

# Divorcing Parents: 10 Questions to Ask Before Fighting Over the Kids

Posted: 07/21/2014 6:11 pm EDT Updated: 07/21/2014 6:59 pm EDT

Divorce attorney Larry Sarezky has created a short film to stop divorcing parents from engaging in high-conflict custody battles for the sake of the kids. I saw the film, *Talk to Strangers*, and was dramatically impacted by its message. Larry also provides ten questions divorcing parents should ask themselves before fighting over the kids in court. His years of experience have shown him the consequences for the children involved -- effects they'll experience on a life-long basis. Here are Larry's 10 questions, along with his opening comments about high conflict divorce.

## **Ten Questions to Ask Before Fighting Over the Kids**

My worst nightmare as a divorce lawyer is that thousands of children are growing up wondering why the "grown-ups" didn't protect them from their parents' high conflict divorces. That's how my film, *Talk to Strangers* came into being. But long before that, I put together ten questions to ask clients who were considering custody battles.

If it's your co-parent who seems intent on fighting over the kids, see if he or she has answers for the following:

- 1. Do you want your children to endure months of anxiety and uncertainty as to where they will be living and whether they will have the relationship they want with each of their parents and their siblings?***
- 2. Do you want your children subjected to interviews by attorneys, mental health professionals and court personnel during which they may be frightened and conflicted, and will feel pressured to be loyal to both their parents?***
- 3. Do you want your children subjected to the possibility of inquiry by these professionals about the most personal aspects of their lives including their fears and frailties?***
- 4. Clinical studies have shown that high conflict between parents exposes children who witness it to serious psychological harm. Do you want to risk your children developing emotional disorders as a result of your high-conflict custody battle?***
- 5. Do you want your inability to resolve your differences to serve as a model of parenting for your children?***
- 6. Do you want intimate details of your life to become a matter of public record?***
- 7. Do you want a stranger deciding how much you will see your children, and how you will make decisions concerning them?***
- 8. Do you want a substantial portion of your assets used for fees of attorneys and expert witnesses with no guarantee that you will be happy with the result?***
- 9. Do you want to give up attention to detail that a negotiated agreement will have but that a judge's decision will not?***
- 10. Do you want to engage in costly, time-consuming and rancorous litigation that can make future cooperation between you and your co-parent extremely difficult at best, and the resumption of amicable joint parenting nearly impossible?***

Sometimes all it takes is a profound question to shift us into a clearer state of mind. I hope Larry's questions can do that for every parent involved with divorce -- and those who are co-parenting following divorce. That's why the Child-Centered Divorce Network strongly endorses his new film and message. Larry has been in the trenches and has seen well-meaning parents go off course when putting the future well-being of their family into the hands of busy judges and overcrowded courts.

Fortunately, there are better options available. Avoid litigation and look into mediation. Work together as parents to make responsible decisions that you can both live with -- and that support your children in the months and years ahead.

Seek out attorneys who are genuinely family-focused and try to keep you out of court. Bring in therapists or divorce coaches to provide insights and strategies for resolving conflict on behalf of everyone in the family. Be a caring, responsible parent. Divorce

should not be about winning or losing. It should focus on finding a new way to still be a family -- but in a different form that still supports the children you love. Is it worth the effort? Watch Larry's film and decide for yourself!

**Follow Rosalind Sedacca on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/RosalindSedacca](https://www.twitter.com/RosalindSedacca)**