

Book review

Contributed by Lorraine Shaffer

E-Book Review

Family Law June 2007

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E-Book Review

Michael J Laycock's e-book is written in a style that is accessible for parents and professionals; informative and to the point. The advice given is consistent with the research that has been done on the effects of divorce and separation on children and is aimed at helping the parents learn how to help their children and so minimise the negative effects as far as possible. What I particularly liked was the absence of quick-fix strategies and how Mr. Laycock normalises everything and does not play down the time that it takes for both the adults and the children to go through the grieving process.

In the introduction the author says "this book is a child-centred book for separated and divorcing parents who want to minimise the harm to their children during and after their relationship breakdown. It is intended as a practical and informative guide...not intended to be academic." There are nine chapters, clearly signposting the reader to the topic discussed. The book is written as bullet pointed paragraphs under headings, some in bold, so it is easy to find the points being emphasised and to refer to particular issues as needed. Chapter 7, "Looking after yourself" is based on material from another writer and I would suggest is out of keeping with the rest of the book and Michael Laycock could incorporate the points more effectively in his own style.

In Chapter 8 there are some good tips for parents about how to deal constructively with conflict and manage their relationship without blame.

The final chapter is about lawyers, courts and other professionals. There is useful advice about how to find and make the best use of lawyers followed by a section on mediation. It would be helpful if mediation were introduced in the first paragraph so that readers know they can make a choice at the beginning to try mediation before and alongside consulting lawyers.

Michael Laycock is both a lawyer and a mediator and the emphasis of his book is about parents making choices and keeping control of how they parent. Where they need help, mediation is the option that best fits with the ethos of the advice given. Having said this, the information about the legal process points up the pitfalls in terms of costs as well as how parents can lose control of the process, and there is sound advice about how to engage lawyers and use them to the best advantage.

Overall this e-book, which I hope will be freely downloadable is an excellent guide for parents and professionals about how children and adults can survive the difficult times following separation and divorce. It pulls no punches about parents' responsibilities in managing this in an adult way, but does so in a style that is sympathetic to how hard this can be. The advice is practical and can be followed. The tone is respectful and does not blame parents nor make them feel guilty. Michael Laycock has used his twenty-five years experience to produce a very helpful resource, which will benefit the children of parents using it.

Lorraine Schaffer Director of the Centre for Mediation and Conflict Resolution at The Institute of Family Therapy (please note that since the review the original Chapter 7 has been deleted from the book)

If you would like to buy my book or to try a free sample of Chapter 1 of the book please go to the following link:

<http://effects-of-divorce-on-children.com/buy-now/index.php>

Family Law:

www.familylaw.co.uk

Institute of Family Therapy:

www.instituteoffamilytherapy.org.uk