

Why is it that we have a culture that is so unresponsive to human needs? Marriages are breaking up and people are finding themselves in single parent families. Are there ways where single parents can meet each other and network? So far, the only thing I have come up with in my investigation is Parents Without Partners.

One organization for an entire city seems ineffective. What about calling your friends - you know, the ones you used to have prior to your divorce? I tried that. As a matter of fact, I try that often but to no avail. They are busy. They are spending the weekend or the holiday as a family... nuclear family that is. They are going away to meet old friends that are married and also have children. Why can't we come along? The "we" in this situation means one parent and two children. Never in four years of single parenthood have I or my children been invited by my "marriage intact" friends to go away with them or to spend the holidays with them. Don't you think that is strange? I do.

While I was married I had single friends live with me from time to time if they broke up with their significant other or if they had financial problems. I never thought twice about their being single. They were my friends and I was there to care about them as a good friend would. So where were my friends these past four years? My clients who are in a similar position face the same problems. It doesn't seem to matter what geographic area one lives in, the results are the same. Single parents have a difficult time in this dyadic culture. If you do not have family close by it is very hard to make it in these times.

There are no societal structures for singles. Why aren't there coffee houses with large playrooms with babysitters where single parents can congregate? Why aren't there new designs for restaurants geared toward singles meeting each other such as long tables or large round tables? We are a Noah's ark culture with places and mentalities designed for two. Communes went out with the hippie generation and so did the open love we had for our fellow human being. It used to be in vogue to hang out in groups and to support each other. What happened to those ideals? Did they go out with the times?

We became a more competitive culture driven to acquire more money and things. We were trying to get ahead of one another and began thinking only of ourselves. We forgot we are all part of a greater whole. Our spirituality left along with our heart. Our sense of connectedness got traded for greater technological ways of relating at a distance, and people no longer had to get together to get things done.

Now we are in a human crisis. We are so far apart from one another and so disconnected internally we do not know how to bridge this gap. How do we re-establish a relationship with our higher power and then with each other?

Your reactions

What are your ideas on this matter? Do you have findings that conflict with mine? If so, please write and let me know. Do you have any innovative ideas that we can publish in this column to begin shifting the culture? Change is going to come from a grass roots level and that means each one of you. If you are not divorced, I'm sure you know many people who are. We need a culture that supports everyone, not just those who happen to be paired up at the moment. If someone that you love is affected, then you too are affected indirectly. Let's brainstorm to create a world that works for everyone - a world that stands for the old traditional values of love, generosity, and compassion. What I am asking for is a new vision for us to live into that will support a global shift in consciousness.

Current Paradigm

Currently, we are still promoting a bankrupt paradigm. Our white middle class framework of reference is an outdated dyadic culture. It is a picture of a two parent, two children, one dog and two cars (one of course is a family van) totally independent family. How many people that you know fit into this picture?

Times and people are shifting and we need to replace our old reference points with new more flexible and creative ones that are culturally inclusive and viable. What about promoting multi-single parent family dwellings and hook your real estate broker friends in this new idea? It will require courage on your part to encourage others in developing their own creativity that challenges the current status quo. You will also need a willingness to appear somewhat strange or eccentric. That is the stuff that a visionary is made of and these are the times that mandate an enormous strength of character. Do you have the courage to promote this shift in being within yourself, among your friends, colleagues, and your clients?