

## Lesson #5: Tips on How to Negotiate

Divorced Fathers Network  
Advocates Of Shared Parenting  
'Because Children Love Both Their Parents'

### 8 Tips to help you negotiate:

1. Be businesslike, and keep emotional control. You stand to lose a great deal if you are not able to keep your cool. It's also wise to avoid letting your feelings guide you in decision making, as feelings are not always good guides for actions and decisions.
2. Find ways you can both get what you want. Try for a "win-win" approach where both parents and the children get as much of what they want and need as possible. No one will get everything that he/she wants. Think about what you can give your former partner that she values and is good for your children.
3. Watch your timing. Negotiating without a third party may be nearly impossible during the heavy negative intimacy phase. Being ready and being willing to negotiate are two different things. Another possibility is that one can be ready and willing to start the negotiating process, but not to complete it. It is often the case that both people are not in the same phase of emotional recovery at the same time, making it more difficult to find the right timing for negotiating.
4. Find what motivates you. Try to find something from your past experiences that can help you to be patient. For instance, you might have been the child of a difficult divorce and not want to put your children through that
5. If he or she doesn't follow an agreement, put "teeth" in it, which means written statements on what will be acceptable alternatives, substitutions, and compensations when the agreement is not followed. Use the HIRT test to determine the severity of the situation. If your situation doesn't pass, then "teeth" are needed in the agreement.
6. **HIRT test**  
**H**=how hurtful is the problem to the children?  
**I**=how intentional is the transgression?  
**R**=does the parent repeatedly not follow the agreement or do hurtful things to the child?  
**T**=is this a tactical move by either one of you to gain an undue advantage, get revenge or avoid responsibilities?
7. Try to find a **FASTER** solution:  
**F**= be flexible and fair  
**A**=be active  
**S**=use substitutes  
**T**=make trades  
**U**=understand and be understood  
**R**=be respectful.
8. Show your children that mature adults can resolve differences. Children deeply feel the effects of conflict between their parents. They can become

demoralized and emotionally injured, and in many cases, feel they are to blame. Children often end up feeling that things are hopeless, and that they can't resolve their personal problems. This can lead to escape through drugs, violence, and mental illness. Ongoing, meshed conflict between parents, part of separation and divorce for children, and can affect them the rest often have If you feel your children that these conflicts can be resolved, you are offering them a positive roles and showing them that even in difficult and painful time, things can eventually work out. Plan meeting times, their length, and the meeting place carefully. Choose a time that suits both of you. Limit discussion time to 30-45 minutes. Cover only one item in one session, having agreed on the agenda beforehand. Meet in a neutral place. Be kind to yourself. Preparing for these delicate negotiations can bring a number of difficulties surface, and make it harder to push forward. You can limit your preparation time to 20-30 minutes at a time.

*From "Mom's House, Dad's House" by Isolina Ricci 1980,1997*

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