

though Mom and I are going to get divorced, Mom's always going to be your mom and I'm always going to be your dad. We're going to be working together to take care of you until you're grown up. Mothers and fathers sometimes get divorced, but children and parents *never* do. You're going to be living with Mom on Sunday through Wednesday and with me on Thursday through Saturday."

Children's single biggest concern: Fear of abandonment by one or both parents. A thorough explanation of what is happening gives children concrete reassurance of their continued relationship with both parents. It's critical to present it at the time of the separation and repeatedly thereafter.

More suggestions: Give the children a calendar on which you have circled the days of the week they will be with you and the days they'll be with their mother. Take them to your new home and show them the room or space you've set up for them. Use statements such as "This is your bed, this is your dresser, this chest is for your toys." Making concrete both when and where they'll be seeing you is very reassuring to them.

GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR EX

About one-third of parents recognize that no matter how they feel about their former spouse, the children need love and support from both parents. Another third can see that the child needs a good relationship with both parents, but their anger gets in the way. Another third fight with their ex through the children by undermining the other parent's relationship with the child or by making the child choose between parents.

Goal: Not to take out destructive feelings about your ex-spouse on your kids.

Step one: Say to your ex-wife (who may or may not listen), "We need to work together in Johnny's best interests. I'll support you in your relationship with him, and I want you to support me in mine. I assure you that I'm not going to try to get him to choose between us. I want to know that your attitude is the same."

Step two: This is the hard one. If your ex-wife is undermining your relationship with your child, you need to confront her. Tell her you're not undermining her parenting authority with the children, and ask her to support your parenting role as well. Even if she continues to undermine you, *don't reciprocate.*

Children whose parents are fighting

over them have in effect lost both parents. If one parent avoids attacking, children are still sad, but they're not clinically depressed or likely to be into drugs or promiscuity. As long as one parent provides what I call an "island of psychological contact," children will do all right.

What parents don't realize: When children forced to choose reach adolescence or early adulthood, they become furious with the parent who manipulated them. They are likely to seek a renewed relationship with the excluded parent, rejecting the other. ■

Morphology

Dr. Gerald N. Epstein Reading Faces

Reading faces is part of the science of morphology (the study of face and body). It can help you quickly understand how a person thinks, why he behaves as he does and what his needs are.

Morphology was practiced in ancient Egypt, Greece and Israel. It is used today in China and is included in formal medical training in France. *Its special value:* It's a quick way to zero in on a patient's physical and psychological problems. . . adding substantially to his own statement.

Reading a face means more than just looking at the expression (smile, frown, etc.). The reader must also carefully observe the shape of the face (both front view and profile), the musculature and the proportions of the features.

BASIC FACE SHAPES

Front view:

• **Square.** Feisty, pugnacious, practical, materialistic. *James Cagney.*

• **Rectangular.** Gregarious, social, action-oriented, easily bored. *Ronald Reagan.*

• **Triangular.** Quick-minded and quick-witted, charming, elegant. Show-biz types and entertainers. *Woody Allen. Long triangle:* Philosophical, communicative. *Fred Astaire.*

• **Trapezoidal.** Meticulous and thorough,

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hypersexual, willful, slow to act. *Clint Eastwood. Long trapezoid:* Far-thinking, creative (especially in the area of intellect and ideas), charismatic. *Meryl Streep. Reverse trapezoid:* Benevolent, paternal, devotional, generous, tolerant. *George Schultz.*

• **Hexagonal.** Loyal, care-taking, aggressive, money-making. *Ginger Rogers.*


• **Oval.** Idealistic, detached, born to lead. *Grace Kelly.*


• **Round.** Poetical, lyrical, maternal, rhythm is slow, dreamy. *Linda Ronstadt.*


• **Lozenge-shaped.** Spunky, conciliatory, talkative, involved with social causes, family-oriented. *Elizabeth Taylor.*


• **Oblong.** Artistic in music and art, spiritual, dreamy. *Duke Ellington.*

Side view:

 • **Bilious.** Conquering, domineering, brooding and ruminating. Doesn't require much sleep. Active constructor—needs to make things happen. *Napoleon.*

 • **Sanguine.** Action-oriented, fickle, good merchant. Establishes superficial relationships. Aesthetic and body-oriented. Sanguine types are not terribly philosophical, and they think analytically. They don't like long-range planning. America is now a sanguine culture (concentrating on body fitness), led by sanguine types like *Ronald Reagan.*

 • **Lymphatic.** Kind, tolerant of all other types. Listens to his own drummer. Prefers ideas to physical activity. Not an initiator, but companionable, accepting of what life offers, autocratic, dogmatic. . . and a great organizer. *George Washington.*

 • **Nervous.** Darts in and out, doesn't like being in groups for long periods, tends to be reclusive. Artistic in an imitative rather than an original way, sensitive, a great communicator. Needs to be applauded, acknowledged and adulated. Responds to events rather than initiating them. Has a highly evolved intellect and great perception but has trouble sustaining things. *Woody Allen.*

USING MORPHOLOGY

Personal: Parents can quickly tune in to what their child needs.

Example: Recognize that a lymphatic child won't be interested in baseball or in any other physical activity.

Business: In France, personnel directors use morphology to help select employees.

Example: If you're looking for a bookkeeper or an organizer, hire a lymphatic type. For sales, sanguines are best. In advertising, nervous types make good copywriters and packagers. And bosses are usually bilious types—natural leaders. ■