

Sons Can Be a Problem For Single Mums

Contributed by Dr. Noel Swanson

Understanding your children

Q. I'm a single mother. I have three children, Caitlin, 7, Tom, 9 and Liam aged 11. I don't have problems with Cait, but the two boys are making life difficult. Tom apparently behaves well at school, but has learning problems. When he gets home he often throws temper tantrums. Liam acts as if he hates me. He doesn't show me any affection and is extremely rude. Tom's dad died when he was a baby, and Liam's father doesn't visit him. I need to find out what I'm doing wrong, since I'm so stressed all of the time.

A. I'm so sorry you're having a hard time. We all expect parenting to be mostly fun. The first thing you must do is to stop blaming yourself. Everyone makes mistakes, including you, but that doesn't matter. What does matter is the course of action you take from now on.

Your daughter is doing well - so you must be doing something right as a mum! It is also good news that your younger son is doing well at school. If he is able to settle down and work, even though he has learning difficulties, that is very encouraging. However, you might want to check with the school about how much he is struggling there, as it may be that he is bringing his frustrations home.

It's most likely that both boys miss having their dads around. This is a hard problem to tackle. The youngest probably finds life easier since "a dead dad is better than a non-caring one". That's because he isn't actually being rejected. You can't do anything about the other dad except to be honest with your son. It isn't a good idea to either defend or criticize him. If you make excuses for him your boy will take it as you being on the dad's side. If you say negative things about him then the child will want to defend him, since he is his dad. Remember that you cannot change the children. You can only change yourself. So, in what ways could you be different that would make life more peaceful for yourself? Surprisingly, if you can find ways to be more positive yourself, it will probably result in the kids also being more positive. Conversely, if you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got.

Above all, believe in yourself and your children. Look to the future instead of the past, and decide how you want to be. Think only of the positive, rather than of what you don't want. Instead of worrying, think about the happy outcomes to come. You won't get there in a day, but watch those baby steps. They will add up and take you to your destination. Improvement will take some effort, but so does your present life. You will get there if you remain determined.

Dr. Noel Swanson has written what is probably one of the the best parenting books, 'The Good Child Guide,' so if you could do with some tips for dealing with your children it would be well worth a visit. [Make A Positive Difference In Your Life With A Motivation Session With An Elite Coach](#)

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