



FAMILY RENEWAL RESOURCES PROJECT
parenting forever, through whatever

Judith Wallenstein – Take Care of Yourself

- Parents can't help their children until they've thought about themselves, about where they're coming from.
- Once you've decided that it's really over, you'll have set into motion the task of becoming a different person, and to your surprise, a different kind of parent.
- Your decision to divorce not only marks the end of a marriage, but the formation of a new kind of family.
- What you're feeling today is probably not going to be relevant to your life in three, five, or ten years from now.
- There are steps you can take to ease our immediate pain, but the really hard work comes one day and then one year at a time with changes that ricochet into your life and into the lives of your children.
- You can't become an effective parent until you've regained your footing and begun to repair the damage done by the failed marriage and the inevitable stresses of the divorce.
- How far or fast it all happens depends on how you respond to the challenges and frustrations that lie ahead.
- If you get caught up in the image of having failed in your marriage your parenting will be burdened.
- If you find yourself raging at your husband or wife, it doesn't matter if you're right. What matters is being enraged will eclipse your ability to be a good parent. It clouds your judgement and makes it hard to take care of your children or see your children as being separate from you. You have different needs and priorities at different ages. It also makes it harder to be a compassionate parent.
- In a normal situation, only one partner wants to get a divorce.
- Divorce creates two separate single parents with two homes, two sets of furniture, two refrigerators, and separate insurance policies.
- You are responsible for the well-being, discipline and entertainment of the children under your roof.
- Co-parenting after divorce is not the same as within a marriage.
- Divorce forces you to become a new person.
- A birth certificate didn't turn you into a parent, you remade yourself into a parent.
- You find yourself waking up in the middle of the night to carry out new and unfamiliar duties.

- Many psychological changes occur over time in both you and your ex-partner. After weeks, months or even years, of feeling shaky and bewildered, there comes a psychological moment when you become this new person.
- You are a new person when you finally stop feeling like a failure, and you feel free, even hopeful, and can make decisions without trembling inside.
- To begin the healing process, you might try this simple exercise.
- At some point, every person must face up to the hurt and disappointment that go with a failed marriage and the continuing tensions of the divorce.
- In a divorce, it's letting go of the memories collected over many years of being together.
- Mourning loss is a process that takes time. But you must know that after divorce you enter a new attachment with your former partner, one that is not born of love but one that arises from the role of co-parenting.
- Divorce is the end of love and the persistence of attachment.
- As human beings, we're blessed and damned with memories.
- Before you can give your children the attention they need, you need to gain control of your own emotions in general.
- People who have been wonderful parents and rarely raised their voices in anger slam doors on their children, cry in closets, and erupt in anger over nothing in particular.
- Your children often remind you that you have big responsibilities, and that is the last thing you want to think about. Many children are terrified by the change in a parent's behaviour.
- In your weakened condition, you are called on to be wiser than you've ever been before.
- The more chaos, the crankier your children become, the more they scream at each other, and the more you're going to lose self-control.
- Men and women face different challenges when telling the kids.
- If you're a man who never took care of your kids day-to-day, welcome to Home Economics 101.
- Whether you do or don't get along, the ties that bind you together still hold.
- You have financial obligations with less power.
- Your task is to make the most of a part-time role that you share with a woman who is no longer central in your life.
- You cannot decide on an impulse to take the kids to Disneyland.
- You can't suddenly decide to change their schedules, diet, or bedtime.
- If you're a mother, you also continue to be responsible for your children but you'll have less power in deciding how to raise them.
- It won't do any good to tell the something if you are worrying about it in your mind.
- When your children are with their father, you cannot control what happens to them.

Anger

- If you've been betrayed, you may feel ashamed and wounded.
- Many people find that anger makes them feel good. It can make you feel righteous, if not saintly. You can first use your anger to mobilize yourself.

- You may enjoy blaming the other as arch villain and this can block you.
- You're free to organize your new life as you see fit.
- Anger can persuade you that you'll do things differently this time around.
- You can regain self-control and understand the roots of the fury that had spilled onto your innocent child.
- You can't help your children make decisions after if you're driven by rage.
- No one can overcome your anger for you. Most people let go of anger to regain control.
- If you're alone and unhappy while your ex-partner is dating other people, your mind can turn any relationship into a torrid romance.
- If you are the victim of jealous fantasies and threats have been made against you, you are urged to take them seriously and seek protection from the police.
- If your energy goes into how hurt you are, how can you gather the strength to move forward in your life?
- Anger blocks the kind of self-scrutiny that you need in order to change.
- There is no substitute for what you say to yourself.
- Most people can help make the transition to the "new you".
- Being a good parent during this transition helps diminish the grief, guilt, and tremendous upheaval that divorce causes.