

# Changing Paths

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Even though their paths are filled with tears and struggles, they persevered. What are some of their experiences? What contributed to their decisions and strengths to move on in life?

*The demands of life suffocated her since the death of her husband. My children are still so young, she said. Adding on to the stresses were more unexpected issues of legal disputes. She felt helpless and distressed. In the midst of settling her difficult issues, she said, “as long as I am alive, I will still try my best to attend to the needs of my three young children!”*

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*Disbelief and shock accompanied him when he realised that the marriage was coming to an end. He suddenly realised he has taken marriage for granted, thinking that it would last forever. The decision to end the marriage crushed all the hopes and dreams he had for the family. In the midst of facing all these, he said with deep emotions, the children are innocent. Tears rolled down his face and when his tears dried up, he said, “no matter what, I’ll still raise them up! Life has to move on!”*

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*She tried very hard to salvage the marriage she sought help from family members and marital counsellors and hoped that her husband would want to work on the marriage. However, he did not want to. The process was strenuous for her mentally and emotionally. Even though she was confronted with disappointments, she still said, “I would need to move on for my children.”*



The opportunity to journey with many single-parent families is precious. The chance to witness their perseverance and growth reminds us to view life's difficulties and changes from a different perspective. They have the inner strength to fight against adversity and motivation to hold things in place. One thing that is admirable is that no one parent forgets the existence of his/her children even when confronted with many issues. The care and concern for the child/children is an important driving force in the lives of many single parents and it is the guiding light for them to move on! We have heard many touching acts of these parents in providing for their children and it is amazing to know that there is a powerful force within them to do so.

Single parenting could mean the end of something but it could also be the beginning of other things. The process allows single parents to reflect on issues such as marriage, interpersonal relationship, meanings of family and life. Although there are many challenges, the process incorporates a sense of relief and precious moments. The change in the family structure somehow created more opportunity for bonding between the single parent and his/her children. Some parents shared their experience that they have never thought of the possibility of such rewarding relationship with their children. Of course, single-parent families are not spared of tensions and conflicts (which are inevitable in interpersonal relationships). Still, many single parents have found and are discovering new meaning in this newly constructed family structure.

Sometimes when moving on seems difficult, talking to a caring adult or joining a support group at HELP Family Service Centre would help these parents sort through their confusion, and guide them in their recovery. Such support also helps the single parents to face life's challenges as it provides affirmation and empathy for single parents in coping alone.

“Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony.” - Albert Einstein

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