

# Single Parents Come in Three Distinct Stages



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by Linda Ranson Jacobs

“ParentZone Library.” Click on “Single Parents Come in Three Stages, Stage 1.”

Over the past several years I have had the honor of watching single parents try to parent alone in a very complex world. At first I watched from the sidelines thinking, “I am so glad that’s not me. I don’t have to be in their shoes.” Don’t get me wrong: I prayed for them, but I didn’t understand them. I had sympathy for single parents, but I didn’t have empathy. Actually I had a rather self-righteous attitude about the whole single parenting thing. It was sad if you were parenting alone due to a death. But the whole divorce and never-married scene wasn’t within my realm of comprehension. Then one day I woke to find myself parenting alone.

As I strived to make sense of my world and my life, I began to empathize with every single parent I’d ever known. I have lived it, and I have walked with many others through the troubling times of parenting alone. In my observations I have developed a theory about single parents. As single parents navigate parenting by themselves, they go through definite stages. I believe these stages can be grouped into three distinct phases—surviving, transitioning and emerging.

For more on Stage One: The Surviving Stage, go to [www.dc4k.org/parentzone](http://www.dc4k.org/parentzone). Click on

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