



START WITH A JOKE. THE LAWYER SAYS: "MY CLIENT WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE A LONG DRAWN-OUT CUSTARDY BATTLE" ... BUT TODAY'S TOPIC IS NO JOKE ... NO ROOM FOR HUMOUR IN TRIBAL WARFARE. .... AND WHEN YOU'RE ...>>

# **RIDING THE WILD WATERS OF FAMILY SEPARATION**



Life jackets are essential ~

.... SO MY OPENING OVERVIEW IS A LIFE JACKET FOR YOU. .... BTW THESE GUYS ARE DOING THIS FOR FUN ... HIGH CONFLICT SEPARATION IS NOT FUN ... NOBODY – NO CHILD, NO PARENT, NO PROFESSIONAL – WILLINGLY CHOOSES HIGH CONFLICT SEPARATION OR ALIENATION. SO: NO HUMOUR, NO CHOICE, NO FUN ... TODAY LOOKS GRIM ALREADY! ...>>

# A LIFE JACKET ... BASIC SURVIVAL TIPS



1. A Definition
2. Brief Cases
3. Key Bullet Points
4. Why Study PA?
5. What We Can Do
6. Further Learning ~

~ THIS DOWNLOAD LATER WILL ALLOW YOU, THE READER, TO GO THROUGH THE SLIDES AND NOTES AT YOUR OWN PACE – WITH FULLER CLEAR NOTES (THAN NICK’S RUSHED CONFERENCE AD LIB) ...

.... THIS IS A PACKED SUMMARY OF THE FIELD AS I KNOW IT – CREDIT TO ROY MACKAY: WE’VE TAUGHT EACH OTHER ALL WE KNOW! I MAY FIRE THE BULLET POINTS, BUT WE SHARED THE PRODUCTION LINE.

Are you ready?!



## **PARENTAL ALIENATION: NICK'S DEFINITION**

- **Parental Alienation is a family pattern**
- **most strikingly (but not only) found in the context of high conflict separations,**
  - **where a child is shaped into totally rejecting the other parent and their tribe,**
- **even though the child previously had, and could still have, a safe and valued relationship with them ~**

~ "SHAPED" ... BECAUSE IT'S A NEUTRAL TERM THAT INCLUDES A RANGE OF THINGS.

PURE ALIENATION IS RARE ... IT ALSO GETS CALLED ...>>

## **... OR CHILD ALIENATION ~**

- “It’s when one parent turns their child against the other”
- Typically: The child strongly rejects one parent on a flimsy basis ~, driven by the aligned parent and their overwhelmingly strong and needy personality ~
- Terms like Child Alienation or Children Resisting Contact work better. But Parental Alienation has stuck
- Alienation is one end of the closeness spectrum that everyone knows – egs “I was close to my father”; your teen’s peer choice ~
  - So Attachment-based explanation and approaches work well
    - Gardner listed 8 features of rarer pure PAS ~
  - Most people have dropped the simplistic “Syndrome” tag ~

~ USING THE WORD “CHILD” EMPHASISES THE PRIORITY .... ALIENATION IS AN OFF-PUTTING WORD .... WHEN PEOPLE REMAIN PUZZLED, AND YOU SAY: IT’S WHEN etc ... THEY OFTEN SAY “OH, I KNOW SOMEONE WITH THAT!”

~ OFTEN NORMAL FRUSTRATIONS OF FAMILY LIFE – EG SHE GETS ANGRY, HE SLAMS DOORS

~ THE OVERWHELMINGLY STRONG PERSONALITY GETS GIVEN AWFULLY NEGATIVE LABELS LIKE “NARCISSISTIC PD” ... OR ELSE THEY GET HUGE SYMPATHY ... WHICH IS WHAT THEIR CHILD GIVES

~ TO MAKE ALIENATION SEEM LESS ALIEN, IMAGINE YOU DON’T LIKE YOUR TEENAGER’S CHOICE OF PEER GROUP OR BOY/GIRLFRIEND - YOU MAY SHOW YOUR FEELINGS AND TAKE STEPS TO INFLUENCE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AND LOYALTY TO YOU. YOU’LL SAY “IT’S FOR THEIR OWN GOOD” ... WHICH IS ALSO WHAT ANY ALIENATING PARENT WOULD SAY. THE POINT IS THE PATTERN IS ONLY DIFFERENT IN DEGREE FROM GOOD PARENTING.

~ GARDNER’S LIST IS STILL USEFUL THOUGH MOST CASES ARE MULTIFACTORIAL OR HYBRID

## WHEN LAYERS OF ADULT CONFLICT CRUSH THE CHILD ~



MY WAY OF TELLING IT (AS A SHORTHAND FOR A SHORT OVERVIEW) SEES PA AS A NATURAL OUTCOME OF A HIGH CONFLICT SYSTEM WITH LAYER ON LAYER OF ADULTS – MAYBE PA-UNAWARE THERAPISTS TOO – ALL ESCALATING THIS POLARISING TRIBAL CONFLICT WITH A CHILD IN THE MIDDLE AND EVERYONE LOOKING TO THE CHILD'S VOICE TO DECLARE THE WINNER. THEY SAY 1 IN 10 SEPARATIONS ARE HIGH CONFLICT LIKE THIS (MEANING THAT THE CONFLICT ENDURES AND FAMILY COURTS ARE INVOLVED). DO REMEMBER THAT HIGH CONFLICT SEPARATION GOES WITH A HIGH RISK OF ACTUAL PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE FOR ALL PARTIES.

.... NB THE TUG OF WAR IMAGE IS NOT SATISFACTORY: IT IMPLIES BOTH PARENTS ARE EQUALLY UNCOLLABORATIVE – ALLOWING PEOPLE TO DISMISS THEM: "WELL WHAT CAN ANYONE DO WITH THEM?!". IT ONLY TAKES ONE PARENT TO BE NONCOLLABORATIVE TO CREATE HIGH CONFLICT.

..... IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS ONE... >> <<...

**... IT IS NO SURPRISE WHEN THIS  
HAPPENS ...**



..... THE CHILD OPTS TO CLING TO ONE SIDE AND DROP THE OTHER PARENT. WHERE THIS HAPPENS WITHOUT GOOD PAST OR PRESENT REASON TO DROP ONE SIDE, THIS IS ALIENATION. IT IS SAID TO BE RARE – 1/10 OF THE HIGH CONFLICT COURT CASES, ie 1/100 SEPARATIONS . .... SO AN INTERESTING ... >>



**... SO AN INTERESTING  
QUESTION IS ...**



... Why does this happen so rarely?!!



>> QUESTION IS: ...

... YOU'D THINK IT WOULD HAPPEN QUITE A LOT