when he wrote, “Too often, men and women end

relationships and feel that they made a mistake in choosing the partner they committed to in the past because the relationship didn't work. But such a perspective betrays the bigger picture that relationships are one of life's greatest classrooms and it's within this context that we figure out what we need and learn how to move closer to true fulfillment." Instead of focusing your energy on changing the result of your ended marriage by making him pay for what he did, recognize your role in the demise of that relationship and make it a goal to learn from that experience. Feelings of resentment and revenge do nothing to change the outcome. All it does is affect those you still fully love—your children. "Barring cases of abuse," added Myers, "learning to forge a friendship with your ex after divorce can be a truly healing experience and allows for an important integration of your past with the present."

By staying committed to long-term goals, maintaining a positive and hopeful attitude on your future, and viewing your relationship as a learning experience, you're set to develop a surprisingly supportive relationship with the one person who used to know you best and that's a winning strategy for you and your children.

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