

13 Reasons Divorcing My Husband Made Me A Better Parent



[Lynne Meredith Golodner](#)

Blogger

[LOVE, HEARTBREAK](#)

October 1, 2015

I became the mom I'd always hoped to be.

"I know you can't see it now, but you'll end up appreciating the nights your children are away," my mother said to me when I was getting divorced.

She was right. I couldn't see it then, but I truly treasure those blocks of time when the kids go to their father. When you're dissolving a [marriage](#) and

dividing up your parenting time, it's hard to imagine the silver lining. But there's a big one and it shines bright.

Here's how [divorce](#) has made me a better parent.

1. I gave into the emotions and misery I felt while I was still [married](#) to their father.

Which didn't make our home a very fun place to be. I yearned for a break, complained about my [husband's](#) failings, and felt burdened to have to care for the children by myself.

Once we divorced, I realized how precious parenting really is, and how fleeting. And I decided not to fill the time I have with my children with pettiness, rage or disappointment.

2. I [love](#) the breaks.

My children are away from me every Tuesday night and every other weekend. While I use those times to catch up on sleep, see friends, work and exercise, by the time they come home 24 hours later, I'm refreshed and excited to see them.

3. I focus on my kids when I'm with them.

I never hire a babysitter because I have built-in date nights with my new husband and weekends to play. Every year, my ex gets two vacation weeks with the kids, giving me plenty of my own travel time, in addition to the longer jaunts he gets sharing holidays and school breaks.

4. I'm a more rested, energized mom — and my kids see the difference.

They know I do things for myself — get a pedicure while they're gone, meet up with friends, take a yoga class. This sends a message that parents are people, too, with their own interests and desires separate from the kids.

5. I don't play the martyr when there's something I want to do.

It's a huge guilt-free gift to my kids. This summer, my husband and I learned to row on the Detroit River, and we absolutely loved it. Every Tuesday and Thursday nights, we headed downtown to get in a boat and paddle against the waves. We brought the kids with us Thursday nights, with a bag full of board games to keep them occupied while we got our sun-kissed workout on the water.

6. I developed my own interests and talents.

And my kids are along for the ride.

7. I always make sure my kids come first when they're home.

When they're with me, I'm laser-sharp focused on them. I listen better than I did before the divorce, I make time to be one-on-one with each child, and I plan my schedule around them. I never really need more of a break because divorce builds that in.

8. I'm sensitized to assessing the character of people around me.

The divorce taught me that, as a single mother, I couldn't date just anyone. I surely wouldn't invite a man into my bed because I was horny. I had three kids to think about and didn't want some strange guy knowing our home.

The dating choices I made were more careful than when I was younger. Anyone I linked up with would be linked with my kids, and a new guy would know that the kids were my top priority.

9. I wouldn't settle, compromise my standards, or shack up just to have a warm body next to me at night.

I had three warm bodies who loved to sleep next to me in bed, so it would have to be someone pretty special to kick my kids back into their own rooms. The divorce taught me that a guy was the icing on the cake, and I'm the cake.

10. I married someone whose top priority is also their kids.

My husband's daughter is his top priority, too. And that makes our [love](#) stronger because we aren't making each other our entire universe, nor depending on one another for wholeness. We come together as two whole individuals with clear priorities so we are free to love each other fully and completely.

11. I learned independence.

That I didn't need a partner to parent well, and that when my kids are gone I'm still OK. Having to make decisions solo taught me confidence and belief in myself. It also showed me the possibility of seeing my children as whole people separate from me who have to adjust to change just as I do.

But they cannot be my *raison d'être*. I have to be OK with their absence, distance, and independence. And my kids are stronger for it. They navigate between two homes seamlessly, which helps me appreciate little annoyances as just that: annoyances that will pass with time.

After the divorce, I talked openly with my children about many things, still preserving that parental authority.

12. I had to say no to certain extravagances because of my single-parent budget...

But I had the gift of showing my children how to manage money, and how to distinguish between need and want.

13. I let myself be sad in front of them, so they know it's OK to feel less-than-happy.

I forgive myself when I screw up, so they know what it means to be human, and I apologize to them when I don't feel I'm living up to my parenting ideals. They're my pals through life.

It took a while for me to be OK with letting my kids comfort me when I felt down, but I realized that in doing so, I was giving them the gift of empowerment, of humanity, of compassion. It's not do-as-I-say; it's live side-by-side.

Could I have accomplished all this without getting divorced? Sure, but I wasn't on that trajectory. In my first marriage, I was me-focused and became a parent because I wanted to be one.

I ended up filing for divorce because I realized that in order to teach my children how to have a healthy [relationship](#), I had to be their best role model.

I got divorced to show them how to be an adult who's independent, happy and confident. And in return, I stepped into the kind of parent I'd always hoped to be.