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## Custodial Challenges

In a separation, it's not always easy to share custody with your ex. Your ex-partner may not have the desire, confidence or proper conditions to take care of the children. At the other end of the spectrum, they may want the kids all to themselves.

To minimize the damage and make sure that your children adjust more easily to the new situation, it is important to make some arrangements. Make sure you and your ex define custody terms that work for both of you, but especially for your children. It's always important to help the kids keep a close relationship with the parent they don't spend much time with.

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Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2

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## Attacks Through the Children

If the marriage/cohabitation ended badly and the separation was tough, it may sometimes seem that the easiest way to get revenge on the ex, is through the children. We all know that whoever hurts our children, sticks a knife through our hearts.

## Understand Your Ex's Behaviour

You might find yourself in a situation where your ex refuses to spend time with the children. They may be unwilling to provide financial support, or make it difficult for you when you require some flexibility. This can be terribly frustrating for you, but try to think of why your ex is doing it, without labeling him/her. Perhaps they are feeling too insecure, or have negative emotions that they don't know how to deal with. Whatever the case may be, it is certainly not fair, on your ex's part, to take out their negativity on you and the children. Still, if you understand why it is happening, you might be less angered by it. The latter would work to

everyone's favor, but especially to your children's, since they won't have to endure two angry parents.

## **The Court**

In cases where custodial and financial arrangements are difficult to settle, the court plays an important role. It can establish child support and define the amount of time your children may spend with each parent. If you would like to keep things more civilized, for the sake of your children, you may request mediation. Another great option is family therapy.

## **If Your Ex Is Unsafe**

For whatever reason, and we hope you're thinking of your children's best interests and not getting back at your ex, you may want your children to spend less time with the other parent. It may be that you feel they will be endangered, poorly treated, or placed in an inappropriate environment.

Whatever the reason may be, your children may not understand why you want to keep them away from their other parent, and may even blame you for keeping them apart. This not an easy situation to experience.

You may want to request the court's psychological assessment, or even ask social services to visit your ex, in order to determine if they can safely spend time with the children. It's best to have the court and the appropriate professionals mediate these kind of situations.

## **Defining Good Custody Terms**

As you already know, you may need to request family mediation to help define custody terms with your ex, before submitting them for the court's approval. When there is still too much conflict, these services can help ease the process, as well as aid the parents in adhering to their agreements.

## **Compromise**

You need to give something to get something. You can't expect to keep your children with you at all times and make all the decisions on your own. Be reasonable and remember your children need to be raised by both parents.

## **Stand by Your Principles**

Remember that you need to think of your children's best interest. If you truly believe your ex is not a responsible and caring person, you don't need to isolate your children from your ex, but you will need to find another way for them to be in touch.

## **Aid the Fulfillment of the Terms**

If the other parent stops calling or doesn't live up to their promises, help them get organized. Ask your children to phone their parent, call the other person and try to talk to them. Children need a certain amount of structure in their lives as well as a healthy routine.

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