

How Divorce Affects Kids

Some people might be wondering why we're talking about divorce in these weekly tips. Here's why: Because Gayle and I have met many hurting wives and husbands in our travels who are looking for a reason to NOT get divorced. They feel hopeless. They believe they've tried everything. They're afraid and feel alone. And they don't believe that their efforts will improve their marriage.

Let's say you have a great marriage and might not feel like this information is really suited for you. Chances are you know someone for whom it is. Maybe you'll be able to help keep a family together because of what you're reading here.

We'll spend this week and next on divorce before transitioning into making a case for marriage, staying together, and ways of strengthening your relationship.

Of all the divorce myths floating around out there this might be the worst:

Many professionals claim it's *healthier for the kids* if mom and dad end the marriage instead of keeping them "trapped" in an unhappy, strife-filled family environment.

An expert from the University of Missouri on human development studied the impact of divorce on children throughout their various life stages:

Infants:

- Increased crying and irritability
- Altered eating and sleeping patterns

Toddlers:

- Recognition that one parent is missing
- Difficulty in dealing with forced physical parental separation
- Expressions of anger
- Regression or loss of skills previously learned like potty training, sucking their thumb, nightmares and altered sleeping patterns

Preschoolers and Early Elementary Age:

- May blame themselves for the divorce
- Have anxiety over the new changes in their lives
- Demonstrate sadness and grief over the lost parent
- Sometimes will become aggressive to the parent they believe caused the divorce
- Fantasizes about their parents getting back together

Pre-teens:

- Abandonment issues caused by the departing parent

- Withdrawal from interpersonal relationships
- Disengagement from favorite activities
- Demonstrate strange/unusual behavior
- Use bad language
- Express anger and uncertainty regarding their ideas of love, marriage and family
- Sometimes feel that they are growing up too soon
- May be overly concerned about the family finances

If you're in a marriage that you think might be headed towards divorce, please take action to turn things around - do it for your kids. And your first decision should be to wait because you can always get divorced later if you're truly in a relationship that is harming your soul.

Your marriage is good enough to save and your family is worth keeping together. No one earth cares more about your marriage and family than you. So regardless of what others might say, including the experts, about what you should do, the choice is yours.

You're in charge. Don't let anyone talk you into something that you don't want to do. Will saving your marriage be easy? No! (It'll be easier than you think, though.) But will it be worth it? Yes! Say to yourself right now: "*I can do this.*" Say, "I WANT to do this." Now say, "I AM doing this." That's right you are. This is the day you're doing something about it. Not only are you healing your marriage but you are saving your family.

Until next time this is Mike and Gayle Tucker and we want you to be *mad about marriage!*