

When Your Relationship is On the Rocks

We sometimes hear the term 'the relationship is on the rocks'. We all have personality traits under the surface, personal traits about ourselves that we don't like too much, jealousy, selfishness or vengeful thoughts. When couples are going through the trauma and stress of separation many of these traits come to the surface, it's like the tide has gone out, and those traits we don't like are now clear to see. They are sticking out like rocks above the surface. We can see them very clearly in our former partner and even in ourselves. We don't like the person that our former partner has become. And often it is hard to admit, but we also don't like the person we have become too.



It is the trauma and stress of the relationship breakdown that has caused the tide to go out; our 'relationship is on the rocks'. We are likely to behave in ways that are destructive to ourselves and relationships with our former partner, our children and other people that are significant in our lives.

We might engage in some of the following behaviours with our children:

- Fight in front of the children or tell the children about the fights.
- Encourage the children to take sides.
- Speak badly or dig about the other parent.
- Grill or question your children for information when they return from time with their other parent.
- Punish the other parent by threatening to or making it difficult for them to see their child.
- Tell your child to pass messages between you and the other parent.

All these behaviours are damaging to children's wellbeing. Some parents might think; well the children have a right to know some 'home truths' about the other parent. The test is; would you say these things about the other parent if you were still together? Your children love and are loyal to both of you. The ongoing conflict between separated parents is one of the most significant risks for children's wellbeing and future mental health.

The stress of a relationship breakdown will reduce, the trauma will pass, and the tide will come back in. Make a commitment to end the pattern of behaviour that is detrimental for your children and you. Seek the support of positive people that can assist you through the trauma of separation.

***Be a parent that is:
Bigger, Stronger,
Wiser and Kind.***

See the information sheet; **A New Ways of Relating**