

Parenting Solo: A Tough Job For Those Whose Spouse Died

Even with a skilled husband and wife “tag team”, parenting is a challenge. Some, for some unfortunate reasons, have lost that advantage and are parenting solo. For them the journey of parenthood will push them to their limits, time and time again. Fortunately, there are some resources to assist single parents. One resource is *Raising Great Kids on Your Own* by David and Lisa Frisbie. Filled with real-life examples, the Frisbies offer tools for the journey.

As the parent, you play a key role in how your children see your family. For those who experienced the death of a spouse, you need to allow the children to see you grieve. If they don't see this, they may wonder if their feelings of grief are appropriate. And they may wonder why you don't seem to miss the other parent, too.

As you share your grief, remember to help them see that life will get better. The current pain will not always be as acute. Show them that life can be good, that there are things to laugh about and hope for. And be sure to re-live the joyful times you had with the deceased parent. Find ways to celebrate their life.

Here's an example. Before the death of your spouse you purchased pizza every weekend. Afterward his or her death you face the decision of continuing the tradition or stop it. Whatever you decide, it is wise to discuss the decision with your child. You may want to change the tradition a little so that it reflects the family's decision to continue it. For instance, instead of purchasing pizza, you could create your own pizza by using English muffins and involving the children in the preparations.

You may determine that changing the tradition is still too painful and decide to create a new weekend tradition. This could be something as simple as watching a favorite TV program and eating popcorn. It might be playing games or taking a walk together.

The bottom line is that you hold the key. Even as you acknowledge your pain and grieving process, one of your highest priorities is your children. They are the legacy that you and your deceased spouse will leave to the next generation.