

N.Y.B.L. Podcast Ep 190 (The Effect of Narcissistic Parenting on Children)

[00:00:00] **Rebecca Zung:** Welcome to another episode of Negotiate Your Best Life. I'm Rebecca Zung. Today's episode is the effect of narcissistic parenting on children. This is, A very heavy topic today, but so important. I get a lot of inquiries about this. I have [00:01:00] litigated this as an attorney and it is never an easy topic, but it's certainly very, very important.

[00:01:07] Narcissists use used. Children in litigation and we've also, you know, I've seen the effects of it up close and personal as well. So, you know, I want to address this and, uh, you know, I think a lot of you are dealing with this. I also want to make sure that each of you know that my brand new books slay the Bully, how to Negotiate with a Narcissist.

[00:01:35] And when is now available, please go to slay the bully.com and check it out because you all need this information. It is so important and it is, you know, this is something that. Every single person needs. You know, all of us are dealing with these toxic [00:02:00] personalities, and so I've made the entire manuscript available immediately upon purchase.

[00:02:06] And there's a masterclass there, there's a workbook, there's all kinds of bonuses there for you. So make sure that you go to slay the bully.com. Pre-order it, get that now. All right, let's dive into this very important episode. So narcissistic parental alienation, what does that mean? So parental alienation in general means the psychological manipulation of one parent against the other to, to the child by causing the child to reject disdain, hate, uh, the other parent in a very complete way that that child actually ends up.

[00:02:49] Feeling like the other parent is the enemy is disgusting, is horrible. Okay? So that's parental alienation. What [00:03:00] narcissistic parental alienation is, is when you have this alienating parent who also happens to be a narcissist, it's probably the most lethal, toxic, horrible situation that you could possibly have.

[00:03:18] So before I get into what you can do about it, let me give you some indicators that may parental alienation may be going on for you. So number one is that they send poisonous messages to the child about the, what we call the targeted parent, and they portray the targeted parent as unloving, unsafe, unavailable, things like that.

[00:03:45] So they're manipulating the child into believing that this parent, who even maybe once was very loving, uh, into believing that this person is now, uh, hates you, that hates the child, [00:04:00] and that the, the environment is unsafe, that the, that the parent doesn't want the child, something like that. So they send these poisonous messages to start basically brainwashing the child into believing how horrible the targeted parent is.

[00:04:18] Okay. So the second thing that they do is they, um, start limiting contact and communication between the child and the targeted parent. They'll start saying that the child doesn't wanna come over to your house, that the child is too tired, that the child is sick, that the child has homework, um, you know, anything that they can dream up.

[00:04:40] They start limiting that contact, limiting that communication. They'll even start saying things like, well, the cell phone wasn't working, or The battery died, or, um, I shut it off because I don't want you tracking me. Something like that. So they start limiting communication between. The child [00:05:00] and the targeted parent.

[00:05:02] So the number thing that they do is erasing and replacing the targeted parent in the heart and mind of the child. So they basically will start saying that, you know, this is your new daddy. This is your new mommy. Or, we don't need old daddy in our life anymore. We don't need new mommy in our life anymore.

[00:05:20] You have me. I'm the only one that you can count on. I'm the only one who's here for you all the time. You know, daddy or mommy, whoever the targeted parent is, doesn't want you. And besides they never wanted you and um, you're just a father in their life and I'm the one who loves you. I'm the one who wants to be with you all the time.

[00:05:39] Things like that. So they start replacing, uh, and erasing the targeted parent. So the number four thing that they do is encourage the child to betray the target parents trust. So, in other words, they'll have the, per the child's spy on the [00:06:00] targeted parent and get back to the alienating parent, what's going on in daddy's house?

[00:06:06] What's going on in mommy's house? What are you doing over there? Um, tell me what's happening. Um, tell me what you had for dinner, or tell me if daddy or mommy, you seeing someone else. Tell me what you're seeing in the house. Things like that. So basically they become this little, like spy for the other parent.

[00:06:24] So that the other parent, the, the alienating parent has more ammunition to use against the targeted parent. And the last thing they do is they undermine the authority of the targeted parent. And how they do that is they say, you know, the targeted parent might say, no, you're not allowed to go out till three o'clock in the morning with your boyfriend.

[00:06:47] And then the alienating parent will say, no, you can go ahead and do that. You know, daddy, your mommy is, uh, stupid, or they don't know, or they're, they're not the boss of you. I am, you know, things like that. So [00:07:00] they'll undermine the other parents' authority. And I do wanna mention that a lot of what I'm getting today is from Dr.

[00:07:08] Amy Baker, who is the author of the book, co-Parenting with the Toxic Ex. I've had the pleasure of being able to interview her. She is the foremost authority on parental alienation in the world. And, um, I will drop a link to my last interview with her in the, uh, description below so that you can check that out if you'd like to as well.

[00:07:31] And I will also drop a link actually to her book Co-Parenting with The Toxic Ex, if you wanna be able to check that out. Also. So, you know, you may see one or two of these things, uh, happening with you, but you know, every parent when they're in the middle of a divorce or in the middle of breaking up or something like that, they engage in some of these things.

[00:07:53] So, you know, if you just see one or two, it, you know, it may not be parental alienation. It's the [00:08:00] whole, when you're, when they're all taken together, then these parental alienation strategies, foster conflict and, and they create that psychological distance between the child and the targeted parent. And that's what it is that they want.

[00:08:19] And, and sometimes it's just because they hate the targeted parent. They want to punish them. Sometimes it's just because they want the kids to love them more. And especially if they're a narcissist, they want to feed their ego. They wanna show the targeted parent that I've got you. I got the kids to turn against you.

[00:08:40] That is one thing that narcissists do anyways. Triangulate and try to gather a support team and get people to go against you. And so in the middle of a divorce, they do that with the children and with anyone else that they can get on their side as well, unfortunately. Okay, so what can you do [00:09:00] about it?

[00:09:00] Number one thing that you can do about it is do something. A S A P. The thing is that when it's gone all the way to where the child is fully alienated, absolutely hates the other parent, then it's so hard to turn that around. I've seen some of the worst possible cases. I've actually had clients that have had to go to parental alienation camps, UniFi reunification camps with their children.

[00:09:29] So that they can try to reunify, um, you're basically deprogramming the children at this point. It's almost like as if they've been in a cult. So it's really, really difficult. So if you are seeing any of these signs, do something immediately. Get help, um, and, and, and make sure that you are considering your strategies and your interventions absolutely.

[00:09:52] Right away. Don't brush it off. Don't say, well, you know, she was angry. Or He was angry, or We're just going through a divorce, or [00:10:00] I'll get the kids back at some point. Um, just be really, really mindful of doing something as soon as you can at the beginning of the process. The second thing that you can do is don't engage.

[00:10:15] And what I mean by that is, first of all, you're not gonna engage at the level that the narcissistic, alienating parent wants you to. Um, I have a whole video on how to negotiate with a narcissist ex where I talk about the Biff Method brief, informative, friendly, and firm. And I will drop a link to that video below as well.

[00:10:36] You're definitely gonna wanna check that out, but you don't wanna engage and don't employ the same tactics that the children that the other parent is employing. Parental alienation is a form of child abuse, and I wanna make sure that I say that. I've, I've had Dr. Amy Baker actually said that it's harder for children to get over parental alienation syndrome than it is sexual abuse.

[00:10:59] It's that [00:11:00] traumatic. So, you know, children of parental alienation syndrome who've been targeted, who are the victims of that? Um, have anxiety, depression. Their grades suffer. They sometimes have eating disorders. They sometimes drop out of school. They have a higher incidence of teen pregnancy. They have a higher incidence of being on drugs.

[00:11:21] All kinds of really, really bad things because this is a form of child abuse. So don't respond by engaging in the same type of behavior. Just keep letting the children know that you're there for them, that you want to see them, that you love them, that the problems with the other parent have nothing to do with them.

[00:11:40] Just keep letting them know that even though they say they hate you or whatever, um, it still goes in there. They still see it, they still hear it as much as they don't communicate that with you. So just don't stop telling your child that you love them, but don't [00:12:00] engage with the other parent. The last thing that you can do is make sure that you have a really, really strong support team.

[00:12:08] You're definitely gonna want to have a lawyer that understands parental alienation. One that, um, has had experience in dealing with parental alienation. And then you're gonna wanna hire or get involved with, um, hire a good coach or a therapist or somebody who really knows parental alienation and also get involved with some support groups, uh, people, other people who have dealt with it.

[00:12:35] And, you know, not people that are gonna, gonna like kind help you on the hate wave because that's not really gonna help you. So what you really want is somebody who can give you, um, information, advice on how they were able to reunify with their children. Today's topic is one that is, So difficult and so painful, yet so needed, and [00:13:00] there's really not a lot of information out there yet.

[00:13:03] It's becoming more and more prevalent, and that is how to deal with parental alienation. It's also called parental alienation syndrome or p a s, and it is distinguishable from a situation where one parent is just badmouthing the other parent. That's not what parental alienation syndrome is. This is much more toxic, much more insidious.

[00:13:30] The impact is much more powerful and not in a good way. So if there's a true case of parental alienation syndrome, this is a situation where one parent has systematically employed manipulative strategies and tactics. Similar to those used in religious cults to brainwash the children so that the children end up not wanting anything to do with the other parent.

[00:13:56] This is just, this isn't just one parent keeping the [00:14:00] children away from the other parent or something like that, like the normal stuff that you see in a divorce situation. This is much, much more extreme. In this case, if there's truly p a s or parental alienation syndrome, the children vehemently hate the other parent.

[00:14:20] They tell the other parent they want them to drop dead. They say, get outta here. I hope you die. Um, the children themselves no longer want anything to do with the alienated parent. And the impact on the children is what is the

worst. Studies are now calling parental alienation syndrome what it is, and that is it's a form of child abuse.

[00:14:45] The evidence has shown that alienated children are actually much more likely to have panic attacks, have lower self-esteem. Uh, their grades either slip or they even drop out of school, and they're more likely [00:15:00] to turn to drugs. This is not something to mess around with. The signs of children who have been alienated include children who are acting out verbally toward the other parent vehemently refusing to see the other parent, telling the other parent he wishes.

[00:15:15] Uh, he or she wishes the parent is dead. Um, changing their last name sometimes, or wanting to change their last name if the father is the alienated parent. There are many other signs. These are a few. Um, did you know that? Alienated children are very different than abused children. Um, children who are abused, they still want the love and affection of the abusing parent.

[00:15:45] They still want that parent's, um, approval. They still wanna be with that person, and they're fearful of that. Parent children who've been alienated really show no fear. [00:16:00] They end up getting right in the face of the alienated parent, even if they're saying, you abused me. I hate you because you abused me.

[00:16:08] This is a sign of a child who's been alienated, not actually abused. So if you suspect that there is parental alienation, And you're the victim of it. As a parent, what can you do? First of all, this is not something that can be undone easily. This is, you can't just talk this out. You can't just communicate properly or use any of the traditional channels or methods of co-parenting with a.

[00:16:37] Difficult X or soon to be X. This is a situation that actually calls for troops. You will need maybe a reunification therapist, somebody who's actually trained in reunification therapy, maybe even spending time and reunification, reunification camp. Um, the children must spend time with [00:17:00] you alone without any interference from the parent who alienated the children in the first place.

[00:17:07] If there's any communication whatsoever, and I don't know what that period of time may be for you, it may be that five months, six months, three months, two months, who knows? Um, that's something that has to be determined by somebody who's an expert in alienation. And then, Even as that period of time goes by making a determination as to whether more or more time

is needed, where there's no communication at all between the children and the alienated alienating spouse, the one who caused it in the first place, because the children will not wanna let that alienating spouse down.

[00:17:48] And so if there's any communication whatsoever, they're gonna wanna be pleasing that other person, and they're gonna see being nice to the parent that was alienated as a [00:18:00] betrayal. And so there has to be a period of complete, uh, isolation away from that alienating parent. Um, the children have to be deprogrammed really is what it comes down to.

[00:18:15] Uh, there's a psychologist named Amy Baker, um, she's a PhD. She's written many books and materials on this topic. I recommend you check out her stuff. If you really believe you're a victim of this, start reaching out to people who can help you, um, and help you get the court on your side immediately. You need a good lawyer who really knows, uh, how to deal with this.

[00:18:39] You need, uh, a good, uh, custody evaluator so that the proper court orders can be issued because the alienating parent is not gonna do anything unless a court makes them. So, uh, one final thought. You must act immediately. One more day [00:19:00] is another day of brainwashing. You could lose your children forever if you don't intervene immediately.

[00:19:06] Now, if you are co-parenting with a narcissist and you really wanna protect your kids from that toxic, Personality. There are a few things that you can do, but before I get into that, let me just get, give you a few ideas of the kinds of things that you're going to be in for if you are co-parenting with that narcissist.

[00:19:27] Number one is parental alienation. Most people who are alienators are also narcissists, and I have an entire video on narcissistic parental per, uh, narcissistic parental alienation, and I will drop a link to that below. You're definitely gonna wanna check that out. But, you know, they engage in all kinds of things that look like parental alienation, which is a, a, a, a campaign of denigration against you trying to turn the kids against you so that the kids think that you're the most [00:20:00] disgusting thing that ever walked the planet, even if you had a, a wonderful relationship with them before.

[00:20:06] And, and they start. You know, drip, drip, dripping on the kids in a way that starts turning the kids against you. It is very serious and very toxic. So definitely check out my video on parental alienation, narcissistic parental alienation, if you haven't already seen it. In addition to parental alienation and

the campaign of denigration, they'll also just personally attack you, not necessarily just to the kids, but also just to you.

[00:20:33] So they will go on these personal attacks and messages in person to third parties, uh, to, you know, whoever their lawyer is in, in whatever way that they possibly can. They will go on this. This, you know, campaign of personal attack against you and, you know, not to mention twisting everything that you say, gaslighting, you know, manipulating [00:21:00] you and on and on and on.

[00:21:01] The third thing that they're gonna try to do is legal attacks on you. So they will use the system as their soar. They hide behind that. They don't wanna actually have to have a conversation with you unless they think they're gonna be able to control it. So if they, um, you know, but, but they will file like 15,000 motions and then obstruct you in every possible way from getting any information and make you run up the fees and spend lots of money.

[00:21:27] And then they'll, you know, nicely come to you and say, oh, let's just go have a conversation at Starbucks or whatever, something like that. But they will use that legal system as their soar to try to as a means to try to control you. Okay. So what can you do to protect your children from this toxic personality?

[00:21:44] Let me just say at the outset that there's no easy answer here. There's no magic wand. There's no way to turn that narcissist into a normal person. They have a personality disorder. There's something wrong inside their head, and you know, nothing that you're gonna be able [00:22:00] to do is going to be able to change that about them.

[00:22:03] And the worst thing about narcissists is that they don't think there's anything wrong with them. So they'll never go and get help. So the only thing that you can do is control yourself and your behavior. Okay. So that's just say that at the outset. But there are a few things that you can do to minimize the issues and to protect your children.

[00:22:23] So number one is a custody evaluation. If you decide to get a custody evaluation, you have to file a motion for it unless they, the other side agrees to doing it. Sometimes they're so crazy that they, they want the custody evaluation to try to show the world how terrible you are. Which is, you know, kind of their way of projecting, um, their own behavior onto the other person.

[00:22:46] Um, but it is only in the context of a custody evaluation that you'll very easily be able to get psychological evaluations done. If you just ask for a psychological, psychological evaluation without bringing the children

[00:23:00] into it, without having a best interest reason for it, you probably won't get it.

[00:23:05] But if you say that it's for the best interest of the children, that you are concerned for the children and their welfare when they're with this person and you put it at issue, then the court may, you know, more than likely will agree to, um, order this custody evaluation. Um, they sometimes don't, um, even if they think they should, uh, because sometimes.

[00:23:30] They just feel that neither side can really afford it. They do get a little bit costly. It's certainly less costly than bringing 50 witnesses into the courtroom because the custody evaluator, who is a trained psychologist, does all of that legwork at a much lower rate. So, you know, you do, uh, get that in the interview.

[00:23:51] Both of you, they interview the children, they get to come to your home, they get to interview anybody that's related to the children. They get to observe stuff. [00:24:00] They do all kinds of testing, not just psychological testing, but they can do drug testing. They can do, uh, testing on, you know, somebody's propensity to be a good parent.

[00:24:11] There's all sorts of things that they can do. Um, and um, so it's something to consider. Number two is to stay on emotional. And those of you who are my regular listeners and viewers know that I say this all the time, and yet it is the hardest thing to do because they definitely know how to push your buttons.

[00:24:29] They definitely know how to get under your skin, and they will definitely try. So, um, and you know, but they will taunt you. Go do, do whatever they can to get you to respond and get down on their level and hopefully get you unglued so that they can use that against you. So stay as unemotional as possible.

[00:24:50] That's tip number two. Tip number three is if you really do believe that you or your children are in danger, don't wait to call your lawyer. Please call the police. [00:25:00] Um, you know, there are. Um, other people that can help you as well. Sometimes there's shelters for abused women, um, and or, or shelter even for, for men, um, who are abused.

[00:25:12] Don't just sit there like a sitting doc. Please call the police. And once you do call the police and you do have a record of threats and things like that, um, you can potentially try to go get an injunction. Also, sometimes called a

restraining order. Um, and, uh, it, you know, I, it's a little bit difficult for me to, uh, quantify when you can get a restraining order or when you can't.

[00:25:40] The one thing I will say though is that if you decide to try that path to hire somebody and a lawyer who really understands the system and understands the statute, because you want to make sure that it sticks. If you do get it, it, the worst thing in the world is to try to go get [00:26:00] one and then, Have, um, have it be dismissed because then the other person feels empowered.

[00:26:06] So you, you're gonna wanna make sure that you know, you're really, um, you've got enough. Uh, unfortunately, you know, even if you feel in fear and you don't really have any way to prove why you're in fear, you probably won't get one. But if you are in real danger, um, of physical abuse or, you know, stalking something like that, please call the police.

[00:26:29] Number four, what you can do is, um, use a co-parenting app that, you know, help you minimize the, uh, interaction between the two of you. Because sometimes just the escalation of interaction between the two of you, um, becomes a danger to your children. So if you wanna protect your children, then you know, minimizing the, uh, fighting and the back and forth and all the toxicity and poison that's going on between the two of you will definitely help to protect your children.

[00:26:58] So, [00:27:00] um, more than likely you'll have to get a court order. More than likely the other person won't agree to it. E even if they do agree to it, have that agreement or stipulation turned into a court order so that the other person is ordered to use it. Because if they're a narcissist, They're not gonna wanna use it.

[00:27:16] Even if they're court ordered to use it, they'll still try to figure out ways around it. Well, we're here right now, let's just talk. Or, oh, it's too hard to use the app. I'm just texting you. You know, they'll, they'll, they'll still try to find ways around it, but then at least it's a violation of a court order.

[00:27:31] Okay, my next suggestion is non-disparagement clauses. And those can be written right into a parenting plan where it says, you know, neither parent is allowed to talk badly about the other parent to the children. Now I'm gonna tell you that most of the time I find these kinds of clauses to be aspirational rather than actually useful, because it's really hard for a court to enforce them.

[00:27:56] Even if you have proof, even if you have a [00:28:00] text message from the parent to the child that says, you know, mommy is a loser, or Daddy is

a drunk. Um, you know, even then the judge is probably just gonna go, don't do it again. I mean, you know, because it's really hard to enforce. That kind of a, an agreement. So my suggestion to you is to have some kind of extra thing written into the agreement that helps you enforce it.

[00:28:23] Like if the person violates it, then the person who violated it lo violated that clause, loses the ability to have ultimate decision making authority on one particular area or another, like medical or educational or something like that. Or, and, and the person who violates it has to pay both sides fees or something like that.

[00:28:45] Give the, the judge some kind of teeth to be able to enforce that court order. Number six is document, document, document. You all know who are my regular listeners. You better document every single thing. Have the notes

[00:29:00] section open to your phone or use an app or whatever you need to do. I've won entire court cases on, on documentation, so, you know, um, persons late or they didn't show up to take the kids or whatever, so that down the road you can potentially modify that parenting plan so that you get more time sharing than the other person does.

[00:29:21] And the last one is to, uh, get therapy for your child. Um, you might have to get a, uh, court order for this. You might have to go to the judge and say, you know, my, my, my child needs therapy. Because if the other person doesn't agree to it, which, if they're a narcissist, they probably won't because they probably don't believe in therapy and they're afraid of what therapists might uncover or say about them.

[00:29:47] Um, so, or they just won't agree to it because that's what you want and they just don't wanna give you what you want. So you might have to go and ask the court to order that. It's okay, but, you know, give your children an [00:30:00] outlet. Give them a place that's protected for them to talk about what's going on and how they're feeling about the entire situation.

[00:30:07] So some states do actually, um, Have statutes that say that only one parent's permission is needed for therapy. So you'll have to check with your lawyer on what is needed for ordering a child to therapy in your particular state. So today we are here talking about how to co co-parent with a narcissist, which might sound like an oxymoron cuz anything CO with a narcissist is.

[00:30:35] Kind of an oxymoron. Well, I told people it's not co-parenting, it's single parenting with an elephant on your back. You know? This is, yeah. It actually would be easier to be a full on single parent. Oh, totally. Than to

co-parent with a narcissist. Yeah. And I have to say, of all the areas, Rebecca, we're always generating content.

[00:30:51] We have a magnificent YouTube community and they're always giving us new ideas for content. Co-parenting has gotta be one of the top, you know, top topics. But what [00:31:00] I'm glad about, I was about to do it alone, but then you and I met and then I thought, no, I want people to hear. Cuz what they're getting frustrated with is the legal elements.

[00:31:08] I can walk 'em through the psychological thickets, but there are so certain things that legally that happen that incensed them even more. And you might be able to shed some light on that. Yeah. So the first thing I wanna say is co-parenting with a narcissist is, is something that you're dealing with when you're living in the same household as you're breaking up after you've broken up.

[00:31:29] I mean, so it's, there's several differences. Stages of it. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. And then the other thing is that, um, it's, it's actually a slightly different, even though, uh, a lot of the same issues mm-hmm. If you're dealing with somebody who you're just breaking up with. Mm-hmm. Um, a lot of the millennials are not getting married anymore.

[00:31:49] Yes. And so mm-hmm. It's a good point. There's not a divorce involved. Um, And then there's also the divorce piece too. So there's kind of two s. Mm-hmm. Separate ways. Mm-hmm. That I look [00:32:00] at it from the legal perspective because one is a paternity action, right. And one is a divorce action, and there's actually different ramifications mm-hmm.

[00:32:08] For both. Interesting. When you're co-parenting, but in either one, one of the things that I tell people is to expect the narcissist to be a narcissist. Yes. So, you know, there's not gonna be any magic wand that anybody can wave that is going to turn this person into a person with a conscience. Yes. A person who has empathy, a person who cares about anybody.

[00:32:35] Mm-hmm. But they're. Themselves, they, they'll say they care about their children. Mm-hmm. And that's one thing that you will hear all the forms of narcissists say, I love my children. My children are the most important to me. Mm-hmm. Because all narcissists know that that's what they're supposed to say. So you will hear them all say that.

[00:32:54] But when you're dealing with a real narcissist, it becomes pretty evident [00:33:00] that. You know that they're a narcissist because they lack

empathy and they, they really don't want what's best for the kids. They want what's best for them. Well, one of the big challenges, and the question I get a lot is why do narcissists even have children?

[00:33:14] You know, it really doesn't make sense. Children are incredibly inconvenient. They're demanding. They tend to suck all the oxygen outta the room. I know that's a sort of a unfair depiction. I see this as a mom, but it's hard. It, there's a lot of compromise involved in being a parent. Once again, one would say, why would a narcissist do this?

[00:33:31] And in a significant number of cases, narcissists become parents because they want the window dressing the same way they might get a fancy car or wear a fancy outfit or go and take the right vacation. It's window dressing. So even. A, after a relationship breaks up or a person gets a divorce, they wanna maintain the facade, they wanna maintain the window dressing.

[00:33:52] And in many cases too, the dynamic is that the child is either a source of narcissistic supply for them or an [00:34:00] extension of their identity. And so that idea of losing control over that, and that's a lot of Waco, co-parenting is hard. Narcissists hate losing control. They like to be in control of everything.

[00:34:09] And as you've mentioned so many times, and I know very well from working on this, clinically, they wanna win. They want to win, and for them the win is to show the world, look, I got my kids. I beat her, or I beat him. Mm-hmm. At this game, without really thinking through what it means to have these children, 50% or even more right of the time, but they don't wanna win because they think that it's best for the kids to have them 50% of the time.

[00:34:38] It has nothing to do with what's in the best interest of the child. Mm-hmm. Or children. It has to do with. Beating the other person or showing that they're the winner, or maybe it has to do with manipulating the other person, making the other person miserable. Um, a way to gaslight them, a way to, um, continue [00:35:00] the, um, the campaign of control and, and the attempt of, of controlling the other person and their lives.

[00:35:06] The hard part though, and this is where I really look forward to your expertise, is the thing that messes up a lot of people. So I'll be working with a client. They've, the, the person who is experiencing the narcissistic abuse has effectively been a sort of single parenting, constantly dealing with the shenanigans of the narcissistic parent.

[00:35:24] Now they're going through a curated court process and these stupid terms like co-parenting come up. If anything, uh, going through this process is the first time that they're actually having to interact with this person, this much about these kids. Before, while they were still married, the narcissist was just sort of doing their own thing.

[00:35:42] Oh. And showing up when they want. So I, I hear this all the time. That's the time. It's like this idea that now the court, you weren't co-parenting when you were married for God's sake. No. And now not totally. You're ending this relationship. They were, they were off doing their own thing. Exactly. The whole time the relationship ends and now there's this demand Yep.

[00:35:59] For [00:36:00] something collaborative to happen where there's absolutely no template for this. Well, and even beyond that, I mean, I agree with you. Now they have to actually collaborate. Yes. Like collaborate and co-parent with each other and cooperate. Mm-hmm. But even more than that, now this other parent is demanding to have 50% of the time.

[00:36:19] Right, right. With the kids. And most of the non narcissist, uh, parents will come to me and go, well, he or she never Right. Was there 50% of the time. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. They don't even know where the kids. School is, they don't know what their favorite food is. They don't know what they eat for lunch. Right. They don't know who their teachers are.

[00:36:36] Mm-hmm. Well, here's the difficulty with that. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. That is that the judges don't care. Mm-hmm. The judges mm-hmm. Position is they'll learn. Mm-hmm. They can learn, they can learn how to bathe the children. They'll figure it out. They didn't co-parent before because they didn't have to. Mm-hmm.

[00:36:55] Because you were there. Mm-hmm. And so, and the climate in the [00:37:00] courtrooms now is very much a, a, an assumption. For 50 50. It's, it's, yeah, I totally agree. Yes. Absolutely. It's, absolutely, it's, it's really in the legal terms, we call it a presumption. Um, and what that means is, is who has the burden of proof? So it used to be that the presumption was that a 50 50 custody plan was actually contrary to the best interest of the child.

[00:37:29] Right. Right. I could find you case after case. Case after case that said that rotating custody, which is what a 50 50 plan was mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Was against the best interest of the child. Mm-hmm. Even before that, we had the tender years presumption, which presumed that if you had young children, they went to the mom.

[00:37:46] Right, right. Mm-hmm. And dad's got, you know, we got the term Disney dad. Mm-hmm. Dad's got every other weekend dinner on Tuesday night, and that was it. I mean, that's how it went. Mm-hmm. And for years, even when I started practicing, we just stapled that parenting plan to the back of the [00:38:00] marital settlement agreement.

[00:38:00] Mm-hmm. And that was that there really wasn't a whole lot of fight about it. That's interesting. Um, So what's happened is, um, a lot of the states have removed language from the statutes that made one parent seem more important than the other. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So this happened 10, 12 years ago. Right, right across the country Yeah.

[00:38:19] Where they removed language like, um, primary residential parent, yeah. Mm-hmm. Or, um, or custody. Mm-hmm. You know, even the word custody mm-hmm. Um, has oftentimes been removed or visitation. Mm-hmm. You know, who's visiting their kid. Right, right, right, right. Or their kid is visiting them or whatever. I mean, so when they removed that language from the statutes mm-hmm.

[00:38:44] It. Inadvertently created this shift that now both parents are equal. Sure. But that's where we stand now. Yes. And, and, yes. Yes. So, mm-hmm. I mean, like it or not, and, and I actually have a case going right [00:39:00] now mm-hmm. Uh, as we speak mm-hmm. Where the husband is a flaming narcissist mm-hmm. Flaming narcissist.

[00:39:06] Mm-hmm. And, uh, he filed for divorce when my client was, um, eight months pregnant. Mm-hmm. Um, a month before she was getting ready to deliver. Mm-hmm. Um, the child is now six, eight months old. Mm-hmm. And she, he is demanding, demanding 50% custody. Mm-hmm. Six month old child. Yep, yep. Yep. She's still breastfeeding.

[00:39:31] Mm-hmm. And guess what, we were in court a couple weeks ago mm-hmm. On a different matter in the case, and the judge who's a, a white male said, Don't come back here to trial unless you're planning on getting 50 50. Cuz that's what I'm gonna be ordering. He hadn't even heard the facts of the case. Yep, yep.

[00:39:48] Yeah. He didn't know what's in the best interest of the child yet. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Had no idea. Right. But so that's what we call a presumption because he's presuming Sure. That the best [00:40:00] interest is 50 50. Right. Which means she's now gonna have the burden of proving why 50 50 is no longer Exactly. Shouldn't be.

[00:40:08] Which gets so, and then, so let's, so to take it back to what we're talking about, which is, you know, we could talk all day, all night about the fact that the way family court is being run now. Because I think that what I see and the agony that I see my clients who are experiencing narcissistic abuse and are going through divorce procedures, are going, are experiencing is that I.

[00:40:29] It's the inability of the court to make any kind of a qualitative judgment that, you know, not, not that they're necessarily saying one parent is better than the other or not, but rather that it's like you said, these things like rotating schedules may not be indicated for, especially when one parent moves an hour away and so we, what are you gonna do in the morning?

[00:40:46] Four kids gonna have to wake up hours or, yeah. Or has a crazy work schedule or has a crazy work schedule or travel maybe travels a lot. Exactly. Yeah. So all of the, but, but here's, this is not what we're talking, we're not talking about those practical things. What we're talking about is something that isn't as black [00:41:00] and white as traveling and moving and all that.

[00:41:02] It's about this thing that the court either won't or can't recognize, which is these toxic personality patterns. Yeah. And I have, we've talked about this, we talked about this on an earlier, um, episode in this series, which is, you cannot use the word narcissist No. In the courtroom. You cannot. I've seen it blow up.

[00:41:24] You can't use the word gaslighting in a courtroom. No, none of the terminology. No. Just that you're an alienator. Exactly, which we're gonna be talking about in another episode or about, or that you're the difficult parent. Correct. So all of that we've talked about strategically, but now I know what at least the people have been saying in my YouTube community is, mm-hmm.

[00:41:40] Will you please tell us then how to do this? I mean, so I know from my side as a psychologist, when I'm walking people through co-parenting with a narcissist, it's things like, you know, you have Family Wizard, use Family Wizard and never Gravitare Off a Family Wizard. You use it or another app religiously, whatever app it is.

[00:41:59] [00:42:00] Family Wizard is the one that's come up the most in the cases I've worked on. Yeah. But whatever app that has been agreed upon, whether it's through mediation or in court, whatever, you use that. And even when, cuz what happens is the narcissist loves breaking rules and violating boundaries, but when all of it goes through that one space, then in some ways you're just sort of.

[00:42:16] Slapping their hand, but above all else, I say documentation, realistic expectations. Those are the two places we start from. Okay. So you, you're, you, you've hit on two of the ones mm-hmm. That I was actually gonna mention. Mm-hmm. So when I tell people about communication mm-hmm. With a co-parent, I say pick one medium.

[00:42:37] Just one. Mm-hmm. Have everything funnel through one, one thing. Right. Right. Which could be one of these apps. The app is the ideal thing. Yeah. Mm-hmm. You can't necessarily get them always to agree to it. That it brings me to another thing is every single agreement has to be turned into a court order because even if you just sign the agreement, if it's not a court order Yeah.

[00:42:57] Then you have no t Yeah. You have no way [00:43:00] of going back and getting them to, um, adhere to it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, but definitely using an app, yeah. Getting them to agree to that early on. Most, uh, states require, um, some sort of mediation or some sort of dispute resolution early on in the case to figure out a temporary parenting plan, even if you haven't gotten to the final, um, destination yet.

[00:43:23] Um, So when you go to that conference, yeah. That settlement conference on the temporary parenting plan, that needs to be one of the first things that you want. You want to have a mode of communication. Yeah. That is controlled. Yeah. And everything goes through that. And they will fight it. They will resist it.

[00:43:44] Oh heck yeah. They will say, um, oh, it's too hard to use. Oh, we're just standing here talking. Why can't we have a conversation? Like two normal people. Right. They're gonna do whatever they can. But here's the thing. So I have a case right now, [00:44:00] it just happened a couple of weeks ago where, um, My cl my clients are supposed to use an app.

[00:44:07] Mm-hmm. Okay. Mm-hmm. So he comes to pick up the child and, you know, takes the child for his parenting time. Next thing you know, she gets a, a, a thing through the app. Mm-hmm. Thanks for confirming just this, just confirming the conversation we just had. Mm-hmm. Which, the, which in which you agreed to, um, allow me to have the child next Saturday during your parenting time.

[00:44:32] Mm-hmm. That conversation never happened. Didn't happen. Yep. But now he's trying to make her look bad. Mm-hmm. By saying, oh, that she's going back on her word or whatever. Yeah. I see this all the time. Yeah. Yeah.

And so it's that combination though. And then the reason they, I, they psychologically don't like having that one consistent mode of communication is that narcissists thrive on triangulation.

[00:44:56] Mm. The creation of chaos by turning, you know, bringing
[00:45:00] all these other people in mm-hmm. And twisting truths. And then that also builds upon gaslighting. So then you can say things like, I never said that, that never happened, all of that. So, right. Those themes play out. So let, so one of the questions that will often come up, because at the end of the day the head of steam we're heading towards is that this is not good for children.

[00:45:21] Right. This is not good for the children because that tends to get lost in the conversation is well there's people feeding them and, you know, housing them and all of that, but this kind of tension, even if the parents aren't fighting in front of them, it's really overwhelming for a child. Yeah. A question I get, and I'm so looking forward to asking you this cuz I don't know it, you know, I never completely know the answer.

[00:45:41] Okay. People are going through a divorce. Okay. Hopefully I do. I Girl, if you don't, we have trouble. So, so people are going through a divorce, okay. And it's very, very clear that the child is going to need therapy. Yeah. How does it work in divorce? Because one of the things that I see the struggle is that in [00:46:00] many cases, they need, in most cases, they need to get the agreement of the mm-hmm.

[00:46:04] Parent, other parents. Yeah. Because you need both parties consenting Yeah. To healthcare. And the other parent is resisting. Yeah. Getting psychological services for that child. Oh, can you shut some, some light on that? They're, they're going, they're definitely going. Absolutely. So could you shut some light on that?

[00:46:18] Cause they don't want, they, they wanna shut down any, right. Uh, areas where they're not gonna have control as well as other eyes on that child because the child having a chance to talk and really saying, this is tense. Or my dad this, or they, in other words, what narcissists hate are the sears of truth. Oh, yes.

[00:46:35] So they don't like people who have their number. They don't like people who they know can see through them. Yes. They don't like people. They can't charm and they don't like, People who are acting in these third per these third party objective capacities, like a good therapist who can't be swayed, they will try to win over that child's therapist.

[00:46:51] Let's, if they end up in therapy, then they're gonna back definitely be in that therapist's face. Let's go backwards for a minute. So you have a parent, the non, the non narcissistic [00:47:00] parent is really worried about their child's mental health. They're like, and I'm gonna tell them when I'm in session with a non narcissistic parent, you really need to consider therapy for this child.

[00:47:08] Your child is struggling now. They're having difficulty getting the other parent to consent. I'm working one case like this right now where you're talking severe mental illness in the child, and what's happening is that ultimately the parent is relenting. But even then is choosing substandard services.

[00:47:26] But let's go even more basic that the, the narcissistic parent isn't agreeing to getting therapy for the child. So,[00:48:00] [00:49:00] [00:50:00] [00:51:00] [00:52:00] [00:53:00] [00:54:00] [00:55:00] [00:56:00] [00:57:00] [00:58:00] [00:59:00] [01:00:00]

[01:00:49] A parenting plan in it. It includes a couple of different elements. Mm-hmm. One is the actual time sharing plan. Right. Which is what kind of what we talked about at the outset when we were talking about 50 50, [01:01:00] and then it also talks about parental responsibility. Mm-hmm. Sometimes it also includes breakdown of costs for things like that, but most of the time, any.

[01:01:09] Think financial is a separate issue. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So in, in my mind, a pure parenting plan is just the parental, the, the time sharing, and then the parental responsibility. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Um, and, um, and then it includes all kinds of other, what I call aspirational language, which would be like, you know, neither parent will disparage the other parents, whatever.

[01:01:30] And, you know, my clients coming to me, they, he disparaged me, look, you know, and I was like, okay, so what's the judge gonna do? Don't do that. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. I mean, you know, it's really, I call it aspirational language cuz it's really hard to enforce. Right, right, right, right. Um, but sorry, people, I mean, I, I, I hate that that's the way it is, but it is, it is.

[01:01:48] That's why we're doing this series. I mean, obviously in many cases it's not, but you know, in some ways the. Aspirational language almost feels antagonistic because you're putting this thing down, knowing that, in fact, in some ways, the [01:02:00] narcissist may even go out of their way. Oh yeah. To poke at it, so, oh yeah, totally.

[01:02:04] You know, I think that it's almost like a mixed bag. You put it in there, it's aspirational. It's not really enforceable, but at least it's down. But some people feel, it's like even more frustrating cuz they're, they're, it's always like what they do, they try to come just one millimeter underneath. Of course.

[01:02:18] That one thing. Of course. Where know, you know where they're gonna actually, it's gonna be enforceable. Yeah. That's the challenge. Or they'll. Say it was inadvertent or I didn't mean it that way, or whatever. Mm-hmm. Um, or I was late because of something, or I didn't drop them off because my plan was late or whatever.

[01:02:35] I mean, even though they could have controlled it mm-hmm. I mean, it it, of course, that's what they're gonna do. Right. And, and a lot of the parenting plans include things like, you know, the child's rights. The child has a right to two parents who love him or her. Yes. The child has a right. Which is all great stuff.

[01:02:50] Not, I'm certainly not mocking it at all. Of course, it's. Great stuff, but when you're dealing with a narcissist mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. It's just a waste of [01:03:00] space on the paper a lot of times. I mean, so what my advice to people is, is number one, you have to have as specific a parenting plan as possible. Yeah. I mean, literally who's driving, you know, to pick up the kids, who's driving to drop the kids off, where is it happening exactly what time?

[01:03:21] And not just the regular parenting plan, but, you know, Christmas Day or, or, or Hanukkah or whatever it is. If there are Monday holidays that you wanna handle, how is that going to be handled? Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And um, and if parents switch weekends, now all of a sudden one has three weekends in a row. So how is that gonna be handled?

[01:03:43] Mm-hmm. Are you gonna now. Switching back. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, every single thing has to be contemplated, right. Because the stronger it is, the more, the less conflict you'll have down the road. You, I don't know that you'll have less conflict, but it'll be more enforceable because it's very [01:04:00] clear what the, what the program is.

[01:04:01] I think they'll always be, well, there's less conflict. I mean, here's the thing, a lot of times people will say to me, well, we're getting along, you know, and we don't need a, uh, you know, and so they just put sort of general language, you know, my husband will get to see the parent when, whenever he can, or something like that.

[01:04:18] Oh, okay. Well, you know, the thing is just like, there aren't divorce fairies that jump out and make people behave. There aren't divorce fairies that jump out and make people adhere to court orders. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So, if you don't, if you choose not to use your parenting plan, no one is going to care or know unless.

[01:04:34] You file a motion to enforce it. Mm-hmm. So, you know, you just wanna be able to fall back on it and go, this is what we're going to do. The other thing you can do when it comes to dealing with a narcissist is, uh, something when we call parallel parenting. Mm-hmm. Which is where you ba ba basically are in different worlds, and you really interact as little as [01:05:00] possible.

[01:05:00] Yeah. Unless mm-hmm. There's an emergency or a mm-hmm. A sickness that needs to be communicated. All of the pickup and drop offs are at school. Yep. Um mm-hmm. Or some other neutral place on if there's a vacation or a holiday, um, and you just. Don't ever interact with each other, which I highly recommend if you're dealing with a narcissist, especially if you're dealing with a malignant narcissist.

[01:05:25] And here there's another thing that comes up though psychologically, when these very, very detailed parenting plans are getting set, a thing that often comes up is that the narcissist will say, oh, you're being petty. We don't need to write all of this down. Oh, sure. It's ridiculous. Yeah. It's a gaslighting maneuver.

[01:05:40] Yep. Because you know, in your heart of heart, If it's not this structured, they are going to find every single loophole, but yet that gaslighting of calling you petty or you know, ridiculous. It's the technique they've been using on you for a long time. Mm-hmm. And it's very easy to get talked out of that kind of detail orientation cuz none of us [01:06:00] really wanna walk around thinking we're very petty.

[01:06:02] But they'll always try that and say, oh, come on, we'll figure it out. We'll figure it out. Is never going to be the right answer. Correct. And that you also have to sometimes coach your own attorney. Not all attorneys are Rebecca, some don't get it. And your attorney's like, oh well come on, we, and you have to hold to that line of a parenting plan that almost feels obs.

[01:06:21] Excessive for how detailed it is. Because if you do, if you have that unicorn of a narcissist, that does improve enough over time that they, they aren't fighting it as much. The one thing that can make that unicorn narcissist

sometimes come up is when they get into a new relationship, oh, they start a new family and they're talk, they're bored of you.

[01:06:39] They discard your child. It's heartbreaking to witness and experience, cuz now your child's like, oh, family B is in, I was in family A I'm out. The, the benefit to that though is sometimes they stop caring and so they're just like, sure you can have them for every Thanksgiving and perpetuity. I'm going to Barbados.

[01:06:56] So, yeah, you know, there, there is cause, but there's all these little twists. And the [01:07:00] best way, it's like any company, like a company that has policies and procedures, they may seem excessive. They have them so they can enforce them and so don't get talked out of it, which they're gonna try to do through gaslighting.

[01:07:10] Hold your line. Yeah. And the other thing that I see them doing all the time is they'll hold you to the letter of the agreement. Mm-hmm. But themselves, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. That's a different story. That's a different story. And that hypocrisy is an, is is a natural part of narcissism that they love rules that apply to other people.

[01:07:28] Yeah. Not to them. So they're entitled, they're hypocritical. You need to sort of be, um, you, you need to be sort of on top of that. Mm-hmm. So, you know, do you have any other thoughts on co-parenting? I have a few other thoughts psychologically, but from your side as an attorney. Uh, well, uh, we've hit on a lot of them.

[01:07:45] I, I want to make sure that we actually. Specifically hit documentation again. Mm-hmm. A little bit more. Mm-hmm. Because right from the beginning, you should be logging and documenting every little thing, keeping copies of every email. Mm-hmm. Keeping copies of every text. And [01:08:00] also, one thing that I always say people say, say to people is remember that every text, every writing, everything you put your hand to is a potential trial exhibit.

[01:08:10] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And if you don't wanna see it again, then don't send it. Mm-hmm. But it goes the other way too. And, and narcissists will often conflict, uh, themselves. They will, um, they, you, they will send one text that conflicts with another or they'll, you know, and, and so you'll be able to keep track of all of that.

[01:08:29] Mm-hmm. Um, and so make sure you keep copies of all of that. Mm-hmm. Um, keep your phone closed. Mm-hmm. Keep the notes section of your phone open, um, and just. Even the smallest of things, the things that you don't necessarily think are that big of a deal, um, you know, just keep a log of it. And one of the things I wanna make a point about with the temporary parenting plan is a lot of the times, you know, especially the moms that I see, and you know, I've got four kids, so I get it, you know, they go, oh, you know, he's [01:09:00] never taken care of.

[01:09:00] He doesn't know how to take care of a baby, blah, blah, blah. On the temporary parenting plan. It's good to give them rope to hang themselves. Yes, I agree with that. So give them some time. Because they won't take it. They can't help being themselves and they will end up wanting to switch the schedule and they will end up not showing up.

[01:09:20] And then you will have this beautiful log by the time you get to trial of how even during the case mm-hmm. They couldn't keep a 50 50 parenting plan. Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think that's exactly what it is, is that you sometimes set the oddest widths of traps, cuz it's almost like traps they're gonna trap themselves in, but you just need to set them.

[01:09:39] But for some people it's, it prov, it provokes anxiety in them to do it on the first. I know it's the first place. It's so hard when you're wanting to protect your child. It's, it's the hardest thing. And I did it, I mean, with my older three kids, I had to co-parent with their dad who was not a narcissist.

[01:09:57] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Not a bad guy, but he, there were things going [01:10:00] on at his house that I didn't necessarily love. Mm-hmm. And you know, that's the thing when you're no longer in the same. House. Mm-hmm. You know, things that go on in the other side are. Sometimes hard to take Right. And hard to deal with. Um, but you know, those are the, the thing is, it's like what we started, said, said in the beginning, narcissists are gonna be narcissists.

[01:10:24] This is just a, a way to manage Yes. The situation. A way to, uh, deal with it. Mm-hmm. Uh, in a way that gives you as much control as you can have Yes. Over the process. Yeah. And one of the most psychologically difficult thing issues I face, whether it's through the many emails we get, the comments on these videos, or the people come in my office and I sometimes feel helpless too, is how desperately they are like, Please, can you gimme an answer?

[01:10:54] Can you almost like give them that, that magic bullet, that magic wand? I, we don't have that. She doesn't, I [01:11:00] don't, I mean, there are

sort of rules and laws around this and so many times a person will be sort of watching their child really have to go through the rigors of being with that narcissistic parent, whether it's 50% of the time, whether it's more or it's less.

[01:11:14] And it really, really starts to take a toll on that child. They may even be concerned that that child is starting to mirror that parent and pick up some of their s language. That's true. Their dismissiveness. And I'm gonna be totally frank with you and I I, I'd be curious to hear, hear what Rebecca says, you going back into court and saying, my child is now mirroring their narcissistic behavior is a pointless endeavor.

[01:11:38] Totally. It's pointless. And so I know that you're looking to say, okay, there's gotta be a way to stop this. Unfortunately, with some of this, this is the tragic legacy of one of these relationships. Now, there are some things you can do, and one thing is, is do you have to double down? On being the empathic and emotionally available and skilled parent.

[01:11:59] Now, [01:12:00] depending on where your child is developmentally, that's gonna have a lot to do with it. Obviously with a smaller child that might be expressed through play the way you read with them, or movies or TV shows you watch. One thing I always tell people, if you have a co-parent who's a narcissist and really is kind of that mean-spirited, competitive negating and validating person, make sure you do things like play board games with your child.

[01:12:23] So they, they get the. Experience of losing sometimes and having to regulate their disappointment when they lose. Mm-hmm. Read books with them and stop during the story and have the child reflect on how a character might be feeling. How do you think the cat feels, or how do you think this one feels? And even as your child goes older and goes into adolescence, just cuz you're leaving the movie theater or turning off the movie, don't just go your separate ways.

[01:12:46] Sit with your child for a moment and have a conversation maybe about the psychology or the emotions of that character. I'm thinking even most recently, the, the Joker was a great example of a film where you had this really dark, complicated character. You can [01:13:00] have a conversation about any significant character in a film where you can try to make it an emotional conversation just to flex that emotional empathic muscle.

[01:13:09] Soul in your child, whether they're a baby watching little baby shows or they're a 17 year old, but you've gotta be that parent that models empathy, that models grace, that shows them about going high when the other parent's

going low. Like you have to be the better person. The complaint I hear from a lot of parents is, this isn't fair.

[01:13:28] None of this is fair, none of it is fair, and the most fair just thing that can happen is that despite the circumstance that your child is in, you're giving them a little bit of an emotional muscle or headstart. If you're getting fought on things like therapy and it's taking a long time to get that going, don't balk at things that could be viewed as classes, so they wouldn't necessarily be therapy.

[01:13:52] That includes things like meditation and mindfulness. Those things don't always fall on. I like that therapy, but what it [01:14:00] does is it helps your child work on emotional regulation. So by. Finding those other fixes. And I actually think mindfulness training is brilliant for any child going through this because it's the opposite of what their parent is, who's often impulsive and clearly not in the moment.

[01:14:15] And it gives your child one more emotional tool in their arsenal that you're giving them. So you're gonna find those workarounds, spend time in nature with them. The narcissistic parent will often put them in, in front of screens and devices or over entertain them, right? We're gonna go to a theme park and this and this and this.

[01:14:34] You wanna almost down-regulate them at times. Take 'em to a park, take 'em on a walk, lie in your back. Look for shapes and clouds. You have to figure out the ways to be that offset. Giving them structure, keeping them on bedtimes. That's how you co-parent. You co-parent. By honestly doing the parenting work for two, the four or five days you have with your child, you are often having to make up with the air of for the errors of the previous four or five days.

[01:14:59] You can [01:15:00] do this, but you have to be aware of it. Okay. And a lot of people, again, get caught in the justice piece, let it go. This isn't just, none of it's just, but if your kids still end up with a good head on their shoulders, that's about all the justice you can get. Now, are you dealing with a co-parent and a custody situation, and you're just about ready to lose your mind because that co-parent is a narcissist?

[01:15:29] Or maybe that person has a high conflict personality and you just maybe wanna pull your hair out or bang your head against the wall. That might actually feel better than dealing with a co, uh, a co-parenting situation with a narcissist. Right? Well, there's good reason for that. So let me give you some statistics.

[01:15:49] Statistics show that 40 million Americans are currently co-parenting with a, uh, another person right now, not necessarily with the narcissist, but 40 million [01:16:00] Americans are co-parenting children who are under the age of 18 right now, just in the United States. According to an article written by Bree Che, licensed clinical social worker in the.

[01:16:14] Magazine, psych Central, approximately 6% of any population has narcissistic personality disorder, and another 3.3% has no conscience, a lack of empathy. So combined, that's 9.3%. If you take 9.3% of 40 million Americans, you're now at roughly 3.7 million. Americans are co-parenting with either somebody who has narcissistic personality disorder or potentially has.

[01:16:49] No conscience, no empathy, uh, something like that. So if you take those statistics and you apply them to the world's population, obviously it's going to [01:17:00] be a lot more than that. Even so, you know, billions of people are probably co-parenting with a high conflict or toxic personality, and it just makes it so difficult.

[01:17:12] So difficult because obviously your children are, are the things that mean the most to you. I mean, that's, there's nothing more. Close to your heart than your children. And so when you're dealing with your children, the thing that means the most to you, and then, um, you have to co-parent with a toxic personality on top of it.

[01:17:33] It's almost like more than you can handle. But there are ways to handle it. There are ways to make it more manageable and actually be able to preserve your sanity. So when you're dealing with co-parenting with a narcissist, I always think it's kind of a weird misnomer because co anything co means that you're co-operating and that you're working together and, you know, anything.

[01:17:57] Co working together with a narcissist [01:18:00] is absolutely not possible. I mean, it's, it's a complete misnomer because it's just not possible to co cooperate or co-parent when it comes to dealing with a high conflict personality on the other side. They don't want to cooperate with you, in fact. You know, they get off on the fact that they can make you miserable.

[01:18:22] Um, and, and anything that means the most to you, that's going to be the one thing that the narcissist is going to hone in on. And make sure that you don't get, or, or, you know, you can. They, cuz they know that they can get a rise out of you. And so they know that your children are gonna be the thing that means the most to you.

[01:18:43] So that's a perfect and right place for you to have an achilles heel. Remember, narcissists have no inner sense of value. They have no inner sense of self. So they need to get all of their feeling of value from the external, from [01:19:00] the outside and what we call that sucking of value. That what, what it is that they need.

[01:19:06] We call that narcissistic supply. And narcissistic supply can be anything that feeds their ego. So it can be. Things like what you would think of like having lots of money or a big important job or having a prestigious position somewhere, or being friends with the right people or living in the right neighborhood and you know, all of those external things.

[01:19:32] The other way though, that narcissist got supply. Is by getting people to squirm, by getting a reaction out of them, by controlling them, by devaluing, debasing and degrading people, they get supply out of that too. So if they know that you love your children, which they know you do, then that's a perfect thing for them to get supply from [01:20:00] because they know they can get an emotional reaction out of you.

[01:20:03] So it's this sick way of actually feeding their need for supply. They need supply, uh, like people need air. It's oxygen to them, it's breathing, it's survival because they don't feel like they exist unless they are getting this supply. And they smell where they can get supply. Like, like sharks smell blood in the water.

[01:20:28] It's like right there. And, and so, They know that your children are gonna be your Achilles heel. So boom, there, there goes the shark coming after the blood, in the water coming right after you to try to make your life miserable using your children all along the way. So how does one co-parent with a narcissist?

[01:20:49] Well, the first thing that you need to do is realize that they're not going to change. They're not going to change at all. And so no amount of, Hey, you're hurting the children, or don't you see what your behavior [01:21:00] is causing? Or, you know, trying to reason with them or show them that, Hey, you, you said something the other day and now you're contradicting what you're saying, that you're wasting your time, wasting your breath, wasting your energy.

[01:21:14] And more importantly, that's, that kind of thing just starts to suck at your soul because you're, you're putting something into a black hole that you're never gonna get any satisfaction from. So don't bother trying to get them

to see reason. You're never gonna be able to overlay reason onto a narcissist, which is a ain't ever gonna fit.

[01:21:36] So the first thing you can do for yourself, your sanity and your children, is to realize that they're not going to change when they do the things that they're going to do. Don't be surprised. Don't go, oh my God, I can't believe she did that. Oh my goodness. I can't believe he did that. Don't, don't bother with that.

[01:21:56] Just go, yeah, I can believe it. That's what they do. That that's what [01:22:00] narcissists do. It's like watching a two year old have a tantrum on the floor. You're not gonna be shocked when a two-year-old has a tantrum. Two, two year old have tantrums, narcissists act like, act like narcissists. They will be their narky selves no matter what.

[01:22:15] So understand and accepting that, understanding that and accepting that is like the first thing that you can do. So anything that you can do for co-parenting with the narcissist is going to be on your end. Things that you can do to make your life more miserable and, and, and hold them at bay and box them up.

[01:22:37] Okay, so, so that's number one. So the next thing that you can do is have a really super specific parenting plan. And when I say specific, I mean specific. A lot of people think, oh, you know, we're getting along now, or It's okay, or I don't wanna make waves, and we're just gonna agree that the kids can go back and forth whenever they want to.[01:23:00]

[01:23:00] Or we're basically gonna do 50 50, but we're not gonna figure out exactly what that means. That's a huge mistake that leaves you open for all kinds of litigation and all kinds of headache down the road. The more detailed, the more specific you can be, the better it will be for you in the long run, the more.

[01:23:20] The more specific you can be, the better it will be for you. In the long run, you will save yourself a lot of headache. And what I mean by specific is have details in there exactly about what are you doing during the week? Where will the CH children be? Are you picking them up from one particular place?

[01:23:40] Where is it gonna be? What time? Who's driving there to pick them up? Um, one of the other things I recommend when it comes to parenting plans is maybe consider parallel parenting. That means that you have as little

interaction with the other side as possible, meaning that. You know, you, you're gonna [01:24:00] have everything all set up so that the exchanges maybe take place at school.

[01:24:04] You drop off on a Monday at 7:00 AM and, and the other one picks up at MON on Monday at three 3:00 PM and you never have to interact with that other person. Um, and you, you know, so the, the minimal amount of interaction, uh, possible is, is best. When you're looking at the parenting plan, also remember details around holidays, Monday holidays, how are you gonna handle schedule changes?

[01:24:32] Make sure that's written in there. Um, uh, special days that are important to you. Birthdays if, if trick or treating is really important, make sure that there's something, um, in there about that. Um, vacations as specific as you possibly can. And even times like if there's a, you know, like the holiday vacation in December, you know, if you're going to split it, say, you know, the first seven days [01:25:00] until 3:00 PM goes with mom and then dad gets 3:00 PM on December 26th through January 2nd, or, or something to that effect.

[01:25:10] The more, more detail equals less headache down the road and. The less interaction with each other, the better. The next thing you can do is have super strict boundaries. And one way that you can do this is limit the way that you communicate with each other. So I would suggest you have just one way of communicating with each other, and it should not be text, and it should not be in person.

[01:25:36] It should not be over the phone. It really should be email or a court approved app, uh, you know, a co-parenting app of some sort. Um, the reason why I say that is because these kinds of communication are easily transferable into trial exhibits down the road if you end up needing a trial exhibit down the road.

[01:25:59] So, [01:26:00] um, because they have date stamps, they have timestamps, they, the full conversation is there. You can use text messages, but it ends up being screenshots and you can't always see, uh, what time they were sent or when they were sent, and sometimes people cut and paste them. Court approved apps are great because you can, the whole conversation is there, everything is there.

[01:26:23] What you will wanna do though is make sure that you agree to do using this app or, or the email or whatever form you use in writing Signed. By both of you and then also turned into a court order. Same thing with the

parenting plan by the way, because once it's rendered into a court order, either an order or a final judgment, then you will have some teeth.

[01:26:47] You will be giving the judge some teeth to enforce it down the road. When that narcissist doesn't comply and fails to, um, do what they're supposed to do, according to the parenting [01:27:00] plan, which they undoubtedly will do, they undoubtedly will violate the parenting plan or the order for the app or email or whatever it is, because they are narcissists and they can't help themselves.

[01:27:19] The next thing you will want to do is document, document, document. And I say this, I've said this over and over and over again. I cannot say this enough. Um, if you are using a, a court approved app, sometimes those apps have private places to put notes sections. If you wanna just keep notes in there or you can use the notes section of your smartphone.

[01:27:41] I just would be careful about that. Make sure that your cloud devices are all synced up and you know where the passwords are and you know where they're being shown so that nobody can be reading what you're writing. But you do want to keep notes on every little thing, um, [01:28:00] including the most mundane details.

[01:28:02] You know, what time. Did the other parent pick up the children? Uh, were they late? Uh, did they ask to change the schedule? Did they not show up? Did they show up impaired? Did they show up bringing a girlfriend? Did they, do they always have the. Their parents watching the kids when, when, when they're there.

[01:28:24] You know, all these mundane little details because one detail alone may not seem to be anything, but over time, these mundane details end up showing patterns, and those patterns can end up becoming really strong, leverage down the road for your court case, and potentially turn into really great trial exhibits.

[01:28:46] The next thing you can do is keep your emotions in check. This is part of my matter method, by the way, which is E. The e and matter is stands for Keep your emotions in check. And this is because one of the ways [01:29:00] that narcissists gets supply, remember, is to rattle you up, get you excited, get you angry, make you upset, because then they get supply from that.

[01:29:09] They get off on that literally. And so the, the, they'll, they'll figure out, they'll try to figure out ways to get under your skin. They're gonna be

sending you written correspondence that says, you know, you're a deadbeat dad, or You're a neglectful mom, or you're an alcoholic, or whatever it is that they know is going to upset you because they wanna go you into writing something back that's going to be just as emotional or just as awful or even worse.

[01:29:41] And so, Remember, by the way, side note, every single text writing anything you put your hand to any social media post becomes a potential trial exhibit. So if you don't wanna see it again, don't send it, don't write it, don't post it. Okay? [01:30:00] And this goes hand in hand with keeping your emotions in check.

[01:30:03] Don't try to justify, don't overshare, don't, don't defend yourself. You know, just say, I disagree with your characterization, and you can pick up Johnny, uh, at 3:00 PM on Wednesday. Just, just the facts. Stick to the facts. Don't take the bait cuz that's exactly what they want you to do overall. Just remember what I said at the beginning of this video.

[01:30:27] Narcissists cannot change. They won't change. Um, it's just, they're, they're never, they're like wild animals. They're never gonna be tamed. But you can build a fence around them so that, you know, you feel like they're more contained. And by doing that, it'll make it a little bit. Easier for you to co-parent with this narcissist.

[01:30:50] It'll never be a breeze, but it'll be a little bit easier, which will help preserve your sanity and also the quality of your life [01:31:00] and your children's lives as well. Okay, so over the weekend there was all kinds of a flurry drama, trauma, chaos in the lives of Kim and Kanye when Kanye posted all kinds of stuff.

[01:31:15] Well, it was kind of like ostensibly sort of talking to God or something where he was saying, Hey, God, help me. Help me get my kids to church. Specifically north. He wanted to take North to church. He was saying that he was angry because Kim was. Posting more videos on TikTok, and he really doesn't like that.

[01:31:44] Now, Kim, honestly, he's been saying this for months, he doesn't like that she's posting these videos on TikTok and you know, she continues to do that, which is not necessarily a good thing because [01:32:00] obviously she's provoking this. She's baiting him too, and this is causing more drama, drama, chaos on his part as well.

[01:32:10] Apparently there was a flu flurry of text messages between Pete Davidson, her new boyfriend and him, which he then went on to post publicly. So, Which I don't think, obviously Pete meant for them to be posted publicly, but there they were posted. He started off by saying, Hey man, you know, she's a great mom and why don't we try to have a conversation?

[01:32:39] Why don't we just talk to each other? Maybe, why don't you try to get some help? But basically Kanye was sort of baiting him and ended up getting Pete sort of upset and emotional, and Pete ends up saying, [01:33:00] Hey, I'm in bed with, with your wife. And of course, Kanye in his brand of messages kept referring to Kim as his wife, which is she really his wife anymore when they're divorced, you know, not really.

[01:33:17] Right? But the whole thing really kind of had me thinking about. What is it like to continue to be co-parenting with a narcissist? And I just thought this is such a good lesson, uh, for all of you out there that are trying to co-parent with a narcissist. And I thought, what better way to draw attention on the do's and don'ts of co-parenting with a narcissist and a good lesson in what to do and what not to do when you're trying to co-parent with a narcissist?

[01:33:53] Apparently Kim and Kanye do not have a structure parenting agreement in place. That's a big [01:34:00] no-no. For one thing, you definitely wanna have a structured parenting agreement in place. You really shouldn't even be separating without a structured parenting agreement in place. You shouldn't even be living in separate houses without a structured parenting agreement in place.

[01:34:15] You really need to have a very, very specific parenting agreement in place. It should be as specific as you possibly can so that. Is a lesson in what to do. Number one to do, do not move out without a structured parenting agreement in place if possible. Number two, don't have your significant other. Be trying to talk to your new boyfriend.

[01:34:45] Be trying to talk to your ex-husband and interview convening on your behalf like that. Especially be saying, Hey, I'm in bed with your wife and sending photos of you like. In naked in bed. That is so [01:35:00] much of an instigation, right? And here he is basically baiting Kanye, not good. I mean, and Kanye is kind of baiting him.

[01:35:09] And what does that do? Number one, it gives Kanye narcissistic supply. Number two, all kinds of trial exhibits potentially down the road, which is not gonna be good for Kim because if they end up. Having some kind of trial

over the custody. All of this is going to come to light. All this flurry of text messaging, everything that's going back and forth here, ends up being potential trial exhibits.

[01:35:44] It's not gonna be good for Kim and frankly, all this stuff that Kanye has been posting, this diarrhea of the mouth and everything that he's been posting, I. Is going to [01:36:00] be something that can be used against him too. Remember that anything that you put your hand to is a potential trial exhibit. You know?

[01:36:10] And all that stuff becomes leverage. Things that can be used against you. And I have a whole video on that, which you can definitely check out. This is the real leverage against narcissists, which I highly recommend that you check out as well. These are the things that end up being used against you. And another thing that they should be doing, and that you could be doing if you're dealing with a narcissist is, instead of back and forth using texts and things like that, is they could use one form of communication.

[01:36:51] And I do highly recommend if you are dealing with a co. Parent who's a narcissist is use something like an [01:37:00] app. You know, there's a lot of different apps out there that you can use that are specifically designed for co-parenting. And I highly recommend that if you are in a court battle, that you have the court actually order that you use the app.

[01:37:18] Because that way if they don't use the app, you can actually file something with the court that says, Hey, they're not using the app, and you can actually order the, the court, make them use the app rather than, you know, all these different ways that they can like, make your life miserable. And you know how they do, they, they use 50 different ways to communicate with you to make your life miserable.

[01:37:46] So I, I would say that, Playing all this out in the public eye is actually just giving Kanye a forum for his narcissistic supply. Baiting is is [01:38:00] also a forum of narcissistic supply. By taking the bait, they're giving him narcissistic supply and then the reaction. It's also all kinds of things that people can be using as court, as trial exhibits, all those sorts of things.

[01:38:18] All kinds of do's and don'ts in this particular situation. Fatal errors that can potentially be used in court. Thanks for listening to this episode of Negotiate Your Best Life. Remember that I have brand new episodes just like this on my YouTube channel every single day. So if you want to be empowered

every single day, head over to my YouTube channel, and also you can follow me on Instagram at Rebecca Zung or my TikTok at Rebecca Zung as well.

[01:38:54] And remember that you can pre-order my book right now, it's slay the [01:39:00] bully.com, and get early access to the manuscript as well as tons of other bonuses. And make sure to register for my brand new webinar, my new masterclass at Break Free from Hell, and it's breaking free from hell. Take back your power emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

[01:39:22] I can't wait to support you in your journey to taking back your power, and otherwise, I will see you right back here for the next episode of Negotiate Your Best Life. I am so excited to supporting you and remember that today's a great day to start negotiating your best life.