

Advice for getting through a divorce

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ



Divorce Coach

My ex and I have different parenting styles. I don't like that my kids have conflicting rules and expectations.

This is a tough one and all I can say is acceptance and consistency. It's a big pill to swallow (one of many) that you don't have control of what goes on at

your ex's house, from how the kids are allowed to dress, eat, curfew and language. But here's some tough love — accept it and get over it or it will eat your insides out. Unless you and your ex are truly co-parenting, you will not be able to change anything that goes on over there. But here is where you do have control. Be consistent in how you parent. You have control over your world with your children when they are with you. Stick to your house rules and when the kids say, "But dad let's me stay up till two!" You can smile and say, "Our rules are different and when you're home with me, you need to go by mine." Remember, kids crave structure and they need a parent, not a friend.

My ex wife sends me 50 emails a day while I'm at work. How do I stop this? No más!

You can send her an email stating that you no longer will be reading any of her emails while at work, let alone responding to them. At the end of the day (with a scotch in hand) you will read her email. If there are more than two, you will not even open them. In addition, if the emails are not civil, you will not respond. If they are of a true urgent nature, she is to write URGENT and you will read it. My guess is that she might not get with the program from the starting gate, but it won't take her long. If she continues and it becomes intrusive, I would contact your attorney.

DIVORCE COACH

At what point can I introduce my boyfriend to my children?

There are a number of factors here. Are they older and accepting of you dating? Are they fearful that someone will replace them? Each child is different and how they feel needs to play into your decision. If this is a steady boyfriend, introduce him. If you've only been on two dates with him, you might want to wait awhile. Having dates come through the house like a revolving door could be unsettling and confusing for the kids.

I'm 55 and just getting divorced with three boys in high school. I get sad every time I think of me starting over at my age.

How you think is going to play a very big part in how fast you move on with your new life. Looking to your future with anticipation instead of apprehension is key. It's definitely sad when something ends, but you can choose to focus on that or you can choose to focus on the beginning of a new and better life. Journal about your feelings, the lessons you have learned through this and then make a list of all the things you want to do, things that excite you. There is so much waiting up ahead. Don't get caught up in the sadness of the past and miss them.

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