

《单身妈妈自述：成为单身妈妈，让我破除偏见》

导读:一直以来，单身母亲都备受社会的歧视和偏见。但是，随着社会发展，人们观念的进步，大家都该冷静的看待这个自强的群体了。



Single mothers have often been stigmatized and denounced. Cherry Healey explains why she's proud to be one.

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I'm a single mum. I'm glad I live in an age and a place where it's OK to admit that.

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We have moved on so much, so fast. Once, Margaret Thatcher deemed a single parent family so bad for a child that she felt it was better for the mother and child to be removed and placed within a religious group.

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When I first heard that, I felt such unbelievable pain and heartbreak for all those young mothers that were pressured into following this advice.

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And it would have had many ripples of pain the family as a whole.

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The judgement of others is a powerful thing and people will do unfathomable things to avoid bringing shame onto themselves and their families.

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And this is the judgement that I want to see gone. Completely.

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Yes we have progressed - but even today there is such an insipid, damaging view of single parents that we need to keep revisiting it until single parents feel free of useless, ignorant judgement - and instead receive respect as parents and support if they, and therefore their child, needs it.

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Sadly, even in 2017 I felt the cold wind of judgement when I became a single parent. It's hard to know whether the judgement I felt comes from society or whether it comes from myself. I think it is a bit of both.

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I hate to admit this, but I had a negative view of single mums before I became one. As I grew up I heard, read and watched society's depiction of The Single Mum, and it certainly wasn't positive.

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Comedy sketches depicting single mums smoking cigarettes and drinking cider in the park while neglecting their babies, endless newspaper stories about single mothers on benefits draining the system, statements from politicians about the connection between "Broken Britain" and one-parent families - all fed my prejudice gremlin until one day, I too was a dreaded single mum. And I began to question everything I'd ever consumed about this subject.

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I was happy to discover that I was the same person. I was a good parent as a married woman and I was a good parent as single mother.

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Money was tighter but my ability to maintain order at home, get homework done on time and love my children had not changed.

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Separating and re-establishing my life was difficult but I felt so hugely grateful that at least I was able to pay the bills thanks to my job - and it made me realise that there is so much stigma attached to being a single mother. At exactly the time when the single parent needs support and help, they are stigmatised and judged.

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It also made me realise that for many of us there is a strong, not very flattering stereotype of The Single Mum. And so I wanted to break free from that and give a voice to some single parents that haven't been heard before.

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And I'm glad to say that any prejudice, both conscious and subconscious, was gradually eroded.

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I spoke to Kirsty, a single mother with a terminal illness, who smashes the traditionalist's argument that it's better to stay in an unhealthy marriage, regardless of the circumstances. Even though she was suffering and weak from cancer, she did not regret leaving her relationship and was happy that her daughter's environment was at least peaceful.

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She acknowledges that it was hard caring for her daughter alone: "I definitely still have guilt over it. There are times at bedtime when she'll cry for her daddy."

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But she still feels it was the right decision. She is now able to co-parent with her partner in a more harmonious way. Her message that together is not always best for the child, even in such a challenging situation, was powerful.

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