

...because even when it's good, **it's complicated!**

JUNE 2025

StepMom

ONLINE MAGAZINE

**FATHER'S DAY
SPECIAL EDITION**
Read it Together!

LEARN TO
**COMMUNICATE,
CONNECT & THRIVE
AS A STEPCOUPLE**

***TIRED OF
BEING A
STEPMOM?***

YOU'RE NOT ALONE!

The *StepMom*
Whisperer
**ANSWERS
YOUR MOST
PRESSING
QUESTIONS**

**HIGH-CONFLICT
COPARENTING?**

SOL KENNEDY'S
BEST INTEREST
APP CAN HELP!





Meet June's Cover Couple

Louise Love & Sol Kennedy

Louise and Sol have been together for three years. Both Californians, she's from Mill Valley and he's from Santa Rosa. The two now live in San Anselmo. Sol has one girl, 8, and one boy, 6, from a prior marriage. Louise offers life and money advice as Louise Love Coaching. This month we're running a feature on Sol, who created an AI-powered app to curtail high-conflict coparenting. Our editor's interview with the founder of BestInterest, Inc., begins on pg. 20.

ABOUT LOUISE & SOL

Fave Family Night flick: "Mary Poppins" (1964)

Social media handle (hers): @louiseocalifornia

Social media handle (his): @bestinterest.app

Dream destination: Iceland's Blue Lagoon for "aurora watching"

IDEAL DATE NIGHT

It'd be "dinner at Sol Food in San Rafael followed by tea at Wu Wei in Fairfax."

Photo credit: Alfonso Vieyra

JUNE 2025

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Our mission is to:

EDUCATE, EMPOWER

and provide **EXPERT ADVICE**,
as well as **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**
for women whose partners have
children from past relationships.

Our goal is to:

foster **SOLID** couples,
SUCCESSFUL stepfamilies
and **STRONG** women.



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Introducing Best Interest

A COPARENTING APP FOR HIGH-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

BY CHRISTINE G. ADAMO



Ever wished you and your partner had a better grip on coparenting? Now there's an app for that! Powered by artificial intelligence trained in therapist insights into conflict, Best Interest shelves toxic texts, shifts focus to what matters (Everyone says it's the kids, right?) and increases peace and quiet with each message sent or received. As with any resource aimed at stepfamilies, it's up to you two to decide whether Best Interest suits your household's unique needs and dynamics.

Your Best Interests

Will the new app make texting with the kids' other parent less stressful? More productive? Best Interest creator Sol Kennedy hopes so. This Divorced Dad developed his app for use by either one or both households. *StepMom Magazine* got hip to what he was doing after sister and media coordinator Jamie Kennedy reached out to me on LinkedIn.

I have a major love/hate relationship with social media but could tell from the start that these two take your interests seriously. So, here we are! What I learned from the man behind the app—a longtime software developer and literal advocate for his fellow man—was impressive. Before we dig into all that, it may be helpful for me to lay down a bit of context for you.

Back up 14 years. Every day and night for months straight I suffered through endless texts, insults, physical threats and agonizing fits of anxiety thanks to a beloved boyfriend's ultra high-conflict ex and his inability to "control her" or her outbursts. (It's what led me to *StepMom*.) Today? I get it. He feared losing access to their son and his stepdaughter of more than a decade.

As a former U.S. Marine who spent time in a war zone, depression and PTSD make shenanigans like those too much for me. All of it was so painful and nonsensical that I rarely date anyone who has kids with an ex. What does this have to do with you? If I can save even one stepcouple from similar hassles and heartache, by introducing you and your partner to Best Interest, I'm all for it!

Control the Convo

You've no doubt heard of other court-approved messaging and scheduling platforms: Our Family Wizard, We Parent, Custody X Change, etc. Thing is? Even if you try your darnedest to coparent amicably for the kids' sake, you may still meet with resistance on any platform that requires two-party signup. Well, that's not the case with Best Interest.

His own high-conflict divorce led Kennedy to create the tool he wished was initially there for him and Dads like him. Using AI to detect, decipher and diffuse tensions, his app moderates and mitigates conflict between exes whether used by one or both. It reviews outgoing

messages to ensure clarity. It filters out hostilities, both incoming and outgoing.

Therapist-approved edits and prompts shift focus back to the kids. The app runs undetected and keeps secure, court-friendly logs. Whatever your chosen notification settings (i.e., receive texts in real time, opt for a once daily digest), you never miss out on emergency notifications. Ready? It's time for you to meet the creator and his app! Learn more at BestInterest.app.

CGA: Sol, welcome! Sum up your family structure and relationships for us.

SK: I have two kids, ages 6 and 8. Their mom and I have 50/50 custody, usually a 2-2-5 schedule during the school year and week-on/week-off in the Summer. We separated in 2020 just a week before COVID shutdowns, which made for an especially intense transition into coparenting.

I'm now in a long-term relationship with Louise Love. We met through mutual friends and started off as just friends but she was one of the only people who seemed to genuinely enjoy spending time with both me and my kids. Most of my other friends were really part of my "non-kid" life, showing up on days I didn't have them.

But Louise was different. [In] time, that friendship naturally evolved into a relationship. What meant the most to me was that my kids got to build their own connection with Louise from Day One, on their terms and in their time. It was clear they adored her and that told me everything I needed to know.

CGA: What inspired your app, how did you get it developed and when did it launch?

SK: Best Interest was inspired by my own experience as a coparent. From the very beginning, communication between my ex and me was difficult: lots of unresolved resentment and blurred boundaries. I remember, when I started dating again, my first girlfriend gently pointed out how often I was getting messages from my kids' Mom.

It wasn't just the volume. It was how those messages pulled me out of the present moment both with my kids and in trying to build the next chapter of my life. At one point, I even hired an old colleague to act as "customer support" for my relationship. He'd read and filter messages for me. That actually helped but it clearly wasn't scalable.

When AI became more accessible, I realized I could use my tech background to solve this problem not just for me but for coparents everywhere. That's how Best Interest was born [and became] an AI-powered message moderation tool designed to bring peace, boundaries and emotional safety to the coparenting experience. We officially launched in 2024.

CGA: How have your own life and perspectives changed with help from AI?

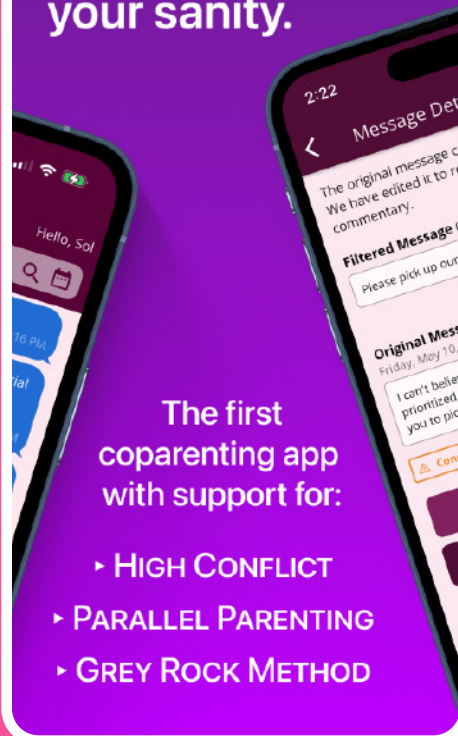
Coparenting
made peaceful
with AI smarts.



*"BestInterest
changes the game
for co-parents stuck
in contentious and
confusing cycles of
communication."*

Dr. Ramani
Clinical Psychologist, New York
Times Bestseller & Professor

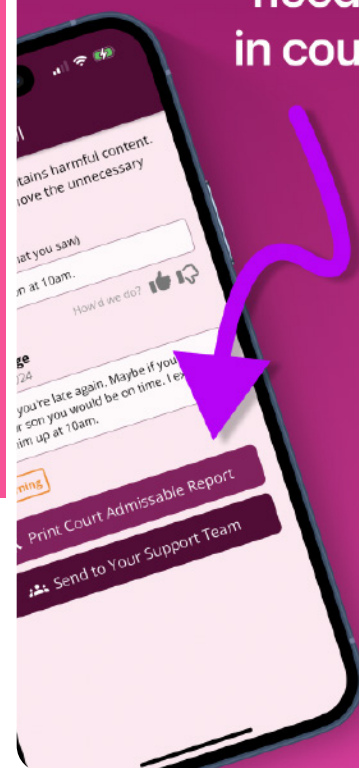
Stay in contact
for the kids, while
maintaining
your sanity.



The first
coparenting app
with support for:

- ▶ HIGH CONFLICT
- ▶ PARALLEL PARENTING
- ▶ GREY ROCK METHOD

Everything
tracked if you
need it
in court.



SK: As a repartnered Dad, AI has helped me become more present both as a parent and as a partner. Before Best Interest, I'd spend so much time mentally recovering from difficult messages. Even when I was physically with my kids or with Louise, I was still emotionally tangled up in coparenting stress. It felt like I was always bracing for the next conflict.

Using AI to filter that communication didn't just make things more manageable. It gave me space: space to think clearly, to enjoy my kids without that cloud hanging over me, to build a relationship with Louise that wasn't constantly disrupted

by past dynamics. It also shifted how I think about boundaries.

I used to feel like I had to read every message the moment it came in. Now I realize: *Just because someone sends a message doesn't mean it deserves immediate access to my peace.* That's a game-changer. So, yes, AI helped build this product. But, more importantly, it's helped rebuild me. It's given me a better version of fatherhood, partnership and even selfhood.

CGA: Who uses your app? Is it available worldwide or just in the U.S.?

SK: Right now, Best Interest is available in the U.S. and Canada with plans to expand worldwide in 2025.

All of our users are coparents and over 80 percent describe their relationships [with their exes] as “high-conflict.” These are people who’ve tried everything else yet still found themselves overwhelmed, frustrated or even re-traumatized by ongoing communication. What they tell us—again and again—is that Best Interest is the first solution that actually brings peace to their situation.

One of our users recently called Best Interest her personal “AI bodyguard” and I love that image. It captures exactly what we aim to provide: a protective layer between you and the stress, while still keeping essential communication intact. [It’s] real-time, AI-powered message moderation designed to protect your mental health and restore your peace of mind.

CGA: Is the label “AI bodyguard” a stretch?

SK: Not a stretch at all. In fact, I think it’s the perfect

description and I’m super honored that she called it that. You have to understand that, for a lot of our users, coparenting feels like an impossible situation. They’re doing everything they can for their kids but they’re doing it with someone who may use that love as a weapon.

When your devotion becomes a tool for control or emotional harm, it can feel like there’s no way to protect yourself. That’s where Best Interest steps in. The app acts as a buffer; a protective layer between you and the stress. It filters harmful messages before you even see them. It lets you set notification boundaries so you’re not interrupted during family time, Date Night or moments of calm.

If you’re writing a message in the heat of the moment, the outgoing-message filter helps you catch something that might escalate things. It’s protection in both directions. So, when that user called Best Interest her “AI bodyguard,” it really landed. That’s exactly what we we aim to be

CGA: Walk us through some options, pricing and

JENNY & BRUCE'S TEST RUN

Kennedy quickly agreed to let us test out his app on your behalf. I loaded it to my smartphone to get familiar with the interface and check for glitches. (So far, so good!) Welcome emails were friendly, helpful and succinct. The app assigns a random “dummy” number which you ask the ex to use going forward. Area codes don’t yet match users’ existing numbers but that’s in the works.

Psychology professor and *StepMom* contributor Jenny Katz and her husband, Bruce, also tried the app. They each downloaded it and, as a starting point, used it to communicate with one another. They modeled their texts after actual messages between Bruce and his ex-wife. The couple especially liked the ease of download, straightforward setup and intuitive interface.

Jenny pointed out that distinguishing “filtered” incoming texts from raw originals took some getting used to. After learning how to do that, they used Best Interest to send heated texts back and forth in order to test out filters and flags. Jenny and Bruce appreciated that the app:

- Calls out strong emotions
- Makes texting more mindful
- Can deliver 1x daily text digests
- Provides relevant tips and content
- Deescalates by slowing things down

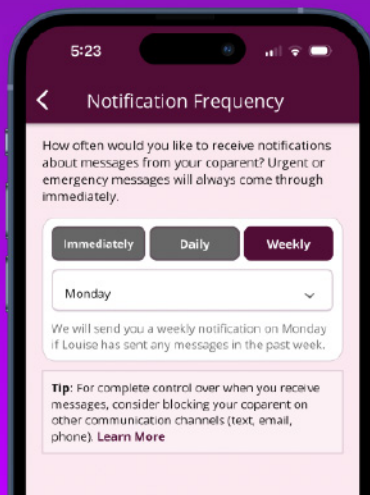
As for settings, Jenny found them less intuitive: “AI-based messaging was set as the default rather than user-authored messaging. Bruce unintentionally sent the AI version of one of his responses to me because it was set as his default. Still, the messaging interface was helpful at slowing down communication by filtering what was said through the app.”

Other perks were personalization (i.e., child name, pronouns) and strong AI-edits overall. The couple did wonder if some edits were too accommodating or patronizing. They mentioned, for example, “I’m open to hearing any suggestions you have.” and “Let’s be sure to focus on our child’s routine.” The good news is that, in the end, you get to choose which message to send!

Messaging on *your* terms.

Set **boundaries** on when
and how often you get
notified - you're in control.

And with **automatic
urgency detection**, you'll
never miss an important
message about your kids.



immediate benefits.

SK: Best Interest is offered as a subscription service with flexible pricing. You can choose a monthly plan or save by going annual. We also offer a free trial, so you can experience what it's like to have your communication moderated and feel the peace it brings without any pressure to pay. The headline feature is our message filtering.

Anything that isn't child-focused gets filtered out, allowing you to stay in the driver's seat and collaborate effectively with your coparent without getting sucked into conflict and drama. What you need to know stays in. Everything else gets filtered out. And, while I'm personally an advocate for reducing reliance on the legal system, Best Interest saves all the original messages in case you ever need them in court.

One thing that makes Best Interest truly unique is

that it works whether or not your coparent agrees to use it. Of course, it's ideal when both parties are on board. But, even if your coparent refuses, you can still use Best Interest solo. That means even in the most difficult dynamics you can download the app and feel more protected immediately. Best Interest also reviews outgoing messages to help ensure your responses stay calm and grounded.

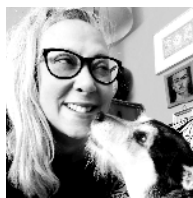
Many of our users tell us they've seen the tone of communication shift over time. Because they're responding from a more centered place—avoiding the trap of defensiveness and frustration—their coparent often has less fuel to keep the conflict going. For a lot of our users, that first sense of relief over not having to read another hurtful message unfiltered is life-changing. You can literally experience peace on Day One.

CGA: What challenges linger? And how are users addressing them?

SK: [Having] a high-conflict or emotionally abusive ex doesn't magically get easier over time. The dynamics shift but the core patterns often remain. Things like boundary violations, passive-aggressive messages, guilt trips or legal manipulation can keep showing up even years after separation. What we're seeing is that Best Interest users are starting to treat emotional safety as a daily practice and not just something they hope for.

They're using the app not just to block toxicity but to reclaim their energy, their clarity and their ability to respond or choose not to respond on their own terms. We also see users sharing feedback and feature ideas, which helps us evolve alongside them. They're creating support systems around the app. Some share it with their therapists or attorneys.

Others use it as a touchstone when reflecting on past communication patterns. So, while the challenges are real and ongoing, our users are building resilience. They're protecting their peace—one message at a time.



CHRISTINE G. ADAMO is a freelancer of 20-plus years on a quest to answer the age-old question: Who would ever write, revise, edit or proofread stuff for a living? Let alone tackle layout and design? Uh, she would! Standing gigs include Managing Editor of *StepMom Magazine*. Christine shares a New York home with her two rescue dogs and an assortment of collectible LPs, VHS tapes, etc. Her boyfriends are rarely without exes and kids. Follow @WriteReviseEdit.