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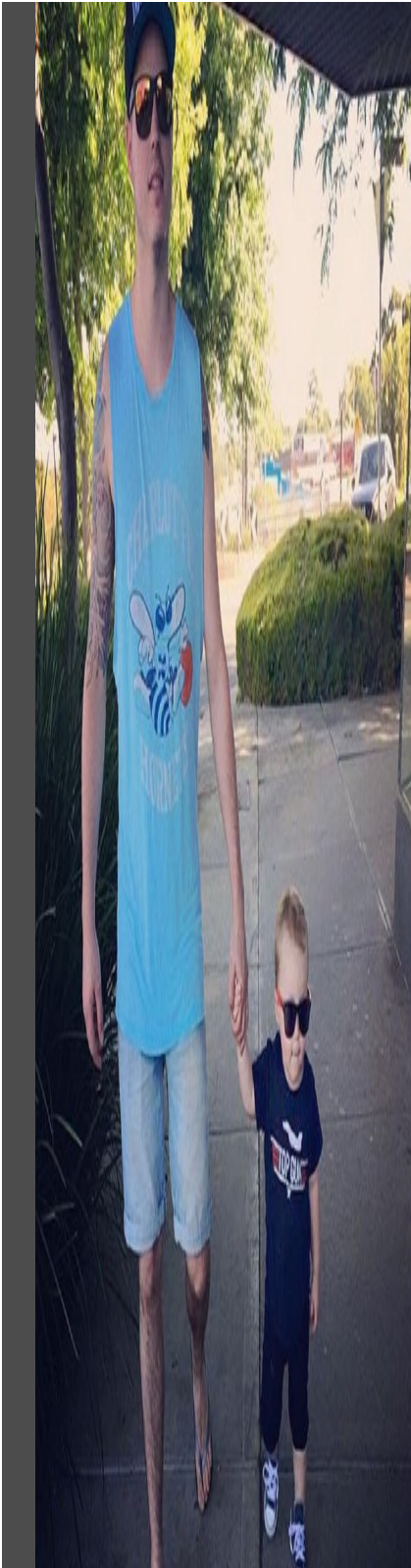


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NEWSLETTER

Issue 902

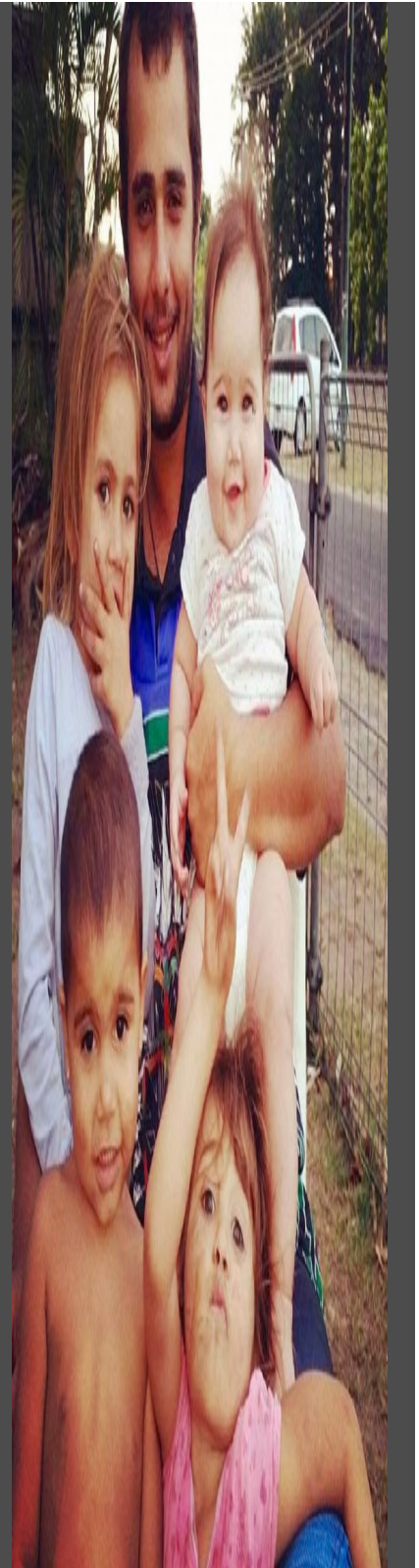
Inspiring Fathers - Encouraging Families



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Making a Difference for Men and Boys

● INTERNATIONAL
MENSDAY
November 19



Dear Richard

On Tuesday 19 November 2019 we celebrate [International Men's Day](#). Many people don't even know that such a day exists. Some years ago Punch Columnist, Richard Fleming wrote an article to celebrate [International Women's Day](#) titled, "Why there is no International Men's Day".

The opening sentence gives us the foundation for his thesis. "With today being International Women's Day there will be millions of men around the world thinking, "This is so sexist! Where is my 'International Men's Day?'".



"IF" a Poem by Rudyard Kipling promoting [Movember](#)

Richard Fleming then goes on to point out the incredible inequality that women suffer, particularly in the third world. He is right. Women in general do very badly in third world countries. The oppression of women as a gender in these countries is visceral.

Fleming has worked in the third world and I can confirm, as someone who has worked with and visited the poor in Africa and other third world nations in Asia, that women are in need of a strong voice. Hopefully International Women's Day will continue to be a voice for them.

Having said that, the situation in the west is altogether different. Masculinity has been derided for almost half a century and the male of the species is showing a lot of wear and tear in vital statistics. Sadly, the most popular adjective to describe masculinity is found in the very popular phrase, "[Toxic Masculinity](#)".

The [Australia Bureau of Statistics](#) pointed out many years ago that men fare worse than women in education, health and crime. The simple facts are that men are killing themselves between three and four times the rate of women and they die on average four years earlier. To a lesser or greater extent these figures are mirrored across the western world.

The controversial book by Hanna Rosin, '[The End of Men: and the Rise of Women](#)' illustrates the point perfectly. Feminist author, Susan Faludi's ground-breaking book '[Stiffed](#)' is written along the same lines but with more compassion.

Perhaps the comments below Richard Fleming's article best explain some of the history of International Women's Day and the need for an International Men's Day. A comment by 'Terry' in the reply section of the column puts it this way:

'International Women's Day was created strictly to promote socialist politics and was always referred to by the Communist name 'International Working Women's Day'. It wasn't until the 1970s that the word 'working' was dropped along with its socialist meaning. Beginning in the 1970's IWD became coopted by feminists.

Whereas IWWD was previously used to promote women's oppression by a class of bourgeois upper class men-AND-WOMEN, 1970s feminists changed the basis of "IWD" by stating that men as a class of "male chauvinists" completely controlled women who were each and all men's victims.

One can say that in the 1970s IWD became a brand new IWD with males -all males- for the first time becoming "the" enemy. But IWD limped along as a fairly insignificant world event until 1980s when "Patriarchy Theory" was elaborated as the brand new theory necessitating observance of an IWD.

Then women joined it in vast numbers (mostly out of paranoia that men were out to oppress them) and the event continues to grow primarily as a gender war, the principle being that men alone as a privileged class hurt women alone as the oppressed class.

International Men's Day has a completely different reason for coming into being. Although IMD objectives occasionally intersect with those of IWD, such as advocating equality between the sexes, it is predominately about celebrating positive male role models, a very worthy aim in a social context which highlights ONLY males behaving badly (perhaps a self-fulfilling propaganda exercise by the patriarchy theorists who are now in various positions of influence in media. social services, etc).

Said concisely, International Women's Day started as a day for women to promote socialist

objectives, especially for proletarian women to fight against oppression by the upper bourgeois class of men and women.

In the 1970's it became a new movement claiming that men alone oppressed women, and that IWD will be used as a vehicle to promote, primarily, an assumed gender war.'

International Men's Day is not based on the assumption of a gender war. IMD is primarily about promoting and celebrating positive male role models in a contemporary world context which is obsessed with teaching all young boys and girls that males behave badly, and only badly'.

Terry has hit the nail on the head. The 2019 theme for www.internationalmensday.com is 'Making a difference for Men and Boys' in the light of the need for positive male role models. International Men's Day is not based on the assumption of a gender war but is about celebrating the good things that men bring to our families and society. The six pillars of International Men's Day are standing the test of time.

To promote positive male role models; not just movie stars and sports men but every day, working class men who are living decent, honest lives.

To celebrate men's positive contributions to society, community, family, marriage, child care, and to the environment.

To focus on men's health and wellbeing; social, emotional, physical and spiritual.

To highlight discrimination against men; in areas of social services, social attitudes and expectations, and law.

To improve gender relations and promote gender equality.

To create a safer, better world; where people can be safe and grow to reach their full potential.

The [Movember](#) fundraising campaign for men's health has put a particularly positive spin on the importance of manhood by [promo videos like "If"](#) featured earlier. They have also raised \$911 million worldwide for men's health since starting in 2003 in Melbourne, Australia. [See this video](#). Help them if you can.

Lovework

Make a Difference for Men and Boys. Celebrate the importance of positive male role models

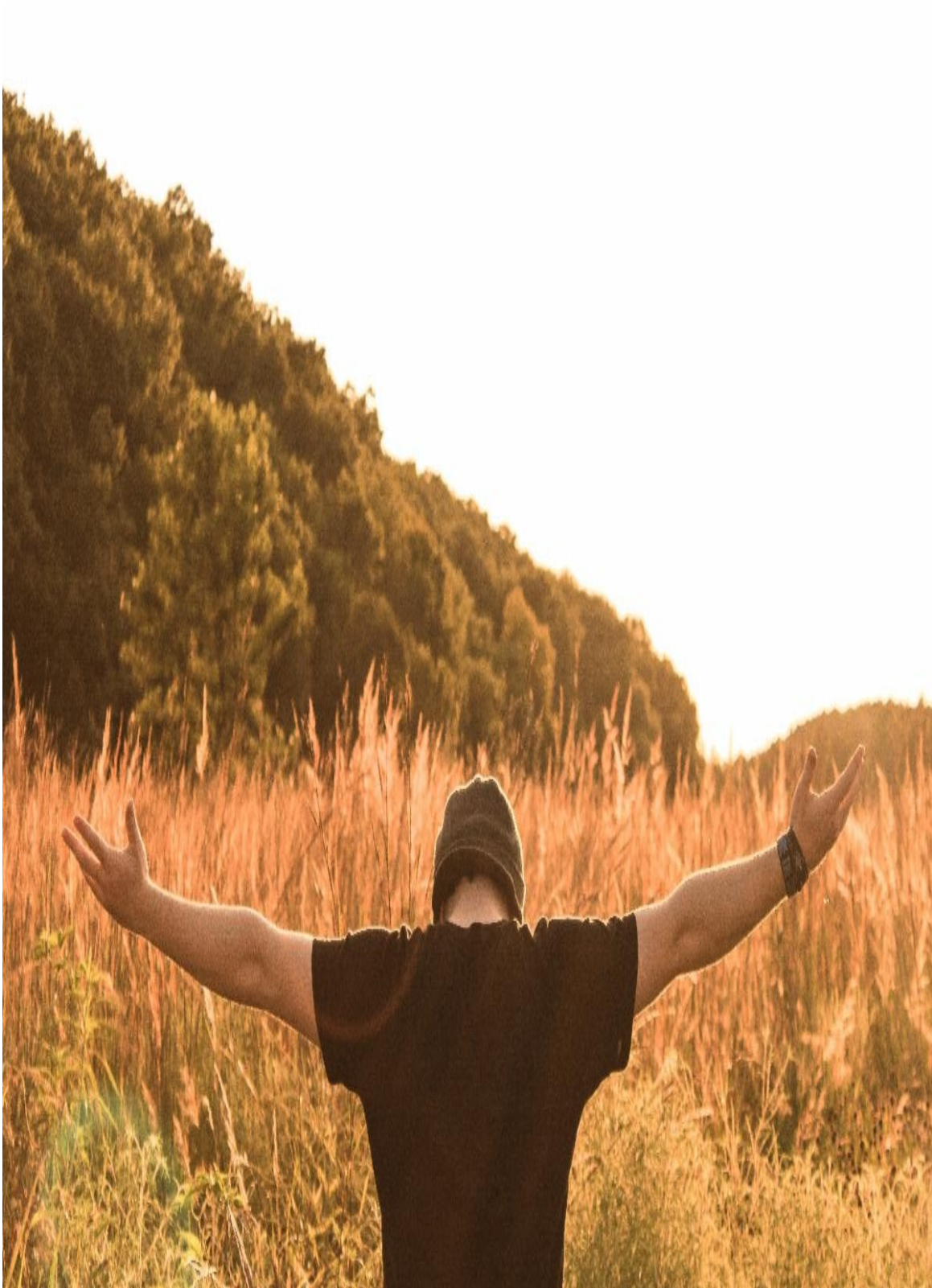
by being one yourself. Your children need your positive maleness more than you will ever know. Why not get together with a few male friends on 19 November and observe the obvious? Children need fathers in their lives just as much as they need their mothers.

Yours for celebrating the obvious
Warwick Marsh

Warwick blogs at www.justaman.com.au

PS. We don't ask for help often but we need your fiscal support to promote International Men's Day, to turn the tide of men's suicide and help make a difference for men and boys. Give [NOW AT THIS LINK](#).

Thought for the Week



**There never was yet a truly great man,
that was not at the same time truly virtuous.**

Benjamin Franklin

Don't wear headphones
while vacuuming.
I've just finished the
whole house before
realizing the vacuum
wasn't plugged in.



I Used to Think it was a Man's World and Then I Became a Dad

by [John Adams](#)

UK Daddy Blogger John Adams says he's celebrating International Men's Day this

year, something he wouldn't have dreamed of doing before he experienced fatherhood.

International Men's Day is upon us and I shall be celebrating it and encouraging both men and women to do the same. I haven't always held this view. Until about three years ago, when I became the main person caring for my children, I'd have laughed at such an occasion. I'd have told you it's a man's world and we don't need this kind of interference, thank you very much.

Since then, experience has shown me that us men are second class citizens when it comes to being parents. If International Men's Day can shine a light on this issue and change the perceptions of fathers then I will be very happy indeed.

So how can it be that us fathers are disadvantaged in the twenty first century? It's true, there is no Israeli-style 'peace wall' coming between my children and I. In the nation where I live, the United Kingdom, men and women alike are protected by a raft of equality laws that stop men in my position from blatant discrimination.

Sadly, however, this message has not been universally received. I can tell you that I face lazy, latent and often unintended sexist words, media messages and actions every day and most of it revolves around outdated language used to describe parenting. Allow me to give you a few examples.

When was the last time you saw a cleaning product with a strap-line clearly stating it was for women to use? Can't think of one? I suspect you'd probably have to go back decades. You just wouldn't see products marketed that way anymore and yet you could walk into any supermarket and there on the shelves you'll find a major brand of breakfast cereal sold in packaging instructing children to ask their "mum" to help them pour the milk into the bowl.

You probably think that sounds petty. Unfortunately the examples just keep coming. There's the baby shampoo and skin care cream with "mum and me" stamped across the packaging, the powdered milk manufacturer that runs a "mother and baby" club, the book publisher that instructs children to "read with mummy" and so on.

I could continue but you get my point. These products, which I always try to boycott, are marketed using very lazy language. Not only does such marketing send a shocking message to our children, it also ignores the fact that men are increasingly taking a more hands-on approach as parents.

I always think there's a certain irony in this dreadful approach to using this language. In my opinion it's just as offensive to women as it is as to men. It reinforces the old stereotype that a woman's place is in the home looking after the children.

Of course this is a much bigger issue than some stupid comment written on a shampoo bottle. Just the other week I took my baby daughter to see a general practitioner. The doctor was a young woman, probably about 30, and to my surprise, more so because of her young age, she accused me of “babysitting” my child. This is a phrase that has unfortunately been thrown in my direction a number of times but never by anyone so young.

I can think of another time when I took the same daughter to see a nurse for some inoculations. I can only describe what happened as bizarre. She gave my daughter the required injections before pointedly asking where my wife was and then started to physically look around the room for her! I’m also going to put myself on thin ice and say that women can be guilty of reinforcing the stereotype that childcare is no place for men. One way to demonstrate this is to look at social media usage.

Let me give you an example that’s rather close to home. One of my daughters was attending a pre-school that had a Facebook page. Despite the fact that several men were regular users of this page, messages were almost always sent out to “mums” and “mummies.” My concern when seeing these messages wasn’t for myself but for the male divorcee or widower who must have found these messages very irritating indeed.

Again, this may seem like a very petty example but it demonstrates language and use of language is important. If men are to be encouraged to be better and more involved parents the language used to describe parenting must be more inclusive.

In conclusion, my appeal to you, dear reader, is to think about the language you use when talking about parenting. That coffee morning you’re organising, is it just for mums or are dads also welcome? Put down that story book that says “read with mummy” and find something else that doesn’t reinforce unhealthy stereotypes. That “mother and toddler” group you attend, maybe you should have a quiet word with the owner about that dreadful name.

The most important thing you should do, however, is enjoy International Men’s Day. I’m not going to dodge the fact; there are some dreadful fathers out there. Sadly they tend to dominate the news headlines. Just for one day, let’s celebrate the good men that are out there, because they do exist and they are trying to raise healthy, well-rounded children in a world that often says they aren’t capable.

See more articles like the above [here](#):

Video of the Week



How Long is Your Shadow

Love & Marriage



Marriage is not a Partnership

Housework: It's often a topic of debate among couples, and truth be told, we've had our own dramas in this area over the years.

We have very different values and expressions when it comes to housework. Byron is particular about floors and will often be found with a broom, mop or vacuum cleaner in hand. Francine is more motivated around food preparation – she's more likely to be at the supermarket or in the kitchen than cleaning bathrooms or dusting.

While Francine is more fastidious about how clothes are washed, carefully separating whites, colours and delicates, Byron is highly motivated around ironing; when Francine would likely solve the issue of crushed shirt by hiding it under a sweater, Byron will very sensibly iron it.

Gender equality is a hot topic at the moment and so here are a few thoughts about how we can navigate this in our marriages.

Men and women are different – thank God!

It's plainly obvious: men and women are different – anatomically, neurologically, immunologically, hormonally, psychologically. We differ in body shape and brain structure; in biological function and in thinking patterns.

Every single cell in our bodies is genetically male or female and it's not just on the sex chromosomes (XX or XY) – researchers have identified 6,500 differences in genetic expression between men and women in almost every organ of the body on almost every one of our 46 chromosomes.

This research lays bare the erroneous assertions that gender roles are purely the result of socialisation. Not only are we different, there are all sorts of ways that our biological sex differences manifest in psychological behaviours and interests.

These differences, and the ways we express them, are wonderful. They are part of what attracted us to each other and with what we fell in love. Embracing them provides a more enriched social fabric – just as diverse ethnic backgrounds brings variety to our cultural heritage, differences between the sexes makes the tapestry of human interaction richer and more varied.

Seeing things differently leads to differences in priorities

A 2019 study by University College of London (UCL) found that only 7% of couples share housework equally. In the study, researchers divided 8,500 couples into eight categories according to how they configured their time between paid work, childcare, adult care and domestic labour. In six of these eight groups representing 93% of the sample, women did more housework than their male partners.

Several commentators on the study suggested a reason for the lack of male investment in housework was due to different standards. As one author noted: unlike his wife, he is content

to let the dishes pile up or to stuff unfolded clothes into the drawer.

While there are always exceptions, another commentator claimed that “Women clean and tidy more because they care more. ... Men’s brains just aren’t wired to notice the demands of housework.”

This goes the other way in other areas, for example men often complain that their wives are negligent when it comes to car maintenance with many women confessing that they simply didn’t notice the tyres were looking flat or that there was a strange sound coming from the engine.

Being different doesn’t mean unequal

Long ago, in his letter to the Galatians, St Paul wrote: *there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus*. He was articulating a profound truth that would have been shocking to his contemporaries: men and women, though different, were equal heirs to the Kingdom of God.

Our culture seems to have become confused by the simple truth that being different does not equate to inequality. We can be equal in dignity and value, even though we are different in ability, gifts and capacity. God doesn’t measure our value by the size of our salary or the tidiness of our home, and we shouldn’t either.

Wisdom is timeless.

The Power of Specialisation

Our differences, whether they are based in sex, education or interests, equips each of us in unique ways for our shared life. In our marriage, with 30 years of professional experience, Byron has vastly more insight and experience into financial matters than Francine. Francine, however, is more knowledgeable and skilled in child development and behaviour.

This disparity in skills and interests made it easy for us to each develop specialised areas of responsibility with Byron taking primary responsibility for our financial interests and Francine for the education and formation of our children.

Both areas are vital to our family functioning. Both areas require the involvement of each of us to some degree. But there is an undeniable advantage in having us specialise in our own area so that we can bring additional skill and insight to the task beyond the base level.

By specialising in this and other areas, we’ve harnessed an efficiency that has allowed us to get more impact for our combined investment in time and energy. The distribution of skills/interests allows us to contribute equally to our marriage and family, but in different ways.

The division of labour like this is not a radical idea. After all, every business operates on this principle.

The Danger of Polarisation

Specialisation, as practical and as sensible as it is, comes with some dangers; if the specialisation becomes extreme, the couple becomes polarised.

This typically happens when one of us neglects our responsibilities to the other due to an over-investment in our area of responsibility. For example, a wife may over-invest in her parenting such that her husband feels irrelevant in this area.

Or a husband may invest so much in securing the family financially, that he becomes physically or emotionally absent from the home and a 'stranger' to his loved ones.

When this happens, a husband or wife is progressively excluded from their spouse's area of responsibility. Soon they realise that they have little or no influence in that area and are locked out of the decision-making, feeling powerless and irrelevant to their spouse.

Likewise, the overly responsible spouse can feel isolated and abandoned in their area of responsibility. They can feel burdened and alone in the decision-making, unappreciated and taken for granted.

This results in resentment and distrust between husband and wife and is the dynamic that often underpins the debate about housework.

Read full article [here](#).

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Grandads



**Man is never so manly
as when he feels deeply,
acts boldly,
and expresses himself
with frankness and with fervor.**

Benjamin Disraeli

Single Dads



3 Steps for Single Dads Coping with Life After Divorce

By Dr Karen Finn

You can get through this.