

Advice for getting through a divorce

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Divorce Coach

I found out that my ex changed the address at the school to his address only. Now I don't get the kids' report cards and other notifications. Is there legal action I can take?

Rule #1, avoid legal recourse if at all possible. So many times people run to their attorney to show their ex "who's boss". The financial and emotional toll it will take on you isn't worth it. Very simply, go to the school's registrar and explain the situation. There should be a way that they can flag your account so no changes can be made that involve your name and address. Then take that money you would have spent on an attorney and go have a spa day.

My ex will never accommodate any schedule changes that I may have, yet he expects me to accommodate all of his. How can I co-parent with someone who is unreasonable?

Simply put, you can't. There are two issues here — one is scheduling and the other is co-parenting. Let me address the scheduling problems. Depending on your MSA, there might be certain times spelled out that you will need to accommodate him. But, in general, it is your choice if you want to change the schedule. If he is asking you to change and it benefits your child or it is not an imposition for you, then by all means do it, but do it with the acceptance that it might not be reciprocated. Leave that expectation at the door. Divorce is not a two-way street; depersonalize it. Stop looking at his refusal to switch as a way to get back at you. That might be the case, but if it is, do you think you are going to change that? Change if you want and if not, just tell him by email or text that the switch isn't possible this time. The second issue here is the term co-

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parenting. Let me define terms here as I'm applying them.

There is joint custody/parallel parenting where each parent does their own thing when they have the children. Rules, values, parenting style and philosophy are different. Then there is co-parenting where the parents work together on every aspect of their children's upbringing. If you are divorced from someone who is unreasonable, trying to get back at you or using the kids as a pawn, the reality is such that you won't be able to co-parent. The focus is not the child, but you. If you have an ex that doesn't see parenting the same way you do, take a deep breath, know that you are in this for the long haul and be consistent with the structure you have set up in your home. Let go of trying to get him to see parenting your way. Put your focus on being the best parent you can be.

I am going through a divorce and my ex wants to settle this between "us". Is this a smart thing to do?

You might want to explore the option of you and your ex coming up with an agreement and then you have an attorney look it over for your protection. Remember the saying, "Every man for himself"? I think the person who said that was going through a divorce.

Debbie Martinez is a Certified Divorce Life Coach. She has given workshops on divorce and women's issues and has offices in South Miami. For more information, go to <www.thepowerofdivorcecoach.com>.