

Adult Children of Divorce – Kent Darcie

Kent Darcie is our newest therapist at Reconciliation Ministries. He and his wife, Kathy, have been married since 1983 and have three adult children. Kent ministers with a focus on marriage and family, and brings many years of experience as the founder and president of [Adult Children of Divorce Ministries](#), a ministry which expresses his passion for bringing the healing power of Jesus Christ and God's word to those in need. He is also a Christian author and teacher.



Hi, I'm Kent Darcie. We all have stories, and as a new member of the Reconciliation Ministries' team, I'd like to share mine.

I was raised in upstate New York and had a "white picket fence" childhood (but without the fence). I loved life because life included my dad. My mother was there too—as were two annoying younger sisters, but a deep father/son, "man to man" relationship was forged and continued until I brushed pre-puberty. It was then that marital tensions became irreconcilable and my parents divorced.

This radically changed my relationship with my dad, because I went from seeing my father daily, and being the apple of his eye, to visits with him three to four times a year, due to his relocation. This occurred just as I entered my teen years. They say 20/20 hindsight is perfect, but that's not what I've found when rebuilding the pieces from parental divorce – both from personal experience and speaking with other adult children of divorce (ACD). In fact, thirty years would pass before God revealed how deeply my parent's divorce affected me. Yes, I knew the divorce was a hassle. Dealing with parents who didn't want to be in the same room together was a hassle. Holidays were a hassle. The birth of their grandchildren and the accompanying milestones we'd celebrate usually included a background of tension. But outside of a problem with anger – which I didn't connect to their divorce, I'd tell you I was unaffected by the split and I truly believed it.



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But parental divorce is an interesting thing. It changes the hues of our lives. For example, maybe we lose "green" in our life. It just fades from our life's color spectrum mostly unnoticed. Basically, we see life without "green" (for example, believing people can be trusted) and not know it's gone (that we don't trust people anymore). Joy (whatever color that is) left my spectrum after the divorce. Greif can be a killer of joy and 20/20 hindsight reveals my teenage self tried to put a band aid on my grief from the divorce-related losses I experienced, but the anger (part of the grief cycle) continued into adulthood until a non-physical episode with one of my kids led me to seek counseling.

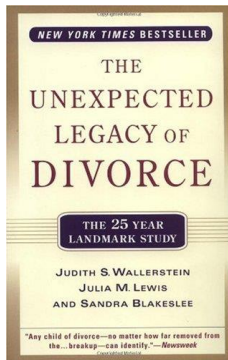
Rejection can also trigger grief. Regardless of how much your post-divorce parents love you (and mine loved me very much) you can feel rejected by the one who leaves. My father's absence created a huge hole that my loving mother and annoying sisters weren't designed by God to fill. I felt rejected. Also, like many teenage boys, I wanted to date girls. Unfortunately, being one of two blacks in a graduating class that exceeded 550 students, rejection was the norm. While, I wouldn't say rejection was a "color" in my life's spectrum the accompanying belief that you aren't worthy (popular among ACD) dulls all of the colors. The reds of passion are less. The blues of peace and enjoyment are less. Again, unbeknownst to me.



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Thankfully, I was spared the illicit drug use, sexual promiscuity, and risk taking that is common with children of divorce, but Jesus promises life abundantly (John 10:10)—deep, vibrant colors. However, my color spectrum was like paint faded by the summer sun. Again with 20/20 hindsight, I see signs of mild depression that continued through getting married, kids, job and all that life stuff. Though ACD lives can be good, we often don't know our color palate has changed—and I didn't.

But thirty years after their divorce, my wife and I were at a Marriage Encounter weekend and the Lord spoke to my heart. He said that if I didn't take intentional steps to change, I was on the same emotional path as my dad. My father is an ACD, as was his father, and grandfather—a situation not uncommon among ACD. But as much as I love my dad, that scared me, because, by then he'd divorced twice and was heading toward his third marriage. I loved my wife and, like every ACD, the last thing I wanted was a divorce.



Though I'd been a Christian for over ten years at this point, it was here that I really started to give Him various parts of my life. This was in large part due to my research on ACD issues. The first book God led me to was called, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce* by Judith Wallerstein. Her book did two things: it showed me my parents' divorce was still affecting me (a truth I denied), and there were millions of ACD who were as clueless as I was to the impact.

A big thing I learned was how fear dominated my life. I've heard there's a do-not-fear oriented verse for every day of the year. But I'd fear that things would go wrong, fear rejection—which caused a lot of problems in my marriage, fear being inadequate (as a man, husband, father, and black man), and fear conflict—which feeds the fear of rejection (which is rampant among ACD.) Additionally, I learned my anger was, in large part, sparked by my parents' divorce, but fanned by life's curves. This is true of my fears too.

The other way God used Wallerstein's book was to birth my ministry—[Adult Children of Divorce Ministries](#). After extensive research, I presented my first seminar on the subject in 2004 at my church. Ten years later, the ministry became a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization. My board felt I should deepen my knowledge on the subject (and I heartily agreed) so I enrolled in Moody Theological Seminar and received my Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology (biblically integrated counseling) in April 2018.



I'm currently awaiting my Limited License Professional Counselor certificate and plan to become a Licensed Professional Counselor with an additional license in Marriage and Family Therapy. I've always had a passion for saving marriages and worked with countless couples and individuals through the years, but breaking the cycle of divorce saves marriages and too few individuals are focused in this area. The key scripture for my ministry is 2 Corinthians 1, verses 3 and 4:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

God has blessed me with His comfort. It is my great joy and privilege to share His comfort with others, so they can experience His comfort in *their* troubles, so they can then share the comfort they've received from God, and so the hurting can be healed and walk in the abundant life Jesus offers. I am humbled and thankful to be a part of this process at Reconciliation Ministries!