



*“A grandparent is talking with their grandchild and says there are two wolves inside of us which are always at war with each other. One of them represents things like peace, bravery, and love. The other represents things like upset, despair, and fear. The grandchild stops and thinks about it for a second. The grandchild asks, ‘Which one wins?’ The grandparent quietly replies, ‘The one you feed.’” - Parable of Two Wolves*

I was recently looking through some Facebook posts in the groups I belong to that address parental alienation and I was struck by one person’s post in particular. It was a targeted parent who had taken a photo of themselves while expressing great distress over the loss of the child in their life. This really struck me because my experience of being targeted has certainly resulted in times where I have experienced great anguish as well. While it is helpful to know we are not alone I think this is not a useful thing to post or encourage others to do. This anguish and this pain is exactly what the alienators want to cause. It not only gives them satisfaction, it gives them a sense of power and it causes more discord between us and our children. It perpetuates a soul-killing cycle.

Over the last couple of years of my own situation and listening to others, I think it is important to be aware as to how we may perpetuate the dynamic. I suspect it may be that part of the reason we ended up with alienators is because of an internal dynamic going on with us that although horrific—is also familiar. I suspect some of us realize this and are taking steps to make our own internal experience more stable, while others may think it is

happening “to” them and they by and large feel like victims. I am *not* saying that the alienators are not perpetrating emotional and psychological abuse, but my experience is that if I perceive something as only happening “to” me then I have no ability to stop or change it. I can’t have that experience and be there for my child with the very limited time I have with them.

Instead, I am very focused on how I can be more of the person I am when I feel whole and connected—and stay focused on being that way when my child is around me. I do this through finding anything I can to be grateful for (like health, the fact that my child is in my life), staying connected with others who want the same things and taking care of myself on a daily basis as best I can. I believe it has made a world of difference in my child’s experience and why they have not rejected me even though their mother has been going to extraordinary lengths to try and erase me from their life. □I know some of us don’t have any contact but I think that we can always get to a better place and leave doors open.

I don’t know what the future will bring - I am cautiously optimistic things will get better as the court system is finally seeing a pattern in my ex’s behavior and steps are being taken to try and repair my relationship with my child. But I don’t know what that will look like or how long it will take. This system remains very broken and I am doing the best I can within it.

Here are some things I do know:

1. I want to enjoy the time I have with my child and have them enjoy the time they spend with me.
2. I want to stay educated on what’s happening so I know the best ways to respond. For me, I know learning about [Dr. Childress](#)’s work and the [attachment based parental alienation](#) (AB-PA) approach to this has made all the difference.
3. I want to fight for change for the children who won’t have to go through what ours are going through.

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