



Joint Custody with a Jerk

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

Published

March 13th, 2014

"Joint Custody with a Jerk: Raising a Child with an Uncooperative Ex" was written in 1996 but offers advice that is timeless. Julie A. Ross is a therapist who has teamed with freelance writer Judy Corcoran to identify the problems that can occur after a separation or divorce and offer solutions to deal with them using effective communication strategies.

There are three concepts presented that do not only apply to parents who are or have ended their marital relationship but also for anyone who wants to understand and improve their communication patterns.

The first is understanding feelings and how they interact with events, thoughts and actions. The diagrams and examples given provide clarity that, if applied, can result in effective problem-solving.

The second concept involves understanding and using a four-stage problem pyramid that helps identify who is responsible for solving a particular problem. Stage one asks the question: What exactly is the problem? Stage two asks: Who has upset feelings about the issue? Stage three is Who brought up the issue? and Stage four is: Who is responsible for the solution?

The third concept is called "The Formula" and teaches the reader how to use a template based on an "I" message to communicate with others. This communication tool involves expressing a feeling and reason for that feeling combined with a request for change in behaviour. The authors have also presented two forms that are gender specific.

"Joint Custody with a Jerk" applies the three concepts to real-life examples that occur in families where conflict negatively affects family members. But these can also be used with families that are still living together or in everyday relationships in the workplace or friendship arenas.

The book offers insight regarding how change can be encouraged from different perspectives depending upon whether you, the ex or your child is the one who "tops the problem pyramid". The reader is encouraged to learn the techniques and then practice them so that they not only become comfortable using them but that they will be able to set up healthy boundaries for the future.

Encouragement is also offered that involves thinking and doing positive things with a focus on what a person has rather than always thinking about what has been lost.

As a Registered Psychologist, Social Worker and Mediator who has had over 7,000 clients over the years, I highly recommend this book. In fact, before I even finished reading it, I was telling my clients - those who are going through separation and divorce as well as those who aren't - how beneficial I believe that the book would be in improving the communications for everyone!

Each of the 241 pages of this book has a nugget of information that clearly outlines ways to improve the life of adults and children alike. Communication and relationship problems occur no matter what type of family living situation you are involved with. This book helps you to prevent some of them and to resolve some of them by understanding and using the wisdom found within its covers.

All Psyched Up. **Joint Custody with a Jerk** By Dr. Linda Hancock Published March 13th, 2014

(Rev. 11/25/2020)