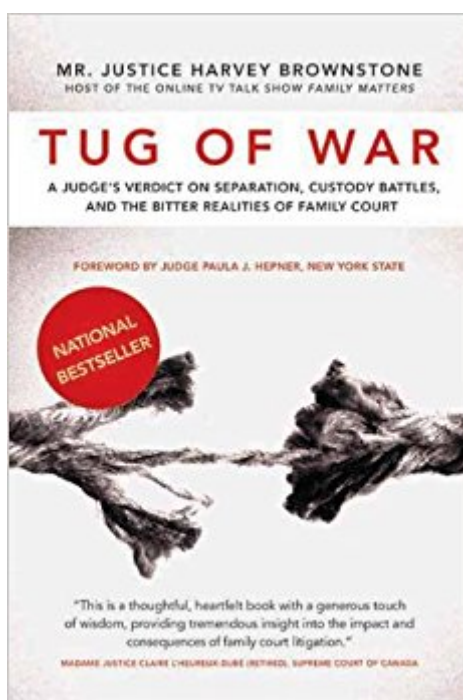


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Tug Of War: A Judge's Verdict On Separation, Custody Battles, And The Bitter Realities Of Family Court



Synopsis

Tug of War is the first book of its kind. Written by a sitting family court judge in layman's language, it demystifies complex family law concepts and procedures, clearly explains how family court works, and gives parents essential alternatives to resolve their own custody battles and keep their kids out of the often damaging court system. Breakup rates in North America are skyrocketing. Recent statistics say 45% of marriages end in divorce, and at the centre are countless children, thrust by their families into a complex and seemingly impermeable family court system. Tug of War explains the role of lawyers and judges in the family justice system, and examines the parents' own responsibilities to ensure that post-separation conflicts are resolved with minimal damage to the children stuck in the middle of parental disputes. Justice Harvey Brownstone explores themes that apply to all families and parents in conflict. He draws on fourteen years sitting on the family court bench to provide clear case examples with inclusive and accessible language. Tug of War describes alternatives to litigation and exposes the myth that parents can represent themselves without a lawyer in family court. Justice Brownstone discloses the inner struggles of parents, judges and lawyers in the maelstrom of marital conflict. This book is a must-read for couples involved in or contemplating separation, family law judges, lawyers, mediators, parenting coaches, psychologists, family counselors, social workers, students and professors of family law at law schools. It is endorsed by judges currently sitting in Ontario and New York State.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Provides a rare glimpse of what a sitting judge thinks about the good, the bad and the ugly realities

of the family law court system . . . [and] provide[s] better guidance to clients, especially the final chapter that is full of heartfelt and wise advice."Â #151;The Lawyers Weekly"Every lawyer should provide clients with a copy of Tug of War and encourage them to read it before proceeding with their case."Â #151;Anu Osborne, The Canadian Bar Association

Harvey Brownstone has been a judge for more than 12 years and presides over family court in North Toronto. He lives in Toronto.

This is a great book and just what most people need, Judge Brownstone covers many areas with great advice based on his extensive experience. I didn't give 5 stars because about 30% of parents who divorce, are in a high conflict divorce with a spouse who has a mental illness that is not covered deeply enough or accurately. The Judge does dedicate pages 31-34 to address mental illnesses in parents. However, there is a public health epidemic that exists in the court system and with nearly all Judges (and lawyers), they have ZERO psychology training or skills (those courses are not even offered in law schools). Judge Brownstone does a nice job of mentioning depression, substance abuse, and his hesitation to prevent a parent from completely denying parental access, but he displays a lack of psychology training by not mentioning the existence of personality disorders and makes a generalized statement, "...their mental health issues are largely irrelevant." He is a good and typical Judge, but there is a widespread problem that the court system is yet able to address properly. Long accepted research indicates that about 10% of the adult population has a narcissistic or borderline personality disorder, or both. I have empathy for these people, they did not ask to have a personality disorder, and they suffer from it. You can probably reflect on what you know about your spouse's childhood and their current family relationships to recognize the possible causes for their disorder and validate that they have one. Since it is inherent with both disorders there is a lack of self-insight to recognize that there is something wrong with them, they never see a need to seek treatment - so they never get "better". With both disorders, they have an underlying core belief of personal inadequacy and anticipated abandonment - which scares them deeply and drives their insidious behavior with their children. Also unfortunate is that in a divorce situation, their personality disorder prevents them from any ability to recognize that their child's own mental health will be severely damaged if the other parent is prevented from having a normal parenting role in their life - or worse, the child is manipulated to fear and hate the other parent. The narcissistic/borderline parent is driven by their own core fear and will do ANYTHING to prevent the child from having ANY relationship with the other parent, including lying to the child, lying to courts, and manipulating

(brainwashing) the child to hate the other parent. The common term for this is parental alienation. Search "parental alienation" on and you will see 250+ books. Many books focus on describing what parental alienation is and how that parent does it. I recommend 2 books that include the critical guidance on steps you can take to reduce / prevent parental alienation, they are by authors Amy J. L. Baker, PhD and Bill Eddy, LCSW, JD. Act quickly by getting educated and stopping the alienation before it gets to deeply ingrained in their highly susceptible brains. Your children need you to act right now to buy and read those books and/or research parental alienation online and on YouTube. You are likely exhausted by the challenges of divorce and money is tighter than ever, but the EFFORT and financial investments you make now (in a lawyer who specializes in parental alienation - they are rare, test them on their experience and knowledge), will save you huge money and heartache (for you and your kids) in the long run. Good luck.

Harvey Brownstone, an experience jurist, talks parents through the quagmire that is family law in most Western countries based on an English system of law. If you read it carefully, you will really want to have a reasonable, rational conversation with your ex about arrangements for the kids, because getting into the legal arena means gloves off, and kids are the inevitable victims. If you have a friend who is separating and wondering what will happen, buy him or her two copies, and have one sent off to the ex. They'll both thank you.

This book explains what happens in Canada when a family unit disintegrates, especially when there are children involved. Justice Brownstone's theory is that when people break up, they must adopt a mature approach of dealing with their former partners, especially when children are involved. However, he also addresses the topics of finances in a number of chapters, which describe how you can try to resolve your conflicts without going to court. He has a chapter on alternatives to litigation. He describes when going to court is necessary. There are also details about lawyers, what you should look for, and why they are very important in their role. Especially close to his heart is the chapter on custody and access disputes. He talks about the importance of joint custody as a concept. DeRusha Law Firm The above review has been prepared by Haig DeRusha, senior counsel and Family Law Specialist at DeRusha Law Firm. Our firm has four lawyers and an articling student, and has prominent lawyers practicing family and divorce law in both the collaborative and the litigation approach, which practice areas include Mississauga, Brampton, Milton and Toronto. More information can be obtained about DeRusha Law Firm by reviewing our website.

This book is so unique (the first written by a sitting judge) and readable that I finished it in one sitting. It's written for the general public and speaks primarily to people who need to resolve issues relating to custody and support of their children. The judge makes a plea to parents to use the family court as a last resort and explains alternatives to litigation, like mediation. He also provides a thorough explanation of how the family courts and laws operate, including how they intersect with the criminal justice system. But, the book really shines when the judge shares what he has seen in his courtroom during his 14 year career on the bench. Using real life anecdotes, sprinkled with empathy and humor, Judge Brownstone teaches us all about the impacts of separation and divorce on children. Read this book to educate yourself and give it to someone you know who could benefit from Judge Brownstone's insight.

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