

Women Cannot Be Fathers...by Kim

As much as we would like to believe it, Women cannot do everything. We cannot be everything. American culture has raised a society of females who believe they can be everything a man can be. Last time I checked, our anatomy was still different. Why would we believe our roles are not different? Do we really think we can be both a mother and a father...or that raising a child without a father is no big deal? That is dangerous thinking.

As women, many of us are unable or unwilling to develop a healthy relationship with a man. Maybe that's because we don't know what that looks like. It was not a part of our own upbringing. But most of us still long for a family. And when our relationship with our child's father is not good, we rationalize that our happiness and well being is more important than that of our child.

Uh oh. I just stepped on some toes. This is not to say that our children must endure abuse. But there is a difference between harm and hurt. Hurt is a part of life that we all must learn to deal with. A responsible parent keeps his or her child from harm, but must realize that hurt will occur. Our job is to teach our children how to deal with it in a healthy manner. We ourselves must do the same - deal with the hurt in our husband/wife relationships and not run away from it. Perhaps it starts with resolving our own father issues.

At a recent fathering conference we conducted, both men and women were given the opportunity to forgive their fathers. It was amazing to see young and old alike confess the hurt they've carried with them most of their lives over issues with their fathers, some they never knew and others they knew in unhealthy ways. There is no way anyone can tell me that a mother, no matter how wonderful she is, can take the place of a dad.

I am saddened to hear of women in our culture who choose to conceive and raise children without a father in the household. Notice I said *choose*. Unplanned pregnancies occur and children have a right to life. Men walk away from their families every day. But when I *choose* to be a single parent, do I really understand my child's need for a Father? Do I understand the harm done to my child?

Please understand that the best thing you can do, as a mother, is to instill respect for your child's father. Whether you are married or not, you can build up that man in your child's eyes. What a gift! Love your child and commit to his/her father. That is what children want. If you don't believe it, listen to what they say.

Tasha, a fourth grader, wrote in an essay for the National Center for Fathering, "He [her dad] treats my mom very nicely, which makes me feel wanted." Compare that to Rebecca's essay. "Everybody in my family has had to put up a lot with all the things that have gone wrong. One thing about this divorce is that when I go over to my friends' house to spend the night or something, their fathers usually come in and say good night, not good-bye..."

Resolve to forgive your father, love your child's mother/father, and when you say goodnight, do it with a kiss and a prayer.