

# Problem-Solving Tips

When it comes to working through some of the issues regarding parenting your children, try your best to use some of these problem-solving tips.

1. ***Some problems can't be solved; also, no relationship is perfect, so lower your expectations. If you and your co-parent can come up with a solution, perfect!***
  - Recognize your own emotional process, state and reactions
  - Don't try to problem solve when you are emotionally upset.
2. ***Stay on task; stick to topic of discussion***
  - Push through on one topic at a time. If you can't agree on something, move on to a new item on the agenda
3. ***Don't become historical***
  - Many parents stockpile issues to address all at the same time because they have bitten their tongue for so long. Keep things in the present and follow the rule, "That was then, what do I want for my children in the future?"
4. ***Never communicate with your co-parent in anger***
  - This is a tough rule to follow...because if things are going well, you wouldn't be needing to communicate to solve a problem
5. ***Manage the negatives***
  - Filter through anything that is not related to the well-being of your child. Dwell only on the things that pertain to this too; ignore the stuff that does not need your response
6. ***Wait to respond (texts, calls, emails)!***
  - There is no rule that you have to immediately respond to a text message or return a call if you missed it, but don't wait for five days either
  - Find healthy ways to clear your mind (not ignoring issues either or blocking them by drinking) and then come back to the issue
7. ***Take a "time-out"***
  - Like a coach, stop, regroup, determine what needs to happen, create a plan
  - Better to let each other calm down than risk blowing up and making things worse for the children
  - Unlike in sports, most relationship time-outs require at least 30 minutes to calm down and allow the stress hormones to get out of your system. If you come back together too soon your body will be primed to fight
  - Attend to danger signs of communication such as withdrawing, making negative interpretations and dismissing the other person's thoughts/feelings
  - Meditate, pray
  - Take deep breaths; calm heart rate down
  - Write things down; journal
8. ***Agree to never fight in front of the children!***
  - This should be your very first rule
9. ***Find a mediator who can help you work things out***
  - Call a friend and vent; but set stage for turning the venting into something productive rather than simply justifying your position and getting more stuck! Find friends who won't simply agree with your side but who will truthfully give you their opinion. Be open to hearing it, good or bad