

A Healthy Relationship with My Ex ☐ Is That Possible!?!?

1. **You can be healthy in any relationship, regardless of the other person's state of emotional/mental/relational/spiritual health.** It may be convenient to blame your Knothead of an ex for the way you act in your interactions, but it isn't really accurate. You be in charge of you. *Do you really want him/ her in charge of you?!?*
2. **Ask yourself why you are having this interaction with your spouse.** Is the motivation healthy or unhealthy? Do you really need to have this interaction? If it is about your children, keep their well-being as the focus!
3. **Communicate clearly, directly, and respectfully.** Maybe your ex doesn't deserve this from you, but you can set the example and lead the relationship in a healthier direction. The "Golden Rule" even applies to Knotheads – "Do unto others as you want them to do to you." They are more likely to be respectful, clear, and direct with you if you set this example. *(Although this IS NOT a guarantee!)*
4. **Find the best format for communication.** This will be different for different people. It may mean keeping as much correspondence as possible in email format. It may mean a weekly conversation to discuss the children. It may mean impromptu conversations as needed. It should include clear guidelines about what is and is not appropriate to discuss with children present.
5. **Do not use your children as messengers, reporters, spies, or judges!!!** If you need to communicate something to or from your spouse, do it directly. This is one of the most tempting and child-damaging traps for divorced parents.
6. **Do not minimize or magnify your ex's faults, when talking to your children.** It is tempting to either cover for her/him out of a desire to protect the children, or to dwell on his/her faults out of anger and frustration. Neither approach is good for your kids. Allow your kids to have their own realistic relationship with their other parent, and be there to support and encourage them when things are tough.
7. **Talk to family members about guidelines regarding how to talk to your kids about their other parent.** Be proactive and have some straightforward conversations. Family members can be destructive, often without realizing it.
8. **Spend time with people who encourage you to be healthy (*spiritually, physically, mentally, relationally, etc*).** If friends, family, church members, or others don't pass this test – you may need to limit your interactions with them.

Recommended Resources

(I buy my books at www.addall.com to find the best prices available, every time.)

- **Boundaries** by Henry Cloud & John Townsend (www.cloudtownsend.com)
This huge bestseller has helped countless numbers of people learn how to develop healthier boundaries in their relationships. Whatever your personality or relationship style, there's a good chance you will find yourself in this book – and meaningful ways to improve your relationship results.
- **Emotionally Healthy Spirituality** by Peter Scazzero (www.center4ehs.org)
The author's stated premise is "You can't be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature." He offers very useful guidelines for emotional/spiritual growth. A very profound and meaningful read!
- **ScreamFree Parenting** by Hal Runkel (www.screamfree.com)
While the focus of this book is on the parenting relationship (*and it happens to be the best book I've ever read on parenting*), the principles are applicable in any relationship. The website includes other applications of the "ScreamFree" philosophy and principles.
- **The Smart Stepfamily** by Ron Deal (www.successfulstepfamilies.com)
You may not need this resource yet, but there's a good chance you will someday. I think it is the best book available for building healthy stepfamily life.

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- www.hopeforyourfamily.com
I try to make my website a very useful resource center for anyone desiring healthier lives, relationships, and communities. You will find my recommendations for other good books, websites, tips, and various resources for growth and healthy living for you and your family. I hope you will find my weekly articles useful, as well. Be sure to check out my article entitled "Knotheads" – posted November 12, 2006.
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