

# Take the High Road; there's less traffic

To "take the high road" means doing the right thing, even if it may not be easy or popular with the majority. For example, if someone has wronged you, you can "take the low road" and seek revenge. Or you can take the high road - forgive them or ignore them or not let it worry you. Taking the high road has much less traffic and a far better view.

Let's not let our ideas about fairness in the relationship between separated parents become confused with what is right for the children. Following a separation, parents are often not able to separate their own needs from the needs of their children. The parents fight, and the children get caught in the middle.



Taking the high road and bite your tongue when needed, will always win out over responding to jabs, pokes and unreasonable behaviour from the other parent. Here are four reasons a separated parent should always take the high road.

## **You are the one who Benefits Most from “Taking the High Road”**

When a parent becomes single it doesn't stop them being a parent and a role model. Children learn from our behaviour more than words. Regardless of what led to the end of the relationship, you always have the ability to treat the other parent of your children with kindness and consideration. Your children will be witnesses to how you treat the other parent.

Teaching children compassion and kindness is the biggest gift we can give to our children. The role model you are is what your children will most likely become. Imagine if our children took the high road when dealing with bullying in the classroom or cheating on tests. Imagine if our children took the high road and negated any peer pressure related to drug and alcohol abuse. Be the parent that is wiser.

## It's the Right Thing to do

Thinking that taking the high road is about letting the other parent off the hook. It's not. Taking the high road is not about the other parent at all. It's about you. As much as it will feel like punching yourself in the face it will be the right thing to do. Figure out what sort of person you want to be and act accordingly. Taking the high road means to be the bigger person and be the one who does the right thing by the children.

Children are smart enough to figure out the other parent's faults without our coaching. If the other parent is being unreasonable, or ungracious, that's something the children will figure out soon enough. Fostering hostility only hurts our own relationship with our children. Be the bigger parent.

## When you Put the Children Ahead of Yourself, the Children Win, You Win

Kindness is foundational to healing. Separation and divorce are always painful, and everyone needs to heal. Our kindness will facilitate our own healing, our kids' healing, and our former spouse's healing too. We live in a competitive culture. Winners and losers, and we think we have to be first. Thinking that "If my ex looks like a loser then I look like a winner." Sorry, that's not going to work. This may be counterintuitive, but everyone looks good if we make our competition look good. Dad looks good if he makes mum look good even if they're separated, and vice versa. Putting others first is the first step to moving forward ourselves. Be the parent that is kind.

## Don't Take the Bait

If the other parent says something mean to you, or does something stupid, or pushes your buttons, take a deep breath, and walk away. Do not engage! It will take a lot of self-control, but it will be worth it. The more you fight, the longer your divorce takes and the more it costs. Fighting affects your kids, and it takes a toll on your own health. While you may feel that "giving in" makes you a wimp, the truth is that keeping your temper when all you want to do is lose it, is the strongest, most courageous thing you can do. Taking the bait will only throw fuel on the fire. I will encourage the other parent to continue with their behaviour because they are getting the reaction from you that they are wanting.

The other parent's baiting is a way that they can maintain an emotional relationship with you. By responding to the bait and you becoming upset or angry gives them control over your emotions. By taking the bait it keeps you in a negative emotional relationship. It distracts you from moving on with your life. Is that really the control you want the other parent to have over you? Be the parent that is stronger.

The author Ayn Rand in a 1964 interview for *Playboy* magazine said; 'If a man is guided by his emotions and uses his mind only to rationalize or justify them somehow—*then* he is acting immorally, he is condemning himself to misery, failure, defeat, and he will achieve nothing but destruction—his own and that of others.'

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