

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Denial

DENIAL: disbelief in the existence or reality of a thing. *(from dictionary.com)*

Scripture References for those in Denial

Ps. 119:50	Mt. 5:4
Ps. 119:76	Lk. 19:41
Ps. 147:3	Jn. 11:33-36
Ecc. 7:2-4	Ac. 20:37-38
Is. 43:2	Rom. 12:15
Is. 46:3-4	2 Cor 1:3-4
Jer. 29:11	Rev. 21:4

DENIAL...AIN'T JUST A RIVER IN EYGPPT! When it comes to children of divorce, denial is a very real thing that many experience. Many children, most of whom are ill equipped to deal with the trauma and consequences of the decision of one or more of their parents, will turn to denial (either knowingly or unknowingly) as a coping mechanism.

Rather than face the prospect of an irreversibly changed world, children will just deny that there is a problem or falsely assume that their parents will be getting back together. Faced with the prospect of having their world torn in two, children will choose to “pretend” that nothing has changed. Prolonged denial can be dangerous for children of divorce because it does not afford them the opportunity to talk about, and deal with, the emotions they are facing.



WHY DENIAL CAN BE A GOOD THING

According to the article “Denial: When it Helps, When it Hurts” the Mayo clinic staff explains (<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/denial/SR00043>),

“Refusing to face facts might seem blatantly unhealthy. Sometimes, though, a short period of denial can be helpful. Being in denial gives your mind the opportunity to unconsciously absorb shocking or distressing information at a pace that won't send you into a psychological tailspin...When faced with an overwhelming turn of events, it's OK to say, “I just can't think about all of this right now.” You might need time to work through what's happened and adapt to new circumstances. But it's important to realize that denial should only be a temporary measure — it won't change the reality of the situation.”

Before rushing to force a child to “accept reality” and deal with their denial, it is prudent to step back and ask yourself if they just need some time to adjust to the new situation. However, if the denial persists, then some form of intervention might be warranted.

DENIAL IS PART OF GRIEVING

Children experiencing the divorce of their parents will generally experience all the stages of grief. Those stages include:

- ✓ Denial
- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Bargaining
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Acceptance

For children of divorce, they often experience these stages over and over again as they leave one parent to be with another and at each stage of live. The best thing you can do for a child going through these stages is to be there to listen and lend an empathetic ear. The grieving process itself, while painful, helps the child to process what is going on in their lives.

