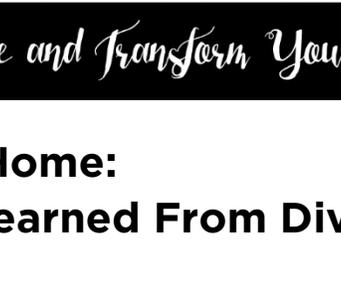




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Shine Through Your Brilliance and Transform Your Life Experience

The Upside of a Broken Home: 14 Surprising Lessons I Learned From Divorce By: Jessica Darling

I'm the product of not only one divorce, but MULTIPLE divorces. My mother never married my father, but left him when I was 2. She married when I was 7, divorced when I was 10, remarried when I was 11, and divorced again when I was 20. She is now married again. Crazy, I know! That's a lot of change. I have to add: her current husband is a keeper! He's great, and I love him. I think they will continue to be very happy together.

I learned so many valuable things from my experience with the ongoing changes and relationship ups and downs. I'd like to share them in case some of you are going through similar situations or are contemplating divorce.

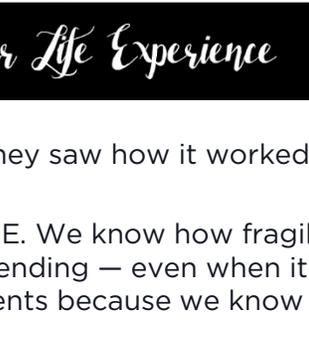
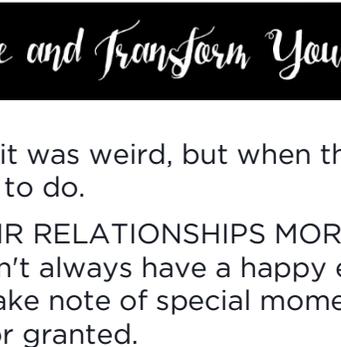
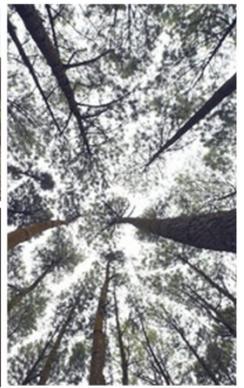
- 1) I learned that above all, you need to be happy in your marriage. If you aren't, it needs to end. It doesn't make you a bad person or a failure if it doesn't work out. People change. Sometimes that change works in a relationship, but sometimes it doesn't. If individuals don't change, then they aren't making progress. That can be unhealthy. Children of divorce are less likely to put up with someone's crap.
- 2) I learned warning signs. While this may not stop me from entering bad relationships, I surely can recognize when relationships go sour.
- 3) I learned that communication and intimacy are the two most important things in a relationship.
- 4) I learned that divorce doesn't mean the end of the world. Not for you or your children. It changes your life in many ways, but mostly for the better.
- 5) I learned how to stay friends with my exes. This is important, because when you break up with someone and you have kids, that person MUST stay in your life. While my two step dads had every right to be at each other's throats, they weren't. We had holidays together. They had RESPECT for one another. Because of their example, when I broke up with my oldest child's dad, I STILL invited him to Thanksgiving and Christmas. No matter how mad I was at him for whatever. He didn't have family to spend it with, and my daughter got to be with her dad (AND her paternal grandparents) on the holidays. It was special and made our family

Because of our love for our children, we fear we will mess up their lives in some way. I hear this fear voiced over and over again: "I don't want to hurt my children with a divorce."





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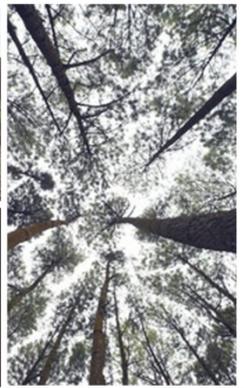
stronger. Some people thought it was weird, but when they saw how it worked, they knew it was the right thing to do.

- 6) Children of divorce VALUE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS MORE. We know how fragile they are. We know that they don't always have a happy ending — even when it starts off so wonderfully. We make note of special moments because we know they aren't something to take for granted.
- 7) We are more cautious with our feelings. This is a good thing. We don't jump the gun and fall in love with the idea of falling in love. That's a game and we know those don't get us anywhere. We love genuinely and deliberately — with care.
- 8) We make the most of the little pleasures in life. Seeing how things can change, we see things from a different perspective. It makes us deeper people and it helps us be more in touch with our emotions — which is VERY important in relationships with others. And because communication is so essential to us, we are better at that as well.
- 9) I saw the struggles of a single parenthood. This made me understand what it meant to be one. It taught me how to be strong and how to be comfortable with independence. Knowing you can be a parent and be single successfully because you saw your parent do it is a valuable lesson.
- 10) You don't need to stay with someone or MARRY someone just because you have children. This is a big one. It can be scary, but if you've lived it, you know.
- 11) You see parents as HUMAN BEINGS with FEELINGS, and not just "my parents." Kids see their parents as an organization when their parents are married. They don't know or want know that their parents have complex feelings, have sex, etc. When you have divorced parents, you get LOTS of benefits, but one of them is witnessing what dating should/should not look like. Think about it: if you only ever see a couple AFTER they get married (like with children of married couples), you have no clue about dating. I'm telling you — it is a VERY valuable experience for children to see their parents date. Even if it's messy — this way, at least they see what NOT to do.
- 12) Some children of divorce learn organizational skills of how to run a household on a tight budget. This is an important skill. They also learn how to maintain schedules. Both of these skills translate well to personal and professional life.
- 13) Children of divorce are more careful with other people's feelings. Because they see their parents fall in love and get their hearts broken, they know not to do that to others. Dating a child with divorced parents is different in a good way.
- 14) People who come from divorced families are extra sensitive to not only their own children, but all children. Dating a person who comes from a divorced home





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means they will likely be supportive of their partner's or friend's children. It makes them more involved parents. You want your kids to feel secure when you have experienced such a change as your parents divorcing. In my opinion, that is a wonderful thing.

Divorced parents actually make happier, better adjusted adult children.

I hope this helped someone out there who may be desperately unhappy, but is worried about how it will affect their children. Life can be challenging, but I would urge people to face those challenges with BOTH sides of the coin – not just the fear, but the possibilities as well.



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