

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACTS OF DIVORCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes many of the common psychological and emotional effects divorce has on men, women and children and their psychological attitudes to the society and their environment. The societal expectation is that divorced life is less satisfying than married life. Divorce is dealt with an increase in depression--people experience loss of partner, hopes and dreams, and lifestyle. They may become depressed, develop headaches or stomach aches, and have changes in their eating and sleeping patterns. Moreover, there are specific feelings, attitudes, and dynamics associated with whether one is in the role of the initiator or the receiver of the decision to breakup.

KEYWORDS: *Divorce, Marriage, Emotions, Second Marriage, Lifelong Experiences, Communication, Children Behavior, Remarry, Social Connection*

INTRODUCTION

It is crucial to understand about divorce and the typical effects it has on men, women and children and their positions in society. Nowadays the divorce rate in the world is increasing. About fifty percent of marriages end in divorce. Sixty-seven percent of all second marriages end in divorce. As high as these figures are, what is also true is that the divorce rate appears to be dropping. The reasons for this change are not clear. Many people cannot afford to divorce, many people cannot afford to marry. The societal expectation is that divorced life is less satisfying than married life. Divorce is dealt with an increase in depression--people experience loss of partner, hopes and dreams, and lifestyle. The financial reality of divorce is often difficult to understand: the same resources must now support almost twice the expenses. Nearly fifty percent of all children are children of divorce. Twenty-eight percent of all children are born of never married parents. Divorce is expensive. Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) resources are drained by the needs of divorced and single parent families; including the cost of collecting child support. [1]

After divorce, women initiate divorce twice as often as men and 90% of divorced mothers have custody of their children (even if they did not receive it in court). Moreover, according to statistics 60% of people under poverty guidelines are divorced women and children. Single mothers have to support up to four children on an average after-tax annual income. And the researches show that 65% divorced mothers receive no child support (figure based on all children who could be eligible, including never-married parents, when fathers have custody, and parents

without court orders); 75% receive court-ordered child support (and rising since inception of uniform child support guidelines, mandatory garnishment and license renewal suspension). In addition, after divorce, women experience less stress and better adjustment in general than do men. The reasons for this are that (1) women are more likely to notice marital problems and to feel relief when such problems end, (2) women are more likely than men to rely on social support systems and help from others, and (3) women are more likely to experience an increase in self-esteem when they divorce and add new roles to their lives. Women have more innate abilities than men that are why, women who work and place their children in child care experience a greater stigma than men in the same position. Men in the same position often attract support and compassion. [2]

When it comes men, they are usually confronted with greater emotional adjustment problems than women. The reasons for this are related to the loss of intimacy, the loss of social connection, reduced finances, and the common interruption of the parental role. Also, men remarry more quickly than women. According to the researches, as compared to "deadbeat dads," men who have shared parenting (joint legal custody), ample time with their children, and an understanding of and direct responsibility for activities and expenses of children stay involved in their children's lives and are in greater compliance with child support obligations. There is also a greater satisfaction with child support amount when negotiated in mediation. Budgets are prepared, and responsibility divided in a way that parents understand. Yet, men are initially more negative about divorce than women and devote more energy in attempting to salvage the marriage.

Scientists say that, there are some significant effects of divorce on children. For example, one of the researches has shown the negative effects of divorce on children have been greatly exaggerated. In the past we read that children of divorce suffered from depression, failed in school, and got in trouble with the law. Children with depression and conduct disorders showed indications of those problems predivorce because there was parental conflict predivorce. Researchers now view conflict, rather than the divorce or residential schedule, as the single most critical determining factor in children's post-divorce adjustment. The children who succeed after divorce, have parents who can communicate effectively and work together as parents. [3]

Actually, children's psychological reactions to their parents' divorce may be different in degree dependent on three factors: (1) the quality of their relationship with each of their parents before the separation, (2) the intensity and duration of the parental conflict, and (3) the parents' ability to focus on the needs of children in their divorce.

Older studies showed boys had greater social and academic adjustment problems than girls. New evidence indicates that when children have a hard time, boys and girls suffer equally; they just differ in how they suffer. Boys are more externally symptomatic than girls, they act out their anger, frustration and hurt. They may get into trouble in school, fight more with peers and parents. Girls tend to internalize their distress. They may become depressed, develop headaches or stomach aches, and have changes in their eating and sleeping patterns. A drop in parents' income often caused by the same income now supporting two households directly affects children over time in terms of proper nutrition, involvement in extracurricular activities, clothing (no more designer jeans and fancy shoes), and school choices. Sometimes a parent who had

stayed home with the children is forced into the workplace and the children experience an increase in time in child care. [4]

A child's continued involvement with both of his or her parents allows for realistic and better-balanced future relationships. Children learn how to be in relationship by their relationship with their parents. If they are secure in their relationship with their parents, chances are they will adapt well to various time-sharing schedules and experience security and fulfillment in their intimate relationships in adulthood. In the typical situation where mothers have custody of the children, fathers who are involved in their children's lives are also the fathers whose child support is paid and who contribute to extraordinary expenses for a child: things like soccer, music lessons, the prom dress, or a special class trip. One important factor which contributes to the quality and quantity of the involvement of a father in a child's life is mother's attitude toward the child's relationship with father. When fathers leave the marriage and withdraw from their parenting role as well, they report conflicts with the mother as the major reason.

The impact of father or mother loss is not likely to be diminished by the introduction of stepparents. No one can replace Mom or Dad. And no one can take away the pain that a child feels when a parent decides to withdraw from their lives. Before embarking on a new family, encourage clients to do some reading on the common myths of step families. Often parents assume that after the remarriage "we will all live as one big happy family." Step family relationships need to be negotiated, expectations need to be expressed, roles need to be defined, realistic goals need to be set. Most teenagers (and their parents) eventually adjust to divorce and regard it as having been a constructive action, but one-third do not. In those instances, the turbulence of the divorce phase (how adversarial a battle it is), has been shown to play a crucial role in creating unhealthy reactions in affected teenagers.

Divorce also has some positive effects for children. Single parents are often closer to their children than married parents were. However, this is can also be negative as when a child takes on too much responsibility because one or both parents are not functioning well as a parent, or when a parent talks to a child about how hurt they are by the other parent, or how horrible that other parent is. Often a divorced parent will make an effort to spend quality time with the children and pay attention to their desires. And you can imagine that some children might find some benefit in celebrating holidays and birthdays each year. If both parents remarry, they may have twice as many supportive adults. At the very least, when parents can control their conflict, the children can experience freedom from daily household tension between parents.

The decision to end a relationship can be traumatic, chaotic, and filled with contradictory emotions. Moreover, there are specific feelings, attitudes, and dynamics associated with whether one is in the role of the initiator or the receiver of the decision to breakup. For example, it is not unusual for the initiator to experience fear, relief, distance, impatience, resentment, doubt, and guilt. Likewise, when a party has not initiated the divorce, they may feel shock, betrayal, loss of control, victimization, decreased self-esteem, insecurity, anger, a desire to "get even," and wishes to reconcile. [5]

Much of children's post-divorce adjustment is dependent on (1) the quality of their relationship with each parent before the divorce, (2) the intensity and duration of the parental conflict, and (3) the parents' ability to focus on the needs of the children in the divorce. Typically, children whose parents are going through a rough divorce engage in behaviors which are designed to help them

feel secure. Also, since so much marital conflict may be related to the stress of parenting, children often feel responsible for their parents' divorce, they feel that somehow their behavior contributed to it. This is especially true when parents fight during exchanges of the children or in negotiating schedules: children see that parents are fighting over them. They may try to bargain their parents back together by promises of good behavior; they may have difficulty with transitions or refuse to go with the other parent.

To sum up, separation has negative impacts not only the psychology and emotions of family members but also their future lives. They may come across difficulties to find their place in society and they may find hard to communicate with others. Despite these drawbacks, sometimes people who come from divorced family may be able to get lifelong experiences to overcome difficulties during the rest part of their lives.

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