

No matter how exceptional at parenting two moms or dads may be, they're incapable of providing the gender-specific love and biological identity exclusive to the child's absent mother or father. The problem with same-sex parenting isn't the gay parent, it's the missing parent.

"NO DIFFERENCE," REALLY?

Most "studies" proclaiming that kids with same-sex parents fare "no different" than children of heterosexual parents are methodologically flawed:

- Participants were aware that the purpose was to investigate same-sex parenting, thus the respondents may have aimed at producing the desired result.
- Participants were often recruited through friends or through advocacy organizations.
- Most surveyed parental perception rather than the children's actual outcomes.
- On average, samples of fewer than forty children of parents in a same-sex relationship virtually guaranteed findings showing no statistically significant differences between groups.

Of these erroneous study results, Stephen, who lived part-time with his father and his father's partner, said, *"I keep seeing articles stating that children with gay parents do just as well, if not better, than children with straight parents. Where are they getting their information? Have they interviewed any adult children with gay parents, who can think for themselves and are no longer living with their parents?"*

METHODS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

In his New Family Structures Study (NFSS), researcher Mark Regnerus concluded, "On twenty-five out of forty outcomes evaluated, there were statistically significant differences between children from intact biological families and those of the mothers in lesbian relationships in many areas that are unambiguously suboptimal, such as receiving welfare, need for therapy, infidelity, STIs, sexual victimization, educational attainment, safety of the family of origin, depression, attachments and dependencies, marijuana use, frequency of smoking, and criminal behavior."

Using data from the U.S. National Health Interview Survey, Paul Sullins discovered that when compared with children in dual-gender households, children in same-sex-headed families:

- Were likely to suffer emotional or behavioral difficulties at a rate of 9.3 percent, more than twice the 4.4 percent rate for children in dual-gender families.
- Experienced "definite" or "severe" emotional problems at a rate of 14.9 percent versus 5.5 percent.
- Were diagnosed with ADHD at a rate of 15.5 percent versus 7.1 percent.
- Struggled with learning disabilities at a rate of 14.1 percent versus 8 percent.
- Received special education and mental health services at a rate of 17.8 percent versus 10.4 percent.

When methodological gold-standards are employed, "marriage equality" for adults results in childhood inequality.

MOTHER AND FATHER HUNGER

The craving for father-specific and mother-specific love transcends politically correct ideologies and progressive trends. Children's longing to be known and loved by their mother *and* father is at the very heart of what it is to be a human child.

"I am the daughter (not biological) of two moms. I love them both sooo sooo much but there is not a day that goes by that i didn't wish i had a dad... i have men in my life my moms' friends but it is not the same. I don't agree with the fact that I will never know half of my biology or my siblings."

"Is there anyone else who has 2 Moms or 2 Dads who wonders what it would be like if they were born into a normal family? Is there anyone else who wants to be able to use the word normal without gettin a lecture on what is normal??? I don't know my real father and never will. It's weird but I miss him. I miss this man I will never know. Is it wrong for me to long for a father like my friends have?"

"From an early age I found myself being drawn to my friends' fathers, or at least the ones who seemed like good, responsible, loving dads. I think my [lesbian] parents knew somewhere in the back of their minds that this was necessary for me and didn't discourage this, which was smart on their part. My best friend's dad also probably recognized the role he was fulfilling in my life and did so willingly and that's something I'm forever grateful for." -Theodore

TRANSGENDER PARENTS

Many kids with parents who've transitioned describe the experience as a type of death. They don't feel like their father has become their mother; rather, their father is altogether gone.

"My dad made the change to Stephanie and in doing so, destroyed his family.... The feelings I felt were loss. To me, my father had died, and there was no changing that. I was looking at a shell of the man I once knew. It was hard seeing him because, to me, he passed away, and it brought up those same feelings every time. I could no longer relate to him the same way."
-Elizabeth

Joshua reflects on how his father's decision to become a woman, Karen, has most impacted his own sense of what it means to be a man. *"When that person, your masculine figure, is lost to you at the most pertinent age and suddenly [there's a] woman in front of you, what are you supposed to do?... What is it to be a man?"*

EMBRACE, ACCEPT, AND CELEBRATE—OR ELSE

When society conditions kids with the "love makes a family" refrain, they will doubt their instinctual want of a mother or father. Children are incapable of comprehending that it's the cultural and legal landscape which has failed them, not their own feelings. Kids with LGBT parents also face extraordinary pressure to endorse the political activism rooted in their parents' sexual identities.

"I suffered guilt, because who was I to reject this other parent? And, oh my gosh, if she is really what is supposed to fulfill me, how horrible must I be to reject that notion?"
- Millie Fontana, daughter of two mothers

Disparagement of members of the LGBT community or the kids they are raising is unacceptable. Advocating for children's rights is not a commentary on whether gay men and lesbians are capable parents. A lesbian can be an exceptional mother; she simply cannot be a father. A gay man can be a fantastic father; he simply cannot be a mother. Children need, long for, and have a right to both.

Excerpts from chapter 6 of "Them Before Us: Why We Need a Global Children's Movement"

