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magazine

REDEFINING DIVORCE

For The Kids



ON THE COVER:

"What's best for the children should be first and foremost. It is often my role to help parents reset their priorities."

Zina Gleason, J.D. Redefining Divorce
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redefining divorce

It Can Wait...



That relationship you are already in or wanting to dive into before your marriage has ended...it can wait. Here is why: They rarely last and the damage caused is not worth it. People going through a divorce or a legal separation, no matter how emotionally advanced they think they are, are still emotionally distraught. It would be odd if you weren't. So, the story goes then that those who are attracted to you in that condition are also likely emotionally distraught but for different reasons.

The damage you cause by having another relationship during this process or immediately after is irreparable, especially when you have kids. You can tell yourself all day long that the kids love your partner or they are happy you are happy, but the reality is that kids generally want to please their parents. They will tell you what you

want to hear because they don't want you to stop loving them. As adults we know this won't happen. But as kids, unconditional love is contingent on their behavior, choices, and your reactions. All they see is that mom and dad are split up and, before the kids have had time to process what is going on and adjust, mom/dad has a new partner. Not only is this incredibly confusing, it's potentially devastating.

The one thing kids want the most in the world- even if it's not in anyone's best interest- is for mom and dad to get back together. When a parent introduces a partner into the parent-child relationship, the child will almost always defend the other parent because they feel the need to protect him/her. This creates a divide between you and your child. And...for what? Temporary relief from emotional pain? Does that sound fair?

It is not okay to put your child's emotional state in the gutter so that you can manage your adult emotions resulting from *your* marital issues.

Remember- you are still a parent even if you are in hot water. There are a set of little innocent eyes watching you and learning from you. Be sure to give them the proper instruction and guidance through your actions and choices. You can't ever make this time up with your children. Your next relationship...it can wait...



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