

THE CO-PARENT'S MANIFESTO™

12 PRINCIPLES EVERY CO-PARENT SHOULD FOLLOW
FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR KIDS

A WORK_(IT OUT)BOOK™

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Fellow Co-Parents:

A manifesto is a declaration of intent. As co-parents, none of us are perfect by any means, but our good intentions and best efforts matter greatly to our children. In the pages that follow, you will find a declaration of 12 intentions, a Co-Parent's Manifesto, that we hope you'll embrace as blueprint for your parenting partnership. We know first-hand that these principles, in action, can facilitate healing and positive outcomes for children and for the adults who are parenting them across two households. The Co-Parent's Manifesto is a set of beliefs and commitments that put children where they belong—at the center, the heart, of the co-parenting partnership—without putting them in the middle of parental conflict. We hope that you'll embrace these principles and make the commitment to cooperation and civility that your child not only deserves, but that will allow him or her to thrive.

You'll note that the title of this e-book refers to a singular co-parent, and this is not incidental. This Manifesto is a personal commitment. Regardless of the actions (or inaction) of your child's other parent, we invite you to commit to upholding the principles outlined in these pages, for two very simple, very important reasons: because they are in your child's best interest, and because your child is worth it.

Peace to you and your family along your co-parenting journey.

Talibah, Deesha, and Michael

I believe...Children benefit from having both fit and willing parents play an active role in their lives.

List 5 ways your children can or do benefit from having you actively involved in their lives:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

List 5 ways your children can or do benefit from having their other parent involved in their lives:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

How would **your children** say they can or do benefit from having both of you in their lives?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

I believe...Children should be allowed and encouraged to love both parents freely.

Draw the family from your perspective.

Now, draw the family from your child's perspective.

I will...bury the old intimate relationship with my ex and nurture my new co-parenting partnership.

What do or will you miss about the relationship?

What won't you miss about the relationship?

What would you gain by letting go and moving on?

I believe...Someone can be a terrible mate but a good parent.

List 3 of **your co-parent's** parenting strengths.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Now...rate **yourself** on each strength.

1 = Lousy; 10 =Master

- 1) **Strength 1:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 - 2) **Strength 2:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 - 3) **Strength 3:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
-

OK...Now, list 3 of **your** parenting strengths.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Now...rate **your co-parent** on each one.

1 = Lousy; 10 =Master

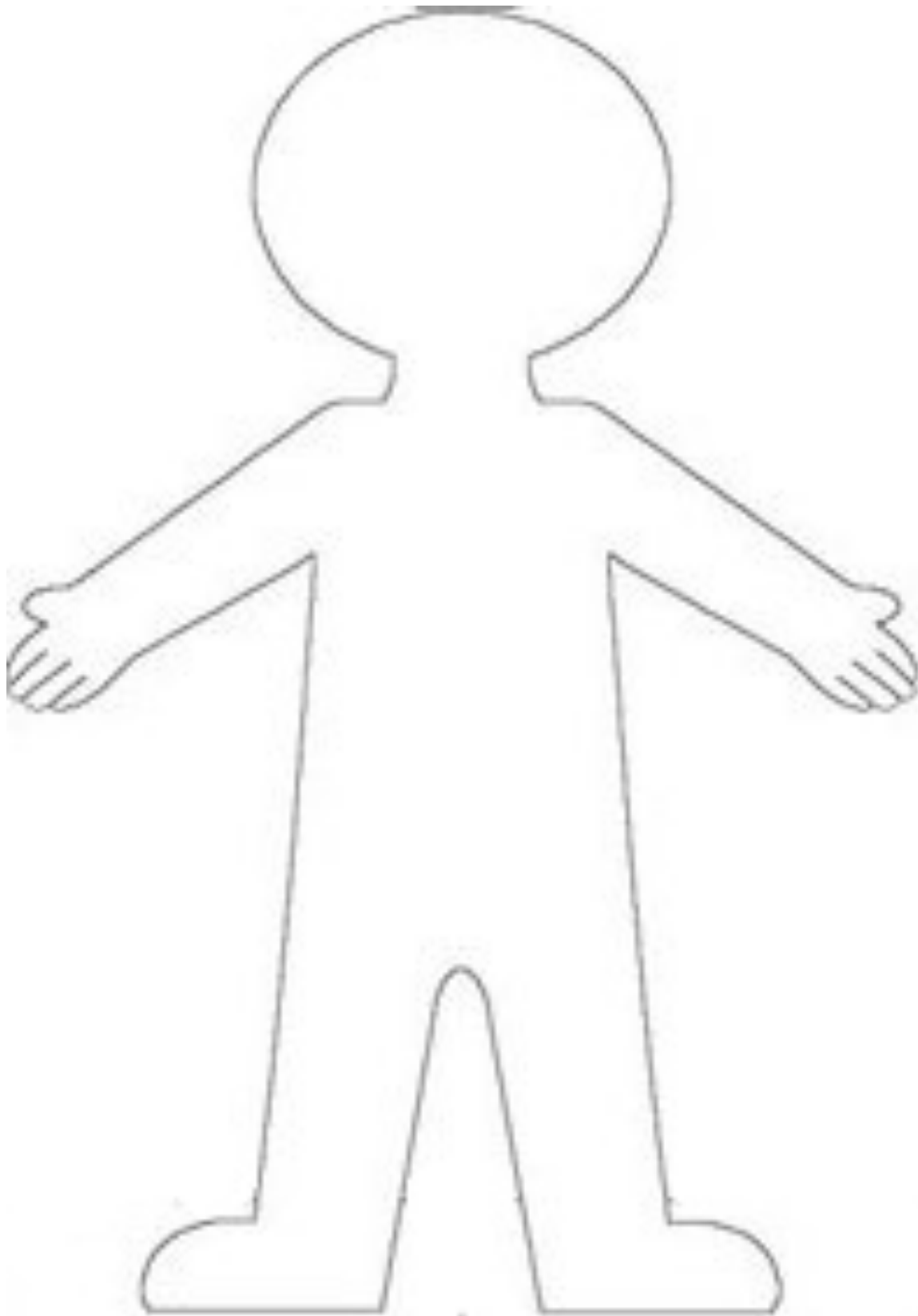
- 1) **Strength 1:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 2) **Strength 2:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 3) **Strength 3:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10 Words Describing My Co-Parent	10 Words Describing Me

Turn to the next page for
Part 2 of this exercise.

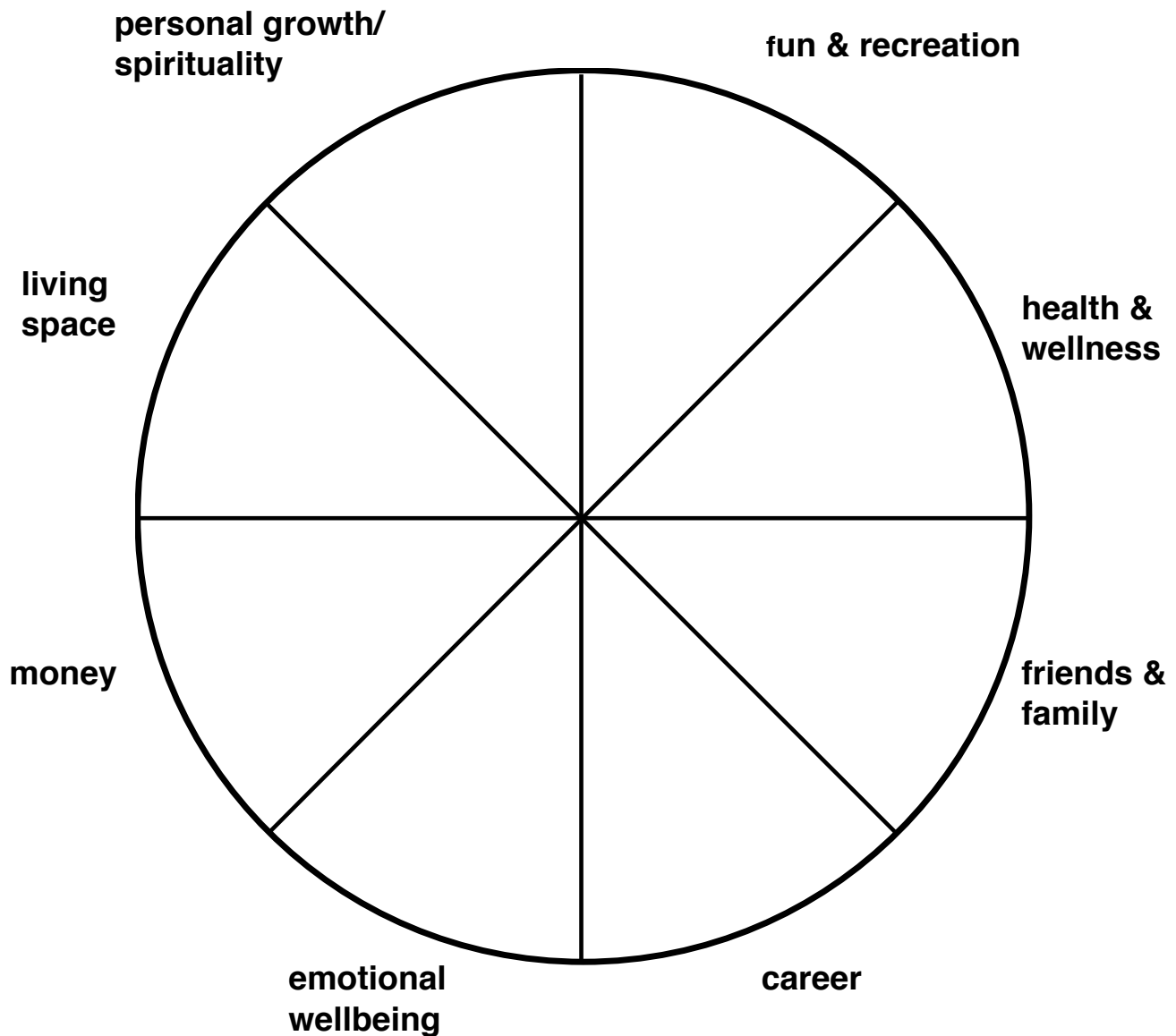
I will not...badmouth my child's other parent to my child or in such a way that my child overhears. I can vent about my child's other parent to a trusted friend when little ears aren't listening.

Copy the list describing your co-parent on the right side of the child below. Now, copy the list describing you on the left.



Now, tear the child in half and throw away the bad half.

I will...take good care of my mind, body and spirit. This allows me to be the best parent I can be.



Seeing the center of the wheel as 0 and the outer edges as 10, rate your level of satisfaction with each life area by drawing a straight or curved line to create a new outer edge. The new perimeter represents the wheel of your life. If this were a real wheel, how bumpy would the ride be?

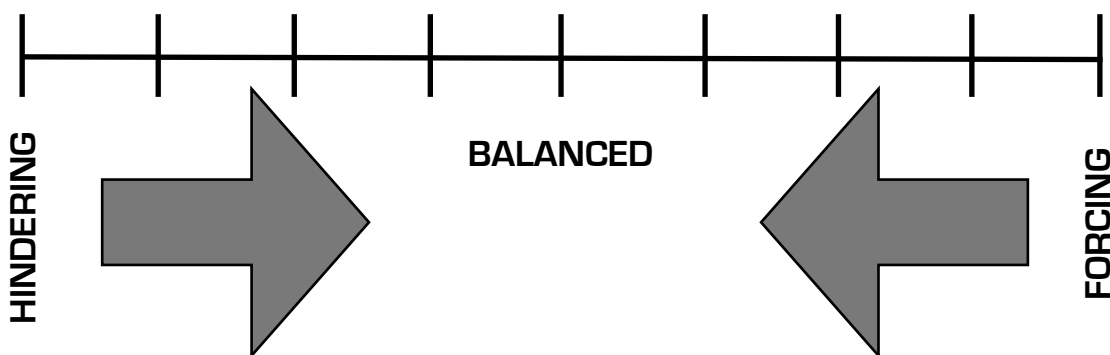
PRINCIPLE 6

For each area of your life, ask yourself, “What changes do I want to make to increase my satisfaction?” Write down one answer for each section that will significantly alter the quality of your life. Then, for each, list one action you can take within the next 24 hours. Commit to taking action...and get going!

Life Area	Change	Action
fun & recreation		
health & wellness		
friends & family		
career		
emotional wellbeing		
money		
living space		
personal growth/ spirituality		

I believe...My child's relationship with the other parent is the other parent's responsibility. I won't hinder it, and I won't force it.

Indicate the nature of your involvement in your child's relationship with his/her other parent by placing an X in the appropriate place.



<p>What fears might be driving your efforts? How might you move closer to the middle?</p>	<p>What's working for you? What advice could you share with another parent?</p>	<p>What fears might be driving your efforts? How might you move closer to the middle?</p>
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I believe...Even if the other parent is uncooperative or disengaged, I still have the power to positively influence the degree to which our child is exposed to parental conflict.

What are the top 3 conflicts that consistently show up in your co-parenting relationship?

What are some strategies you use/can use to gracefully exit an unproductive conversation with your co-parent?

What is your usual response to conflict with your co-parent?

I believe...I can only control my responses and my household.

PRINCIPLE 9

Things My Co-Parent Does at Home that I Don't Like...and Can't Control	Ways I Can Have a Positive Influence on My Children at my Home

I believe...As a co-parent, I am modeling for my child how to handle conflict, disappointment, anger and personal relationships.

What do I want my children to understand about handling difficult emotions and personal relationships?

What are my children learning from me today?

How can I be an even better model for my children?

I believe...It's never too late to turn over a new co-parenting leaf.



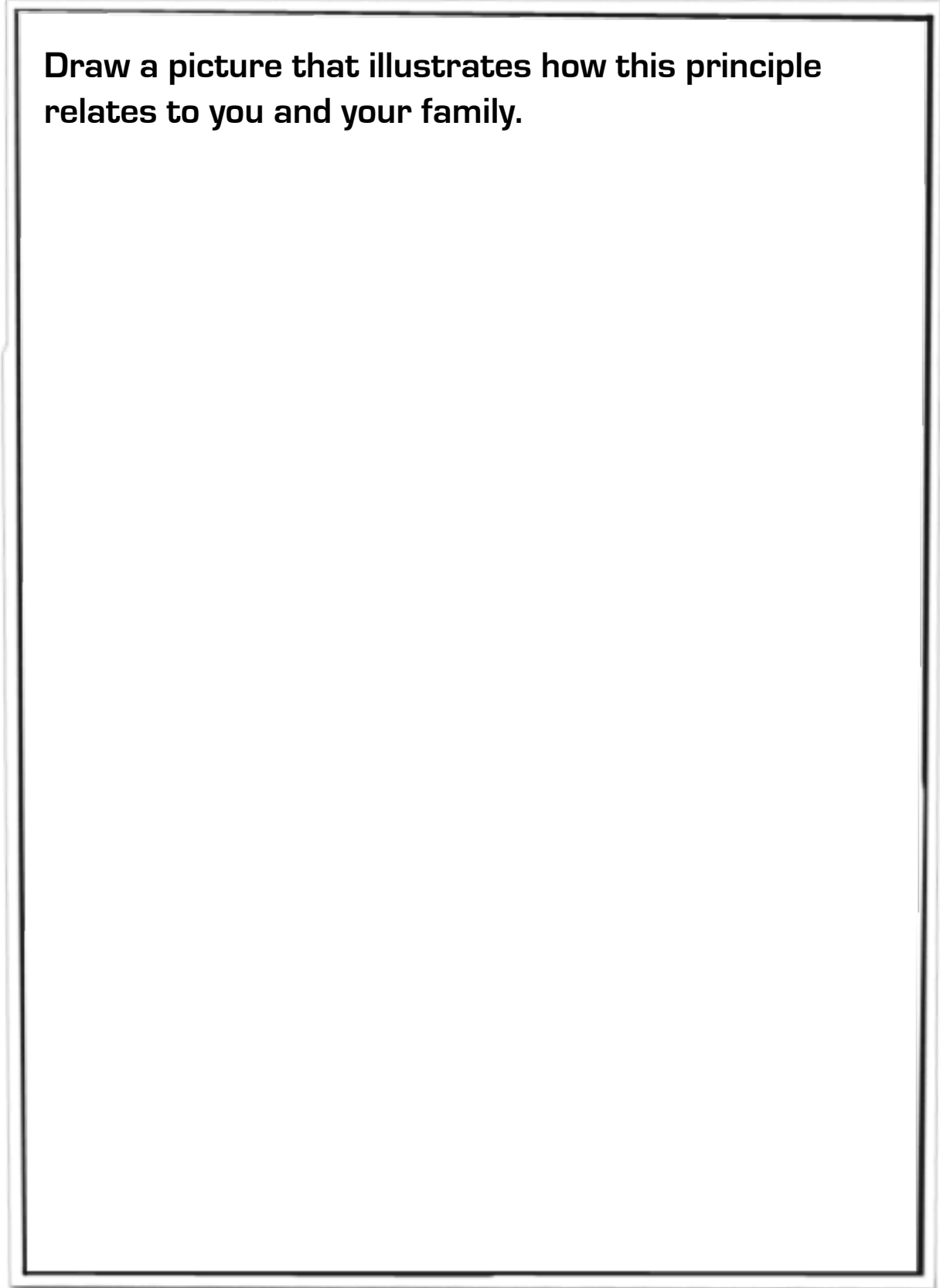
Today I am turning over a new co-parenting leaf by making the following changes:

To:

Address this letter to your children. Share your commitment with them.

I believe...co-parenting is a journey. It's not about me...and yet it is.

Draw a picture that illustrates how this principle relates to you and your family.



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2. I believe...children should be allowed and encouraged to love both parents freely.
3. I will...bury the old intimate relationship with my ex and nurture my new co-parenting partnership.
4. I believe...someone can be a terrible mate, but a good parent.
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