

Finding The Magic In The Messiness Of Splitting Up Together

[BY CHRISTY WILLIAMS](#)

Splitting up together. Bird nesting. Giving the kids custody of our family home.

However you choose to phrase it, this is what we decided to do as a family when my husband of 25 years and I split up.

I loved the premise of nesting as soon as I heard about it. The children stay in the family home, and the parents are the ones who take turns coming and going instead of the kids. The theory being that the kids can maintain their normal routines as much as possible – and hopefully experience less disruption in their daily lives while we all navigate this “new normal” together.

In our case, Dad leaves on business trips, like he’s done at least every other week for practically our whole marriage – and when he’s home, Mom leaves and goes to her small apartment in town. On paper, it looks neat and tidy, right?

But of course, life is never that neat and tidy.

Life is frickin’ messy.

Because even though Clay has traveled at least 50-75% of the time for 20-25 years...now his travel has slowed down. A lot.

So it’s messy.

As it stands right now, he leaves sometimes, I leave sometimes – and there are times when we both stay at the house.

Because it’s so messy, we are trying to find ways to create

more structure for the kids. Like having set days that I am at the apartment versus when I am at the house when he's not traveling. But the kids' activities can influence that a lot, as can holidays, which we still want to do as a family. So we're trying things out as we go along – and seeing what works for all of us.

Neither one of us wants the other one to go a single day without seeing the kids. So on any given day, we are all texting each other about who is picking up which kid from where, and who is dropping off which kid to their thing. Just like we did during our marriage.

Are there downsides? Of course!

I don't love having to pack a suitcase every time I go to the apartment – and I'm not the kind of person who has tons of clothes and can leave half at the apartment and half at the house. But every time I pack or unpack a bag – *literally* every single time – I have a moment of gratitude that at least it's *me* packing a bag and not the kids. That *I'm* the one turning around and going back to the house because I forgot my laptop cord or my phone – and they're not the ones having to worry about leaving something behind at the other parent's house.

Another downside has been a sad and shocking lack of support from a few people. For whatever reason, our loving divorce makes them uncomfortable. And unfortunately, their discomfort has already changed what we are trying to do for our kids, simply by making our kids choose between spending time with me or them, but not all of us together. But just like with everything else, we will take things as they come and decide

what's best for our family – and put our kids' best interests first.

Mostly, though, we have been overwhelmed with love and support.

When we had a spring blizzard a few weeks ago, we both wanted to be at the house to hunker down with the kids – so we did. And I'm so grateful, because our teenager came downstairs with a blanket wrapped around her – and asked if we could have a family movie night! (Shhhh...don't tell her how excited I was that she wanted to do anything with us!) What a gift that was to still be able to share a moment like that together as a family.

The morning before the blizzard, while the kids were at school, we even went grocery shopping together for “blizzard food” – and bumped into a friend of ours. She sent me a lovely message afterward, expressing her happiness in seeing us still being a family unit and doing things together, even if we were no longer married.

And believe me, we *know* that we are so blessed to even have this as an option.

I am uber-conscious of the fact that we are alllllll on our own paths. And that Clay and I are lucky to be able to approach our split in a loving way.

But I am also uber-conscious of the fact that many – if not most – people are not in the same position we are.

And I never want it to come across like we are doing this “better” than anyone else.

Because that's absolutely not the case.

We are all doing the absolute best we can with whatever our individual situations are.

I believe this with all my heart.

And some of us have a right to be totally pissed off and *not* have a loving divorce.

And some of us are just hurting or numb or sad or lost...

And it's all a hot frickin' mess for us – just like it is for everyone else.

We know this won't be a forever situation – and that we will probably change what it looks like several times along the way. But we hope to do it as long as possible. And when it doesn't work anymore, we'll do something different.

But we will always remain a family. Happily even after.

Photo by [Jakob Owens](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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Magical Wild Thing

She's the kind of girl
who would rather
be magical to you
than belong to you.

—

Nikita Gill

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