



CO-PARENTING  
*College*

CO-PARENTING  
WITH A DIFFICULT  
EX: ADVICE YOU  
WON'T FORGET

WORKBOOK

Welcome!



CO-PARENTING  
College



A NOTE FROM  
THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Cylena

EVERYDAY I WORK WITH PARENTS WHO ARE EXASPERATED BY THE STRESS OF DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT CO-PARENT.

IT IS NOT AN EASY SITUATION. I'M GLAD YOU ARE HERE.

I'LL BE YOUR GUIDE TO SANITY, WISDOM AND GIVING YOUR KIDS WHAT THEY NEED.

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# MODULE ONE *workbook*

HOW TO RECOGNIZE  
A DIFFICULT CO-PARENT

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# MODULE 1

## List Your Clues

INSTRUCTIONS: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE CLUES THAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT EX?

1.

2.

3.

# MODULE TWO *workbook*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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# MODULE 2, LESSON ONE

## Your North Star

INSTRUCTIONS: WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS YOU WISH FOR YOUR CHILDREN IN THEIR ADULT LIVES?

1.

2.

3.

# MODULE THREE *workbook*

## TRIGGERS

# MODULE 3, LESSON ONE(A)

## Identifying Your Triggers

INSTRUCTIONS: WRITE DOWN HOW YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE FEELING TRIGGERED. WHAT ARE YOUR SIGNS?

1. WHAT DO YOU NOTICE IN YOUR BODY?

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2. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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# MODULE 3, LESSON ONE(A)

## Identifying Your Triggers

CONTINUED

3. WHAT DO YOU FEEL?

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4. WHAT DO YOU DO?

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# A word about Triggers

Triggers are the things your ex says or does that shocks you or drives you absolutely CRAZY! Learning to calm your triggers does NOT mean that your coparent's behaviour is ok or that it doesn't matter.

It's perfectly normal to have triggers, especially when you're co-parenting with a difficult ex.

Triggers tell us about ourselves. It's a signal that we have something to learn how to manage so that you can reduce the impact that your ex has on your emotions and actions.

TAME/UNWIND YOUR  
TRIGGERS SO THAT YOU  
CAN RESPOND TO YOUR  
COPARENT'S BEHAVIOUR  
FROM A PLACE OF  
CLARITY/PEACE.

KRISTEN V

# MODULE 3, LESSON 1(B)

## Identifying Your Triggers

### TRIGGER CHECKLIST

1. DENYING YOU ACCESS TO THE CHILDREN FOR IMPORTANT EVENTS.
2. REFUSING TO TAKE THE KIDS TO IMPORTANT EVENTS DURING THEIR PARENTING TIME.
3. SHOWING UP LATE OR NOT AT ALL FOR TRANSITIONS.
4. FAILING TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU ABOUT THE KIDS OR IMPORTANT SCHEDULES.
5. CANCELLING OR RESCHEDULING DOCTOR AND DENTIST APPOINTMENTS YOU MADE FOR THE KIDS.
6. REFUSING TO CONSENT TO ACTIVITIES FOR THE KIDS.
7. FAILING TO ADHERE TO THE PARENTING PLAN OR PARENTING ORDER.
8. INTERFERING WITH THE CHILDREN'S ROUTINE.
9. FEELING LIKE YOUR EX IS WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM YOU DELIBERATELY.
10. FEELING LIKE YOUR EX LOOKS DOWN ON YOUR PARENTING AND CRITICIZES YOU.

# MODULE 3, LESSON 1(B)

## Identifying Your Triggers

### TRIGGER CHECKLIST CONTINUED

- 11. FEELING LIKE YOU ARE UNDER YOUR EX'S MICROSCOPE.
- 12. REFUSING TO LET YOU SPEAK TO THE KIDS ON THEIR PARENTING TIME.
- 13. REFUSING TO COMPLETE HOMEWORK WITH THEM.
- 14. TRANSFERRING THE CHILDREN TO YOUR CARE DIRTY AND TIRED.
- 15. MONITORING THE CHILDREN'S PHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU.
- 16. NOT RETURNING BELONGS THEY NEED TO YOUR HOME.
- 17. FEELING LIKE YOUR EX MINIMIZES YOUR CONCERNS OR IGNORES THEM.
- 18. USING THE CHILDREN AS MESSENGERS.
- 19. BADMOUTHING YOU TO THE KIDS.
- 20. IGNORING THE CHILDREN'S NEEDS.
- 21. FEELING LIKE YOUR EX IS EXCLUDING YOU

# MODULE 3, LESSON 1(B)

## Identifying Your Triggers

### TRIGGER CHECKLIST CONTINUED

- 22. EXTENDING THEIR PARENTING TIME WITHOUT AGREEMENT.
- 23. TAKING THE CHILDREN TO AN EVENT (SUCH AS A NEW MOVIE) ONLY AFTER YOU COMMUNICATE THAT YOU ARE PLANNING TO TAKE THEM.
- 24. INTRODUCING THE CHILDREN TO MULTIPLE NEW PARTNERS.
- 25. ALLOWING THEIR NEW PARTNER TO PARENT AND CO-PARENT FOR THEM.
- 26. REFUSING OR DELAYING TRAVEL CONSENT LETTERS.
- 27. USING THE KIDS AS THEIR BEST FRIEND OR THERAPIST.
- 30. MAKING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS FOR THE KIDS AND NOT TELLING YOU.
- 31. HEARING THE KIDS CALLING THEIR NEW STEPPARENT “MOM” OR “DAD.”
- 32. FEELING LIKE YOUR EX IS CONTROLLING YOU.

# MODULE 3, LESSON 1(B)

## Identifying Your Triggers

INSTRUCTIONS: LIST YOUR UNIQUE TRIGGERS THAT WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE LIST

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

TAKE BACK YOUR POWER SO THAT YOUR EX DOES NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO CONTROL YOUR MINDSET, EMOTIONS OR HOW YOU SHOW UP IN YOUR HOME WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

## MODULE 3, LESSON 2

### *Why Triggers Matter*

WHEN YOU ARE A GROUNDED  
AND SOLID VERSION OF  
YOURSELF, YOU CAN BE A  
CALM, PEACEFUL PRESENCE  
FOR YOUR KIDS - REGARDLESS  
OF THE STORM THAT MIGHT BE  
RAGING AROUND THEM.

## MODULE 3, LESSON 3

# Tame Your Triggers

## HELPFUL TRUTH BOMBS

1

TRIGGERS DO NOT OWN YOU

2

FEELINGS ARE NOT FACTS

3

YOUR REACTION IS YOURS,  
NOT YOUR CO-PARENTS

Breathe

Move

Talk it out



# MODULE FOUR *workbook*

THE POWER STRUGGLE

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# MODULE 4, LESSON 1

## Coparenting Traps

### REFLECTIONS

**QUESTION #1:** WHAT COPARENTING TRAPS ARE THE HARDEST FOR YOU TO AVOID?

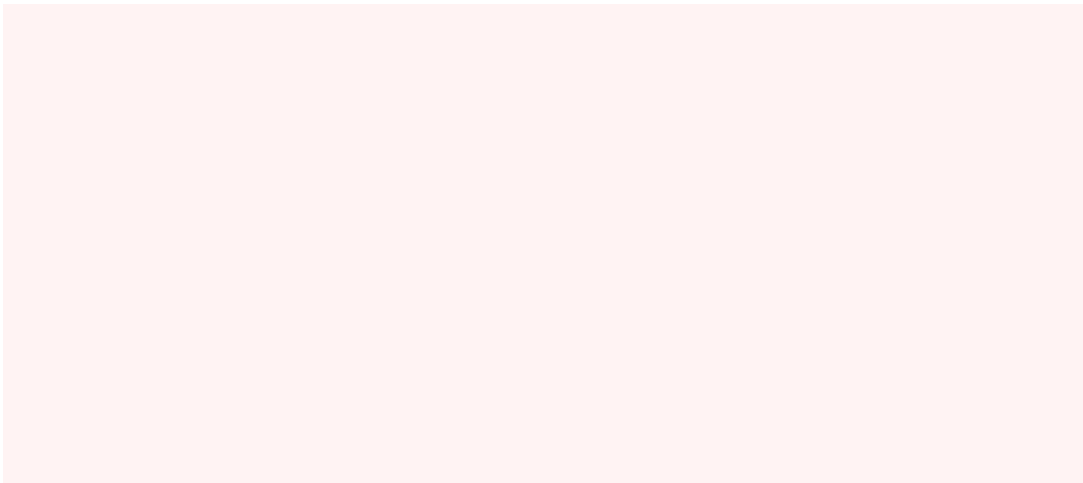
**QUESTION #2:** WHAT COPARENTING TRAPS ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH AT THE MOMENT?

# MODULE 4, LESSON 1

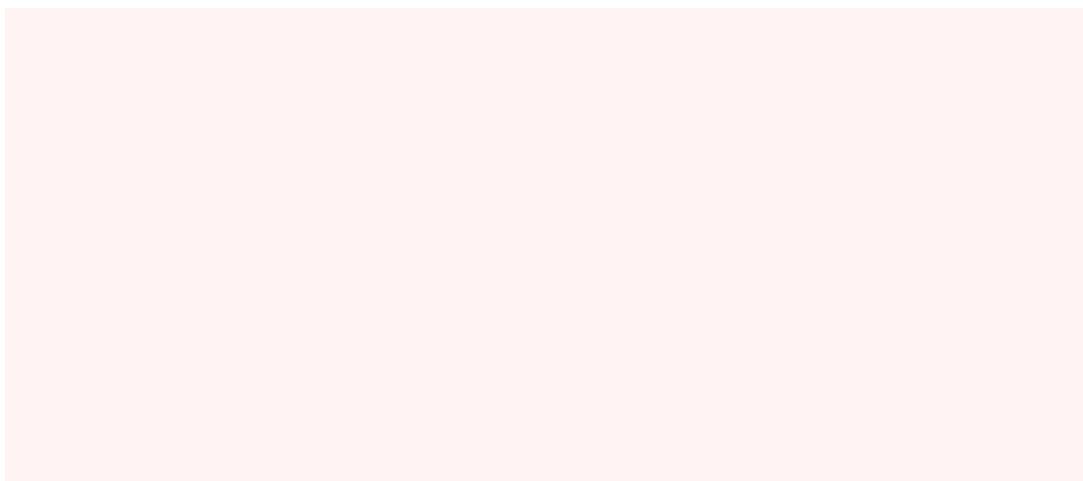
## Coparenting Traps

REFLECTIONS CONTINUED

**QUESTION #3:** WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO BETTER?



**QUESTION #4:** WHAT WILL YOU DO TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMITMENT TO THIS CHANGE?



# MODULE 4, LESSON 2

## *Expectations and Acceptance*

INSTRUCTIONS: WHAT AM I EXPECTING OUT OF MY COPARENT THAT DISAPPOINTS ME EVERY TIME?.

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IF YOU EXPECT YOUR COPARENT TO BEHAVE IN WAYS THAT THEY NEVER HAVE BEFORE OR TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY, YOU HAVE FALLEN INTO A TRAP.

# MODULE 4, LESSON 2

## *Expectations and Acceptance*

INSTRUCTIONS: LIST THE THINGS THAT ARE NOT WITHIN YOUR CONTROL ABOUT YOUR COPARENT.

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POWER IS  
NOT CONTROLLING  
OTHER PEOPLE.  
POWER IS  
CONTROLLING  
YOURSELF

## *Lets talk about radical acceptance*

TO CONTINUE TO WISH THAT YOUR CO-PARENT WAS DIFFERENT KEEPS YOU STUCK. ACCEPTING THAT THIS IS NOT THE CO-PARENTING RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU WANT, DOES NOT MEAN YOU LIKE IT. IT MEANS ACCEPTING IT FOR WHAT IT IS.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE TO THROW UP YOUR HANDS AND SAY THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO. BECAUSE THAT IS NOT TRUE.

# MODULE 4, LESSON 2

## Expectations and Acceptance

CONTINUED

INSTRUCTIONS: LIST THE THINGS THAT YOU DESPERATELY WISH YOU COULD CONTROL AND SPEND TIME TRYING TO CHANGE OR WISH AWAY.

IT THERE ANYTHING I AM TRYING TO CONTROL?

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WHAT REALITY AM I STRUGGLING TO ACCEPT ABOUT MY COPARENT AND THE SITUATION FOR MY CHILDREN?

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# MODULE 4, LESSON 2

## *Expectations and Acceptance*

CONTINUED

CAN I ACCEPT THIS REALITY IN MY BODY?  
WHERE AM I CARRYING THE RESISTANCE TO  
ACCEPT THIS REALITY? SHOULDERS? BACK?  
AM I FEELING TENSION OR PHYSICAL PAIN?  
PRACTICE RELEASING TENSION FROM YOUR  
BODY.

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# MODULE 4, LESSON 2

## Expectations and Acceptance

CONTINUED

DO YOU FEEL SADNESS OR GRIEF IN  
ACCEPTING THIS REALITY?

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IF YOU ACCEPTED THIS REALITY, WHAT  
WOULD YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR CHILDREN'S  
LIVES BETTER? WHERE WOULD YOU PUT  
YOUR FOCUS? REMEMBER: ACCEPTING THIS  
REALITY DOES NOT MEAN YOU CANNOT  
HELP YOURSELF OR YOUR CHILDREN.

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# MODULE FIVE *workbook*

DISENGAGE, DETATCH,  
UNHOOK!

# MODULE 5

## *Disengage, Detach, Unhook!*

INSTRUCTIONS: TIME FOR REFLECTION

1. WHAT AREAS WILL BE EASIEST FOR YOU TO DISENGAGE, DETACH AND UNHOOK FROM?

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2. WHAT AREAS WILL BE CHALLENGING FOR YOU AND WHY?

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# MODULE 5

## *Disengage, Detach, Unhook!*

CONTINUED

INSTRUCTIONS: TIME FOR REFLECTION

3. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL YOU PUT IN PLACE TO HELP YOU DISENGAGE, DETACH AND UNHOOK?

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# MODULE SIX *workbook*

COMMUNICATION: WHAT  
YOU NEED TO KNOW

# MODULE 6

## Communication Resources

I HIGHLY RECOMMEND BILL EDDY'S BOOK, TITLED BIFF. IT'S A GREAT REFERENCE BOOK FOR IMPROVING CO-PARENTING COMMUNICATION.

BIFF IS AN ACRONYM FOR: BRIEF, INFORMATIVE, FRIENDLY, AND FIRM.

IF YOU USE THIS FRAMEWORK IN ALL OF YOUR COMMUNICATION, YOU WILL SEE AN IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME.

CONSIDER USING AN ONLINE CO-PARENTING APP. THESE CAN BE A GREAT TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR DIFFICULT EX. I WOULD RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS, WITH SOME OF THEM BEING FREE:

- OUR FAMILY WIZARD
- COPARENTER
- COPARENTLY
- COZI
- TALKING PARENTS
- 2HOUSES

# MODULE SEVEN

*workbook*

BOUNDARIES

# MODULE 7

## Words You Can Use

### WHEN SETTING BOUNDARIES

- I UNDERSTAND YOUR POINT OF VIEW, BUT \_\_\_\_\_.
- I'VE DECIDED NOT TO \_\_\_\_\_.
- I'M GOING TO \_\_\_\_\_.
- MOVING FORWARD, I WILL \_\_\_\_\_.
- THAT IS UNWORKABLE FOR ME.
- NO THANK YOU.
- AGREED.
- I UNDERSTAND.
- THAT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- I AM UNABLE TO \_\_\_\_\_. HOWEVER, I WOULD BE WILLING TO \_\_\_\_\_.
- I WILL NOT CONTINUE THIS CONVERSATION UNTIL THE ASSUMPTIONS STOP.
- I AM ASKING FOR \_\_\_\_\_.
- I WILL TAKE CARE OF IT AND LET YOU KNOW.



# MODULE 7

## Words You Can Use

### WHEN SETTING BOUNDARIES CONTINUED

- I NEED TIME TO THINK ABOUT THIS. IF YOU NEED AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER, IT WILL BE NO.
- I DO NOT ACCEPT THAT SOLUTION.
- I WILL BE FOLLOWING THE AGREEMENT.
- I WOULD LIKE TO \_\_\_\_\_.
- I AM ASKING FOR YOUR AGREEMENT.

BOUNDARIES DO NOT MEAN THAT YOU CAN CHECK OUT ON YOUR CO-PARENT AND NOT COMMUNICATE. IT MEANS THAT YOU MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE BUT DO SO WITHIN THE SAFE LIMITS OF THE BOUNDARIES YOU SET.

# MODULE 7

## Establishing Boundaries

### VISUALIZATION

- CLOSE YOUR EYES, AND COUNT TO TEN IN YOUR HEAD, WHILE BREATHING DEEPLY AND CALMLY.
- IMAGINE YOURSELF SURROUNDED BY A CIRCLE. YOU ARE IN THE EXACT CENTER, SURROUNDED BY THE EXACT AMOUNT OF SPACE THAT YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE WITH.
- TURN THE CIRCLE INTO A VISIBLE WALL. THAT WALL CAN BE MADE OUT OF ANYTHING YOU LIKE: CLEAR OR OPAQUE PLASTIC, BRICKS, SMOOTH CEMENT OR SOMETHING ELSE. IT CAN BE ANYTHING YOU WANT, AS LONG AS IT'S STRONG.
- ALTHOUGH THE WALL IS STRONG, YOU AND ONLY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO FLEX IT WHEN YOU WANT. YOU CAN REMOVE A BRICK OR SOFTEN THE PLASTIC TO ALLOW THINGS INSIDE THE WALL OR OUT OF THE WALL WHENEVER YOU NEED TO. YOU HOLD ALL THE POWER. YOU ARE SAFE.
- STAY INSIDE THE WALL FOR A MINUTE. ENJOY THE FEELING OF BEING IN CONTROL OF YOUR WORLD.
- REPEAT THIS EXERCISE ONCE-A-DAY.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF AUTHOR DR. JONICE WEBB

# MODULE EIGHT *workbook*


HELPING YOUR KIDS

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## MODULE 8

### *What Your Kids Need*

YOUR KIDS NEED YOU TO SHOW THEM, BY EXAMPLE, THAT THERE IS A HEALTHIER WAY OF INTERACTING WITH OTHERS THAN WHAT YOU EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR OTHER PARENT.





THE SINGLE BEST  
PREDICTOR OF  
FUTURE RESILIENCE  
IN CHILDREN IS THE  
PRESENCE OF A  
RESPONSIVE AND  
SUPPORTIVE PARENT  
OR TRUSTED ADULT.




MONA DELAHOOKKE PH.D


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VALIDATING YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU AGREE WITH THEM. VALIDATING YOUR CHILD IS NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU FEEL OR THINK AT ALL. IT IS SIMPLY YOUR HONEST ATTEMPT TO BE PRESENT AND UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY FEEL, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, WITHOUT JUDGMENT SO THAT THEY FEEL TRULY AND DEEPLY UNDERSTOOD BY YOU.



**PRACTICE HELPING YOUR CHILDREN THINK CRITICALLY IN AREAS UNRELATED TO YOUR CO-PARENT. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO THINK ABOUT WHY THEY FEEL AND THINK THE WAY THEY DO. ASK QUESTIONS! BE CURIOUS BUT NOT CRITICAL.**



## HELP YOUR CHILDREN IDENTIFY AND EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS.

You can identify a feeling by completing the sentence, "I feel \_\_\_\_\_".

You will know you are on the right track when there is just one word in the blank. For example:

I feel sad.

I feel guilty.

I feel embarrassed.

I feel joyful.

I feel jealous.

If you have more than one word following the "I feel\_\_\_\_\_ ", chances are you are stating a thought.

Also, watch for the phrase, "I feel THAT". If you catch a "that" in the sentence, you are stating a thought instead.





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## *Final Thoughts*

*Great things never come from comfort zones.*

THERE IS HOPE FOR AN EASIER, BRIGHTER, CONFLICT-REDUCED FUTURE.

COMMIT TO THE PROCESS AND TURN THESE BEHAVIOURS INTO HABITS. YOU CAN DO IT!

IT WILL TAKE EFFORT AND COMMITMENT BUT IF YOU'RE WILLING TO COMMIT, YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR SITUATION FOR THE BETTER.

THANK YOU FOR SPENDING THE TIME WITH ME AND TRUSTING MY GUIDANCE.

I WISH YOU ONLY GOOD THINGS MOVING FORWARD.

GOOD LUCK IN YOUR NEXT CHAPTER AND SHINE BRIGHT!



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THANK  
YOURSELF  
FOR HOW FAR  
YOU'VE COME

IT HASN'T  
BEEN EASY

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