

# The "Don't Take the Bait" Text Guide

*How to respond when messages are designed to provoke*

STILL DAD

---

**Gray rock:** Make yourself as uninteresting and unreactive as a gray rock. Give no emotional response, no defensiveness, no counter-accusations. Only facts. Only logistics. No texture for conflict to grab onto.

## TYPES OF BAIT

### EMOTIONAL BAIT

Attacks your character, your parenting, or your worth as a person. Wants anger, defensiveness, or self-justification.

### ACCUSATORY BAIT

Makes false or exaggerated claims. Wants you to argue the facts, get defensive, or over-explain.

### URGENCY BAIT

Creates artificial pressure. Wants a rushed, emotional, poorly-considered response.

### GUILT BAIT

Appeals to guilt about the kids, the past, or the divorce. Wants you to over-concede or apologize excessively.

## BEFORE YOU REPLY: ASK YOURSELF

- Is there actual logistical content in this message that requires a response?
- Am I reacting to the tone, or to a real problem that needs solving?
- Would I be comfortable if my attorney or a judge read what I'm about to send?
- Am I trying to be right, or trying to keep things functional for the kids?
- Can I wait 20 minutes before sending this? (If no, definitely wait 20 minutes.)

## MESSAGE REWRITES

MESSAGE RECEIVED	NEUTRAL RESPONSE
"You're a terrible father and the kids know it."	[No response needed. Document and move on.]
"You always do this. You're so selfish."	[No response to the personal commentary. If there's a logistics issue, address only that.]
"I need an answer RIGHT NOW."	"I'll get back to you by [time]."
"You never take the kids to their appointments."	"I'm happy to discuss the schedule for upcoming appointments. What specifically do you need?"
"The kids cried all night because of you."	"I'll check in with them. Is there something specific you think I should know?"
"You're making everything harder than it needs to be."	"I'm open to discussing what would make logistics easier. What are you proposing?"
"Don't bother: I've already told my lawyer."	[Note the message. No response required.]
"You should feel ashamed of yourself."	[No response. Screenshot and move on.]

*The bait only works if you take it. Every neutral, factual response is a win. Every non-response to something unworthy of response is also a win.*