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# MEDIATION MOMENT

NEWSLETTER OF PARENTING SCIL, LLC

## I Want HALF!

By Sean Davis

When I sit down with parents to facilitate a negotiation regarding the custody and visitation of their children, one of the first questions I ask each parent is what type of custody and visitation they want. Much of the time the answer is “I want half”. After a thorough explanation of the definition of legal and physical custody, a follow-up question is often, what does half mean to you? Typically, the answer to my question is either silence or a request for an even 50-50 split of time with their children.

The complexities of a 50-50 split are significant. In many cases, what parents are asking for is not necessarily the quantity of time with their children, but quality time. There are considerations, primarily the best interest of the child, that should be considered. Every situation is unique because parents and children are unique.

### Considerations for Co-Parents

- Geography & Logistics - Will travel be challenging or cause disruption of sleep or school schedule? If parents live far apart, it may be difficult to maintain schedules and connection. Coordination of schedules requires effective communication and commitment from both parties.
- Child's Age and Needs – Children's needs change over time. Younger children may find adjustments challenging. Are there special needs or activities that will be impacted? If equal time is not considered, are there opportunities for activities that may be missed?
- Parental Cooperation – 50-50 parenting time requires a high degree of communication and cooperation. Navigating disagreements, while sparing the child from parental conflict, is essential. What is the level of mutual respect and willingness to collaborate?

The desire for a 50-50 split is positive and may be appropriate. However, it is important to consider the child's age and preferences, specific needs, logistics, and the level of collaboration when co-parents navigate these complexities and decide on the arrangement that promotes the well-being of their children.

## This Issue:

I Want Half!

Communication  
Corner  
Avoiding  
Common Pitfalls

Announcements  
& Updates

Clearly, There Is  
a History





"Very often it isn't what is said but the way it was said that causes trouble"

DR. ISOLINA RICCI

## Communication Corner, Avoid Communication Pitfalls

By Juanita Graham

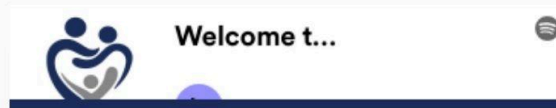
Whether we are talking with a family member, boss, friend, neighbor or stranger, there are some things we can do to avoid communication pitfalls and improve the chances that we will have more constructive and less painful conversations. Try doing the following:

- P - Pause
- I - Invite Conversation
- T - Test What You Thought You Heard
- F - Fix Your Face and Focus Your Words
- A - Address the Problem (Don't Attack the Person)
- L - Listen, We have 2 ears and 1 mouth
- L - Listen, It is often helpful to listen twice as much as we speak
- S - Speak for Yourself

## Announcements & Updates!

Join us on Spotify for a podcast dedicated to co-parenting. Help us build a community dedicated to improving communication and problem-solving!

Click the link below or search Spotify for  
Mediation Moment for Co-Parents



Sean Davis, Mediation Coordinator, was nominated for the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce Health Promoter of the Year Award. Congratulations and thank you for all you do to promote healthy communication in our community!

## Clearly, There is a History

By Crystal Skeeter

The individuals who have shared our journey are a significant part of our story, particularly when time spent together resulted in the life of a child. When parents separate or divorce and choose to negotiate custody or parenting time with their children, mediators recognize that there is a history that may include hurt and disappointment. However, for many parents, it is possible to forge a new relationship as co-parents for the well-being and healthy development of the children involved.

Children have a right to a relationship with both of their parents without witnessing uncomfortable adversarial situations, being involved in their parent's complicated relationship dynamics, or being used as messenger or sounding board. Mediation provides an opportunity for parents to work together, with the assistance of a neutral 3rd party facilitator, to develop a plan that is in the best interest of their children. Beginning today, consider the best possible plan for children's well-being as they navigate between two different homes, one with each parent.

Dr. Richard Stahl provides several tips for mediation that are vital in successful negotiations.

- Approach the mediation with a flexible, businesslike attitude
- Focus on your child's needs. Think of custody and parenting plans as they relate to what is best for your child. Focus on co-parenting, not the past relationship
- Be prepared with a proposal for custody and time-sharing

Regret and loss are emotions that take time to overcome. Acknowledge your feelings and seek professional support when necessary. The goal is a safe transition, and loving environments for your children. Working together for your children's well-being helps focus respectful communication and contributes to a more successful resolution of differences during mediation.

