

# Single Parenting: Holiday Crisis

Special To The Phoenix by: Vivian McMillian

Christmas is traditionally viewed as a holiday filled with good cheer, gift giving and the overall spirit of novelty which embodies adults as well as children. It is a time marked with abundance as evidenced by the shopping carts in supermarkets and long lines of customers in check-out lines in local department stores.

Unfortunately, this joyful and abundant scenario escapes a growing number of people. It fails to include the homeless and hungry street people and the disillusioned youths experiencing chronic poverty because meaningful employment has eluded them.

Often overlooked, but none-the-less significant, is the single head of households who dreads this time of year. By definition, single parents are unmarried, divorced or widowed persons faced with the staggering responsibility of providing enough love, food and shelter for their small children. It has become somewhat of a rhetorical statement, but most single-head of households are women. The problem of the single parent is a weekly to daily dilemma, but during the holiday season the pressures put on them comes to a boiling point. For them, a period of the year becomes a time filled with anxiety and frustration instead of peace and joy for the single parent.

The greatest problem of the single parent is financial stability and security. These women must live on a budget dictated by one income to provide the daily necessities for maintaining a family. This requires hard work, ingenuity, and imagination to make everything fall into place.

During the holidays, it becomes virtually impossible to withstand the added expenses of Christmas. It is disheartening and difficult for the single parent to accept the probability that his/her children will not receive the one gift wanted so desperately because of economic pressures of the parent.

The additional financial responsibilities faced by the parent is the first step down the deep, dark tunnel of depression. The blues is no stranger to the single parent during the season to be jolly. The holiday emphasis on family and togetherness can really make Christmas a lonely time for the single parent.

The divorced and widowed parent is forced to remember Christmases of the past shared with their mates. It can be emotionally taxing to portray a cheerful countenance for the sake of the children for the single parent. Although a considerable amount of time is occupied by the children and the hustle and bustle of the season, there are times when the absence of a "significant other" is painfully felt.

There are no easy solutions for the problems facing single parents during the Christmas season. The best advice to the single parent is to be as 'resourceful' as possible during the entire year in order to make the load lighter during the holidays. Many single parents accept their plight without asking anyone for help. When speaking of help, we mean getting help to help themselves. There are many organizations and groups who offer assistance in training and educating single parents.

Most single parents are dependent on the love and generosity of their family members to make Christmas joyful for their children. Many children in Winston-Salem would not experience any joy at Christmas.

Family oriented activities or gatherings can also provide a conducive environment for single parents coping with holiday stress. Staying busy in social situations surrounded by family can eliminate loneliness for the single parent. It is a good time to extend invitations for visits from friends in similar situations.

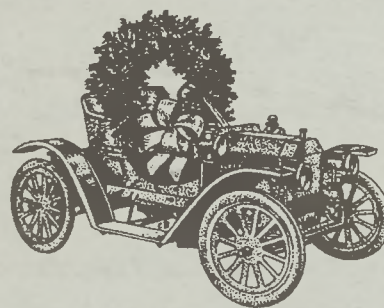
The single parent's struggle to survive the financial stress and emotional duress of Christmas is no simple task. Yet, the motive that fuels her struggle perhaps embodies the essence of the Christmas spirit more profoundly than any other example. The single parent is motivated by a "dogged" determination to give. He/she becomes bent on exhausting every resource to provide her children with magical memories of a Merry Christmas. With total lack of regard for self, the single parent makes sacrifices to insure their children a good Christmas. Often, the only gift the parent receives is the joy on the faces of their offspring when they open the beautifully wrapped gift under the tree on Christmas morning.

By virtue of her selflessness and her unwavering attempts to provide those things that make her children happy, she gives the least expensive, but perhaps the greatest gift of all....the gift of true love.

## Kelly's Dilemma

Kelly Rowland of Destiny's Child is in a dilemma of sorts. The "Dilemma" on the radio charts has forced DC's camp to do some rescheduling. Manager Matthew Knowles went on record as saying that Kelly's debut album *Simply Deep*, which was due out in early 2003, Kelly Rowland was bumped up to September 24 due to the tremendous success of the collaboration.

She and rapper Nelly's song "Dilemma" is the number one single in the country and has been that way for the last six weeks. Knowles daughter and lead singer of Destiny's Child Beyonce, was set to release her album *Dangerously In Love* in early October, but it has now been pushed back to December. However, the single from the latest installment of the Austin Powers film, "Work It Out" topped the Hot Dance/Club Play chart.



## Shift Into Holiday Gear!



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