

Thriving inside a *volcano*: Working over time with parents in high conflict (& complex) separations

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The Sydney ACT Centre
www.sydneyactcentre.com.au

Disclosures:

We have not received and will not receive any commercial support related to this presentation or the work presented in this presentation

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Agenda:

- Outline particular struggle for which separated parents/step-parents increasingly seek our help
- Demonstrate how the ACT matrix and relevant ACT exercises can be used to help parents/step-parents **thrive**
- Describe a useful metaphor for working with parents/step-parents in the aftermath of ‘messy’ separations
- Identify some potential pitfalls for therapists working in this space



A little about us...

The Sydney ACT Centre

- Sydney CBD
- ACT treatment, coaching and supervision
- Individuals and couples
- Variety of presentations



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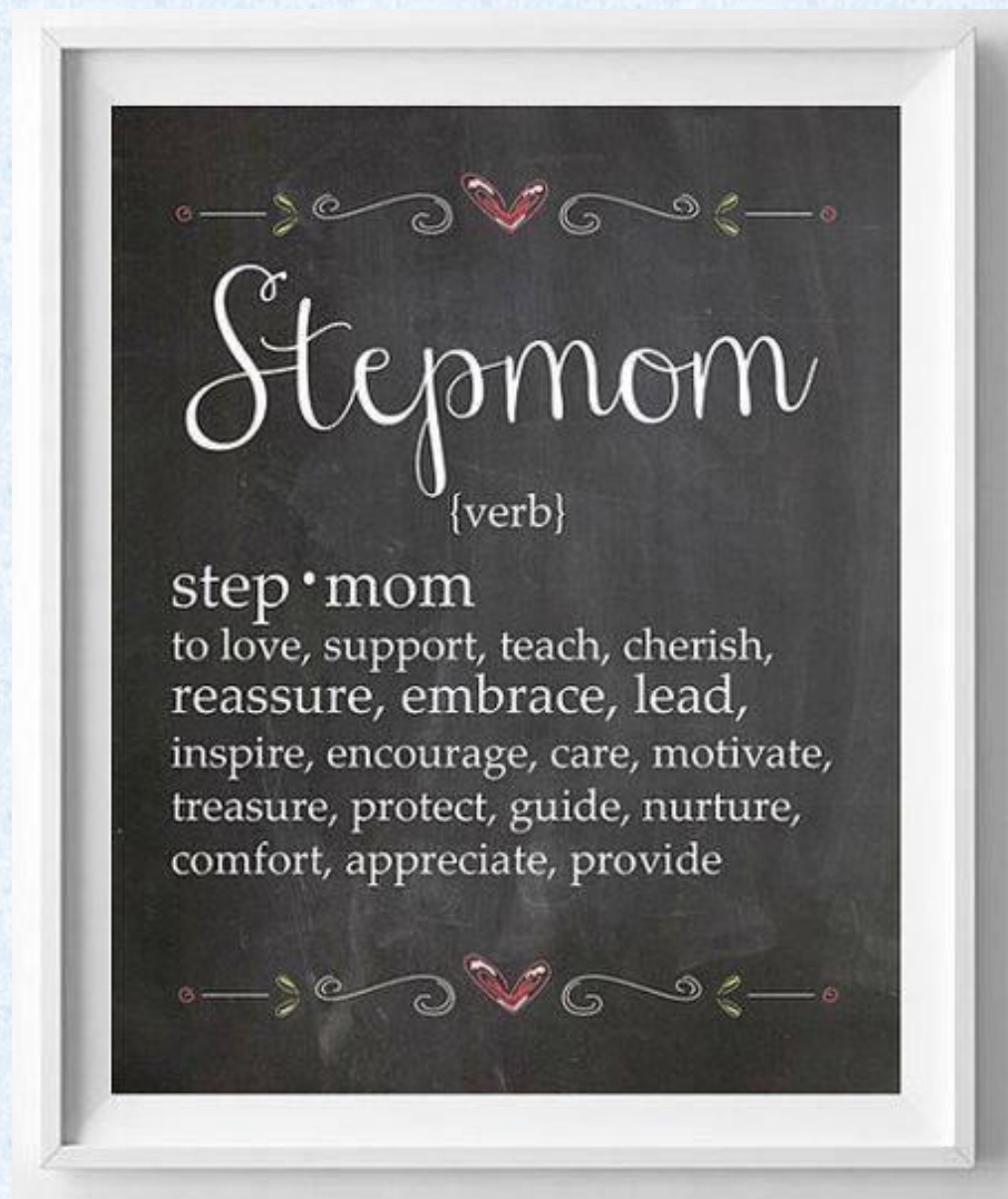
www.stepqueen.com

They're expected to keep everything smooth and under control, without anybody knowing that they're there

stepqueen



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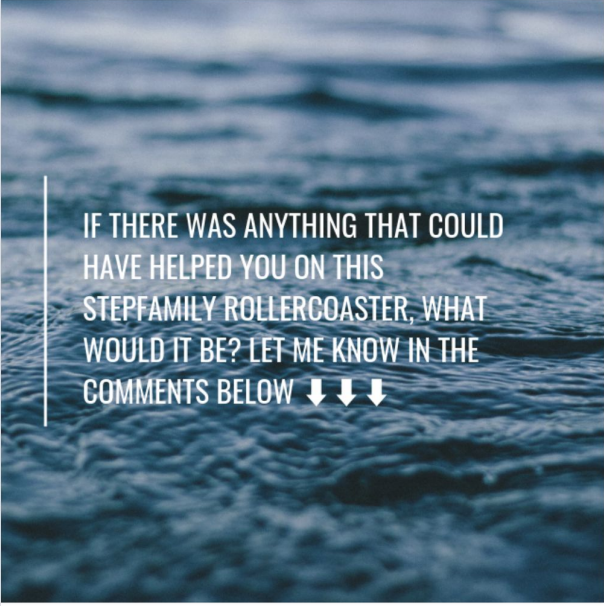
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IF THERE WAS ANYTHING THAT COULD HAVE HELPED YOU ON THIS STEPFAMILY ROLLERCOASTER, WHAT WOULD IT BE? LET ME KNOW IN THE COMMENTS BELOW ↓ ↓ ↓

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Ask Stepfamilies Australia

"Is anyone available to chat?" Ask

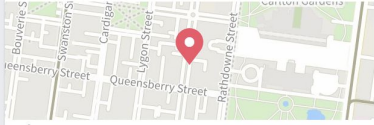
"I have a question. Can you help?" Ask

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Context:

- Messy, scary and exhausting – often for years
- No simple answers and no winners
- Not gender specific – gatekeeping usually relates to primary residence
- Not discussing access in the context of violence
- We only work with one piece of the puzzle
- We're in the soup and have lived this – though not as experts in separation nor loyalty conflicts. Our clients choose us quite randomly!

NUTS:

NOVELTY – Something you haven't experienced before

UNPREDICTABILITY – Something you had no way of knowing would occur

THREAT TO THE EGO – your safety or competence as a person is called into question

SENSE OF CONTROL – You feel you have little or no control over the situation



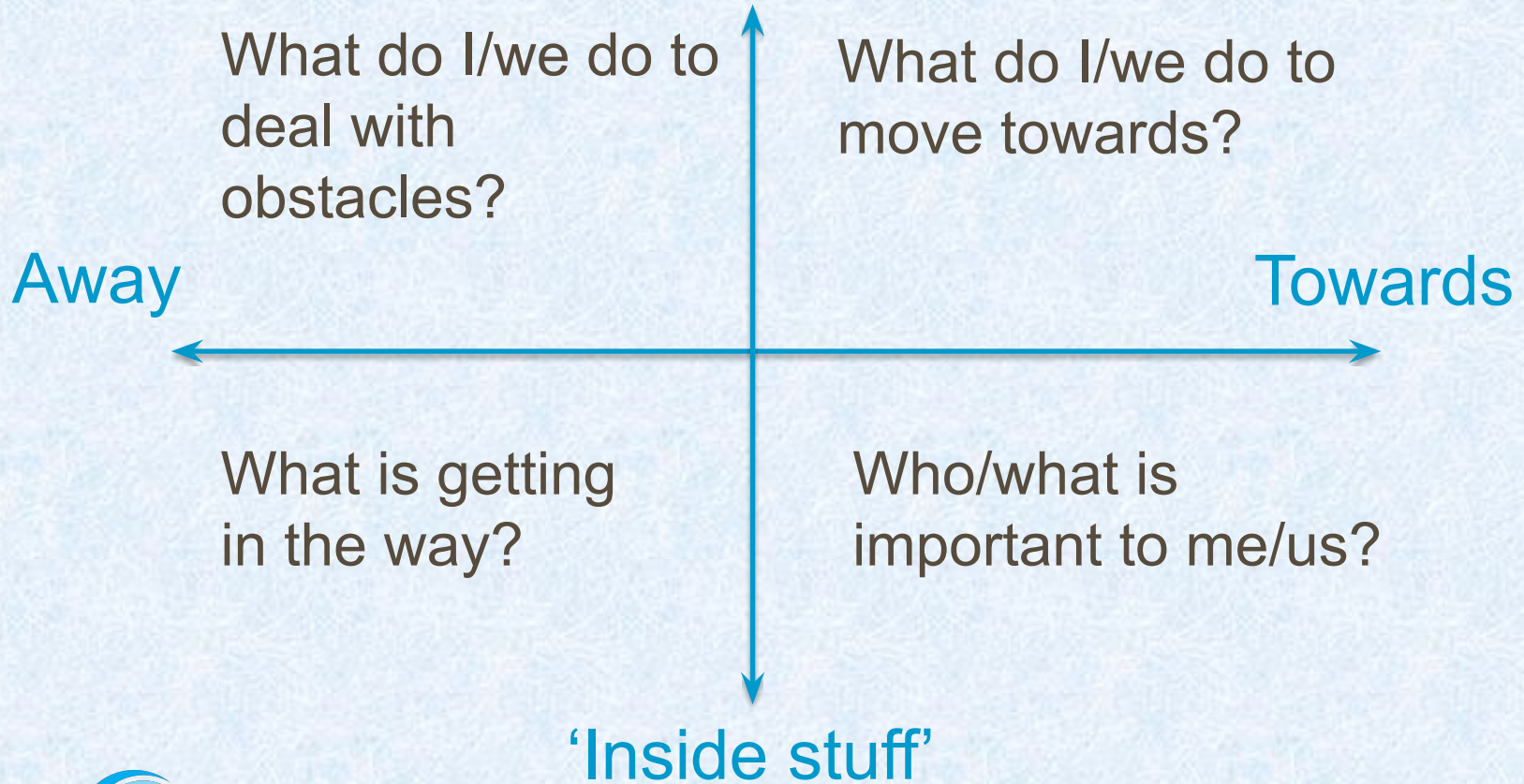
The ACT question:

How can we encourage action that, instead of movement away from core values, helps parents (individuals and couples) move towards the life/intimate relationships that matter most to them.



The Matrix:

‘Outside stuff’ (five senses)





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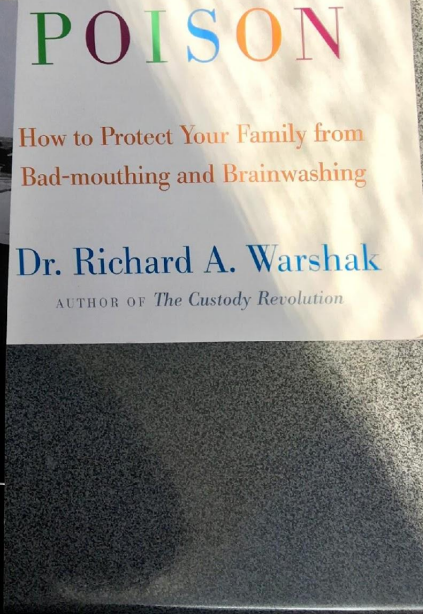
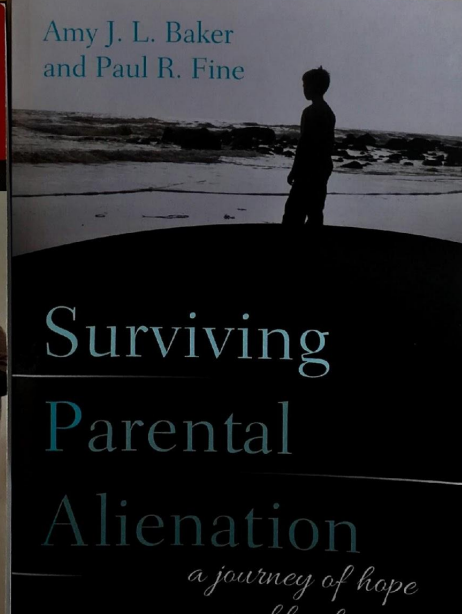
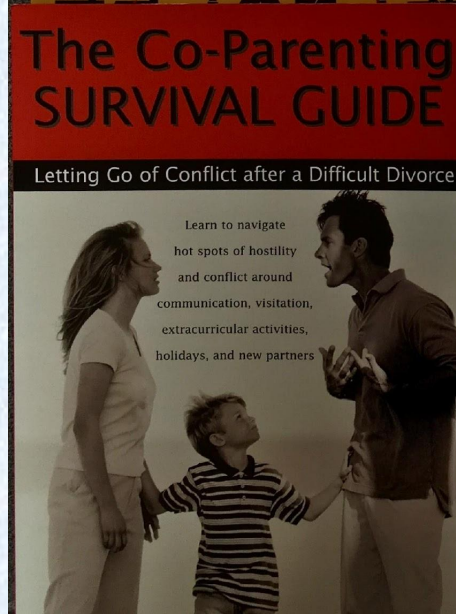
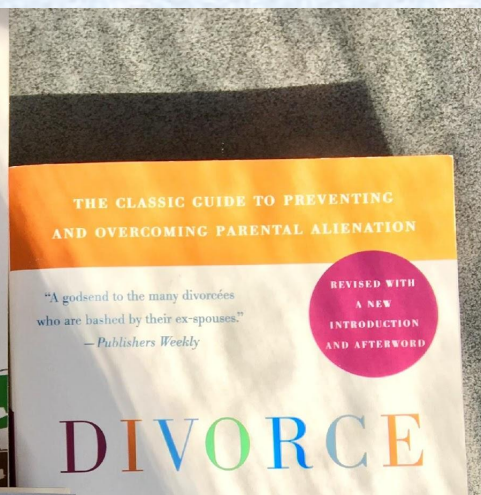
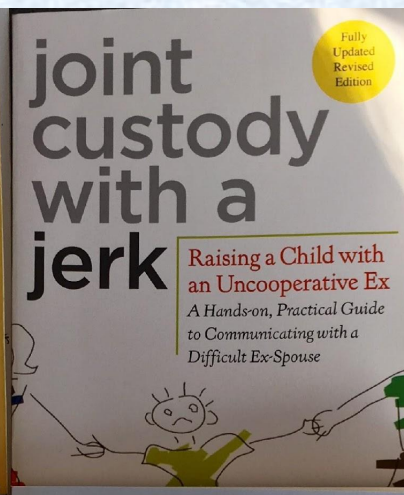
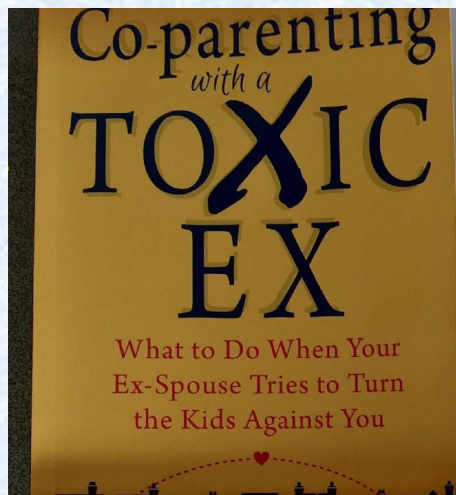


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