

10 Clear Thoughts—Just When You May Need Them Most

1. In most cases, parents either win together or lose together.

No one “wins” in divorce, and almost always a crusade for “victory” will cause more conflict, expense, and damage to children. Outcomes are good if they’re good for everyone.

2. Protecting your children may be your light out of hurt and fear.

Almost always parents do best for themselves when they build peace for their children.

3. You and your co-parent need a plan.

Children’s needs increase dramatically when parents separate—and meeting them requires that, if possible, you have a joint plan. You can begin by using our Parenting Plan Worksheet.

4. Consider if divorce is right for you.

If there is no emergency and if it would be a safe course, you may wish to use counseling and other resources to see if your relationship can be redefined and your marriage saved.

5. Parent conflict can be gravely dangerous to children.

Children have no defense against their parents’ anger, and they experience attacks between their parents as attacks on them.

6. Unless there’s a safety issue, children need a good relationship with both parents.

You have a vital interest in your children’s best possible relationship with their other parent.

7. Whatever anyone else does, courtesy never goes out of fashion—and parents almost always help themselves by being courteous.

Your little acts of protecting a child’s heart are pure heroism. Honor yourself for these—and build on them by making courtesy the consistent theme of your relationship with your co-parent.

8. Little good can be expected from most legal battles.

Half of couples in divorce cases make a serious effort at reconciliation, some successfully, and child-focused courtesy will help, even if there is divorce.

9. Use any counseling and other help to handle this transition successfully.

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10. Be careful where you get your advice.

The world is full of messages on warfare. But it’s your responsibility to create a peaceful world for you and your children—if for no reason other than you’re the only one who can do it.