



Communicating with Your Ex-Spouse

Unless you have no further ties with your ex-spouse, you will have to learn to communicate with him/her about various issues and if you have children together, you will have to co-parent.

Communication Methods

Texting: You can read what you say before sending it and delete things that aren't good to send. You can avoid emotional reactions and keep things simple since texts are short; however, you risk your comments being misinterpreted since they are non-verbal.

In person: You are both at risk of getting more defensive, especially if things are still volatile or emotionally reactive, although there is less risk of being misunderstood in person since your messages have tone and non-verbal components and you can clarify.

Emails: You can write more than a text, but you may still be misunderstood because it is non-verbal. Anything written can be saved and used in the legal proceedings. You can also re-read and delete before sending.

Phone: This is less painful than seeing your ex in person while still allowing you to have a conversation; however, you can still be emotionally reactive and defensive.

Communication Tips

Act as if: Conduct yourself how you would like to be. Pretend if you have to.

Stick to the issue: Identify the issue. Plan what you want to say. Don't be sidetracked by your ex's comments or your own tangents.

Keep it short: The more you say, the greater the chance one of you will react and the conversation will get into areas you didn't plan.

Keep emotions in check: If you let your emotions rule, you will regret how you act. Imagine how you will feel and how your spouse will be able to characterize you if you don't use self-control.

Bury your resentments: Unless your ex has asked for you to let him/her know what has been done to hurt you, bury your resentments so the conversation keeps to the point.

Avoid old arguments: Accept that there are some arguments that will NEVER be resolved and that you will both see differently forever. Now isn't the time to try to win those arguments.

Vent somewhere else: If you are angry or upset, let it out in writing, verbally when you are alone, or to a safe person. Get it out before you talk with your ex.

Detach with dignity: Remember, you are no longer married to your ex. Don't allow him/her to push your buttons. You can now be a different person than you were before; you don't have to react the old way. Choose your response and detach with dignity.