

Divorce: Not the End, But a New Beginning

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It is very common today for parents to get divorced. In fact about 50% of parents get divorced in America today.



*Divorce can leave you feeling hurt and torn between two people you love. This is a very natural feeling to have.

*The divorce of one's parents is a difficult and confusing time in an adolescent's life. You may find yourself with a great deal of questions and not many answers. Here are some commonly asked questions with answers:



- **Q. Was the divorce my fault?**
A. No, a divorce is never the result of the child or his/her actions. A divorce is an action taken between two adults due to reasons between them and no one else.

- **Q. Why don't my parents get along anymore?**
A. Sometimes adults disagree and begin to find different interests. After this happens they may begin to argue more and decide that they would be better off if they separated.

- **Q. Do my parents still love me?**
A. Yes, your parents still love you and nothing, not even a divorce, will stop that.

- **Q. What do I do when one parent asks me questions about the other parent?**
A. When a parent asks you a question regarding your other parent only answer if you feel comfortable answering that question. If you do not feel comfortable answering the question tell your parent and ask that they not ask questions like that again.

- **Q. Who will take care of me and where will I live?**
A. You will still be taken care of by your parents. When your parents divorce they will most likely live in separate homes. You may live with just one parent or split your time between both parents. This can be frightening and confusing. In order to help you understand where you will be at what times ask your parents to make a weekly or monthly calendar showing your living arrangements.

Feelings your parents may be experiencing.

* Confused: about their feelings towards the other parent. They are separating from a person they expected to be with for the rest of their life. This can be very emotionally confusing.

* Worried: about the new living arrangements they will encounter.

* Concerned: about how the divorce will affect their children.

* Stressed: about their new financial situation.

* Relieved: to be away from the former hostilities of the other parent.

Feelings you may be experiencing.

* Confused: about why this divorce is taking place.

* Worried: about where you will live.

* Concerned: about the parent who is leaving.

* Stressed: about the social effects of the divorce

* Relieved: the fighting has stopped.

* As you can see some of your concerns are very similar to those of your parents. Talking to your parents about your concerns can be a very positive way to relieve some of the stress of a divorce.



Emotions: AS you go through your parents divorce you wil l experience many emotions. How you react to these emotions hil l decide whether you experience positive growth or negative set backs

ANGER: Anger is an emotion that many adolescents feel as a resul t of a Divorce. This emotion can lead to many problems for you if not handled in a positive manner. Below is a list of positive activities that can be performed to work out anger:

- School sports
- Running
 - Weight Lifting
- Punching a pillow
 - Swinging a Bat
- Climbing a tree
 - Talking about it



Hurt: One often feels hurt due to a divorce. It can be very hard to deal with and can have very adverse affects. Some positive ways to deal with this pain are listed below:

- Keeping a journal
- Talking with a counselor or friend
- Seek a support group

SADNESS: It is only normal to feel sadness when your parents separate. Positive ways of dealing with sadness are:

- surrounding yourself with comfort objects
 - * Stuffed animal
 - *Favorite Movie
 - *Picture
- Keeping a copy of your parents e-mail addresses and phone numbers so you can contact them at anytime.

Loneliness: When living in a single parent home it is likely that you may be spending more time by yourself at home. Some ways to deal with this are:

- Staying with a friend when nobody is home.
- Taking up a hobby
- Getting a pet (Check with parents)
- Joining an extracurricular activity



Bill of Rights for Children of Divorce

- Parents must recognize that we love and need both parents.
- We have the right to not be turned into messengers. Mom and Dad should talk to each other directly.
- We have the right not to hear our parents say bad things about our other parent.
- We have the right not to be grilled about what is going on at our other parent's home.
- We have the right not to be asked to take sides.
- We have the right to not be made to feel like we are being disloyal to one of our parents if we enjoy being with the other parent.
- We have the right not to hear either of our parents say angry things about the other parent.
- We have the right for our parents not to purposefully forget important clothing or items when we are going to our other parent's home.



For more information try these links:

<http://www.allaboutlifechallenges.org/children-coping-with-divorce-faq.htm>

<http://www.divorcewizards.com/planetdivorce.html>

<http://kidsturn.org/kids/artwork.htm>

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