

Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Divorce: 5 Ways to Be a Hero

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Mother's Day or Father's Day can be challenging for divorced parents. Here are 5 ways to be a hero and a role model for your kids – in spite of how you feel about your ex.

For many divorced parents, the last thing they feel like doing is investing time, money, and energy in putting care and thought into helping their children have a present for their ex on Mother's Day/Father's Day. As a clinical social worker and divorce attorney, I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is for you to make all best efforts to be a hero for your children by ensuring that your ex is celebrated on his/her special day (not to mention birthday).

So, ask not how you can hurt your ex – ask how you can help your children honor their other parent on Mother's Day and Father's Day after divorce.

1. Planning for Mother's Day/Father's Day

Given children's sense of time and priorities, they may not have the wherewithal to timely bring the subject up to you of getting their Mom or Dad a gift. It is incumbent upon you to be the proactive one to ensure [your ex is honored as a parent](#). Try to put aside all your personal feelings about your ex's shortcomings as a parent and try, instead, to focus all that energy on shining the best possible light on making the day special for your child and the other parent.

In that way, you will ironically find that the present you are helping with for your ex is also a rewarding and [bonding experience](#) for you and your children. Sometimes, however, life gets in the way and we run out of time. In that event, be thankful for meaningful gift card options which can be purchased and sent electronically.

2. Mother's Day/Father's Day Gifts

Be [a good role model for your children](#). Take them shopping for their Mom/Dad and give them a reasonable budget towards a gift. Think of this as added bonus time for you and your children to spend quality time together and for teaching them to think about the message of gifting and about keying in on what would be special to your ex if your children cannot come up with appropriate thoughts on their own.

If you know your ex hates flowers, for example, steer your children away from that gesture. And – also be generous of heart (and wallet) by not coming up necessarily with a single gift for each of your two or more children to present; the individual touch reflecting each child's relationship and personality with his Mom or Dad is very special and should be encouraged. However, if you are not inclined to spend any money, proceed to #3, below.

3 A Rose is a Rose is a Rose...

...and a gift is a gift is a gift. Gifts come in a variety of shapes and sizes. If you are unwilling or unable to spend money on a gift on behalf of your child, then ensure that your child comes up with [a DIY \("do it yourself"\) gift](#). For most parents, the best gift they can ever hope to receive is a homemade card, perhaps paired with a photo of their child. Thoughtfulness, creativity, and a bit of an investment of time will go a long way towards coming up with a memorable and home-made gift.

4. Turnabout is Fair Play

As much as you may not like investing time and money in helping your child buy or create a gift for your ex, surely, you hope that your ex will assist your child in being thoughtful when it comes to the

day that honors *you*. This is definitely one of those times when the old proverb "What's good for the goose is good for the gander" holds true.

5. Teach Values by Example

Despite what may have [transpired in your separation and divorce](#) and everything that led up to it, Mother's Day and Father's Day after divorce presents an ideal opportunity for you to demonstrate to your child that "doing the right thing" is first and foremost. Don't punish your child for being an innocent bystander in the demise of your marriage. Do model and instill values for your child that will last a lifetime.

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