10 Things Divorced Dads Wish Their Exes Knew

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In working with divorced families, I find that as soon as *separation* or *divorce* is in the equation, parents stop hearing each other very well. Parents don’t often try to understand the other side because other unresolved issues get in the way. The romantic relationship changes (too often) to a hostile, negative, competitive and destructive process or sometimes a complete shut down where no communication happens at all.

So I asked many single fathers what they wish their children’s mother knew about them and about their motive in fathering. Some of their answers surprised me. I hope this might bring a small bit of insight to moms for the sole purpose of loving and raising their children into strong, stable young adults. Here are 10 things divorced dads which their exes knew.

1. That we bring something to our child’s life that only a father can bring.
2. That when we are not with our child, we feel pain also, even if it looks like we don’t.
3. That we don’t want to be Disney Dad, but if we have our child for only four days a month, discipline is not on top of our list of things to do.
4. That I’m not the enemy, I wish we could co-parent in a civil way and I pray for her regularly.
5. That the more you include me in my child’s life when I’m not around, the less time I spend trying to force myself into my child’s life.
6. That I know your intentions are good to provide for our child, but what she really needs is for us to raise her in Christ and give more of our love rather than stuff.
7. That I thank her every day for staying engaged with me to co-parent.
8. That families change but the love can remain.
9. That I’m trying to be less controlling of what goes on when I am not with my child.
10. That I am trying to move on from the heartache of our separation in a healthy way.

I understand that real pain occurs when relationships end. I understand that real pain occurs inside of marriages and dream-filled families that turn into nightmares and war zones. I know the pain is real and I know the anger and hostility are often justified. These pain points must be acknowledged and processed in order to get to a healthier communication pattern that *helps* the children instead of *hurting* the children. I always recommend that parents seek other adults to have these hard conversations with, someone with a level head who can help navigate the pain so it does not spill out on the children.

If you missed these [10 Things Kids of Divorce Wish They Could Say To Their Parents](http://www.imom.com/10-things-kids-of-divorce-wish-they-could-say-to-their-parents/), please take a look.

What can you do to give your children freedom to love their father, not because you like him but because you love your kids?

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