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## 5 TIPS TO PARALLEL PARENT WITH A NARCISSIST

The Courts and literature stress the importance of co-parenting for your children. In most situations, co-parenting is the ideal standard to work towards. However, when you're dealing with a parent who may be a narcissist, trying to co-parent becomes frustrating and draining. Instead of co-parenting with someone who only has the capacity to think of themselves, try "parallel parenting." These 5 tips will bring you a path toward peace for yourself and your child(ren) where there was once insurmountable chaos.

1. **Establish Firm Boundaries:** This is step one for a reason because narcissists and high-conflict individuals love nothing more than pushing boundaries. Establish times and methods of contact, such as email with notifications turned off. Establish times where the other party may talk to the children on the phone and be clear about your expectations. Never expect the other party to follow your boundaries, but be firm about enforcing them.
2. **Minimize Contact:** Narcissist and high-conflict individuals in general love to create conflict and emotional turmoil every chance they have. This means you need to take away their avenues for constantly contacting yourself or your child during your time. Only respond to emails and messages when absolutely necessary. Unless its an emergency, give yourself a chance to formulate a non-emotional response.



3. **Model Emotional Intelligence:** Getting out of an abusive relationship requires a certain amount of self-care and recovery. We cannot pour from an empty glass. I recommend to clients to find a counselor to help you and your child digest whatever situation you came out of. Instead of or in addition to a form of self-recovery, finding healthy habits and outlets are key to establishing new routines and get yourself and your family back on the path to healthy relationships. This is a very big step toward correctly modeling emotional intelligence to your child.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Joint custody has two types: joint legal custody and joint physical custody. A joint custody order can have one or both parts.



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- 4. **Big Picture:** Focus on your children and pick your battles. Taking a step (or ten) out of their games gives you a moment to assess who you are and the damage that’s been done. A narcissist loves to take matters to the judge and promote themselves as highly moral and charismatic humans. Not every issue requires a court battle and attorney fees--choose your big-ticket concerns tactfully.
  
- 5. **Focus on the Children:** High-conflict people like to get you sucked into their emotional webs and games. Taking a step back and realizing the affect this has on yourself means taking a step back and realizing the larger affect this has had on your children. Never talk about your ex negatively in front of the child and minimize talking about them with your child. Create a healthy emotional environment that focuses on your child's development, self-esteem, and strengths.

Co-parenting assumes that both parents are capable of putting others needs before their own and that both parents have their child's best interests in mind. Narcissists and people with narcissistic tendencies are not capable of this and we must respond accordingly. If you believe you may be divorcing or in a new co-parenting relationship with a narcissist, it is important to have an advocate that understands these complexities fighting for you.

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