



One Woman's Journey Into Becoming a Stepmom

With
Claudette Chenevert

Stepmom
COACH

&
Kim

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Little steps do make a big difference in a person's life.

As a couple, your dream is to make this relationship a successful, loving and happy one. No one ever enters in a relationship wanting it to fail and be miserable. But what makes a relationship work? What does it take to make not only a relationship work but merging a family to create the kind of family you desire?

When you come together with someone who has children from a previous relationship, the way this relationship will unfold is different from relationships without children present.

We often don't have a clue or positive role models to help us maneuver through the many uncertainties that creating and maintaining a stepfamily requires. What is the way to deal with the stepchildren? How do you fit in this new relationship? Why is it important to take care of our selves in order to make our lives better? Is it really possible to get the kind of relationship if I'm the only one making changes? What is the purpose of having a family vision?

All of these questions and many more are typical questions most stepparents ask themselves when in a step relationship. Finding answers, ones that are based on good solid research, personal experience and tried and true techniques can be challenging at best.

Many look for guidance from family and friends, but unless they've had personal experience in dealing with remarriage, ex-spouses and stepchildren, the well-meaning guidance and information may not be what is the most useful.



A while back, I interviewed Kim, a new stepmom who was struggling with understanding her role in her new family. A 44-year-old career woman, Kim fell in love with the man of her dreams. The only minor detail (or so she thought), was his two children from a previous marriage.

She soon realized that if she was to succeed in this marriage and be happy, she needed help in understanding how to be a stepmom, her role in this relationship, and still keep her identity as an individual.

Here is the transcript of this interview. **You can also listen to it by clicking the link below:**

[https://stepmomcoach.podbean.com/mf/play/59mgb7/One Women s Journey to Becoming a Stepmom.mp3](https://stepmomcoach.podbean.com/mf/play/59mgb7/One%20Women%20s%20Journey%20to%20Becoming%20a%20Stepmom.mp3)

I would suggest that you print this report and as you either read or listen to it, take notes and write any thoughts that come up for you.

Use this as a starting place to talk about your expectations and dreams with your partner, and discuss what you'd like for your relationship to look like in the future.

This interview took place on May, 25 2010. It was recorded with the permission of the client.



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Claudette: well welcome everyone to this very special call, **One Woman's journey into becoming a Stepmom - How Coaching Helped her with the Transition.**

My name is Claudette Chenevert of Coaching Steps and I am a certified life coach working to help stepfamilies understand and learn positive ways to deal with daily family issues. Today, I'm talking with a stepmom that first came to me a few years ago, looking for help with her new family life. Like many women that enter into a blended relationship, Kim found out early that it was going to be more difficult than she imagined.

So welcome Kim to our call.

Kim: Hi Claudette. Thanks for asking me to be here today.

Claudette: You're welcome. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what prompted you to seek help for your family?

Kim: Ok. My name is Kim and I'm going to state my age actually. I'm 44. I have to remind myself how old I am. I'm 44 and I've been now with my husband for about 4 years.

We got married a little less than 2 years ago. Previous to that I had been in a long term relationship but no kids, so I'd never had any experience of children, and when I met my husband I know the first conversation I had with him and he was telling me he had kids who at the time were, a daughter who was 16 and a son who was 10.

He was in the process of getting a divorce and when I first met him, I thought well OK, I just wrote him off the list. There's no way I'm going to go out with a guy in the process of getting a divorce and has two kids. There was no way I was going to it, but I just really liked him a lot.

We did get into a relationship and all. As it was getting more serious, I think Claudette when I met you, we were not even, I guess we were engaged. And also we purchased a house together.

It was really difficult the transition of living together. A: living together with a person that you never lived with and B: all of a sudden, for me who didn't have kids, all of a sudden having kids around and we had his son half time-time as the daughter stayed with the mother full-time. It was just really really hard.

Claudette: Not only did you have to adapt to living with a new partner but you also had to learn to deal with children which you didn't have in the first place.

Kim: Right! And you know, these are huge transitions. It's the first time, that I actually purchased a house, so that's kind of stressful right?

Claudette: Uh hum.

Kim: And then moving in together with somebody else, that's a whole huge transition, and then, the kid relationship on top of that and that you know was a least very awkward, because we wanted to make sure that everyone maintain a good relationship with my husband's ex-wife, which she was very present in their lives, and we made a point of just living just a few miles from her, so that the kids could be close, but awkward to say the least, you know?

Claudette: I'm sure. Before your engagement and purchasing the house and everything, did you and your husband discuss the challenges of becoming a stepfamily and what that would mean for both of you?

Kim: We definitely discussed it and I'll tell you, I see, I think we were going out for about? Humm! That can't be right! OK, so we were going out together for a year before we got engaged and I didn't know how to approach the kid thing. I don't think I met his daughter, until after it had been a year we'd been going out. She didn't know about my existence.

I met his son quite a few time. We'd gone out for pizza, and stuff like that. He'd (husband) say "This is my friend Kim". We did talk about it. His daughter was not happy about the divorce and it was pretty clear that she wanted him to come back to the family. The thought of him all of a sudden bringing someone new into the picture, we knew that it wasn't going to be easy.

So we did talk about that quite a lot. We talked about if this was the best thing for you (husband) because I felt firmly that he too that that his most important thing for him was to maintain his relationship with his kids.

Claudette: Uh hum.

Kim: So we did talk about that quite a bit and then when we decided to go forth and move in together, we talked about what kind of examples do you want to set for your son? Do you want to say that "hey, it's OK to live with somebody and not be married to them?" You know?

So that kind of played into it too. We talked about it a few times. I think we did get engaged and then got the house and were living together.

Claudette: So you did have conversations about the fact that his daughter was not prepared to have you in her life, and that for her she expected, or at least really wanted for her dad and her mom to come back together.

Kim: Uh hum.

Claudette: Like a lot of kids tend to dream about that their parents will come back together on day.

Kim: Sure! Uh hum!

Claudette: What did that do for you, knowing, feeling that's what she was hoping to happen. How did that make you feel?

Kim: Well...It's not easy. And I think this is the hardest thing and I'm thinking back to the first time I met you Claudette, the place I was in was feeling just completely alienated. Whenever I was around his kids including his son, they just pretty much tried to pretend that I didn't exist.

And I don't blame them at all for that. I just think it their natural way of coping with the situation. But it's hard being just ignored. And you feel, it's not being unappreciated, it's like, you get the sense that they wish you weren't there. It would be better if you didn't exist.

I didn't have anyone in my life who had gone through this. I know women who had gotten divorced, and then whose husbands maybe got remarried, but I didn't anyone who was the a stepmom coming into that situation.

I couldn't really talk to anyone about it, and I just kind of thought "Oh! I'm just screwing this whole thing up!", "I don't know what I'm doing". I think that's when I met you, I was just feeling like "God! This is the hardest situation I've been in" and "I'm sure I'm the only person ever whose experienced this (laughing)."

Claudette: But that's what you were sensing when you first started living this (being with your husband) and as we were talking to one another. And I remember, your sense of "I'm going to ruin the entire thing!", "What am I doing wrong?" I remember our initial conversations around your feelings of inadequacy, of not measuring up.

Kim: Uh hum.

Claudette: And did you anticipate any kind of challenges and if you did, what kind of challenges did you think you were going to face as being your husband's wife and his children's stepmom?

Kim: I'm sure I did anticipate challenges but I'm sure the challenges that I concocted in my head where not the ones, they were other challenges that happened in real life and I don't think, you know. One, I was just making up all kinds of scenarios to myself.

I'm sure there were typical or common, like his ex-wife is just going to start telling lies about me or something like that. That never happened. That somehow Mark would somehow start

taking sides, he wouldn't take my side. You know? And that never happened. He's always been very good about seeing both sides, trying to balance things out.

My worst fear was that my stepson would say "I don't like living with her! And if she's living here, then I don't want to see you either Dad! I'm not going to come around."

Claudette: Uh hum.

Kim: So that was challenge I anticipated and that's why I think the first year at least I was on pins and needles. Just trying to be like, making things as nice as possible. So that I wouldn't scare him away and be the cause of Mark losing his kids.

Claudette: Instead of being yourself, you started being someone else in order to make everyone happy in the family.

Kim: Right! And that just is draining day after day.

Claudette: Uh hum. I know you talked about some of the issues you faced. Can you tell a little bit more about some of the daily interactions that really made it difficult for you to adjust or to get to know the kids more?

Kim: Well, first of all I set myself up, telling myself don't be yourself just make everybody happy. I mean that just kind of set me up for disaster, right there. That wasn't fair to the kids either, because I'm not being my authentic self, right?

Some of the other challenges though, things would hurt my feelings. Like when either one of the kids would compare our home to their mom's home "Oh this isn't like at my mom's house" or "This isn't how she would make this dinner," you know? Things like that would kind of hurt my feelings.

Another thing too that wasn't just the kids, it was like the community, especially when we first moved in together, the kids were involved with sports and stuff like that and I wanted to be involved and show support and I would go to the occasional soccer game or something like that and when the moms would inevitably ask you "Oh! Who's your son on the team?" and I'd say "I'm a ... And you know...I wasn't at the time married so I didn't feel like I could say I was a stepmom.

Claudette: Ummm.

Kim: So I didn't really know what to say and I'd just say "Oh. I'm Mark's girlfriend and then they'd look at you like "What are you doing here?" you know? And that made me feel kind of like "Wow! I'm really not accepted by not even just the kids but like society in general, you know?"

Claudette: So that was really hard to at least sort of blend in and be part of your husband's life and try to fit into everything that was part of what he was living in his community, right?

Kim: Uh hum, right! And I think part of that, and that is something that you and I worked early on with, maybe the first session even was that I didn't know my role.

Claudette: Yeah.

Kim: I didn't know how I fit in and what I should be doing and it just ... I just didn't know how it should all worked together.

Claudette: I remember we discussed about what it is that you envisioned for yourself and how you would like to see yourself. Part of the process we as we worked together, I asked you, what were your initial goals for yourself and your family. And can you share a little bit what you were hoping to create with this new family?

Kim: Well first of all, the setting of goals was something that had not occurred to me. I was kind of just treading water to keep my head above water pretty much just living day to day versus kind of looking ahead to what I wanted to create or see for the family? So that was a new thing for me. And I remember saying "What? Set goals?"

I think you and I came up with overall, even though there were many other things that we worked on, we had three main goals and the first goal and the most important one for me was the goal of what I called togetherness. And it was creating just the feeling of being comfortable around each and just being a family and it was no big deal because at this point, anytime we would get together, it was a big deal!

And it was just very...it's like you know, you have distant relatives or something like that, and you get together for a holiday and it's just this once a year or once every five-year sort of thing, that's kind of how it felt.

And I just wanted it to be just a normal, every day "Hey, we're out here having a BBQ" kind of thing and it just, it's great you know? His daughter can drop by and just hang out and she could leave and no one's reading anything into anybody else or what they are saying or what they are doing. It's just everyone is having a good time and relax being themselves.

Claudette: Uh hum. And I also remember specifically with this goal that one of the things that you mentioned was that your stepson would never have friends sleep over, like he would have them at his mom. And you wanted to have that kind of home environment where the kids were comfortable to have their friends come over.

Kim: Uh hum. Uh hum. That was part of the whole thing too that the fear of, well if he feels his friends can't come over, then he's just not want to come over anymore at all.

Claudette: Uh hum. Exactly. And the other thing that was in the horizon was the holidays, thanksgiving and Christmas were not far away and one of the conversations right from the beginning was "How are we going to deal with the holidays?" and I remember that you were very nervous and stressed about that too.

Kim: Right. Well yeah! I was very stressed, because we did get engaged first and then we moved in together and later got married later in that same year, and when his daughter found out, she was really not happy about it and pretty much said that it would never work out anyway so and she said that she would never want to come over to our house, she's never going to set foot in our house.

So, that was why this goal of togetherness and me picturing us being together in the backyard for a BBQ was a big big deal. You know that's a big goal. When someone saying I'm never setting foot in your house and I'm saying I'm seeing you there and having a good time.

And I remember you saying hey you know, I was describing the goal and you're like "OK, well just so you know that's not going to happen really soon. And OH No! I understand! I thought that it would be a three or five-year goal.

Claudette: Yeah. I remember. So how long did it actually take for your stepdaughter to actually go and visit you at the home and have a meal there? Do you remember?

Kim: Yes! Because we set the goal, and I'm like "OK, three to five years minimum." And this is why I brought it up because you asked about the holidays and I think she had probably made the comment about not setting foot inside your house.

I think that was September and then the first time she actually came over and had dinner was Thanksgiving. And that was just two months later and I was shocked. Like we set the goal and I was shocked that she did.

It was super super hard. I mean there was nothing easy for that meal. It was the day after Thanksgiving actually, but the fact that it even occurred was just so monumental. You know?

Claudette: And I remember our conversation around just the fact that she actually came was a big event. And to slowly work through the event and not expect it to be perfect. And we actually talked about strategies in helping you deal with the anxiety of whenever your stepdaughter came how to help yourself through that phase and the preparation.

Kim: Right. And I think one of the things that helped me the most was, my brain just kept going to this kind of worry and stress, like "What would this happen?" and "What would that happen?" and these worst case scenarios?

And that's what was getting me all worked up and tense. And you said "OK! You know, sure. We can talk about those and talk about what to do. But why don't we focus more on the good things that can happen instead of the negative, let's focus on what possibly good could come out of this.

And so, that really helped because I do believe that, you know what you're thing about, you attract. And since by the fact that I go in there all worried and tense and expecting bad things to happen then I'm not going to be comfortable and I'm going to make other people uncomfortable. If I'm more relaxed, and you know, just kind of going with the flow then that invites other people to do the same.

That was pretty huge for me. I didn't realize I was being so negative really at the time until you kind of, very nicely pointed it out to me.

Claudette: A lot of our exercises that we've done together was actually helping you to see some of the positive changes that were going through in your family and in your goals that you had set for yourself, right?

Kim: Uh hum. Uh hum.

Claudette: A lot of them, we actually I believe did several visualization exercises where, to make your goals even more powerful, we actually had you talk about your setting where you actually saw yourself, and we rehearsed some of the events that you were attending, and even practiced some of the things you could do while at those events. And how you would feel, and even how you would be dressed, things of that sort. Remember?

Kim: Uh hum. That was really really helpful.

Claudette: Good. So, again, some of the visions of your family, really, became reality, as you worked in making them more of a (reality), something that was important to you rather than focusing on what was going wrong all the time.

Kim: I was amazed at how quickly things would happen. And I was saying that, I feel like I was saying that every week saying "Oh my God! This thing happened!" And I didn't think that would happen for another, you know, year, or something like that!

Claudette: True! Exactly. Do you feel that some of your way of talking care of yourself, of focusing on making sure that you felt supported, was helpful in making these goals move forward faster.

Kim: Yeah. Absolute! I think the self-care was one of the strategies that you and I came up with, to help me to cope with the stressful situations.

And, I knew in particular because we were taking a lot of little family trips like long weekend trips together. And there were sometimes a lot of tense there and there's still a lot of tension between Mark and his daughter, because she was still kind of upset at him. She would criticize him a lot and that would set me off, right?

You and I realized, OK, well, in order for me to be there for everybody else and just be my best, I needed to take care of myself first. Which was kind of counter intuitive to me. I usually take care of myself last.

Yeah, so. We came up with some actual things, like here are the things that I need to take care of myself, including going for a run, because that makes me feel better and anytime I needed to feel...Like we'd go camping and stuff like that, and if I felt I was getting too tense then I would just go for a run, and come back feeling a lot better. That helped a lot.

And just a lot of other little things like being home and making sure that I was getting a little down time. And feeling ok with it, excusing myself if I just didn't feel well and say I just need to take a little time for myself. That was great too.

Claudette: Yeah. and I think that your husband really appreciated the fact that you were taking care of yourself because it sort of gave him freedom of not having to take of everybody at the same time either.

Kim: Uh hum.

Claudette: So he wasn't having to feel as if he had to be in the middle between you and his kids and having to navigate between both of you. He felt probably in a way that you were able to take care of yourself, he then felt that the same stress and probably a lot more supported and the same time.

Kim: Yeah, that's a good point. It didn't really occur to me, but, absolutely. He was always very on board with...and well it's funny cause...as far as coaching is concerned, he's just...I don't think he'd ever see a coach himself...I don't think that he really disrespect the industry or anything like that, but I think that he feels that this is just not for me, and when I told him that I was going to start working with you he was kind of like "Why?".

From his side, he couldn't understand what I was going through either, cause you know, he'd never been there, so. He was supportive but just kind of curious about, well I don't know, what you think you're going to get out of it, and then once I started really...and you know things started to happen and every time he knew I was talking to you on a weekly basis, he said, "OK,

well. What did you and Claudette talk about today?" and I would tell him all these really good points you and I had talked about and some deep questions or important questions he and I needed to discuss, and he was really open and on board with it and very supportive.

And the self care thing, I totally agreed, he was like "Yeah!" instead, I think I was worried that he would think that it would be selfish of to take care of myself. He was like "hey! Do what you need to do, so that you're not all cranky and tense or something when the kids come around."

Claudette: And everybody benefited in the fact that, because you were feeling good about yourself, Mark actually felt good, about having his kids around and his kids probably felt "well you know what? Every body is good and there's no tension." it's really important to realize how everybody's energy affects each other.

And the fact that you were able and willing to take care of yourself, made an impact on the entire family, even though I didn't work with anybody else other than you.

Kim: Uh hum. Right. That's true!

Claudette: So, Kim. Tell me, what were some of the obstacles that kept you from creating the relationship you wanted with your stepkids?

Kim: Oouu! Obstacles! I think...well I think in the very beginning before you and I started to work together, an obstacle definitely was just myself. I mean just not knowing my place and my role in the family. It just made me feel really kind of adrift. It wasn't a good feeling, so. I know that was an obstacle for sure.

I think... I mean, most of it was just in my head being very hesitant to make a move at all and I talked about being on pins and needles with my stepson, and part of what you and I did was to set little goals like well OK, you know, if you want to feel more comfortable around him what would that look like, and what would you be doing?

And just by says "well it would look like this" and then it would just happen and maybe because it was already in my mind that this is what we should be doing, it would just happen natural. It wasn't like I was contriving to make it happen.

The kind of relationship? Other than that, I mean the kids really have been themselves, which I am very grateful for. Which doesn't mean that everything is all great and hunky-dory and or that things go from bad to wonderful in a linear sense. I mean there's definitely been some ups and downs.

Claudette: Definitely, yes!

Kim: Yeah...and...I think...the only time we've had a really a big obstacle, was, if I couldn't ,or didn't take the time to really talk to Mark and to also listen to him, about his perspective on a situation.

Claudette: Hum.

Kim: That's when, if neither one of us was listening to the other cause there were times when I would say, or you just feel like "You're just not hearing what I'm saying, you don't understand what I'm saying." That's kind of when, you know, when you're not listening to each other, that's when things just stop. Fortunately, that's only ever happened once.

Claudette: So part of the process is having communication in a way that each one of you understands and support each other and can really be there for one another.

Kim: And even part of supporting isn't necessarily always agreeing with the other person, but it's feeling like you're heard and understood and then you can say, "OK, you understand me, then you don't agree with me and that's OK."

Claudette: Yeah. True. Exactly. The fact that you're at least able to disagree with each other, created a sense where you were able to actually feel good with one another.

A few things that you mentioned that when we worked together, we created some small steps for you to get closer with your stepchildren. Did you ever find that the steps that were suggested and that you took were monumental or impossible to do?

Kim: I think maybe some were kind of daunting. I think I'm suppressing some certain memories. I think there were maybe one or two steps that we set for me that I may be either didn't do or you know kind of chickened out or something. And I know, I just don't remember what they were.

But I think the steps, the ones that I can remember, like they didn't always... I remember one in particular, we were having this conversation about of having a little strategy of going on a trip and saying "OK, this is going to be the first time the four of us are going on a trip. Just the four of us. And what are we going to do?"

So you and I came up with like activities or ways to get the kids involved and conversations starters, things that we could talk about, and stuff like that. And some of that worked really well and some kind of just fell flat but that's OK. We had other plans, you know?

Claudette: And then remember some of the things we had talked about is trying to find what each child was interested in and have a conversation around what really interest them. And of course, not everything worked perfectly, but the fact that the kids saw you actually trying to get to know them probably got them to want to know you as a person.

Kim: Uh hum.

Claudette: And actually, there was a time when, I remember your husband, Mark went out for dinner with the kids, and you had not gone, and I remember you mentioned that the kids had asked were you were and you were surprised that they even remembered who or what your name was.

Kim: Right. I do remember that.

Claudette: And so these little things actually build on each other and made that relationship grow, little by little. And actually I think that's when you started to realize " well gosh! The kids do know who I am! They're realizing that I'm here and they're even asking about me, what's happening and showing some care and concern for you.

Kim: Uh hum. Right. I do remember that. That's funny.

Claudette: What is the key thing that really helped you to move forward in creating the kind of relationship that you wanted?

Kim: The key thing. Hum... I think it wouldn't of happened at all, if I hadn't gotten just support because, as I said earlier, I just felt really alone, like no one else has never gone through this and no one understands what I was going through.

And just having conversations with you and then you would tell me about and share your experiences made me feel like not alone, made me feel like a normal sane person.

And then that gave me hope, like OK, you know because before I think I felt kind of hopeless. And I just really couldn't do anything. I was just kind of very passive. Just having that acknowledgement made the difference, made me open the door to say "OK, I can do this!"

And, I really think that's the whole catalyst. And from there, having all the structure and setting the goals, figuring out if this is the goal, how are we going to get there? That was great.

I wouldn't have been open to that conversation if I didn't feel like, you know, this is something that, I don't know, being a stepparent isn't just, I don't know. I can't...it's almost like I can't put words to it. I think that at the time I was thinking that it was like the worst thing ever. And I wished that it hadn't happen. And there was no way that I was going to get through it.

Claudette: And you know Kim, a lot of women actually feel this way. It's like the most difficult thing you could ever imagine. And most women say that unless you've been through it, you can't understand, or you can't comprehend how painful, how difficult it can be.

Kim: Uh hum.

Claudette: And I remember, we talked about your mom, and you said you couldn't even talk about this with your mom because your mom had no understand of what actually you were going through.

Kim: Right. I didn't have anyone to talk to because I didn't want be that woman who's complaining about her step kids, you know? And it really wasn't about them so much as it was about the situation. I didn't want my family, kind of looking down on them, cause you know when you just talking to people about someone, and all you do is complain about them? And they're not going to have a very good impression of that person.

Claudette: Exactly.

Kim: And I definitely didn't want that. But there's so many dynamics involved especially with their mom being close by...it's almost like I don't want to sacrifice anything, their loyalties to her and then you know their loyalties to the family. There was just a lot to take in.

Claudette: Exactly. There's so many different pieces and because you are not the only person involved in their lives, there's actually their mother, which is a very important part and I know we did talk a little about your husband's ex-wife, a little bit on how to deal with her and you actually did have some interaction where it wasn't all bad. It was actually where some of it were good, where she actually said thank you for having given her daughter a gift over the holidays. And so, that helped you to realize "Wow! You know? She's not a mean person" or the kind of person you thought, or sometimes a lot of people portray ex-wives to be.

Kim: Right.

Claudette: And just the fact that having support, of having someone help you go through setting the goals and the structure, that was something that really helped to move forward and give you hope, feel normal, or more normal in what you were going through.

Kim: That's right! More normal!

Claudette: More normal. Exactly! So what do you think would have happen if you not have gotten help? Do you think your relationship with your husband would have been where it's at now or your relationship with your step kids be where it is now if you hadn't decided to get help?

Kim: I definitely don't think that we'd be at the place we are now. I think we made so much more progress, and I can even report that my stepdaughter was here at our home the other night, and hung out for dinner and hung out a long after the meal was over versus before, she'd might come over and then when the meal was done, she's out of there, you know. She's like

"what's the minimum amount of time I've got to spend and then I got to go." She was hanging out and having great conversation. It was a lot of fun.

I definitely don't think that we'd be in that place now. I also think because of the work you and I did together, that honestly my husband's relationship with both of his kids is so much better than it would have been had you and I not have this conversation and then have conversations with him.

Yeah. I kind of feel like we'd still be maybe where I was when we first moved in together, where it's just kind of still just pins and needles, and maybe I would've started to resent things a little bit, the situation. I could see that happening if I was always the only one just giving and they were allowed to just not acknowledge my existence, what ever.

I'm sure that was kind of wearing me out already. Yeah! I think it would have been very damaging. We've got two family vacations planned this summer, and we probably wouldn't be doing that right now if we hadn't gotten help.

Claudette: Yeah! And I remember when we first talked. A lot of the concerns you had were actually around vacations and you had actually said "Wow! I'll let them go and I just won't be with them." And then we had a conversation about how that wasn't going to be an effective strategy in making your family work together.

And I'm glad that you are actually having a lot of time together and then I'm really happy to hear that your stepdaughter is going over and having dinner and actually hanging in out because I remember the first time when we talked, associating your stepdaughter and fun were not two things that went together.

Kim: Right. Right! Yeah! Absolute. I think.

What you were just saying just before that was the whole thing about the vacation, and I kind of forgot and I remember now, thinking and saying out loud and I said it to my husband, cause we'd gone on a trip and it hadn't gone so well, and I just said "You know what? I'm not doing them anymore. You guys go. I want you to have a great relationship with them. It seems I'm hampering that relationship cause they don't want me there."

I was just feeling sorry for myself. "You go on the trip without me and I'll just, you know... You can have a relationship with me and then you can have this separate relationship with the kids, but it won't be with all of us at the same time." And I thought "well actually, that just makes perfect sense, you know!" I thought that was just a fine compromise but, yeah, that wasn't really going to go. That wasn't going to be a long lasting thing.

I can see how that would tear him apart and it was setting a bad example for the kids, just saying "Oh well! We don't have to acknowledge Kim because she's going to make it easy on us

and not be around. And if you turn it around, it's telling them "maybe I don't want them around."

Claudette: Right. Yeah. The message was that the fear of that message was of not being important or we don't care about you, or I'm just not going to involve myself, was not something that would have worked long term. And eventually, your husband would have probably felt like had to choose sides between you and his kids and deciding "OK. Where do I spend my time?" and that would have been very difficult for your relationship.

Kim: Uh hum. Uh hum.

Claudette: So Kim, tell me. What advice would you give to anyone who is in a step relationship, who's going through some of the things that you went through. What words of advice would you give them?

Kim: OK. Well yeah, two years ago, I probably would have said just don't do it. Don't get into a stepparent relationship, don't get into that situation. I remember, at one point, just thinking that to myself, "Thank God! I would just not wish this onto anybody! "

But now I would say, just get support. Find some way to get support. I think the first way I initially got support was just going online and found a place where other step moms were congregating and kind of venting, what ever. So I felt, all of a sudden "Oh! There's this whole community of women who were just kind of like me.

The problem with that for me was, first that was great, but the problem for me that it wasn't going to work long term as far as support goes, is that there is a lot of negativity there, on those on-line sites and it was just like, it wasn't making me feel better. It was making me feel ugh! You know?

A lot of women were complaining about the ex-wives and the kids...I just had to get away from that. But whatever support works for you, if you're in this situation, even if it's just a girlfriend who understands or is a good listener, but having somebody.

For me, setting goals with you was just great cause it gave me...that's what I like. I like structure, I'm a planner and I like to feel like "OK, I can come up with this plan."

That was the thing I could control in a very uncontrollable situation. And it just helped me feel like OK, I'm not just at the whim of whatever, of my husband, the kids, and who knows what else, the community who's shedding me from being the girlfriend or whatever. Here are the steps I can take and that made me feel very empowered.

Claudette: I remember that your sense of feeling like you had no control over whatever was going on and as we talked and created these goals and these steps. I actually heard it in your

voice the confidence that you gained in this relationship, the sense of empowerment, as you said in knowing that you could actually do something to have this relationship and to help yourself feel good about being where you were.

And I think that's probably one of the greatest gift you could ever receive for yourself or give yourself is those sense of feeling that you do have control over your life, your thoughts, and to some extent, your environment and feeling that you're not a victim but that you are capable of achieving what you want.

Kim: Right! That's the key thing that you just said there is that not being the victim, you know and when you're playing the victim, there's nothing you can do about it, it's almost like you're...it a weird thing to say...but it's almost like you enjoy being in that spot but it's going to move you forward at all.

Except you start blaming people, it's so and so's fault, it breaths nothing but bad feelings overall and I think it will just keeps building up until who knows what but.

Claudette: Exactly. And it's actually very negative for the kids too because they see this and somehow they will associate it with it's their (the children) fault somewhere, say "ok Well! I must of done something wrong" and so it really is a very bad role model or a bad influence for the kids and they'll grow up feeling worthless and unappreciated as they grew up to become adults in their turn.

Any last words, Kim before we finish this call? Anything else you'd like to share or say about being a stepmom and your journey through all of this?

Kim: Well? I guess the only thing left to say is to thank you again for this forum. It's been a very interesting discussion.

It's actually been great for me to have you remind me "oh, I remember when you were at this place and..." Oh yeah! I forgot about that." So thank you for that.

I would just say, thank God that I had you in my life because it was just a weird...except lots of other things going on in my life, different relationships that I felt that, well I feel like, all this stuff is going well, I know what's going on, what with my job, the hours I was working was great, but this one place, I was really didn't know what to do with it, and I don't even know...I feel very firmly that we would not have our...this relationship probably would not have succeeded had we not gotten help, or had I not gotten help from you and by association then, my husband got help.

Yeah! I think just, it's great and I'm now not regretting being a stepmom, and I'm confident when I go out to the soccer fields and say hey! I'm the stepmom of you know, this boy over here and everyone's fine with that and I think it's really how I put myself out there with

confidence that then people start to respond much differently, including the kids. And including my husband. I think that just the key, just be just confident in who you are, don't try to be all things to all people.

Claudette: Very true. Good points to reflect on. So thank you Kim for sharing your story, and I'm sure that this will help other women that might find themselves in this situation to feel a little less lonely and a little bit more normal within their stepfamily relationship.

Understand that you are not alone, other people are there going through, and as Kim mentioned, having support and finding support helps you, not only you but actually the entire family in making this relationship function in a way that...again, it's not a perfect relationship but creating a more normal kind of relationship where you can actually have enjoyment in being together. And so, if you would like to know about my services, you can visit me at my website at <https://www.stepmomcoach.com/> or you can call me 703-915-2470. And this is Claudette Chenevert thanking you for your time.

Stepmom Self-Study Programs



**Successful
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For the stepmom seeking to improve her relationship with her spouse and stepkids and create a stronger and healthier family.

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I invite you to peruse the online programs and select the programs that can most help you in your current situation. If you would like to talk with me about which program would best suit you, you can email me claudette@stepmomcoach.com .

Here are the current online self-study programs available:



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If you want to bring an end to your struggles and start living a life of fulfillment and accomplishment...the life you were born to live...then this self-study online program is for you.

Calming the Storms of Conflict:

How many times have you tried to present your point of view with your spouse, the stepkids or someone else only to get met with an aggressive backlash from someone who disagrees?

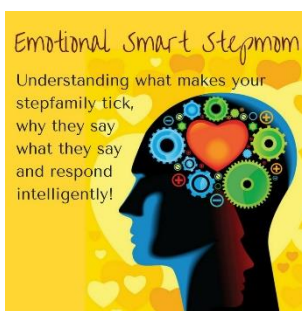
Have you ever experienced the general nature of the conversation becoming more emotionally charged as you seek a chance to defend your position?

Calming The Storms of Stepfamily Conflict

Dealing with conflict before it gets out of hand



Conflict is part of our lives but it doesn't have to ruin it. This program will help you to constructively and effectively deal with conflict before it gets out of hand.



The Emotionally Smart Stepmom:

If you're like most stepmoms, you've probably said or done things you wish you hadn't...all in the heat of an emotional moment. I know it's probably only happened once or twice, but still...those couple of incidents were pretty frustrating, weren't they?

Wouldn't it also be great to learn how to handle life's ups and downs...and **manage YOUR OWN emotions** in all situations?

Understanding how emotions work gives you the advantage of knowing how to deal with people and their emotions, becoming aware of your thoughts and feelings and ways to manage your own emotions in all situations.

[The Road to Becoming An Empowering Stepparent](#)

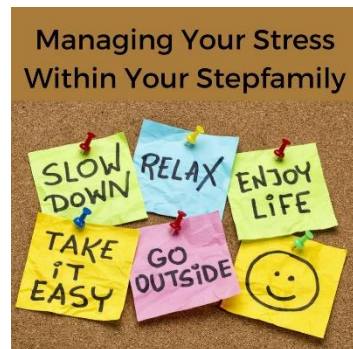
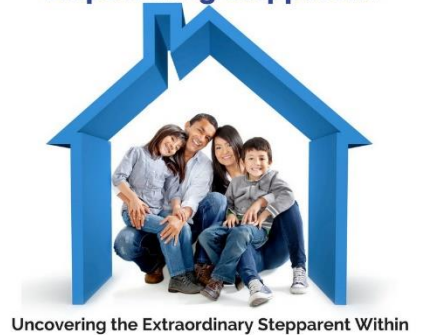
As a stepparent, you are impacting and influencing your stepkids, whether they live with you full time, part time or not at all. Whatever you do or say is being recorded by those around you.

The question is, are you having the impact you want to have, or are you getting less-than-desirable results?

Our ability to parent is driven by our mindset which affects our behaviors and therefore our results as stepparents. If you are not getting effective results, then you must change your mindset and your behaviors, or you'll keep getting the same results – meaning you will keep having the same negative impact. Why not create a parenting mindset that will fuel the behaviors that will have the impact and get the results you are seeking?

The Road to Becoming an Empowering Stepparent will help you achieve positive results.

The Road to Becoming an Empowering Stepparent



[Managing Your Stress Within Your Stepfamily](#)

Stepfamily dynamics are often stressful, and that stress can have a negative impact on our relationships with our spouse, our stepkids and our health. It's important to find ways to eliminate as much stress as we can from our lives, in order to create a more fulfilling stepfamily.

We will always experience a certain amount of pressure in our lives, but stress isn't pressure. Instead, stress is how we choose to react to the pressure of life, especially within our stepfamily. The great news is that stress management is a learnable skill. In the 6-part e-course, you'll be exploring stress management tools that will improve your lifestyle and your health.

Success On Your Terms
Create the Stepfamily life you want
One STEP at a Time



[Success On Your Terms:](#) What will your stepfamily look like in a year from now? Five years? Ten? Do you have a plan? This program lets you create the kind of family you want as you explore the definition of success, learn how to harness your internal & external strengths to achieve you goals, & turn your new discoveries into tangible results in order to have the desired life you want.

To find out more about these and upcoming programs, go to <https://www.stepmomcoach.com/programs/selfstudyprogram/>

Creating Strong and Healthy Stepfamily Relationships – Call (30 minutes)

Are you feeling alone, tired and overwhelmed with your stepmom challenges? Are you ready to take action and find solutions to the struggles you're facing with your stepkids, your spouse or maybe the ex?

I'd love to talk with you and explore ways you can change your life around.

Click here <https://www.timetrade.com/book/4MPBG> to schedule your 30 minute appointment with me.

I promise, you'll definitely feel a lot better, hopeful and energized by the end of our time together.

About Claudette

Becoming a stepmom was not at all what I thought it would be. I never realized just how hard and difficult raising another man's children could be. I felt as if I was not priority number one with my husband. There was a sense of us (my son and I) against them (my husband and his daughters). I was second fiddle to "his family" which was not what I had signed up for.

What I also found difficult was to parent with another woman who was very involved with her children. She and I didn't see eye-to-eye on several things which made everyone's lives miserable at times.

Finding help and information on stepfamilies was not easy for us then. It was definitely wake-up call for both of us. We had to work very hard to make our family function and become what we wanted it to be. We discovered that with the right tools and skills, we were able to not only create an environment where we respected and loved each other, but we also became role models for our children so that they can one day find someone special in their lives to create a family of their own.

My name is Claudette Chenevert and I am a Master Stepfamily Relationship Coach. I have a BA in Psychology of Communication with an emphasis on stepfamilies and conflict resolution. I've taken my training with Results Coaching Systems and am a Master Certified Stepfamily Foundation Coach. I am a member of International Coach Federation (ICF) and a member of International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). I am also involved in several organizations in my local community. I enjoy giving back to others.

I've been a stepmother since 1990 and a mom since 1983. I've learned a lot about the ins and outs as well as the ups and downs of stepparenting. Through my many years of personal experience and years of research, I hope that you will find inspiration and hope in these words.

Claudette L. Chenevert
The Stepmom Coach

<https://www.stepmomcoach.com/>



Stepmom
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PS. Make sure to visit my website for other free resources to help you on your stepmom journey, to get you from surviving to THRIVING, one STEP at a time.