

## **Men can be great fathers.**

I was raised by my father. My mother died when I was 6 years old. At the time, it was unusual to have a father taking care of four young children without a wife. The family tried to convince my father that each of us should be living with one of them. My father refused, saying we here his children and he was always going to take care of us.

He was not a woman, he did not have the soft touch of a mother, he was not awesome at remembering birthdays, but he was always there for us. He did the best he could as a father and as a man. I had a beautiful relationship with my father. He taught me wisdom, the goodness in people, to look at things differently, to take risks, to live life fully.

The one thing he did not teach me what how to have a couple relationship. How could he, since he was not in one and never had a girlfriend after the death of my mother.

I learned from him to single parent. It is in a way much easier as you do not have to get on the same page with your spouse. You do what seems right you without having to get into an agreement. But, that also means that everything in on your shoulders.

When I go my three kids, I was the one taking care of them. My then husband was a good dad but mostly was spending the fun time with the kids only. Not that he did not want to be part of the daily life, I did not want him. I did not know how to parent with two parents.

I was the one taking them to the doctors, to do homework, to console tears, arrange playdates, volunteer in class and sports. I was taking care of the all the details concerning the children.

Until we divorced. For the first time I would not have my children half the time. For the first time, the children would be with their dad hundred percent of the time, without me to organize everything and make sure they were okay.

I had to change my thinking, that only I could take care of them. I had to trust that he would be a great dad. He loves the children and wants the best for them. That was a great start. Now, I had to learn to let go.

I knew that he did know know all the ropes but he had to learn and that I was going to do everything I could to support him to be the best dad he could be. I had to do that for the children, but also for myself. I did not want to worry when I did not have the kids. I wanted them to be happy to go there and for them to know that daddy would take great care of them.

Since I was not his wife anymore, I did not have the right to say what he should or should not do. There were things I knew were going to be different and I had to embrace it instead of thinking that it was wrong.

I also supported my children to express themselves and how to have a voice. This way, if they needed something, they would not be afraid to ask or they could stand for themselves. And that goes for me too. I wanted my kids to feel comfortable enough to tell me what worked and did not work. I too had to do some work to be the best mom I could be, as a single woman.

There were a few things that did not work right away. Some birthday parties missing, some doctor appointment forgotten. But I had to remember that it took me years and years to really have the system down. I had to give him so time to become that best dad as well.

The result was that he became a better dad that when we were married. He was more present with them, and found his way with them, and not the way that I thought was best.

My children still contact me when they are at their dad from time to time to ask how to handle a certain situation. My goal is to always make their relationship better and richer.

Children need their dad, as much as their mom. We don't raise the same way, we don't approach life the same way, we are different. But it is that different that makes our children so rich. They know that there is not just one way that works. They understand that each person is different and that it is okay.

As long as the children are happy and healthy and are looking forward to spending time with their dad, then it is a win win.

Divorce is between a wife and a husband, not between a mom and a dad. Pain and emotions get in the way and too often, it is the children that suffer from it.

I hear a lot: Oh, we never fight in front of the kids. May it be so, as soon as parents don't get along, the kids suffer from it. They feel everything you do. So, if you are sad when they leave for their other parents, they feel that, and deep down feel that they are doing something wrong. If kids know you are sad, then it makes them in a position to take care of you. They won't want you to be sad or angry, so they can start their own fixing. They can start talking bad about the other parent to make you happy, or they feel they are not allowed to talk about the other parents and start lying about their love for their dad or mom. Sometimes, they even start hating their other parents to make you feel you.

How sad is that? A child taking a side to make you happy? I know that this is not what we want for our children, and yet, we do it because we are blinded by the pain and do not realize what we are really doing.

I was the one asking for divorce, and still I was heartbroken. I never dreamed of a beautiful divorce. I wanted an ever and after with my husband, but that did not happen. My marriage did not work, but I was going to do everything for my family to work. I want my kids to be happy, and for that to happen, I had to put myself, my emotions and my pain out of the way.

Not to say to not deal with the pain, but to put it on the side while I was building a healthy divorced family.

Fathers are important and essential to our children. And very often, men do become better fathers when they are given a chance.

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