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My Father Holds Me Still

By Abigail Dotson

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When I was younger, my room always got icy cold at night. Before I went to bed, I would crank the heat up something vicious and close all the windows tight; then I would crawl into bed and fall asleep all toasty warm. As far back as I can remember, night after night, my dad would sneak into my room after he was sure I was sleeping and open all the windows. You see, he's from Minnesota, and he always thought the fresh night air was good for me. Well, sure enough, morning would come and I would wake up shivering, all my windows open to let in the wind. I would jump out from under the covers and hop across the wood floor, bouncing out the back door into the early morning sun and find my dad in the garage, printing. I would yell at him, frustrated that he had done it again, and he would just shrug his shoulders at me and not really say anything at all. Every night was the same. And every morning I woke up cold and angry, although after awhile I guess I came to expect it. After awhile, I guess while I was sleeping I could feel the wind on my cheeks and hear the trees waking up...after awhile, I guess I kind of liked it, even if I didn't know it.

When I was eighteen and moved away from home to go to school, my dad helped me move in. My first night in my dorm room I was alone. I guess I really knew I had left home when I woke up and window was still closed. It scared me. From that night on, I always kept it open.

When I moved to Washington, the first thing I did in my new apartment was open all the windows. When it snowed the first time, I watched the snow that I had never seen before falling through an open window, shivering and talking excitedly to my father on the phone. When it rained that hard and angry rain that sounds like gunshots pelting down, I heard it through an open window. I wasn't scared of getting wet or cold or struck by lightning; I was just scared of closing that window. Because when I thought about it, that was how my father always took care of me. That was him telling me how much he loved me. That was his gift to me, his way of saying: "as long as you keep your windows open, Abigail, I will always be able to reach you." And he did. For years now he has been here and I was always somewhere else, and for years he had found me through that open window. Now I am here and he is somewhere else, but my window stays open. So of all the things my father taught me, that is the one thing I keep telling myself over and over again right now: "just keep your windows open, Abbe."

My Father Holds Me Still

: Abigail is Hebrew for "her fathers joy." I live in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where the cold air under the canopy of redwoods is a constant comfort, and our heating bill is always a little bit higher than the neighbors. I spend most of my time chasing my two year old daughter Ruby Jane, named after her grandpa John

Walking Down The Wedding Aisle: Who Walks Who, Anyway?

By "Amy K. Spade"

Another dilemma that often comes up when planning a wedding is who will walk the bride down the aisle. Although traditionally it's the father that does this, the plethora of step-families has made it a more difficult decision. This is especially true when the step parents have been in the children's lives for a long time.

Breaking tradition

A bride that has both a step father and a biological father may opt still to have her biological father walk her down the aisle. This can be a way to show her family bond as well as stick with tradition. In the case of a bride that hasn't been close to her father, she may opt to have her step father walk her down the aisle. This is a newly emerging sight at weddings, and quite touching.

Of course, if the bride loves both of the men and wants to include them, there's nothing wrong with having both walk her down the aisle. It honors her relationship with both men and lets them have the chance to hold her arm.

This also holds true for the groom. He can choose to escort both a step mother and his biological mother down the aisle at the beginning if she should choose to. Or the best man can do so, as is tradition.

If the father has passed on, the bride may opt to have an older brother or an uncle walk her down the aisle. Likewise, if the mother of the groom has passed, then a sister or an aunt may want to walk with him.

Dealing with difficulties

While this all seems like a loving and simple solution to include everyone in the wedding, some parents may still have issues with their ex-spouses. And this can lead to bitter feelings about your choice in who walks who down the aisle.

Should you fight for what you want? That's entirely up to you. If walking with both fathers makes you happy, then you should do that—even if the opposite wives are not pleased for whatever reason.

If you feel that it may cause more trouble than it is worth, then you may opt to stick with tradition. Just be sure to include your step father in some other part of the wedding so he doesn't feel left out because of biological status.

In the end, remember that it's your day and your decision.

Amy Spade is an expert on planning weddings, and she has written an amazing totally free minicourse on how to make sure that you have the day of your dreams, and avoid wedding day disaster! Get the free course "Your Special Day from Start to Finish" now at at



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