

Co-Parenting with an Extractor

The daily reality – communication,
handovers and protecting your children

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You cannot change what happens in their home. You can build what happens in yours.

If you are co-parenting with someone who has the extraction pattern – whether through informal arrangements or a court order – this guide covers the daily reality. Not the legal process (see the Family Court Survival Guide) but the ongoing management of a person you cannot cut from your life because your children connect you.

1. Parallel Parenting, Not Co-Parenting

Co-parenting requires cooperation from both parties. If one party is extracting, cooperation is impossible – it will be exploited. The realistic model is **parallel parenting**: each household operates independently with minimal communication. You do not need to agree on bedtimes, screen time or homework routines. You need to agree on essentials – school, medical care, safety – and let everything else go.

2. Communication

Move everything to writing. Email or a co-parenting app (OurFamilyWizard, AppClose). Writing defeats gaslighting, defeats word salad, defeats DARVO – because there is a record. Keep messages brief, informative, friendly and firm (the BIFF method). Answer what needs answering. Ignore what doesn't. Do not JADE – justify, argue, defend or explain.

Example: “The children will be ready for collection at 10am Saturday. Please confirm.” Not: “I’ve told you three times about Saturday and you never respond, which is really disrespectful to the children and to me.”

3. Handovers

Public location if possible – a café, a supermarket car park. Brief. Neutral. Yellow rock (warm but not engaging). Focus your attention on the child, not the other parent. “Have a lovely time! See you Sunday.” If the other parent tries to engage, “Let’s keep things smooth for the kids.” Then disengage.

4. When Children Come Back Upset

First thirty minutes: warmth, food, routine. No interrogation. When they are ready: “How was your time?” Open-ended, non-leading. Note what they say – verbatim where possible – factually, with date and time. If there is a safeguarding concern, contact social services or police. If it is distress rather than danger, document and discuss with your solicitor or therapist. Do not withhold contact without legal advice.

5. Protecting Your Children's Inner World

Your home is the safe house. Consistency, calm, unconditional acceptance. They do not have to manage your emotions. They do not have to perform. They can be children. Watch for parentification – children managing the extracting parent's feelings – and provide the opposite: a space where their feelings come first.

Never disparage the other parent. Even when it is true. Even when they are disparaging you. Your children will work it out. Not now – it may take years. Your dignity under pressure is the most powerful lesson you can give them.

6. The Long View

Children of extractors need at least one stable, emotionally available parent. That is you. The architecture you build when they are with you matters more than you can measure right now. By the time they are old enough to see both parents clearly, what they will remember is who was steady, who was honest and who made them feel safe.

Where to go next

If you are in immediate danger: call 999 or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (24 hours, free).

Free guides at www.trueregard.com: The Good Faith Problem · Recognising Covert Narcissism · Waking Up · What Is Happening to You · Family Court Survival Guide · Personal Protection Toolkit · Professional Toolkits.

The full framework: *The Extraction Pattern* and *The Capture: How They Stole America* by Vaughan Smith. www.trueregard.com/the-books.

Share this. The pattern survives through isolation. Every copy shared rebuilds the grandmother.

THE EXTRACTION PATTERN

Vaughan Smith

The five per cent who design extraction. The ninety-five per cent who live inside it. The architecture that could contain it.

THE CAPTURE

Vaughan Smith

How They Stole America. The extraction pattern captured democracy, economy, healthcare, media and accountability – domain by domain.

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