



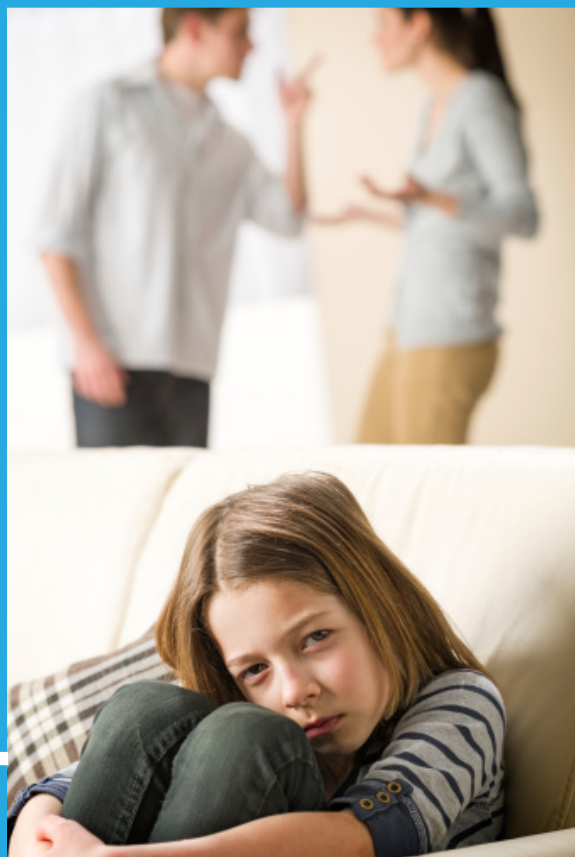
8 **COMMITMENTS** ***YOU MUST MAKE***

**to Protect Your Children
During and After Divorce**

COMMITMENT #1

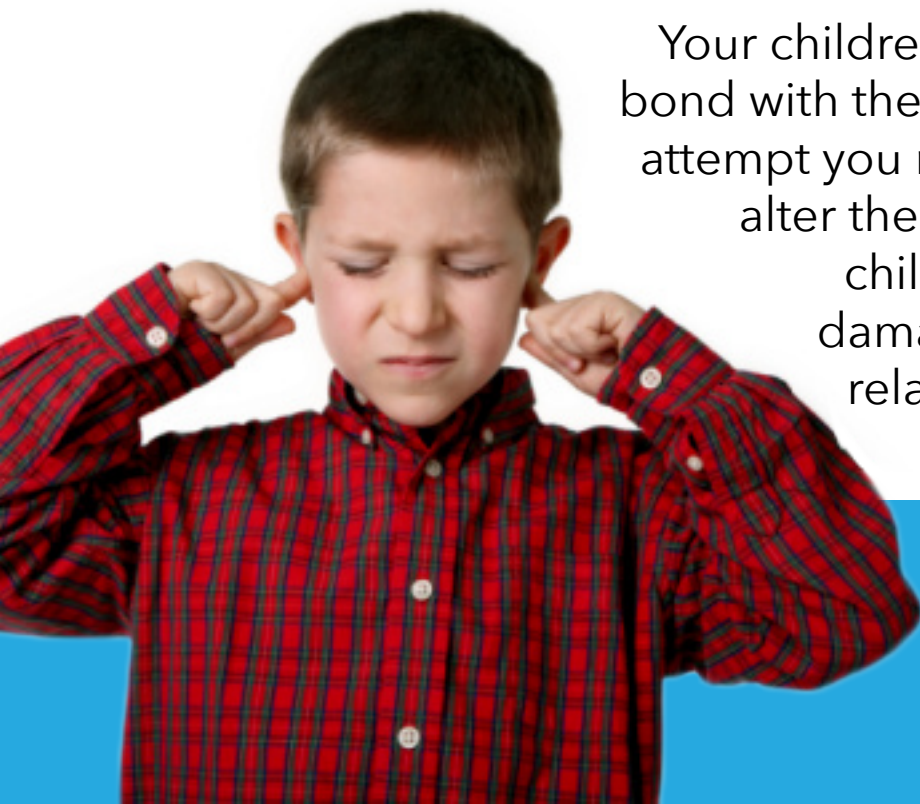
I will not fight with my children's other parent within the hearing or sight of my children.

Exposing children to parental conflict inflicts serious psychological damage on them. The damage may affect your children for the rest of their lives and make it difficult for them to establish their own stable and happy families.



COMMITMENT #2

I will not say anything bad about my children's other parent to my children or within their hearing.



Your children have an enduring bond with their other parent. Any attempt you make to damage or alter the bond will hurt your children and ultimately damage or destroy your relationship with them.

COMMITMENT #3

I will not confide my troubles to my children or turn to them for emotional support.

Treating your children like close friends confuses them and compromises your role as an authority figure. Confiding in children dumps emotional issues on them that they are not mature enough to handle.



COMMITMENT #4

I will not ask my children to carry messages or child support to the other parent.



Communication with your children's other parent may not be easy, but it's necessary. If you cannot speak directly to him or her, then communicate in writing. Making your children messengers draws them into the divorce conflict and, like confiding in them, blurs the line between parent and child.

COMMITMENT #5

I will not make my children feel the need to hide their love for the other parent.

You will put your children under intolerable stress if you let them think they will lose your love if they show love for their other parent. Children must feel free to love each parent without fear of losing either.



COMMITMENT #6

I will not pump my children for information about their other parent or ask them to spy on their other parent.



Pumping your children for information about your spouse will make them intensely uncomfortable. They feel loyalty to their other parent, just as they do to you. If they tell you anything, they will feel guilty that they have betrayed their other parent.

COMMITMENT #7

I will not use my children as bargaining chips to secure a better financial settlement from my spouse.

Do not ask for more time with the children to reduce your child support or offer your spouse primary custody in exchange for not paying alimony. You will feel shame every time you see your children and realize that you treated them like an item of property.



COMMITMENT #8

I will tell my children that both their parents love them and will take care of them.



Repeat this statement to your children often, daily if necessary, to reassure them that you will keep them safe and they won't lose either parent as a result of the divorce.