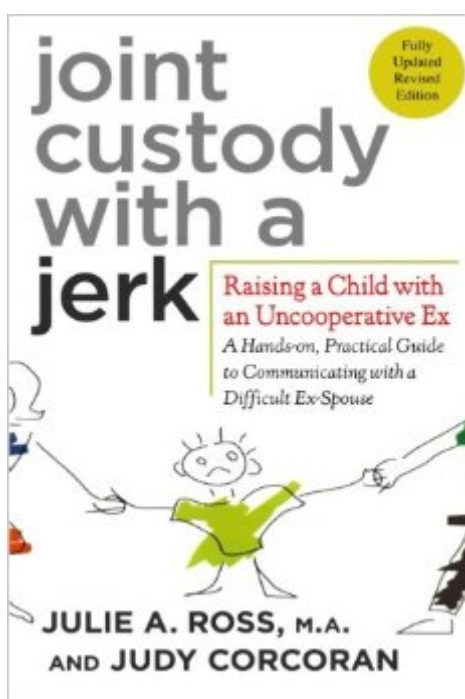


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Joint Custody With A Jerk: Raising A Child With An Uncooperative Ex- A Hands-on, Practical Guide To Communicating With A Difficult Ex-Spouse



Synopsis

From parenting expert Julie A. Ross and writer Judy Corcoran comes the fully revised *Joint Custody with a Jerk*, the highly praised guide to co-parenting with an uncooperative ex-spouse, now updated to provide real solutions to tough family issues. It's a fact that parenting is hard enough in a family where two parents love and respect each other. After divorce, when the respect has diminished and the love has often turned to intense dislike, co-parenting can be nearly impossible, driving one or both parents to the brink of insanity. *Joint Custody with a Jerk* offers many proven communication techniques that help you deal with your difficult ex-husband or ex-wife. By outlining common problems and teaching tools to examine your own role in these sticky situations, this book conveys strategies for effective mediation that are easy to apply, sensible, timely and innovative. This revised edition of a bestselling classic sheds light on how today's digital forms of communication can both hurt and help in custody conflicts, and offers updated information throughout that brings age-old issues into the present day.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If only the book really delivered on its title. The number of people who've read this review suggests that there a lot of folks looking for a book that delivers what this title promises. As other reviewers have pointed out, it has some useful snippets, and it can't hurt to try them out. Go for it. But for those of us with ex's that really are, um, uncooperative, it offers little help; most of the tips assume a level of maturity and responsibility that my ex, for one, certainly lacks. The thought of actually taking

the authors' core advice and telling my ex that her behavior makes me "feel upset," and that I would like her to change it, would be humorous if it weren't so painful. (In fact, it's more appropriate advice for an ongoing relationship that has some rough patches; if my ex were willing and/or able to respond positively to such requests, perhaps we wouldn't be exes.) My impulse is to say that, if you've got an ex who is as cooperative as those described in this book, you're relatively lucky, and don't really need a book with such a provocative title. Unfortunately, this may lead some to conclude that for those of us with truly difficult ex's -- those that really couldn't care less how we feel, let alone whether we find their behavior "inconvenient," and who view any interaction as an opportunity to express bitterness and hostility -- there is no recourse. On the positive side, just reading through the book may cause the reader to focus a little more on the importance of addressing his/her own attitudes and behavior, which is the most controllable element in the situation. There needs to be much more discussion of how to deal with those who don't respond to firm and principled verbal messages, beyond "if this doesn't work, maybe you need a lawyer or a therapist."

This book made two important points. First, if you don't like the way your ex parents your kids after your divorce, that's too bad. Why do divorced parents think they can dictate to each other how to parent? Part of getting a divorce is relinquishing all control you had over your former spouse. Unless your ex is abusing your children and you are ready to press formal charges, don't expect your ex to be interested in your criticisms of him or her. Second, if your kids are complaining to you about what goes on when they're with your ex, the best thing you can do for your kids is to refuse to play the middleman and insist the kids work out their problems with your ex themselves. I think these are both good points, but this book gets caught up in hashing through all the detailed "methods" you can use to figure out what to do when problems come up. One that seemed particularly useless to me was using the "broken record" approach when communicating with your ex, just repeating what you want over and over. Not very mature or solution-oriented. This book also took an old-fashioned approach to custody, assuming that one parent (usually the mom) is the real parent and the visiting parent is mostly just a pain. For a healthier view of post-divorce parenting, see "Mom's House, Dad's House," "The Custody Revolution: the Father Factor and the Motherhood Mystique," and "Children of Divorce: a Developmental Approach to Residence and Visitation." My recommendation to parents is first, to accept that you can't tell your ex how to act, and second, to try one of the books listed above or "Why Did You Have to Get a Divorce? And When Can I Get a Hamster?" for a more grown-up approach to helping your kids through a very difficult time.

The two main things I got from this book were: 1) It helped me achieve a certain level of peace with my custody situation, and 2) It taught me some effective ways to communicate with both my ex and my son. These two things have definitely helped me get a handle on my custody chaos, and consequently I am able to focus more energy on parenting. The book's early chapters deal with common problems that arise in an uncooperative custody relationship. The authors teach you how to break each problem down into the actual problems themselves, and the emotional component of the problems. By analyzing and understanding your own emotional reaction to an issue, you can deal with it much more effectively, and it ends up having less control over you. Sometimes you find that what you thought was a problem is actually not a problem at all, but just an emotional trigger. Later chapters deal with effective ways to communicate with your ex. The suggestions the authors give are practical, and so far the ones I've used have worked. They are probably good for other types of relationships too. The authors stress that building your child's self-esteem and self-confidence is extremely important. They also emphasize that even if your ex is a jerk, your child still loves and needs him or her. The authors teach that it is important to recognize how our words and actions affect our children. I recommend this book for anyone who feels that their custody situation is out of control, or who has communication problems with their ex. No book will solve all your custody problems if your ex is a jerk. When you finish reading the book, your ex will probably still be a jerk. You will, however, be better equipped to deal with the jerk in your life.

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