



The Love of a Step-Parent

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In working professionally with blended families and being a stepmother myself, I have come to realize that love is the key to successful family life. It is important to think of children's needs first in blended family situations. Instead of worrying about the biological parents' past relationship, the step-parent should work to separate his or her feelings from those of the child.

There is no such thing as "too much" love. All in the family should encourage the child to have a healthy relationship with each parent involved. Each can have different supportive roles. No parent is perfect and both step-parents and biological parents can draw from their personal strengths and work for the good of the child. All can be viewed as someone special.

It is important for biological parents to understand that nurturing love from a step-parent is always good for the child. No matter what reasons for the biological parents' separation, children in the blended family need the opportunity to develop a relationship with the step-parent.

Children long for their parents to be able to be together for special occasions and to be able to get along. If a parent finds it difficult to heal from the wounds of divorce without being angry with another parent, counseling may be helpful. Family therapy can offer an opportunity for all to express feelings about how a "new" family is going to work.

When parents are able to work through their own issues and believe that children can never receive too much love, then the needs of the children will be considered before personal needs. And when children know that all the parents accept each other as a vital part of their lives, they can prosper in a blended family.