

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Child-focused or Out of Focus Making the Commitment to Caring	7
What's the difference?	8
Why Conflict Hurts	10
How Conflict Hurts	13
What's the cost of coparenting?	18
Making a Commitment to Caring	18
EXERCISES	
Hopes and Dreams	21
Create an Action Plan	22
Love isn't easy. How far will you go?	23
Separation and Divorce Rules	24
My Coparenting Concerns	25
Children's Typical Reactions to Separation or Divorce	26
2. Plan for Peace or Tug of War Allowing My Child to Love Both Parents	31
Forced to Choose (Loyalty Bind)	32
What if there was only one parent?	34
Two are better than one	34
What can a parent do?	36
The Benefit of Regular Coparent Communication	40
Your Legacy	46
EXERCISES	
Truth or Consequences	47
Commitment to Prevent Loyalty Binds	48
Allowing My Child to Love Both Families	49
3. Letting Go or Holding On Changing My Long-Term Role	51
Your Changing Role	52
Grieving	55
Forgiveness	58
Disengaging	60
Ways that People Stay Engaged	61
Letting Go	64
EXERCISES	
Feelings Vocabulary	68
Emotions Log	69
Disengagement Contract	70
4. Make It Better or Keep It Bitter Choosing My Personal Path	73
Your New Business Relationship	75
Obstacles to Realignment	78

Assumptions	78
Expectations	79
Language	80
Blaming	81
Refusal to Realign	83
What to Do to Improve Realignment	86
EXERCISES	
Coparenting Rules	87
Conflicting Messages	88
Conflict Contribution Cycle Activity	89
Coparenting Boundaries	90

5. Neither Fight Nor Take Flight | Managing My Anger 92

What is anger?	93
How Your Brain Reacts	95
Triggers	97
Expressions of Anger	98
Anger: Helpful or Hurtful?	100
What You Can Do to Manage Your Anger	104
Additional Anger Management Strategies	110
Anger and Children	112

EXERCISES

Understanding Your Reactions	114
Let's Practice	116
Identifying Current Triggers	117
Learning New Reactions	118
Taking Control of Anger	119

6. Defuse or Light the Fuse | Taking Control of Conflict 121

How Conflict Happens	122
Lighting the Fuse	123
Fueling the Fire	125
Withdrawing with Limits	127
How to "Help Yourself" Turn Down the Heat	130
Using "I" Statements	135
Dual Responsibility	134

EXERCISES

"I" Statements in Disguise	135
Rules of Fair Fighting	136
Reactions that Light the Fuse	137
Convert "You" Statements to "I" Statements	139

7. Negotiating Agreements All a Winner or Winner Take All	142
Who really wins?	142
Putting Your Listening Skills to Work	144
Activity: Rating Concerns	145
The Seven Steps to Negotiating Agreements	146
EXERCISES	
Reflecting and Reframing Practice	155
Reflecting Log	156
Thinking Outside the Box: Brainstorming Practice	157
Revised Parenting Concerns	158

8. Cooperation or Conflict Coparenting is forever	161
The Importance of Communication	162
Staying Active in Your Child's Life	165
Communicating with Your Child	166
Handling Difficult Moments	169
Improving Your Child's Transfers	172
Creating Two Homes	173
Navigating Developmental Changes	174
Preparing for Situational Changes	176
Recommendations for High-conflict Coparents	179
Handling Financial Issues Joint Responsibilities	180
Shared Physical Custody and Expenses	185
The Gift of a Strong Coparent Relationship	187
EXERCISES	
Sample Weekly Email Communication	189
Sample Urgent Text Communication	191
Resources Suggested Reading	192