

TO ALL DIVORCED PARENTS

Through this letter, we want to let you know how we feel. 'We' are **the millions of children** each year that are informed one day that their parents are breaking up. It is the day our world falls apart. All that was safe and familiar suddenly changes. Many of us have to move to another house, move to a different school, need to get used to your new partners and, in the worst case, must continue to miss 1 of our parents very much. And that hurts.

We so much want to have both of our parents in our lives. Two parents who love us and who see us growing up. Two parents cheering along the line, who are proud when we get good grades, and are eager to know all about our very first heartache. Who sit together on the first row when we graduate from high school, and who lovingly cuddle their first grandchild.

Do you realize how much sadness we sometimes suffer in silence? When we need to be your messenger. When we have to listen to you saying nasty things about each other. When we see that you **ignore** each other, right in front of us. Do you know how hard it is to love you both, while 1 of you sometimes doesn't want us to? So that we end up not telling you about the fun weekend we had?



We feel torn between the two people we love so much. We feel **guilty** when we enjoy being with the other. We feel responsible for your happiness. Often you do become happier after a while. But for us it's often not that easy. For some of us, the pain never really goes away.

So can we just ask a few things of you?

- > Please do not make us choose sides.
- > Do not have fights in front of us.
- > Do not say bad things about each other to us.
- > Give us time to get used to the new situation.
- > Really listen to what we have to say.
- > Allow us enough room to keep loving you both.
- > Don't forget that it was your choice together to have us.

A divorce feels like a safe home that, all of a sudden, gets completely refurbished. Walls are knocked out, new floors installed, different wallpaper. At first it's a huge mess, but gradually something new and pretty emerges. Give us the chance to calmly paint a bit of the woodwork too, and ask us how we like the view. In this way we can build a **new home** together. With a crack here and there and perhaps a broken roof tile. But warm and solid and safe. A place where we can feel AT HOME again.

You've just been given the key to the door.

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