

Adult Children of Divorce – Hope and Healing

Los Angeles – If you are one of the millions of adults who has experienced parental divorce (or if you are a parent who is considering divorce) – it may be time to recognize the impact of that decision. ***Generation Ex: Adult Children of Divorce and the Healing of Our Pain*** (Waterbrook/Random House, April 2004) by **Jen Abbas** is a rare, honest resource of understanding. Speaking from the tender voice of experience, Abbas, who survived parental divorce at the age of six and eighteen, reflects on the pain and hope in her journey by sharing her experience and stories from other Adult Children of Divorce (ACOD).

“***Generation Ex*** is not a plea for pity or a book filled with condemnation blame; rather, it is a touchstone for recovery and renewal.” Abbas explains, “Regardless of *why* our parents divorced, their decision still hurt us and will continue to hurt us as life events and milestones are affected by the divorce. This book gives us permission to admit the hurt and find hope for the healing process.” Through extensive research, interviews and the author’s personal story, ***Generation Ex*** exposes the life long effects that might not be recognized until the child gets older or begins their own romantic relationship. Abbas admits this is not an easy read, “This is a book about letting go – of ill will, self pity, broken dreams and false identities...” she continues, “during my desperate search for guidance I was amazed that I could not find resources to help me with my healing.” Readers will discover valuable lessons including:

- Realistic goals on moving from hurt/disillusionment to freedom and happiness
- Identifying symptoms of unresolved feelings of loneliness, abandonment, betrayal & fear
- Solutions to the common “get over it” mentality
- Determining healthy, defined boundaries with your divorced parents
- How to handle difficult decisions surrounding the holidays, your wedding and other special occasions
- Creating a safe, sense of home for yourself
- Traits of trustworthy relationships
- The connection between making peace and acceptance
- The impact and role the divorce has on our identity, faith and relationships
- What outreach organizations can offer for ACOD
- Understanding of emotional and situational triggers that elicit unexpected responses
- “Shadow beliefs” and how to work through them
- Advice for married couples wanting to create a divorce proof marriage

Each resourceful chapter concludes with a word of encouragement, reflective questions, suggested reading and a challenge of application. Abbas’s hope for every reader is that “this book will be a catalyst to get the reader on their journey, to gain a positive perspective and to realize they are never alone.”

Jen Abbas, who faced parental divorces, continues to share her story with other adult children of divorce through writing and speaking. She works in marketing and enjoys spending her free time with family, friends and her Shih Tzu dog “Bailey Grace.” She makes her home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. More information is available at www.jenabbas.com.

Suggested Questions for Jen Abbas, author of Generation Ex

What prompted you to write this resource for adult children of divorce?

During your research, what type of statistics did you discover?

You gained a better understanding of your parents relationship from their courtship journal – didn't that make it more difficult in understanding what they had and now lost?

Who are some music celebrities that have experienced parental divorce as an adult?

Is it natural for an ACOD to mourn/grieve over the loss of their family? What are some ways people have worked through the loss?

What are some suggestions for family, friends and the church to reach out to ACOD?

There was a time you maintained a distance from your parents – what led to this decision and your reconciliation?

Although each ACOD has a different story, what are some common feelings they will experience?

Special times in the life of an ACOD, including vacations, wedding and pregnancy, can be compounded with post-parental divorce stress – what are your preventative suggestions?

What is your advice for ACOD whose parents who have unresolved animosity toward each other?

Your parents remarried other people– did you end up with any step-siblings and how did you find a way to “fit in”? What are some of the challenges of being part of a blended family?

Advice for those ACOD who have not resolved conflict, hurt or anger with their parents? What are some ideas to begin this process?

Is it true that many ACOD do not encounter personal difficulties until they enter their own relationships?

What is the importance of friendship and dating for an ACOD?

Has divorce has become glamorized through Hollywood breakups and what message this is sending to you young children (ie – the recent publicity hype on the split of Ken and Barbie)?

What are emotional, situational, transitional, romance and wedding triggers?

If love is flawed – is there any real hope for true love?