

10 Single Parent Resolutions

Stop Feeling Guilty –

Feel guilty because your children's dad/mom isn't involved? Feel guilty because your kids aren't being raised in a "traditional" family". The list of reasons to feel guilty can be endless. Parenting is often synonymous with guilt. Guilt, however, is a waste of your valuable time. It drains your energy and makes you focus on things you usually can't control anyway.

No, we don't have "Leave it To Beaver" families. But not many people do these days. 28 million children in the US live with one parent. Some single parents are divorced, some were never married, some are widowed and some are single parents who have adopted. Whatever the reasons or circumstances that led you to become a single parent, right now is the life you have. Embrace it and make the most of it. Life is too short to feel guilty about things you can't control

Stop Worrying-

See guilt above. Allocate a half-hour a day for a worry session if you must - then move on to productive things.

Be More Patient With The Kids-

Too little money, too much to do, not enough time. Stresses are all around, especially when you are going it alone. However, don't take it out on the kids. They are easy targets because the balance of power favors you. If you feel yourself becoming stressed lock yourself in the bathroom until you get it together. Count to ten before you react. Do whatever works to show your kids they aren't the targets of your frustration. If you feel you're starting to lose control contact Parents Anonymous, (www.parentsanonymous-natl.org) or (909) 621-6184. The National Organization will be able to locate a chapter near you. They conduct support groups for parents while the children participate in kid's groups at the same time.

Go On a Date-

Try it and see what it's like to talk to an adult all evening. It might not turn into the romance of the century. However, you get to practice your conversational skills, see a first run movie that's not animated, and eat at a restaurant that doesn't give you a cup of crayons and placement to color.

Do One Nice Thing A Week Just for Yourself-

The kids, work, the house, etc., etc., etc. With all the responsibilities your needs often come last or not at all. It's vital that you treat yourself well. Do something for yourself at

least once a week. Buy yourself the book you wanted, go see a movie without the kids, take a bubble bath after the kids are in bed. Just remember not to neglect yourself.

Laugh More-

Having a sense of humor defiantly makes all the stress more manageable and puts things in perspective. I have a friend who will only watch comedies on television and at the movies. Her philosophy is that real life is dramatic enough why watch it on TV? Keeping a sense of humor is easier on your psyche and role models good coping skills to your children.

Let the Little Stuff Go-

There is a book entitled Don't Sweat the Small Stuff. And it's all Small Stuff. Are the kids clean? Well-fed? Loved? Receiving an education? Then you're doing your job. If the house is messy, the leaves not raked, who cares?

Keep Yourself Informed-

Information is empowering. Keep yourself informed about current parenting/childcare/child support legislation. Write your congressman/woman if legislation comes up you feel strongly about. Learn basic home repair through community colleges and university extension services so you are not so dependent on expensive repairman. Continue to upgrade your professional skills.

Get Help If You Need It-

Life can often get overwhelming. Seeking help doesn't make you weak or needy -it makes you smart. Don't let lack of money prevent you from seeking help if you feel you or your children need some type of assistance. There are many free and low-cost counseling programs in most cities. Look in the blue pages of your phone book for organizations. Call your state United Way Information and Referral Line for referrals in your area.

There are also programs in every state to help you pay your heat and water bills. Each state has free or low cost health insurance for your kids, food stamps, free immunizations and other programs. Don't assume, also, that you are over income for these programs. For instance, the Women's, Infants and Children's Program (WIC) has a fairly high-income standard. Single Parent Central's Government Page has income guidelines for some government programs. It's a good starting point.

Congratulate Yourself Often-

Look what you're handling. You are raising children, running a household, working outside the house and handling a thousand other things. You are CEO, coach, driver,

cook, educator and provider. You are holding it all together. Many of you are doing this without any child support or help from an ex-partner. Single parenting is not for the meek or mild. You have a lot to be proud of.

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