

# The Stepcouple Commitment

## Pledge of the Biological Parent:

**As a parent who is asking you to love me  
and take on the challenges of both me and my children,**

### **I VOW TO:**

...Learn and understand how I can be a better parent, to learn good rules and guidelines for my children, to learn to enforce rules and behavioral consequences and to teach my children how to live with you by teaching them to be respectful to you. And I vow to learn how to not parent by guilt.

...Learn about stepfamily life because I know I am asking you to undertake a journey that won't be easy. I vow to learn about what you are going through so that I can support you.

...Truly understand about how your feelings of being the outsider are very real and that they will often coincide with my feeling caught in the middle. I will not leave you by yourself.

...Understand that my kids, though I will often feel defensive and protective of them, will be doing typical stepchildren things that may be upsetting or unfair to you. I will listen to your perspective and not leave you struggling by yourself.

...Commit to you and honor our love by consciously putting you in a position as the head of this household alongside me. That means I will not treat you as one of the children. That means I will listen to your struggles. That means I will notice all of the times you are doing things for me and for my kids. I will not simply notice those things I think you are not doing. I know, due to your love for me, that you will try, and that it will often be challenging.

...Learn how to run this household together by learning how to discipline and develop skills that successful stepfamilies use. I will uphold my end of enforcing consequences and not leave you to be the sole enforcer.

...Learn about the impact of stepfamily dynamics on my kids so I don't get caught in the middle and can help both them and you navigate our new family.

...Emotionally divorce my ex and uphold appropriate boundaries so that our life together is our own.

...Be patient as I understand that there will be times you need to just get away from all of us and I will realize that this doesn't mean you are rejecting either me or my kids. I know there will be times when the struggle means you need me to be more understanding when my inclination is to become fearful and pull away.

...Most importantly, I vow to love and support you, and it is only because I am ready to truly make this pledge to you that I ask you to participate in my life with me.

*As seen in:*

**StepMom**  
M a g a z i n e

Written by Susan Swanson, LCSW and Executive Director and Founder of The Stepfamily Center in Beverly Hills, California.  
Contact Susan at: <http://www.StepfamilyCenter.com>

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# The Stepcouple Commitment

## Pledge of the Stepparent:

**As someone who is willing  
to be your partner,**

### **I VOW TO:**

...Remember every day that you love your children and you love me, and that you can love us all and you love us each differently. I vow to not put you in the position of having to choose between me and your kids.

...Remember that your children are very important to you and to honor and respect who they are in your life, and to make room for them in our lives and in our household.

...Learn and understand about children the ages of your kids and not be unrealistic in my expectations. I also vow to learn good parenting techniques with you and help you to succeed in raising your children.

...Learn about stepfamily life because I know that so many times my complaints will cause a loyalty bind between your love and protection for them and your love and care for me. I will realize that and try to help you so you don't feel caught in the middle.

...Understand that part of being a stepparent in this partnership will mean that I experience being an outsider many times. I vow to talk to you and tell you what I'm feeling, and I trust that I can often find solace in your understanding, even when you don't "get it." I will tolerate it at times when I know there is nothing to be done but allow time for things to work themselves out.

...Use good communication skills. I will not criticize or attribute blame, but will talk through my feelings with you, whether they are about us, your ex or the kids.

...Talk with you about parenting to learn about each other, the way we were raised and what was important to each of us so that we can start to grow closer in our parenting values and styles.

...To make attempts to take an interest in your children and see their good because I know many times I will only see what frustrates me.

...Get support from other stepparents so I have an outlet because I recognize that I will need the most support of all of us.

...I vow to love and support you, and it is only because I am ready to truly make this pledge to you that I can say I am ready to make this journey with you, by your side. I vow to hang on through the tough times so you don't always have to fear losing me.

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# The Stepcouple Commitment

## Pledge of the Stepcouple:

### WE VOW TO:

...Commit to making our couples' relationship a priority as we recognize that with our strength we can navigate rocky waters together. We will make quality time that belongs to just the two of us, and keep our love and romance alive.

...Take the time to learn and understand about one another, who we are, our hopes and dreams for the future, and support one another in having the life we share.

...Be each others' safe harbor in the storm of life by being empathic and loving. We pledge to use good communication skills so we don't hurt one another with harsh criticisms and judgment.

...Always see the good in one another rather than the flaws. We will commit to understanding that, in stepfamily life, everyone is sensitive to rejection and criticism so it is easy to focus on the flaws. We promise to always look for the good in each other and in what each of us is doing.

...We pledge to one another that when we are ready to truly commit to this as a real relationship, we can then overcome any obstacles that stepfamily life will send our way and solve any problem together.



**I pledge to you my love.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**on this date** \_\_\_\_\_

**With this commitment, we can enter into stepfamily life from a more informed position because we agree to truly participate together.**

Make this commitment your own.  
Add to it those points that are important to you and talk it over with your partner.  
Make this journey with conscious, thoughtful and mindful intention.

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