



Maintaining a Relationship with Your Ex

Managing to maintain a healthy relationship with your ex can be tricky, especially if your marriage/cohabitation has ended badly. Regardless of who did what to cause the separation, it may take some time until you're able to face your ex or even talk to them without resentment and grief.

However, your ex is also your children's other parent, and nothing will ever change that, whatever the relationship between the two of you may be. Although it could be very tempting to poison your children against your ex, and make them hate her/him as much as you do, you can certainly see how damaging this could be to your children. You don't need to be best friends with your ex, but the ability to maintain a healthy relationship will work to everybody's favor.

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Why Should I Have a Relationship with My Ex?

Actually, you don't necessarily have to have one. You may have your own reasons for not wanting to see or speak to that person ever again, and that's your prerogative. However, keeping a healthy relationship with your ex is extremely important when you have children. It helps them cope better with the separation. Moreover, it reduces the feeling of guilt they may experience for choosing one over the other. Having two parents who get along is also key in raising balanced kids. You do not necessarily have to be friends with your ex, you just need to keep a cordial and respectful relationship.

The Benefits for You

If you are able to maintain a civil relationship with your ex, it may help you heal faster. After all, holding on to guilt, resentment, grief, and pain, will only keep you from moving forward with your life and may render you stuck in the past.

A conflictual relationship with your ex takes a toll on the whole family, since family events become impossible to arrange and everyone will be forced to exist in a tense environment. Remember, a family is a system, with its members constantly influencing each other, even after the separation. Therefore, all the specificities in the relationship between you and your ex will find an outlet in your child's emotional state and behavior.

What Can You Do?

It may be hard and it may take some time, but keeping a healthy relationship with your ex is possible, as long as you put in the effort and consider the tips described below.

Mourn Your Relationship First

It may take some time and you will need to heal your wounds. A failed marriage/cohabitation and a broken heart need mending. If you're not ready to talk your ex just yet, give it space and time.

Stay Away for a While

Some distance is advisable, especially if either of you is feeling angry or resentful. There's no point in refueling the conflict. Give yourself some time to calm down, and then contact each other.

Keep the Communication Lines Open and in a Cordial Manner

You don't have to be around your ex if you're not ready to, but answering the phone or replying to texts about your children, and avoiding confrontation, is a good thing. If you tend to fight over the phone, communicate via short texts instead. Keep it objective and only talk about your children or subjects relevant to them.

Be Friends If You Can, but Don't Force It

If you can remain friends and respect one another, it's a positive thing for you, your ex, and your children. Nonetheless, if you're unable to keep a friendship with your ex, don't push it. It will only cause you pain. In case you don't want that person around you, it is not likely that faking it would help.

Make Mutual Decisions about Your Children

Your ex may want to be kept in the loop when it comes to your children. Making unilateral decisions could easily become the fuse for unnecessary fights. If your ex doesn't care, at least pass on the information, there would be no excuses this way.

Don't Pass Judgement

Providing your opinion about your ex's current life may be done out of the best intentions, but

might not be perceived that way. Some people may view your opinion as an attack on privacy and become defensive. Whether or not you are happy with how your ex is leading his/her life, it's simply not your concern anymore.

Keep Your Private Life Private

Whether you have started seeing someone new or began a new project, remember that your ex is no longer your confidant. It's always best to leave your private matters aside, if don't want your ex to provide their opinion and hear something you won't like.

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