

I.J. Schecter. (2019). Do You Ever Cry, Dad? Toronto: Dundurn Press.

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I.J. Schecter's book, "Do You Ever Cry, Dad?", is a thought-provoking piece that examines how a father handles a family breakup and re-examines what he could have done better. The book is full of helpful information ranging from practical areas like splitting up finances to emotional areas like advice for the father and the children involved in the split between the parents. Schecter uses humour in his book to help diffuse some of the raw emotion that is felt. The most significant insight in Schecter's book was the usage of other individual's voices and viewpoints on a range of topics, with the central viewpoint being about Schecter's children. The usage of viewpoints from important people in his life encapsulates the entire divorce process and helps analyze how exactly the divorce was, instead of the typical one-sided view.

Schecter uses the narration of other people in his life, ranging from his children and his parents to his workmates. Those in Schecter's life either narrate how they viewed Schecter's divorce or gave advice and their views on how they handled their divorce in their own life. Schecter's interview with his parents proves that parents never stop being parents. Schecter's parents admitted to feeling so much distress and helplessness at their lack of being able to solve or assist their son in the struggles he was going through (p. 54). Schecter's parents acknowledged the financial and emotional strain that their son was going through, they wanted to support their son, like any parent would, but had no clue on how to support him or even what level of support he

Dumont

would accept. Schechter admitted to the intense guilt he felt when he had to rely on his parents once again, even feeling like “a screw-up” which no parent would ever believe that their child is a screw up (p. 55). Schechter’s parents were not the only ones who tried to help Schechter during this trying period of his life, but the friends he had were able to offer support.

Schechter ended each chapter of the book with an interview he had with several different male friends in his life who have also experienced divorces. By interviewing several different men, it gave the audience a good insight on how different men handle divorce, how to manage co-parenting, and what they wished they were able to do better whilst in the divorce. The overall message of the advice the men gave was to find a way to be able to work with your ex-partner for the sake of the children, by remembering to put the children first helps lessen the hostility one feels for their ex-partner. The best piece of advice that was given by one of Schechter’s friends, Angelo, the question was, what do children need most from their dad during or after a break up and he responded, “Love, reassurance, time, togetherness, patience, understanding, and the ability to have a good working relationship with their mother” (p. 117). Children are malleable, they can adapt to anything as long as they have their parents supporting and loving them, this quote emphasizes what exactly children need in times of uncertainty, as long as children know and understand that both of their parents love them children can overcome anything. Schechter tries his best to reinforce that message, that he loves his children unconditionally and that they are his number one priority no matter what.

Schechter’s primary focus during his divorce seemed to be his children, and how the divorce was affecting them, and his book is no different. The continual focus on the children and the

Dumont

children's wellbeing in the book is a wonderful guide for all fathers regardless of their marital status. Schecter's devotion to keeping his children the central focus was best optimized by the fact he allowed his daughter to be a part of the book by explaining how her parent's divorce affected. His daughter explains that her parent's divorce left her scared whether or not she would see her father again and that he would forget about them, this exemplifies how children think when their world starts to fall apart (p. 45). Every chapter has some reference or anecdote about Schecter's children, Schecter even acknowledges when his children were angry and hurt by the divorce. Schecter retells the occasion where he gave his son a Bruce Springsteen autobiography for his birthday in hopes to mend the gap that had developed from the divorce, but no Schecter's son barely looked at the book and later asked his mother to return it (p. 25). That was a particularly painful moment for Schecter, it would have been easier to just leave that part out and forget it ever happened, Schecter decided to include all elements of a divorce even those when children become spiteful towards a parent. Schecter included the painful moment to let all fathers know they are not alone when their children act out against them, it is common, and it does not only happen to the particular father reading the book, this is also echoed by the other fathers narrations at the end of each chapter, really showing that children acting out against their fathers is quite common.

Schecter's intention when writing this book was to publish resources and advice specifically for men going through a divorce with children involved. The goal was to create a book specifically for men going through divorce to show men that they were not alone during this experience and that they could reach out if they needed. Some of the information is more directed towards males, like not holding in emotions and allowing oneself to be hurt and upset which is

Dumont

societally frowned upon for men. Even though this book is directed toward a male audience, it is also full of useful information for both genders, particularly with regard to how a couple should split up their belongings. The emotional vulnerability side of this book should most definitely be marketed towards men and the practical information should be marketed towards both genders. A limitation of the book is that it is written from the perspective of an upper middle class white male and as such, some of the advice given is directed to men whose only problem in life is that there are going through a divorce. The book does not write to an audience who suffers financially or suffers racism in the court when trying to gain custody or access to their children. A way to combat the race and class bias is to possibly co-write a future book with a racialized individual to get a fuller view of what it means to be a father involved in a family breakup.

Academic audiences from all areas would find something of interest in this book, for example, anthropology, sociology, psychology, law, philosophy, and education. The academic audience that would be most interested in reading the book would be sociologists within the family stream of sociology and psychologists who are in child and child development stream, as well psychologists are in the family stream. "Do You Ever Cry, Dad?" was a truly insightful, emotional book with great advice sprinkled throughout, Schechter is a captivating author who manages to convey a difficult subject with ease and he manages to make even the darkest period in one's life something manageable and a period of growth instead of a time of destruction.