

Are multiple children necessary?

Posted by: anon_yall ()
Date: April 22, 2016 11:21PM

I'm going to preface this by saying I love everyone in my family and I wouldn't have it any other way.

That being said... (I know, sounds like "I'm not racist but")

When my sixth sibling was born, I was about seven or eight. As I first heard the news, I started screaming "There's not enough love!" to this day, our family plays it off as a joke but... Did I really understand what was going on?

For a few years, I was the youngest child. Then another, and another, and another. Because my TBM grandmother decided to meddle with my parents relationship and guilt them into making more kids, as I understand it. Our little family were TBM, but as we added more my father started "turning away". He started drinking alcohol to ease his trouble, his new financial trouble, his new mother-in-law trouble, thinking he had been done with long nights of screaming kids, realizing he'd have to take money from our college savings to raise the new ones, marrying young and not dating around (this plays a bigger role later).

All because there were too many of us. His alcoholism is present today, and is a health issue.

We ended up moving away, my father needing to support the family now. Third grade, the people I grew up with, suddenly I'm thrown out of that life. Then we move again. And again. I hardly had any social stability which is still a problem to this day for me. I get upset when I hear stories about life long friendships, when I think about the girls I missed out on because I thought it would be easier to not get involved and be ripped away again. I've only had one girlfriend and thank God I'm not a virgin or I'd have long killed myself by now. I'm 26 years old and still think about "what could have been" while trying to move forward in my life.

Because, again, there were too many of us.

My parents both had to work to start supporting all of us. It went from having family time to learning how to be alone. At a young age it's really stuck with me. If we met face to face there'd be no way I could articulate all of this to you, because I'm so used to just being *alone*. Should I consider it child abuse? I do love my parents, if anything for giving me a roof over my head and food. Even now, I'm this old and just can't leave my apartment. I'm just... alone. And it's how I exist, it's how I function.

I'm getting worried about one of my older sisters. She is on kid four now. Doesn't she remember? She has told me about her issues with this life style. My other older sister only has two at this point and she's determined to keep it that way. Is it because The Lord™ tells them to? It's so blind to me, especially after going through it.

I try not to dwell on this stuff, but it's really hard. Especially at this age where everyone

tells me I should have been married by now, my own house, my own kids... Why would I want to bring anyone into this world? It's so lonely.

Then it was fun in the middle of high school, my sisters graduated / moved on and my parents started fighting. I was basically smack right in the middle of it, trying to keep the peace around the house and the little ones out of the drama. Like I mentioned before, they both felt like they were rushed into this lifestyle and never got a chance to see other people. It didn't help that my dad was a public figure so I'd get to hear all kinds of fun rumors and get asked questions at school about our private fucking family life in this small town we had to move to to support ourselves BECAUSE THERE WERE JUST. TOO. FUCKING. MANY. OF. US! At the height of this my dad went missing for about three days and came back telling us he tried to kill himself.

Speaking of killing yourself, as I drove to work today all these memories started swirling around and I just started crying. I'm supposed to be this and that but I'm so alone, I wanted to just be done. What else can I do at this point? Keep working and living in my apartment, alone? All I've felt is alone. I didn't get to have parent time. I was disconnected from my family. I had to deal with too much. And now what, all my missed aspirations and love, I'm just supposed to keep going to work? I hate these weekends because I'm just... alone.

So I have to ask, sincerely, WHY PUMP OUT ALL THESE KIDS WHEN YOU'RE SO YOUNG

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: donbagley ()
Date: April 22, 2016 11:39PM

That really hit home. Thanks for sharing. I've shared many of your thoughts, and that may be why I had only one child. I wanted there to be a part of me (an extension, perhaps) who would be loved and have a stable life. I guess I tried to give my only begotten son the life I never had. He's happy now at twenty five, and we have a good relationship. My parents had nothing to do with him the same way they had nothing to do with me.

One child works for me. And no religion to muck it up.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: Pista ()
Date: April 23, 2016 12:00AM

My parents tried to have more children, but for various reasons, I was an only child. Growing up in Mormon Idaho, I always heard the old canard that only children are spoiled, selfish, and don't know how to get along with others. That really wasn't true for me, and now research bears that out. My family was not wealthy, but we had everything we needed and some things we wanted because we didn't have to spend every dime just feeding and clothing a herd. We were able to travel. We had time to spend together, and my parents had time to spend with each other and by themselves. I didn't have to deal with sibling rivalry, I was never compared to my siblings, I didn't have to babysit for free or get tormented.

I may not be perfect, but no one ever calls me spoiled or selfish. I had plenty of friends and cousins to socialize with.

"Love" may not be a finite resource, but time and money certainly are. I'm sure a sibling or two could have been positive, but the only hardship I experienced from being an only child was having to listen to the opinions of rude Mormons.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: blakballoon ()
Date: April 23, 2016 01:00AM

"Love" may not be a finite resource, but time and money certainly are. I'm sure a sibling or two could have been positive, but the only hardship I experienced from being an only child was having to listen to the opinions of rude Mormons."

^^this^^

For some reason I always fancied 4 children. I remember coming home from the hospital with my third, sitting up feeding in the middle of the night. I thought, this is it, I can't do any more. I'm getting no younger, the levels of exhaustion just go up,up,up.

Have 1, or 2, or as many as you want, or none. Just don't get suckered into the Mormon spin of the magic, beautiful, fairytale temple forever family, where there's love at home and beauty all around Sunshine in your heart, Picture perfect family.

Children aren't easy, but the rewards are remarkable. they need all your time, talents and energy. When you are expected to give that elsewhere, things get even harder.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: memikeyounot ()
Date: April 23, 2016 12:46AM

I'm still reading the obituaries daily. I saw one, last week I think, but of course I can't find it now.

Sweet little old TBM lady, from all appearances and the obit says she and her husband raised 15 children. Didn't say if there was any adoptions but 15 is a lot of kids.

To each his own. Not for me. I have 3, all adults, and I worry more about them now than I did when they were kids. Sort of.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: scmd ()
Date: April 23, 2016 01:30AM

My siblings all have large families. (6, 8, 5, 5, and 6 respectively). I have no doubt that my siblings and their spouses love all of their children, but I also feel that with so many children, they look at their children a bit differently than my wife and I view our own two children. For example, my older child at the age of thirteen months learned

to climb over the gates guarding our staircases. My wife's response was to immediately call in a contractor and to ask him to install the most secure gates possible ASAP at whatever cost was necessary. My siblings all thought this was ridiculous -- that Andrew would only fall down the stairs once before he learned his lesson, and that, furthermore, he needed to learn the meaning of the word "no."

I'm all for children learning to comply, but neither my wife nor I was willing to take the chance that our child might be seriously injured. No one has ever stated this, but there's almost a feeling among their set that children are a replaceable commodity. For my wife and me, they're not. We have two. My wife could not have another baby even if we wanted or needed another. We have to do the job properly with the two children we have. We will not get another chance.

For the record, at the age of almost eighteen months, Andrew now goes up and down the stairs with our supervision, but the gates remain up for those times when no one is standing right by the staircase. Additionally, Andrew's baby sister is nine months old now and is mobile, so we have to keep her off the stairs as well.

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 04/23/2016 01:50AM by scmd.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: Dave the Atheist ()

Date: April 23, 2016 01:38AM

not having children is hereditary.

If your parents didn't have children then you will not either.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: seekyr ()

Date: April 23, 2016 08:14AM

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[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: seekyr ()

Date: April 23, 2016 08:19AM

We only had one child, but if I'd had more, I think even numbers would be best so they can buddy-up. My grown son seems very happy and well adjusted, but I would have liked to have had one more anyway. I think you learn a lot from living with siblings, and also as the parents age, you have some support with all those aging issues that arise.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: Historischer ()

Date: April 23, 2016 01:40AM

In terms of social stability, there's a huge difference between having one kid (or no kids) and having two or three. But huge families aren't a necessity like they were 200 or even 100 years ago. Childhood death rates are nothing compared to what they used to be.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: MrRobot ()
Date: April 23, 2016 02:34AM

Is 3 too many? Is that a large family?

I'm torn. I can't decide.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: getbusylivin ()
Date: April 23, 2016 08:46AM

LDS (among other myth-based organizations) teaches that we're supposed to fill up the planet with peeps. I disagree. I've never had the drive to have a bunch of kids (I have one of my own).

The world is full of both kids and adults who need love. I have my hands full as it is, trying to love them all. No need to make things busier than necessary. In fact, being childless is just fine. Only the ego's need to pass on one's specific genetic information is a possible rationale, and a weak one at that IMO.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: gatorman ()
Date: April 23, 2016 09:09AM

This is an interesting topic for a pediatrician to respond to. First and foremost after over thirty years of practice single parenthood, regardless of the number of children, is a curse I wouldn't wish on anyone. Secondly, babies are a business. My experience with 14-17 yo having babies to basically turn them over to maternal grandmother to raise is too much to not comment on. Between aid to dependent children, WIC food and formula, then food stamps and finally free medical care thru Medicaid some matriarchal groups live on 5-7,000\$ a month easily. In my area, mostly rural, Section 8 housing subsidies exist too. The public schools eventually have to deal with not knowing who belongs to who. EVERY single high school in my area of the state has a funded day care for students and their babies. As for Mormons in this part of the world can't recall a family with more than four. Too many children? We have a government that encourages it. Something else for you to ponder. In my state abortions cost 400\$. Adoptions in excess of 40,000\$. Poor childless couples cannot go that route. I have helped some become foster parents but the revolving door is emotionally tough. Eventually some child does stick. Actually less financially well off couples are preferable to state family services because they DO NOT want to introduce foster kids to affluence. Known some quite well off couples turned down for being "unsuitable". The church is not such a bad example here.

Gatorman

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: summer ()
Date: April 23, 2016 09:14AM

I'm going to address the "feeling alone" aspect of your post. I live by myself as well, and enjoy it. My job is very busy and noisy, so I appreciate the peace and quiet when I come home. Plus, I lived with other adults for years and years, and I was more than ready for some alone time.

But I do have friends, and I think this is important. Find some friendly fellow singles, and issue invitations to the movies, lunch, shopping, a concert, or what have you. If you don't want to date, fine, but do try to get out of the house on occasion. And until you find a friend or two, get out by yourself. I used to go out to the movies by myself all the time, and still do on occasion. I prefer matinees. Trust me, know one else in the audience will care that you are by yourself. They are too wrapped up in their own lives. Get out of the house today!

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: Exmoron ()
Date: April 23, 2016 10:21AM

Apparently multiple children were "necessary" for Joseph Smith.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#) Posted by: Never Mo but raised Fundie ()
Date: April 23, 2016 12:06PM

I also sometimes get jealous when I meet people with lifelong friends.... I completely uprooted around ages 4, 13, 18, 21 & 27 and lost most all friends through each transition. As a mom, my current social life seems to be totally related to kids -- which is wonderful, but not the same....

I too grew up in a family that had more kids than money.

At 26, I was living a thousand miles away from my family in a place where I didn't know anyone before arriving. I too spent lots of evenings in my apartment. You aren't the only one....

Just wanted to let you know that you aren't alone in this feeling.

I am a big believer in recognizing that sometimes you just need to get angry or cry about things -- to grieve your loss.

This is internet advice -- worth exactly as much as you are paying for it but it sounds to me like you are ready to move on..... I'd suggest taking some time to respect your feelings -- whether that's by hitting your mattress to get out the anger or crying in the shower.... whatever works for you....

And then, take a step to change things. You are 26. You have a job, you have your own place. WOW, that's awesome!!!!

May I suggest that you take a look at meetup.com? Find a few groups that look interesting and busy and go attend an event. If you have a hobby/passion for something, you will enjoy being around others who share that same passion.

If you are democrat/liberal, you might like hunting down your local Unitarian-Universalist church. They tend to be friendly but won't come chasing you down if you decide not to attend any more.... I haven't had the chance to go but Sunday Assembly looks very good. They aren't religious at all. Both of these options should be low-key

-- you don't have to contribute, just show up and be part of the experience.

If you are geeky – look for "maker faires" most have lots of groups that are looking for fellow geeks and by "geek" -- it's a huge range robot builders, electronics nerds, drone racers, cosplay, paper artists, welders, catapult makers, etc....

Around here, all the local towns offer festivals/events/movie nights/food truck/farmers market/etc it's fun to go and people watch. (that's what I used to do when I was on my own)

It doesn't matter as much what it is, but this stranger on the internet old enough to be your mom suggests finding one thing a month to go and do :)

Good luck – you appear to have a lot going for you

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: capex ()
Date: April 23, 2016 01:32PM

OP,

Going from a large, chaotic home ran by an alcoholic father, to the peace and organization you wished to create is a big change, and no matter how welcome, change can be painful.

I am an adult child of an alcoholic, and an introvert. In my family of origin, every day was an unpredictable mess (four kids). My dysfunctional role was to be the peacemaker, cook, cleaner, whatever was needed when it was needed. I parented my younger siblings.

I got out. I live alone. It is too quiet sometimes, but the hardest part of learning to live free was that no one knew me – I had to start from scratch with everyone, but in the meantime, there was no fallback position, no one who knew my character, my intent. As an introvert, like you said, I can be sparse with words face-to-face, and without the history, I'm often viewed as strangely quiet.

It was lonely at first, and sometimes still can be, but not too often. I prefer what I prefer, am who I am, and don't want a constant companion obligating me out of my solitude. I interact at work, with neighbors when I want, and see friends occasionally. I just don't want to be part of a tribe.

You are comparing your unmarried age of 26 to TBMs, not to the free world. 26 is young, and you are not obligated to people your life before you are ready for a lifetime commitment to any kids, for the sake of the LDS. There is plenty of time for marriage and kids, if you meet someone you don't want to live without.

The crying is the result of the time, space and safety you have created in your own life. Memories surface, and you are experiencing and expelling negative* emotions you were never allowed as a young person. Anger, pain and sorrow that had to be squelched, to parent your siblings and make peace. It wasn't your job, you were too young and inexperienced to handle it, but you did what needed doing to the best of

your ability. It left little time for self-indulgence, self-discovery. Negative* feelings are toxic if not dealt with, and they didn't just vanish. They were suppressed, and now you can express and expel them.

Your dad, and mine, are examples of men who dealt with those feelings by denying them. Doesn't work. Either the public face of strength and leadership, or the crumbling wrecks we knew/know them to be.

So welcome your tears. Honor them. Be glad that you have made a safe enough life to experience them. Beat a pillow with a racket. Go out into the woods and howl your rage to the sky. Get rid of it.

Then, if you still want, be open to the possibility of a wife, and maybe kids. You have plenty of time.

Your siblings may choose lives of blindness, lives of suppression, but it is not your job to make or fix their choices. You are no longer parenting them, so you can let that go. It was never your job.

There are books, support groups, online info and forums for adult children of alcoholics. There is predictable damage to kids, and much help and hope for understanding and recovery.

It's good you are discussing it, good it is coming up. It doesn't have to be a life sentence.

*"negative" used for brevity. Feelings are not "bad" or "good." They just are.

Re: Are multiple children necessary?

Posted by: want2bx ()
Date: April 23, 2016 01:53PM

I didn't grow up in a very large family, but like you, I moved a lot as a child. Those moves have affected me far into adulthood. I moved at 3, 7, 11, 13 and 17.

I've always had the feeling that I don't really belong anywhere. No place feels like home. When people ask where I'm from I don't know what to say.

The moves shaped my personality as well. My more outgoing siblings fared the moves much better than I did. I am an introvert, but I think the moves drew me into myself even more.

Like you, both my parents worked long hours during my childhood. So we would move to a new place and I had no friends for the first year or so. I would come home from school to an empty house with no one to talk to. I would eventually make friends and become more comfortable in my new location, but it didn't last because we would move again and I repeated the loneliness all over again. It became my normal to feel anxious, "new" and unsettled and to be without friends.

As an adult, I've had difficulty making friends. I see myself as friendly and kind, traits

that might make a good friend. But I'm very hesitant to get too close to people because my experience is that friendships don't last very long.

I certainly don't have any helpful advice. But I completely understand this aspect of life that you're having trouble with.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: Tristan ()

Date: April 23, 2016 02:26PM

I'm one of 5 kids in a blended family. I never thought 5 kids was a lot, only 6 or more.

As an adult however, I think anyone who has over 3-4 kids is nuts. & a lot of times even 4 too much!

Of course, once in awhile people have multiple-children pregnancies, & there's nothing anyone can do about that. But I'm talking about people who go out of their way to have a lot of kids.

For my parents, even though my older siblings were my dad's children (he had custody), 5 kids was way too much. But he married my mom, & she wanted her own kids. I think that if my mom had had a real cisgender boy instead of me, she would have only had 1 biological kid. But she had me instead, & two other kids on top, because 1) she wanted her own son more than anything, & 2) she needed another girl to replace me because I was damaged.

Having so many kids, being in the cult, & trying to conform to certain "standards" that were utterly ridiculous blinded my parents to so much garbage that was going on, & things started falling apart so fast that they didn't even try to fix them.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: quinlansolo ()

Date: April 23, 2016 02:30PM

Of course not...

But that option is reserved for smart people.

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: ificouldhietokolob ()

Date: April 23, 2016 03:23PM

No children are "necessary."

Some humans choose how many to have. Some have a bunch because a high infant mortality rate means only a few will survive. Some have a bunch because some ignorant religious leader insists "god" won't allow them to use birth control. Others have a bunch because some ignorant religious leader insists there are spirit babies just waiting for a body in a mormon family to go to.

And the world goes 'round and 'round...

[Re: Are multiple children necessary?](#)

Posted by: VultureTamerNotLoggedIn ()

Date: April 23, 2016 03:42PM

I wouldn't trade any of my siblings for the fun and dysfunction. I probably wouldn't trade any of them for more money growing up, and we didn't have ANY of that. My parent's time, I'm not sure we knew any different....that we weren't getting much because they were maxed out at work and providing for us. I'm the oldest of FOURTEEN kids, in a blended family.

Looking back now, I do feel shorted, in a lot of ways. But I have never chalked it up to being the fault of my siblings' existence.

I have blamed my parents for their crappy choices that didn't have anything to do with cranking out babies, but forgiven them because 43 years perspective tends to lend some empathy.

That said, I only have two children. (Just realized I said "only".....The Mormon thing never really goes away, does it?)

I wanted six. Ex husband and I agreed on four. Then we had two. And I realized that I would not be able to be the kind of mother I wanted to be, to my children, if I added more. So, I see what you're saying, that resonates with me and my own decision.

I did, however, practically raise my youngest siblings. They sometimes call me Mom, and they're grown with their own families now. I feel like I put in my time as a mother, long before I became one.

I wouldn't change that, either. Those experiences helped shape me into the kind of mother I aspired to be.

Also, you've got lots of time to decide about having your own family. I was almost 26 when I married my ex. 28 before I had my first child. You'll be OK, do things your way. Learn from your parent's mistakes, and you'll make some of your own along the way.

I know the lonely feeling you have, I too moved, and feel jealous of people with lifelong friendships. I've gone out of my way, being divorced, to keep my kids in the same neighborhood, school, friend circles, etc., because I remembered what it was like to move almost once a year after age 12, between my parent's homes and their multiple spouses, up and down the Wasatch front.....ugh.

I've done better for my kids, and there is some satisfaction in giving them the stability I lacked in my own childhood. They don't know any different and may never appreciate it, and that's ok.

You can do things differently than you were raised.