



Single Mother by Choice: Is Single Motherhood Right for You?

By [Erica M. Hanson, LICSW](#)

There are many ways that women decide to be a single mother by choice. A portion of these women made a promise to themselves that they would become a single parent if they were not married by a certain age. Others have been married and divorced without children and still want to be mothers. Some women always pictured themselves as a parent—but not necessarily as a wife—so single motherhood makes sense to them. For others, the decision involves mourning the dream of the “traditional” path to motherhood: love, marriage, and then a child.

Some women feel like they are racing against their biological clock and choose to date often and take any opportunity to meet a potential spouse. They soon realize that instead of getting to know their date, they are sizing him up as a potential father for their unborn child. This is the time they step back and make the decision to become a single mother by choice, realizing that there is no timeline to have a relationship but there is a timeline for their fertility.

What to Consider Before Becoming a Single Mother by Choice

There are many questions to consider before becoming a single parent:

1. Do I have financial, emotional, and social resources to be a parent?
2. Do I have realistic expectations about motherhood?
3. Would my family and friends support my decision to be a single mother by choice?
4. How would I handle any health issues that arise during pregnancy or with my child?
5. Do I have a good work-life balance? Do I travel frequently in my current position? Should I consider moving to another position?
6. Will my family and friends support my decision to be a single mother by choice?
7. If something happened to me, who would be my child’s guardian?

These questions are not unique to single women, as many married couples ask themselves similar questions, although they are more poignant for a woman choosing to parent on her own. Single women are often posed with questions or judgments that their coupled counterparts do not receive. For example, many are asked, “Why do you want to become a parent?”

The answers are similar to other women: “I always wanted to be a mother.”

Single women are also sometimes asked tougher questions like, “Isn’t that selfish of you to want a child?” Reproduction is a human need and single women are not unlike others who want to parent, passing on their knowledge and experiences to their children.

Tips for Single Mothers by Choice

Some single mothers by choice pressure themselves to be perfect parents and to do everything on their own. This is an unrealistic expectation and may set a woman up for frustration and failure. Married or single, everyone needs help raising their children from a family member, friend, or neighbor. It is critical for single women to create a support network. Here are more tips for single parents:

1. ***You don’t have to be superwoman and do it all on your own because you choose to be a single mother by choice.***
Everyone needs help during pregnancy, labor, and as a new mother. Identify who can help you make the transition to motherhood.
2. ***Stop pressuring yourself to be perfect and ask for help when you need it.***
Asking for help does not make you weak or incapable. If you do have difficulty asking for help, try to identify what is getting in the way. For some, asking for help can seem intimidating or humbling, but it can lead to new and rewarding relationships with a neighbor or an acquaintance.
3. ***Make emergency and contingency plans for unexpected situations.***
Expect the unexpected and identify those who can help you and/or your child when you need it.
4. ***Take care of yourself.***
Schedule short breaks throughout the day and do things for yourself that are restorative.
5. ***Join a single mothers by choice group.***
Receive support and share resources with others who are in the same situation.
 - [Join Shady Grove Fertility’s monthly support group for single women.](#)
6. ***Start a co-op in your neighborhood.***
This is a fabulous way to share shopping and babysitting with others.

Becoming a single mother by choice is not always an easy decision to make, but knowing that you have a strong support system in place will help you on your journey.

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