

You and Your Children's Mother: Overcoming Anger for Your Kids' Sake

Getting tired of hearing about how all single dads are angry? If you're like me, you don't even like to read things related to anything about it – it can be to make you mad!

The real danger of that kind of anger is that it can very easily cloud your thinking and make you temporarily forget one of your most valued priorities in life, your kids. What's really best for you and them? Do you really get that much satisfaction out of hating your former wife? Who's really being hurt here? If there's a constant pain in your stomach, it isn't her that's bleeding; it's you—and the kids.



Like many things in life, hate is a choice. It may seem like an uncontrollable reaction, but in not learning to control your anger, you have chosen to hate. I'm not asking you to love the kids' mom again; that's a choice too. There's a middle ground you have to reach—the lack of anger and hate. It's a very necessary first step in bringing healing to your family.

I'll be borrowing from Ken Canfield's book, *The 7 Secrets of Effective Fathers*—that I teach from while speaking throughout the state and recently in Africa specifically, secret five: Loving Their Mother. I know it may be hard to even think about right now, but force yourself—for you and your children's sake.

Distrust Your Former Wife? Your Kids Will, Too

No one's perfect—including you. Sometimes we're late; we all do things that hurt others, too. With that in mind, let go of all the distrust you can, especially if it's based on old memories. If you choose to re-live that distrust over and over in your mind, it will give you an ulcer.

But, even worse, your children will pick up on the distrust like the smell of hamburgers on the grill. Your attitude won't come back to haunt her, only you and

your kids. If you reinforce that she can't be trusted or doesn't keep promises, you'll only create a basic anxiety and fear in your kids' lives. They may not trust any women. Your son could grow up to have a string of failed relationships with women; your daughter may develop negative views of womanhood or motherhood. They'll learn to distrust you for it too, and that could undermine many of the other things you're trying to do as a dad.

No matter how much satisfaction you may get out of spite, don't do that to your kids. Now that the marriage is over, why not be a little forgiving?

Can't Bring Yourself to Talk to Their Mom?

I remember talking to one of my divorced male friends (who seem to outweigh my married male friends) about a deal at an elementary school program where his son was up on the bleachers, singing his heart out about Frosty the Snowman. His mom and him were sitting on the front row, talking. What were they talking about? His son John, of course. No need to be angry about the past or present. No need to hate anyone. It is only a great reason to communicate the mutual love and hope for the life of this great little guy.

The story went on when he told me they were standing around with all the other proud parents and a woman approached him and said, "I was talking to your wife, and she said...." Oh boy. My wife! Then he said he stopped and thought, Of course. It was an easy mistake, but he also took it as a compliment, because it reflected that they were taking a tense situation and choosing to make the best of it. He said they both hugged John and then went their separate ways. No ulcers, no atmosphere of distrust, no lack of communication, no anger. Who benefited? Was it his son, John, him, and maybe their mom? They all won and it was great. You can win and bring your kids into the equation too. What a great story.

Think about the future now. Imagine no hate, anger or distrust aimed at your children's mother. You're there, and there is laughter, affirmation, even love. Your kids see their potential, love their mom for who she is, and give you credit for being the dad all their friends would like to have.

What more can life give in your role as a dad? Not much. Try it! In all things, love, love and listen, listen.