

How to Cooperatively Co-Parent After Separation or Divorce



By Rosalind Sedacca, CCT for [Hope After Divorce](#)

Since they're parents of a two-year-old son, Orlando Bloom and Miranda Kerr's separation is more than just celebrity news. They have become role models for how to handle divorce. At the Child-Centered Divorce Network, we watch celebrity divorces carefully, honoring them when they do things right – and admonishing them if they're doing things wrong.

So far, we're hearing the right messages that every couple facing separation or divorce should heed. I value what Bloom said recently on a TV interview: "We love each other. We're a family. We're going to be in each other's lives for the rest of our lives." That, in essence, is the reality divorcing parents face. Why not approach it cooperatively for the well-being of your children? Bloom added, "For the sake of our son and everything else, we're going to support one another and love each other as parents to Flynn. Life sometimes doesn't work out exactly as we plan or hope for. But fortunately, we're both adults, and we love and care about each other. And we, most of all, love our son."

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I love this response and am delighted to share it with others. No doubt, life for parents after divorce can be enormously complex and challenging for several reasons.

- Both parents are bringing the raw emotions resulting from the divorce into a new stage in their lives.
- Mom and Dad are also bringing previous baggage from the marriage – ongoing conflicts, major disputes, differing styles of communication, unresolved issues, and continual frustrations – into the mix as they negotiate a co-parenting plan.
- Both parents are vying for the respect and love of the children – and are easily tempted to slant their parenting decisions in the direction that wins them popularity with the kids.
- Anger and resentment resulting from the divorce settlement can impact and influence levels of cooperation in the years to come.
- Parents may disagree about major issues ahead that weren't part of the parenting dynamic in the past, including visits and sleepovers with friends, scheduling after-school activities, handling curfews, new behavior problems, consequences for smoking, drinking and drug use, dating parameters, using the car, and scheduling vacation time.
- Parents may not share values and visions for the children as they grow and may also not agree on the plan of action required to honor those values.

When these types of differences appear, parents might find themselves struggling to find ways of coping. Agreement on how to co-parent effectively in the present and the future is not a one-time discussion. It takes on-going communication, both verbal and written, as well as regular meetings via phone or in person. And it takes a commitment to make co-parenting work – because you both want it to.

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The consequences, when it doesn't work, can be considerable. Your children are very likely to exploit any lack of parental agreement or unity, pitting Mom and Dad against one another while they eagerly take advantage of the situation. This is a danger sign that can result in major family turmoil fueled by behavior problems that neither parent can handle.

When Mom and Dad are on the same page, so to speak, they can parent as a team regardless of how far apart they live. These parents agree about behavioral rules, consequences, schedules, and shared intentions regarding their children. They discuss areas of disagreement and find solutions they can both live with – or agree to disagree and not make those differences an area of contention.

Keep in mind that when you're more open and receptive to your co-parent, you are more likely to get what you really want in the end. Good listening skills, flexibility, and the commitment to do what's best on behalf of your children are part of a smart co-parenting mindset. Remember that co-parenting will be a life-long process for the two of you. Why not do it in a way that will garner your children's respect and appreciation? It looks like Bloom and Kerr recognize the importance of that. I hope other co-parents do as well.

For more information on Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).

Rosalind Sedacca, CCT is a Divorce and Parenting Coach and author of the ebook, How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook Guide to Preparing Your Children – with Love! Acclaimed by divorce professionals, the book provides fill-in-the-blank templates that guide parents in creating a family storybook with personal photographs as an ideal way to break the news. Rosalind is a contributing expert at HopeAfterDivorce.org, DivorceSupportCenter.com, FamilyShare.com, and CupidsPulse.com. For her free ebook on Post-Divorce Parenting: Success Strategies for Getting It Right!, her free ezine, articles, coaching services, and other

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