

Creating A Mission Statement for Separating, Divorcing & Co-parenting Couples

-- Worksheet --

One of the best ways to ensure your separation/divorce/co-parenting work is effective is to create a Mission Statement that inspires you and reflects your “Highest Intentions, Commitments and Values” about how you each will conduct yourselves before, during or after divorce.

Divorcing couples have been successful sharing their joint Mission Statement with litigating attorneys, and asking that they hold you both to account and respond accordingly themselves.

Your co-parenting specialist will assist you by combining your private, separate statements in a draft you may accept or edit, until it feels right to you both. Once there’s agreement, your co-parenting specialist will share the final draft with both of you.

Your Mission Statement (MS) describes how you will live your values as your approach the challenging divorce/co-parenting tasks you will face together, such as how you will approach your separation/divorce matters, divide property, work together as co-parents, prioritize the well-being of your children, etc. A shared Mission Statement helps define the Spirit and Tone for the divorce/co-parenting work ahead. We’ve even had clients share these in a joint email to their litigating attorneys, asking them to abide by the MS in all their dealings.

During stressful times, you will each understandably need support to increase your skills to ensure you can behave in ways that align with your highest values. When you don’t, your Co-Parenting Therapist(s) or your Collaborative team are there to help bring you back to the values and Commitments in your Mission Statement.

Each Mission Statement differs, based on your values, personal challenges, and circumstances. Expect your coach(es) to provide guidance / support. These are examples of actual Mission Statements:

Examples:

(Co-parenting and Divorcing) “We commit to work together to end our marriage with grace and good will, to communicate civilly and respectfully, and to enhance our skills to do this reliably. As co-parents, we commit to protect our children from any discord now or in the future, to support and value their relationships with the other parent, and to work together to put our kids’ needs first, ahead of our own desires, as we each support their growth and development into adulthood and beyond.”

(Co-parenting) “We agree to build a respectful co-parenting relationship and to work together fruitfully for our children’s benefit, keeping [children’s names]’s best interests as our priority. We commit to focusing on building the skills we need to communicate effectively, so our co-parenting relationship sets a supportive, kind environment for sharing our kids’ future milestones and relationships.”

(Divorcing, no children) “We commit to ending our marriage and divorcing graciously, with honest and respectful communication. We agree to be transparent with all our financial information, and to deal honorably and equitably with one another to ensure our joint wellbeing.”

MORE PHRASES/IDEAS TO CONSIDER:

WE WANT TO:

WE COMMIT TO:

WE AGREE TO:

- Resolve differences respectfully between us, aiming for win-win solutions, and free of court intervention
- Protect the wellbeing of our children and our restructured family
- An open honest, respectful, kind and cooperative divorce

- Work proactively to limit the negative economic, social and emotional consequences of the divorce on our children and on each other
- Reach an agreement that carefully considers the wellbeing of each family member
- Maintain open, respectful and honest communication throughout this process
- Put our children's needs and long-term wellbeing at the forefront of our decision-making and keep their interests as our highest priority
- Set clear limits with extended family who foster an adversarial tone/approach
- Co-parent in a loving and respectful way
- Ensure our children feel loved and safe with both of us
- Protect our children from any negative fallout from our disagreements and discord
- Maintain a cordial and respectful friendship after our divorce
- Honor and respect our differences
- Build a co-parenting relationship that will allow us to dance at our child(ren)'s weddings, and allow them to experience our united love for them at all their developmental milestones, free from any tension or discord between us
- Respect each other's needs and boundaries
- Work to be skilled at empathy and communication to consider each other's feelings and experiences in ways that serve our children
- Honor our commitments to one another
- Always present a united front when sharing decisions with the children
- Work with our coaches/co-parenting specialists to enhance the skills we need to be effective co-parents
- Be active, engaged participants in the collaborative divorce process
- Commit to the 3 C's: Communicate respectfully, Cooperate granting the benefit of the doubt, and Collaborate to serve the best interests and wellbeing of our children

Begin by writing down some words and phrases that reflect your most cherished values and ideals, as you imagine working collaboratively with your previous partner now and into the future:

This effort can be very reassuring and grounding as you proceed. Use "I" for now. Even if you are unable to co-create this Mission Statement immediately with your partner, you will have your own Statement of Highest Intentions to refer to and live by, with your coach's/therapist's support.

Ideally, use bullets for what you're committing to.

Now, try putting those values and ideas into 1-3 sentences you are willing to have combined with those of your former partner/co-parent: