

Divorce Mailbag

Margot Swann, the Founder & CEO of Visions Anew Institute, The Divorce Resource for Women, answers your divorce questions.

Photo: Dan Carmody, Studio 7



Margot Swann

**Dear Margot,
I really need some help. My controlling husband and I are currently going through a divorce. As the mother of three children, ages 13, 7 and 4, I struggle with my voice being heard by my children when they are misbehaving. My children often ignore what I say and seem to not even hear me. How can I be heard and respected by my children without feeling as though I have to yell and get angry to be heard?**

- Lady Who Lives in a Shoe

Dear Lady,
During divorce it is especially hard to parent. Children often reflect the chaos they feel around them and divorce creates chaos. Because I am not a therapist I am going to defer to Ms Jerry Connor, LPC. Jerry understands children and divorce.

Not being heard is a major parental complaint even when divorce is not in the equation. During divorce there is often a lack of unified support from the other parent.

- Take time to observe and really listen to your children's concerns even if you can't "fix" the situation. Only 7 % of communication is words.
- Different age children have different needs. Learn what these needs are and reassure the children you are working to help them through this stressful time.
- Lack of consistency confuses children. Learn to manage your children with reason, consistent follow through, and with appropriate consequences.

It is never too late to tell the children you have learned some better ways to handle things and you will be starting now. Use your newly learned skills every chance you get.

- Children often fight limits and boundaries. However, they need them more during a divorce than ever. This is not the time to be more lenient. Boundaries may be physical, emotional, and spiritual. Learn what boundaries your family needs.

- Don't say bad things to the children about their Dad.

If you and your husband did not start off with a plan to keep the children out of the fray, do the best you can now. Never fight in front of the children. The children are often caught between parents who forget the affect the divorce is having on them. They will eventually figure things out. Do your best to always take the high road. You will feel better about yourself and your children will benefit, too.


Jerry Connor, MA, LPC, 770-441-3878

Thank you, Jerry, for helping our Lady in the Shoe understand some basics about parenting during divorce. Lady, I would also like to recommend that you continue to attend our free Visions Anew Divorce Support Groups (there are 10 locations all over Metro Atlanta). There is also a new one for MEN ONLY. Other Visions Anew programs include:

- January 22, Divorce Survival Workshop
- February 11-13, Divorce Survival Weekend

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Send your divorce questions to: margot@visionsanew.org

Remember though you never expected to divorce, if it is unavoidable do it with good information, with integrity, and with a team of experts. You don't have to divorce alone.




The divorce process is at best like juggling dozens of balls in a circus act. At its worst, it is like fighting for your life against a multi-headed dragon often while trying to shield your children from its flames.

Our mission is to empower divorcing women to successfully create and achieve a new vision for their lives.

Wise, professional women offer the tools to help you recapture your dignity and self respect.

Our programs educate, support, and connect divorcing women with professionals, resources and each other.



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