



Let's talk about... Conflict

Handout #5: How can parents manage parental conflict?

Watch Chapter 5 - Let's talk about how parents can help here:

<https://bit.ly/2JTgk4V>

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Parents who do the best by their children do not just act out their conflict with each other. They learn to look through a developmental lens, think, and talk, about the good, the bad, and the ugly of what is happening in their family.

MAIN CONTENT

You can become a better gardener of your child's emotional growth.

"I looked at things from my child's point of view" Observe the conflict through your child's eyes. This will help you to consider how the situation might be affecting your child's development, and motivate you to respond more constructively.

"I started to see my partner as human, and not some kind of monster sent to destroy me" Conflict with your partner can be unsettling, and they may feel like a perpetual drain on you, or even like an enemy. Provided their behavior is essentially safe, then seeing the other parent as a real person in your child's life - who they love, need, and depend on - will help you to gain some perspective.

"I thought like a parent, and not like an ex-partner. I kept my parenting mind on the job, not my litigating mind" Prioritise your child above your anger. Every time you are tempted to engage in conflict, step out of the situation, take stock of what is going on, and reengage in a way that is constructive to your child.

"I stopped blaming" Define the problems that you have with the other parent in terms of differences between you, rather than defects. A focus on defectiveness leads to blame and avoiding responsibility, and constructive interactions are not likely to result.

"I stopped reacting" Learn to control your impulses, so that you do not say or do anything that you will regret or wish you had done better.

"I repaired what could be repaired, and stepped up to the idea of preventing any more damage"

TAKE A MOMENT

Consider how you behave when you are with your child. Are you soundly in the role of parent? Reflect for a moment on the experience of other parents (such as those above). Are there ways you can be more fully focused on protecting and nourishing your child to thrive.

Acknowledgements

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All videos in the series can be view here: www.rasa.org.au/letstalkabout