

THE 3 STEP METHOD

3 ways to help your child understand what's happening...without blame

THIS GUIDE IS FOR YOU IF...

- Your child has a parent with **narcissistic traits,** and you're worried about how this might affect them
- Your child doesn't seem quite okay when **transitioning between homes,** and you want to support them better
- You can feel **something isn't quite right** for your child, even if you can't fully explain it
- Your child is **slowly changing or adapting** to meet the needs of their other parent, and you're not sure how to help
- You're worried about **saying too much, saying the wrong thing,** or making things more confusing for them



Children **do notice things.**

But it's rarely true that children simply **"figure it out" on their own.**

Emotionally, they're **not yet able to make full sense** of what they're experiencing. They don't always have **the language for it.** They don't always understand the **feelings in their body,** or how to express it.

And that's why I often see **adults later in life** trying to understand the impact of confusing adult behaviour from their childhood.

I'm not saying this to **worry you.**

I'm saying it because there's probably already **a part of you that's thinking about this.**

That's why you're here.

And that's exactly why **your child is lucky to have you.**

01. NOTICE WHAT'S HAPPENING (BEFORE YOU TRY TO FIX IT)

This is the step most parents skip.

We want to jump in and correct things straight away... but first, we need to understand what's really happening.

Because children don't just experience things...they start to make sense of them in their own way

YOU MIGHT HEAR THINGS LIKE THIS

"I don't want to upset them"

"I think it's my fault"

"I just said yes so they'd be happy"

"I'll just do what they want"

"I think I did something wrong"

YOU MIGHT NOTICE THINGS LIKE THIS:

becoming quieter or more watchful of others

trying harder to please you

avoiding certain topics or conversations

acting differently after seeing the other parent



HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Instead of correcting... you gently notice.

And sometimes, you say it out loud to help your child notice it too.

"Hmm... I noticed you went a bit quiet then"

"That seemed a bit confusing for you"

This helps your child feel seen and understood, without the pressure to do anything about it.

02. CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR CONNECTION (BEFORE ANY BIG CONVERSATIONS)

Before we say anything... this part matters more than most parents realise.

Children don't open up because we ask the right question.

They open up when something feels safe, normal, and unforced.

Children are very good at picking up on what we're trying to do.

If it feels like there's an agenda, or like we're trying to get something out of them... they'll often shut down.

THIS IS ABOUT SMALL. EVERYDAY CONNECTION

short natural moments

not adding pressure

no big conversations

Just 5 minutes a day is enough.

THIS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- chatting about their day
- colouring together
- building or playing together
- talking about a character in a story or programme



KEEP IT SIMPLE:

TV off. IPads away. Keep noise and distractions to a minimum

You're not digging.

You're not leading.

You're just creating space for them to feel comfortable enough to talk...when they're ready.

03. OPEN THE CONVERSATION SAFELY (THIS IS WHERE LANGUAGE MATTERS MOST)

This is the part most parents feel unsure about.

You don't want to say too much.
You don't want to say the wrong thing.
You don't want to make things more confusing.



It's often around this point that children start to talk and open up.

Before jumping in to explain anything, focus on helping your child make sense of how things feel.

Big feelings can be hard for children to understand.

Anxious feelings might feel like:

- a shake inside
- a funny feeling in their chest
- buzzing bees inside

Worry can feel like a twisting tummy.

Confusion can feel like a jumbled head, or like their brain is working too hard

You're helping them find words for what's happening inside.

Not explaining it for them.

You're not telling them what to think.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER:

You don't need to get this perfect.

These conversations happen in small moments, over time.

And what matters most is that your child knows:

- there is always a chance to talk
- there is always someone who will listen
- and there is always time to make sense of their feelings in their own way

As they begin to understand their feelings, you can gently start to reframe what's happening.

For example, instead of:
"Your dad/mum shouldn't have done that"

You might say:
"Sometimes grown-ups don't handle things in the best way"

A LITTLE ABOUT ME & MY STORIES



These books were originally written for my own children.

At the time, I had recently left a very difficult relationship, and I began to notice changes in their behaviour.

One of my children became very quiet and compliant. The other was having big feelings and meltdowns she didn't yet know how to manage.

And I didn't know how to have those conversations.
I didn't want to point blame.
I didn't want to confuse them.

And I didn't want them to feel shame or responsibility for something that wasn't for them to worry about.

So I started to think about a different way.

A way to talk about these things safely using language that was calm, child-appropriate, and easy to understand.

They allowed my children to see parts of their own life reflected back to them, without it being about them directly.

To understand what they were feeling, without being told what to think.

You can find my books here:
Head to my Instagram **@ashlingpodmoreofficial**
(check the "**Sam Books**" highlight)

ASHLING