

# Opinion: Letter to single mothers

By Jordis Brown

This is to all the single mothers. The mothers of young children who are faced with the difficulty of not sharing the physical and emotional hardships and triumphs of being a parent. For whatever reason or whatever path that has brought you to where you are, I wish you strength.

Over the years our area has seen horrific abuse cases involving young children even infants at the hands of the boyfriends of single mothers. Although these are truly the exception to the rule, these incidents did happen. Being a mother, especially a mother to a little one is a blessing with fine print attached. Your little one will trust and love you from day one and that bond is hard to break. Sometimes, being a single mother is too much to deal with and the need to seek out someone to share your life with is overwhelming especially in the beginning years where some women face a great deal of depression. So you start to date while your baby is still a baby or still very young. Although your time is now divided, you are still the person meant to keep them safe. You may fall in love with a man and he may fill that void. You may spend time all together with your child and in your presence he may be as loving as you are. There is something important to remember...that bond you share with your child is yours and yours alone. You can't assume that someone who loves you will love your child just as much.

You must defend your children from a known threat and the unknown threat of harm. If he loves you, he'll understand and respect you for it. This means that you do not leave your child alone with someone that may have signs of little patience or aggression. Attributes that you may find

attractive in a partner may be dangerous in a guise of a possible future step-father. Although your life has taken a serious turn, dating in the beginning should be casual and away from your little one. Start slow, and get to know one another. Set standards and don't make exceptions. If they fall on hard times this isn't your burden to assume. You're already taking care of a child. If there is a rush to move in together re-evaluate how that will affect the stress of the situation. Visiting one another all the time is very different then never leaving. Have the same family oriented goals but make sure that they are actually being worked so they can be realized. It's nice to fantasize and agree on wanting that picket fence life, a whole other story to accomplish it. Especially with the financial burden of children.

Do your research. When you start dating, put off introducing them to your child but welcome being introduced to their family and friends. Find out if he's a hot head or has a history of short relationships with messy outcomes. Your child does not need the drama you may be okay with. It's important for mommy to be happy, healthy and more importantly for that little one to be. With that comes sacrifice. Your child's heart can be broken just as easily. Their safety can be compromised with a distracted parent as well.

Whether or not to date again while your children are young is your decision to make. If the father is involved and hopefully the relationship is good, then it might be worth discussing so there is no strife caused by the shock of you moving on. It's important to do what is right for you child first and foremost and sometimes it means taking a step back and slowing down. Happily ever after is a dream that everyone has and for some reason it did not work out the first time with you. Before trying again, remember that the circumstances have changed and another persons happiness and overall well being is at stake.

