

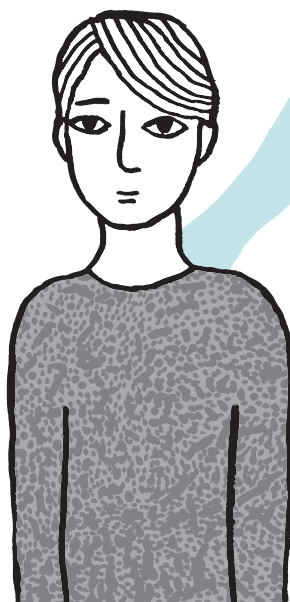
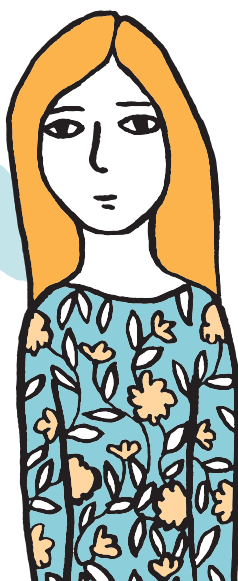
MUM and DAD have SPLIT UP

Lenka Blaze

MUM and DAD have SPLIT UP

HOW TO
COPE WITH
YOUR PARENTS'
DIVORCE...

A CREATIVE
JOURNAL



A FEW WORDS FOR FRUSTRATED PARENTS

Your child can cope with your divorce if you can handle it yourself.

- You and your child are going through a difficult period of change.
- Nurturing yourself and your child helps. Be patient and do not blame yourself. Although it is painful, it will get better in time.
- Divorce is a loss that both you and your child need to grieve and learn to live with.
- Your relationship with your former partner is shifting to co-parenting.

Don't be hard on yourself if things don't go perfectly. We can learn from our mistakes. No one is perfect — the perfect parent doesn't exist.



I applaud your willingness and courage to address this topic and support your child.

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INTRODUCTION

Your parents probably haven't been getting along for a while.

Perhaps they have tried many things to overcome their problems and stay together. But sometimes relationships between adults are very complicated and difficult to untangle.

Unfortunately, you can't fix what is happening between your mum and dad. But there *IS* something you *CAN* do, and that's where this book can help you.

Right now, things are really tough, but don't worry, we'll get through it.

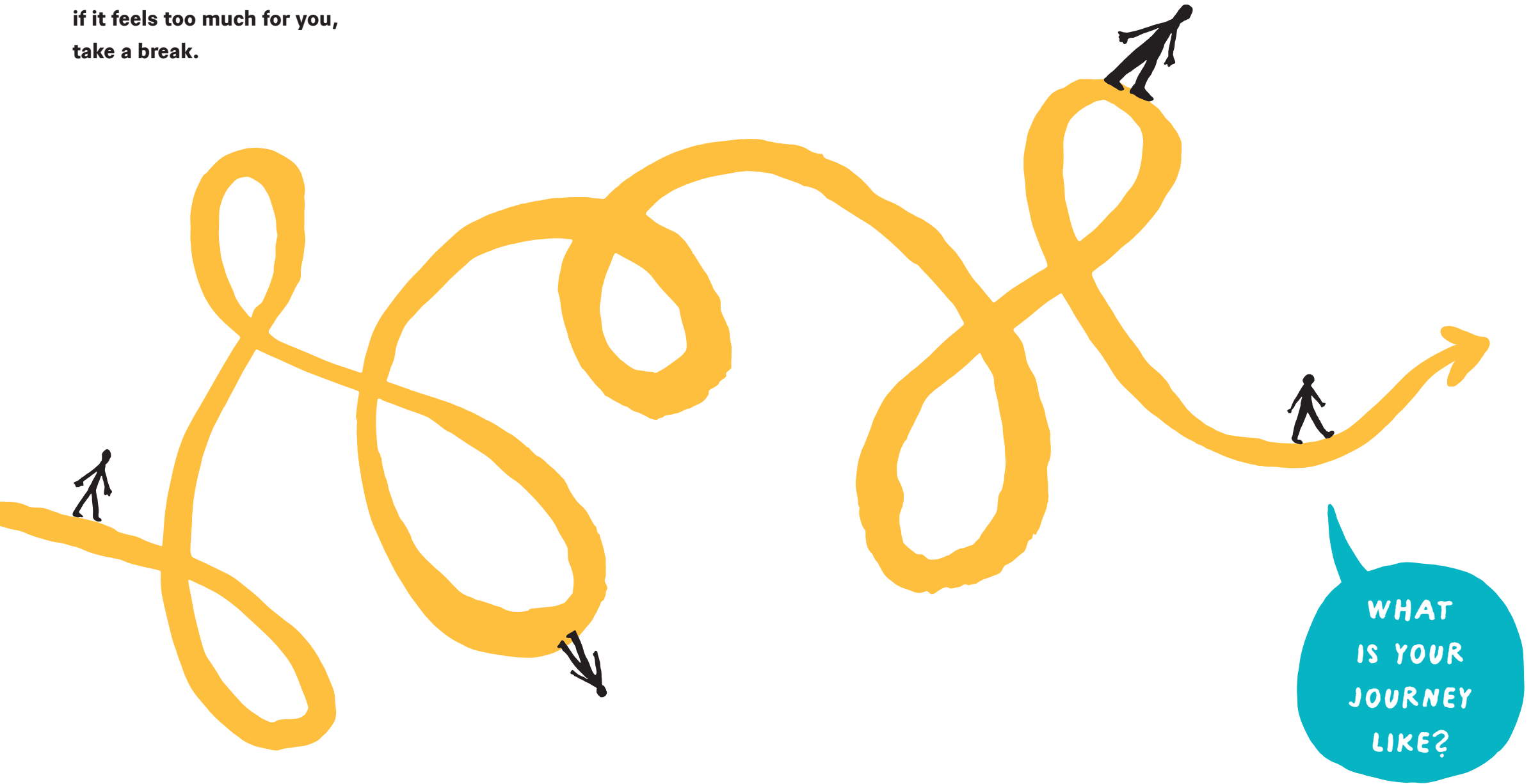
We'll always take care of you. You are really what matters.



You may feel confused and unsure about the future. Even if it doesn't seem like it right now, your mum and dad still love you. They may no longer be married or together, but they'll always be your parents.

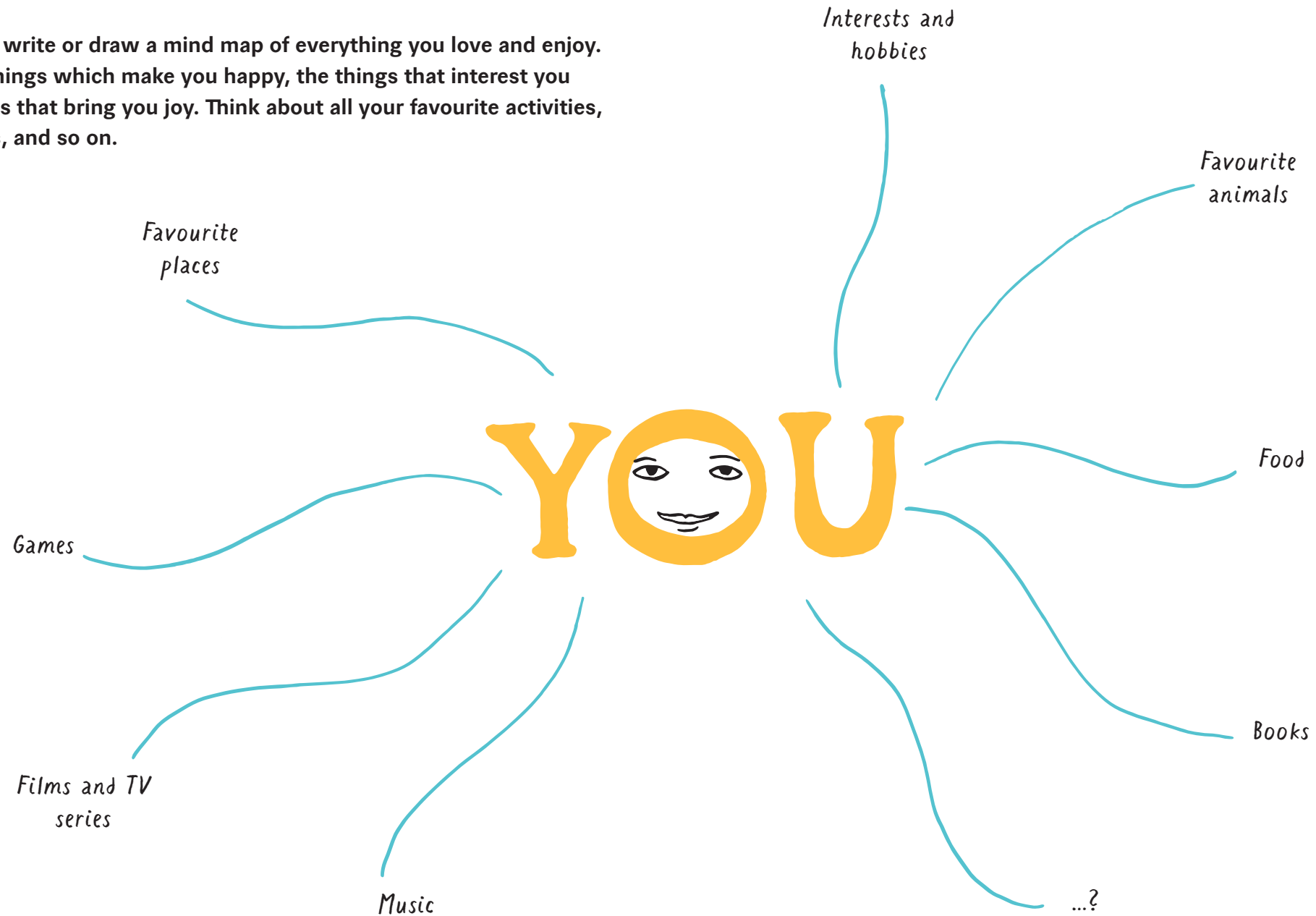
THERE IS NO SINGLE RIGHT WAY TO GET THROUGH IT ALL.

It's the same with this book...
if it feels too much for you,
take a break.



YOUR WORLD

Here you can write or draw a mind map of everything you love and enjoy. Include the things which make you happy, the things that interest you and the things that bring you joy. Think about all your favourite activities, hobbies, pets, and so on.



A FEW WORDS FOR FRUSTRATED PARENTS

It's good to allow yourself time to absorb the changes.

- Children value safety, certainty, stability, structure, and predictability. They also appreciate some special time alone with a parent.
- Give yourself and your children time to adjust. Patience helps; things often take longer than expected.
- Don't let your child take on the role of your partner.



I wish I could have some time alone with Mum. She's always busy working or doesn't have time for me.

I'd like to know where I stand and what's going to happen. I hope they're going to let me know soon.



CERTAINTIES



Even though life and relationships around us change, many things remain the same. These certainties give us strength and peace of mind. What remains unchanged in your life? List them under the headings.

Things that you love and can keep with you:

Family traditions that don't change:

Your parents words or actions that show they love you and that you're important to them:

I have a little teddy bear on my key ring.



I often go on trips with Dad and Mum reads with me.



IT'S GOOD TO RECOGNISE AND EXPERIENCE YOUR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS, AND EXPRESS THEM.

Although it can be hard sometimes, identifying your emotions and expressing them brings relief. Ignoring or suppressing emotions doesn't really work, or at least not for long. They are often intense and arrive unexpectedly. They're like waves. And after the unpleasant ones have departed, pleasant ones follow in their wake.

HOW ARE
YOU FEELING
RIGHT NOW?





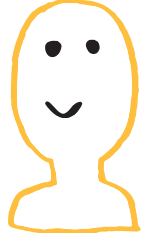


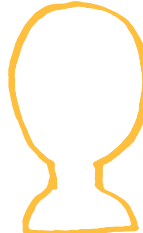
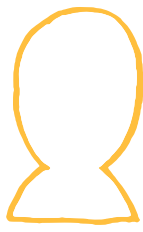
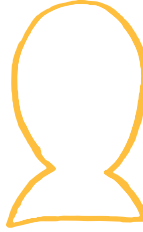

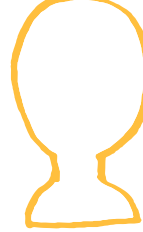
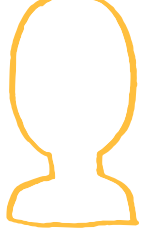

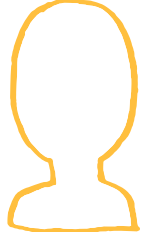

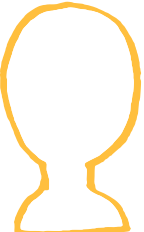

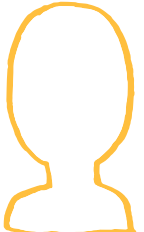


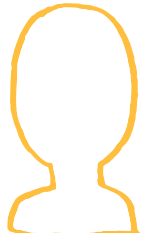

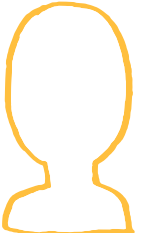
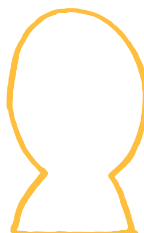
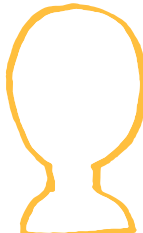
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?

What do you think about most often? What comes to mind?
Draw or write it below.



HOW ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?

Here you can draw how you feel during the day (a.m./p.m.). It is completely normal for moods and feelings to change. They can change quickly, or sometimes you may not feel anything at all.

 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.
 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.
 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.
 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.	 a.m.	 p.m.

HOW DO YOU FEEL PHYSICALLY?

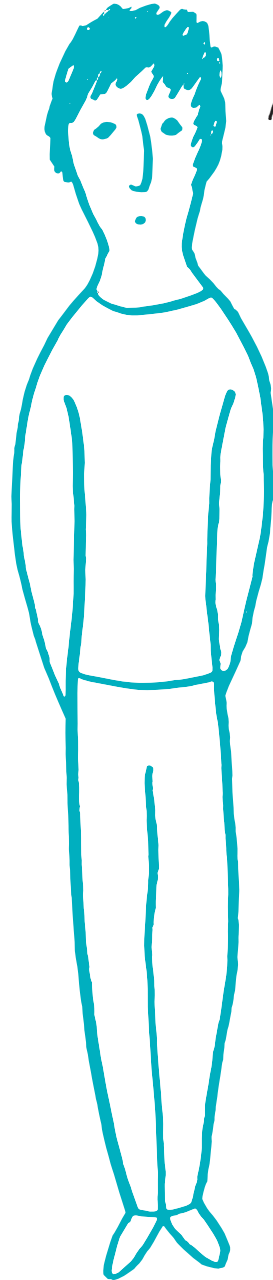
Do you feel tension or emptiness? What part of your body feels good? Mark it on the figure below. If you feel like it, answer the other questions below.

What's on your mind?

What's weighing on your heart?

What do you need to stand firm on?

Do you need to walk something off?



Is there something you just have to swallow?

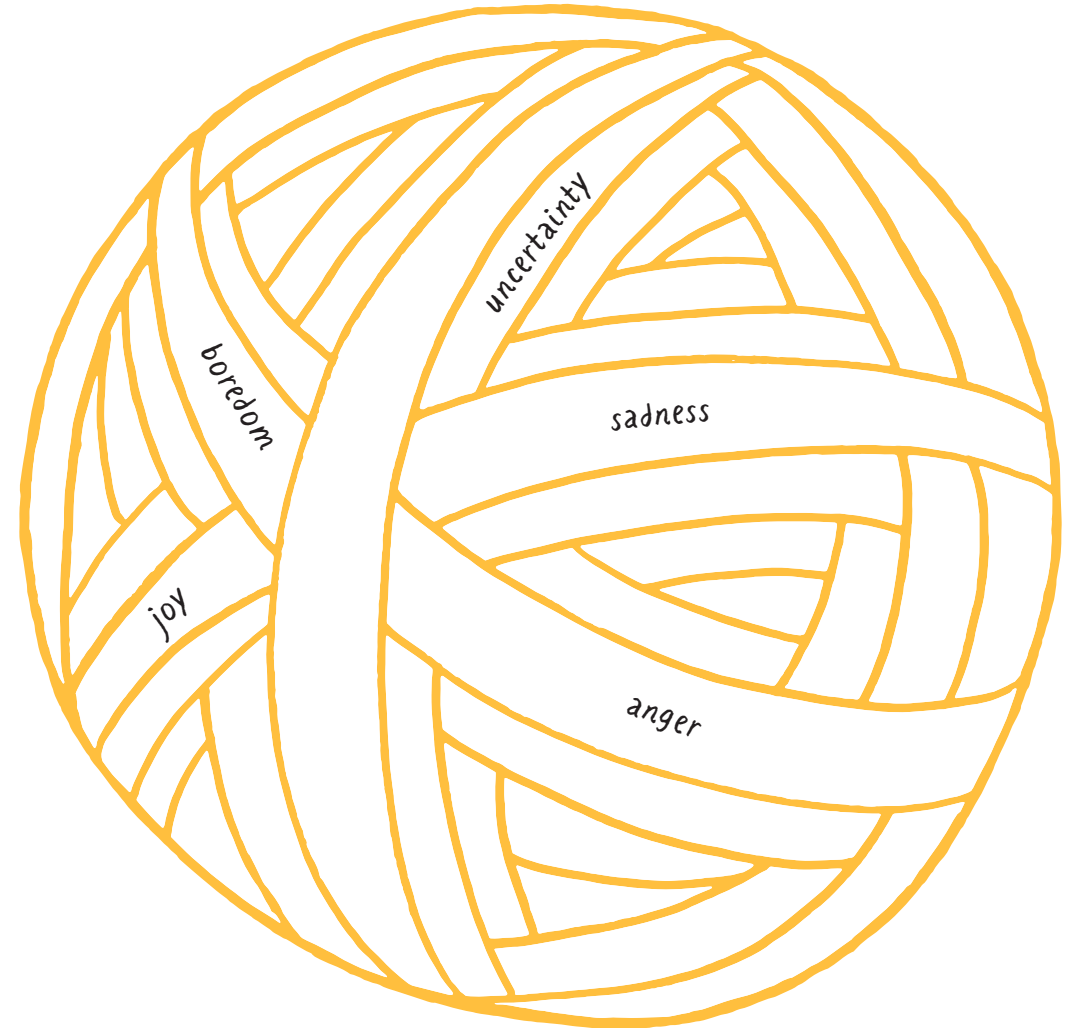
Do you need to take a deep breath?

Do you have a funny feeling in your stomach?

Do you need to stamp your feet?

TANGLE OF FEELINGS

Can you untangle your feelings or are they too tangled up? Write more feelings in the tangled ball and colour it in if you like. What's tangled up in there?



Your feelings may include:

concern, fear, shock, anger, confusion, indifference, disconnection, shame, disgust, courage, interest, curiosity, relief, well-being, peace, acceptance, nothing

A FEW WORDS FOR FRUSTRATED PARENTS

It's good to talk about what's happening.

- It's good to talk to your child about the changes ahead and to reassure them that they are in no way responsible for the divorce. Children understand more than they reveal.
- There's no point in pretending that nothing is happening. Show them that you're not happy about the situation.
- It doesn't help to sugar-coat things. Tell it like it is.
- Be careful not to "protect" your child by not talking about it. On the other hand, you should avoid overwhelming them with your feelings and details of the breakup. Children need an explanation that is appropriate for their age and which they are mature enough to understand.



I can't stand their SILENCE and when they act like nothing is going on. It's not like I don't know.

For them it's just part of life, for me it's my whole life! The only thing I know is being with them. I don't know what to expect or what's coming next?



MY STORY

Mum and Dad argued a lot.



After a while, Dad moved out.

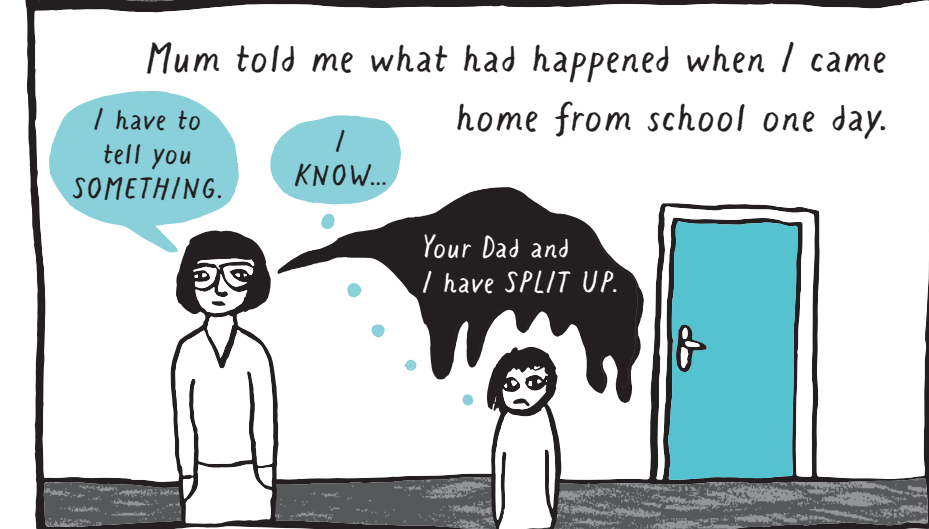


Mum told me what had happened when I came home from school one day.

I have to tell you SOMETHING.

I KNOW...

Your Dad and I have SPLIT UP.



I didn't realize that
adult problems could be
so overwhelming and that
life could sometimes be
so difficult.



miser HEARTACHE PAIN

It is very hard to deal with the heartache and live with the
pain. So many of us have been through this situation,
but we don't know each other.

I feel so alone.
I have to look after
myself.

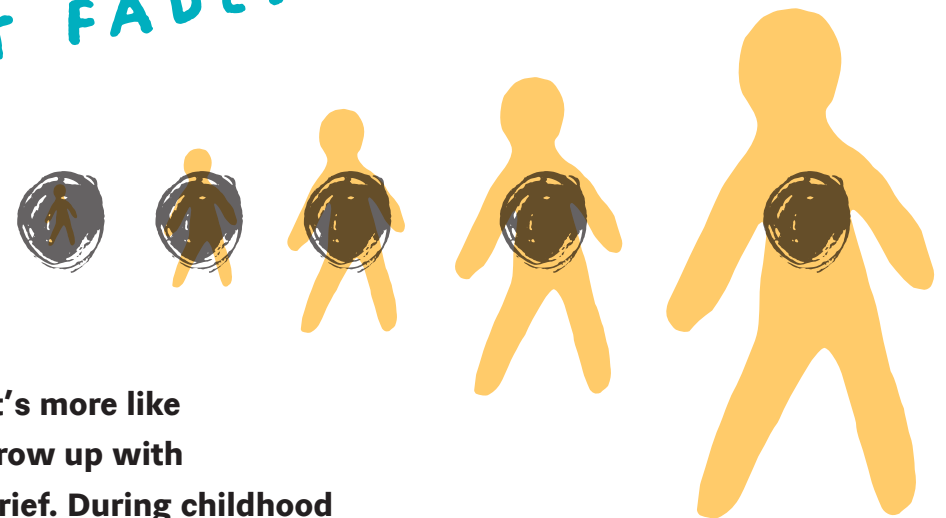


I became less
carefree and
withdrew into myself.
My childhood ended
and I had to grow
up quickly.



PAIN

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT THE PAIN
OF LOSS DIMINISHES OVER TIME
IT FADES AWAY.



But it's more like
we grow up with
the grief. During childhood
and adulthood, the sorrow remains
with us in some form, but we learn
to live with it.

DO YOU
FEEL THIS
WAY?

DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY?

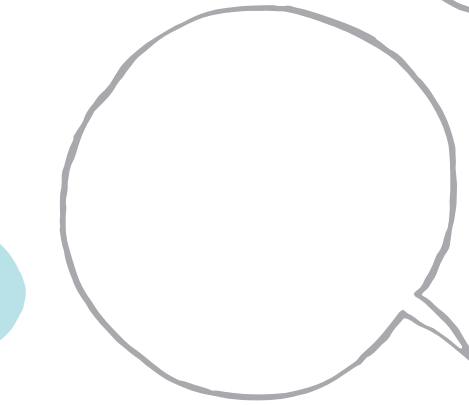
Tick any of the speech bubbles that sound familiar. You can also write your own thoughts in the empty bubbles.



I'm so tired of hearing the never-ending arguments.



It's a BETRAYAL!



I wish they would ask me for my opinion.



My schoolmates make IDIOTIC REMARKS!



I've completely lost faith in adults. They're awful.

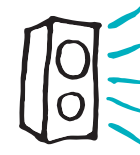


HOW CAN YOU STAY FLOAT?

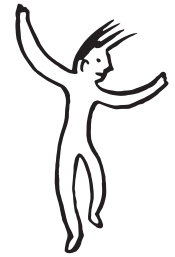
Tick or colour in an activity that helps you when you're not feeling good. It's important to remember that, once you have gone through unpleasant feelings, with time they will change.



Talking to someone



Playing loud music



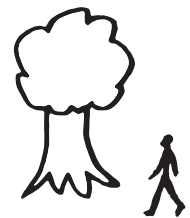
Singing or dancing



Eating something sweet



Stroking or cuddling a pet



Taking a walk



Taking a bath



Hugging someone / yourself / a tree



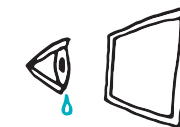
Reading or writing a journal



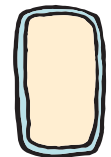
Snuggling under a blanket



Taking deep breaths



Crying while watching a film



Using emotional support apps

SWIMMING THROUGH A SEA OF SORROW

It is absolutely normal and natural to feel very sad sometimes. You might experience terrible despair and feel like nothing will ever be the same again. If something is weighing on your heart, write or doodle it here. Put it all in there!

*I'm
consumed
by sadness.*

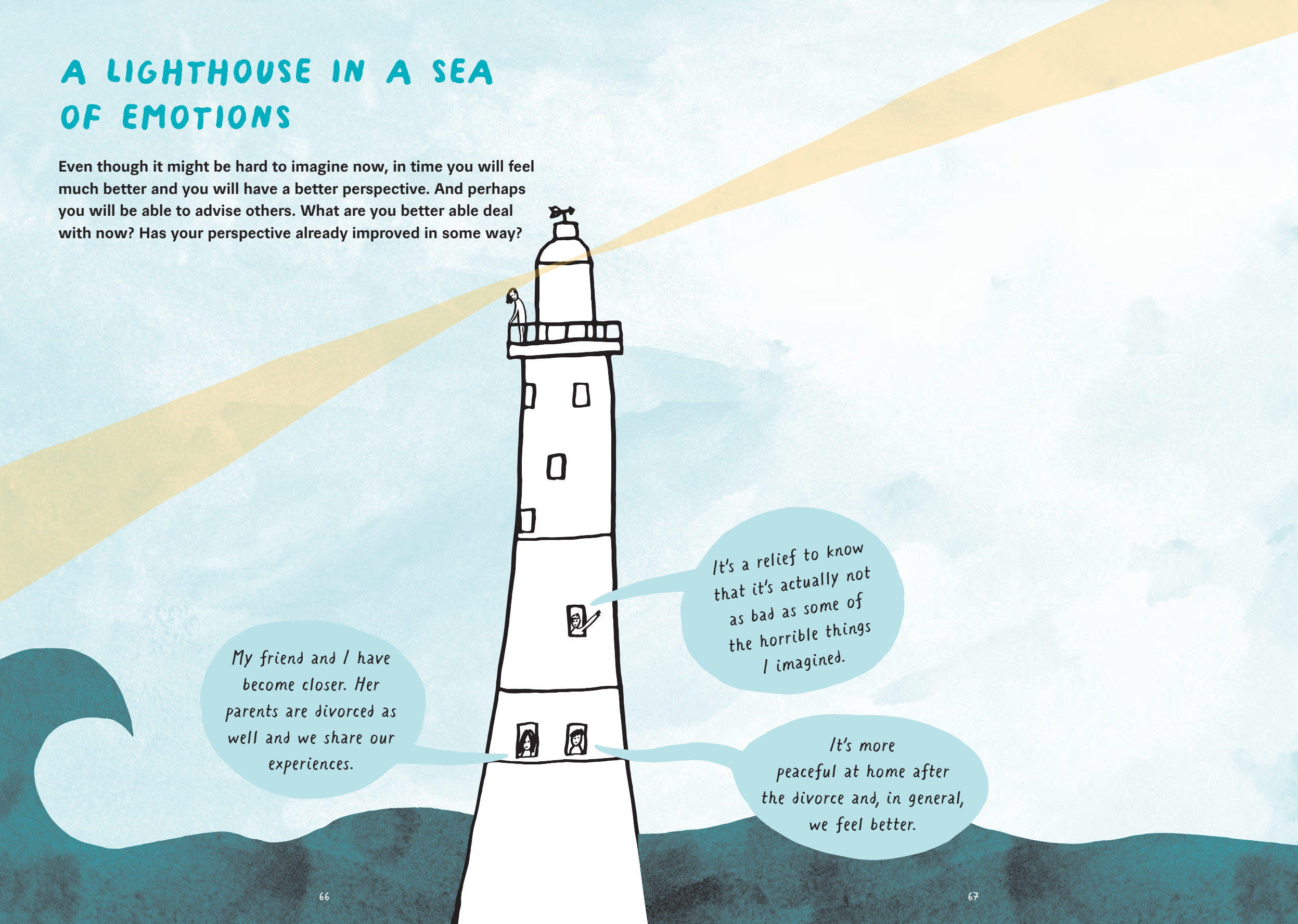


*I'm sad, but I don't
know why. I'm
falling, but I don't
know where.*



A LIGHTHOUSE IN A SEA OF EMOTIONS

Even though it might be hard to imagine now, in time you will feel much better and you will have a better perspective. And perhaps you will be able to advise others. What are you better able deal with now? Has your perspective already improved in some way?



My friend and I have become closer. Her parents are divorced as well and we share our experiences.

It's a relief to know that it's actually not as bad as some of the horrible things I imagined.

It's more peaceful at home after the divorce and, in general, we feel better.

A FEW WORDS FOR FRUSTRATED PARENTS

A child needs to have a relationship with both parents and to continue to love both of them without feeling guilty.

→ Try not to speak ill of the other parent in front of your child. As the child comes from both parents, they may construe negative remarks as a refusal to accept the other half of them.

→ It is not good to use your child as either a mediator or a confessor. Don't put them in the role of an adult.

→ Beware of trying to "erase" the shared past. Unlike parents, a child is not able to do this.



Your problems are your business. Please don't drag me into it. But if you're dealing with something that concerns me, talk to me about it.



I don't want to be the referee or take anyone's side!



I was seven years old when my dad left. With him gone, I had to take on a lot of responsibility quickly and become independent. Mum has always been there for me. Although it was also an incredibly difficult time for her, she never let me down. With her help, I was partially able to open up again and rid myself of some of the bad effects that this period had on me.

In a way, I'm grateful for the divorce, as it endowed me with many of the qualities that I now value in myself, and it made me stronger overall. However, I certainly don't believe that the pain and adverse effects of any traumatic event are redeemed by any 'character-building' or other ultimately positive effects. The pain is often far too great.

The role of mediator and messenger has also always been difficult for me. In general, my parents' communication after the separation was along the lines of 'the less said, the better', which is not ideal for a small child. Even so, I am grateful that they always communicated in a relatively calm manner, at least in front of us children.

This brings me to my message for parents: Don't make your children intermediaries. Try to work out organizational and other adult matters between yourselves.



When I'm at Dad's, I miss Mum, and vice versa. Luckily, I can call them anytime. Dad doesn't mind anymore.



loss

If one parent has moved away, you might feel sad about the loss. When you have two homes, you might feel this way about both parents.



It breaks my heart.

DISCONNECTION DISCONNECTION

Sometimes, strong feelings become too much for us to bear and we detach ourselves from them and from our body. It is a means of survival.



I became detached from myself.



I feel like I'm observing from behind glass.



I'm shrinking.



I don't talk about it.

On these two pages, you'll encounter difficult emotions. It's enough to simply know about them, acknowledge them, and move on. You may not experience them. But if you feel like you're sinking into one of these states, reach out for support. Don't try to deal with it on your own.

self-HATRED

This can feel like a personal hell. When you get very angry and there's no way to release it, it can turn inward, leading you to blame yourself. However, you are not the one to blame. If you feel this way and don't know how to handle it, confide in someone or write it down. Try to let it out in some way.



I'm to blame for Dad leaving. I'm stupid and ugly.



I feel invisible.



I'm closing myself off.



I'm overwhelmed by it all.

POWER LESSNESS

It's incredibly hard to come to terms with what has happened. A divorce is final, and unfortunately there's nothing you can do about it... This could leave you feeling utterly powerless.



IF IT GETS TOO MUCH FOR YOU, ASK FOR HELP. THE HELPLINE NUMBER (TELEPHONE AND CHAT) IS:
116 111

STAY CALM AND GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO ABSORB THE CHANGES.

It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed by changes. It takes time to get used to. You'll get through it. And you don't have to go through it alone.

There are many reasons parents get divorced and you are not one of them. It is a matter between them.

HOW DO YOU
HANDLE THE
CHANGES?

So many changes
have come all at
once. I don't know
if I can handle it.

I can handle it.
I don't have to keep
trying to change
myself. I AM ENOUGH
as I am!

Adult
relationships are
complicated and
it's certainly not
my job to fix
them!

CHANGES

MOVING

DOUBTS

UNCERTAINTY

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY TO MUM?

Is there something you would like to say to your mum? What is it? Is there something you want to ask her? What are your questions? Is there something that is weighing you down or bothering you? What would you like to change? Or is there something nice you would like to say?

TIP

When your loved ones have a lot of worries, and perhaps they don't listen to you or have time for you, it's better to **WRITE DOWN** what you want to say to them. Some people express themselves better on paper, because they are able to think it through beforehand. You can always decide later whether you want to hand them the letter, so don't let it hold you back.

I wonder why they decided to get divorced.

I don't know where I stand. Can't you tell me what's going to happen next?

I'm glad that Mum and Dad are talking now.



FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM DIVORCED FAMILIES

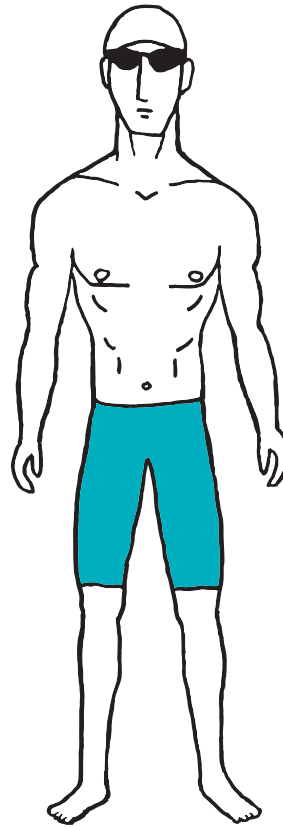
BJÖRK

(b. 1965) Icelandic singer and actress. Her parents divorced when she was a young child. Her stepfather was a guitarist, who introduced her to music. In Iceland, she has been famous as a singer since she was a child.



NF

(b. 1991) American rapper whose real name is Nathan Feuerstein. After his parents divorced, he was brought up by his father. With his songs, he helps millions of young people around the world find hope in difficult times.

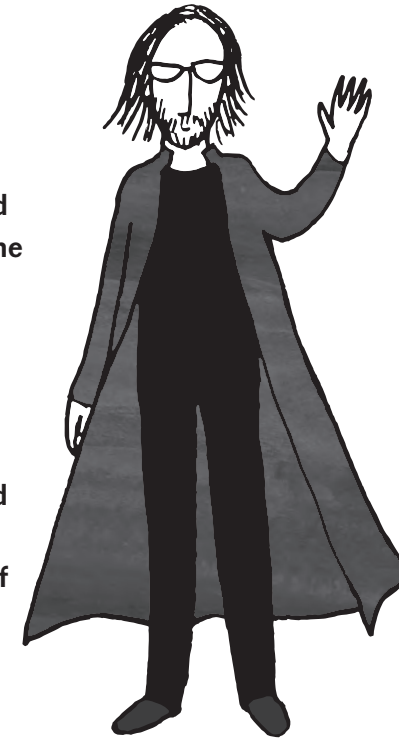


MICHAEL PHELPS

(b. 1985) World-famous American Olympic swimmer. He was diagnosed with ADHD as a child. His parents divorced when he was nine years old, which had a negative impact on him. His relationship with his father was distant for years. Swimming with a coach helped him.

EMMA WATSON

(b. 1990) British actress who played the role of Hermione in the Harry Potter film series. Her parents divorced when she was five years old. The divorce accelerated the development of Emma's sense of independence and self-reliance.

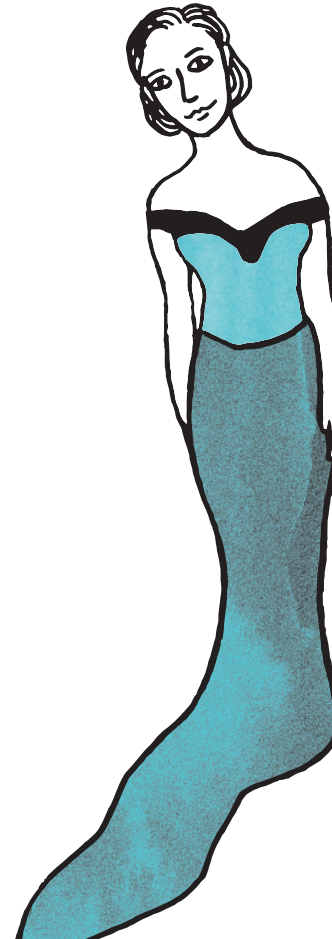


OPRAH WINFREY

(b. 1954) American presenter and actress, richest African-American of the 20th century, and philanthropist. She was born to a teenage single mother. She had a very difficult childhood and experienced great poverty. Her experience of suffering led her to help many people.

KEANU REEVES

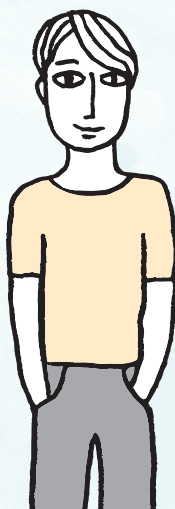
(b. 1964) Canadian actor, famous for the Matrix and John Wick films. His mother married another three times after divorcing his father. His first stepfather was a theatre and film director. Because he moved often with his mother and younger sister, he had to change schools a lot. He was not a good student.



**YOUR MUM
AND DAD MAY
END THEIR
RELATIONSHIP...**

**...BUT THEIR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH YOU
CONTINUES.**

*I'm not
to blame for the
divorce, my parents'
wanted it. They didn't
divorce me.*



*Even though
it happened quite a long
time ago, it still hurts
sometimes. But I got
through it and I'm
proud of myself.*



**EVEN IF YOU GET
LOST IN THE FOG
FOR A MOMENT,
YOU'LL FIND
YOUR WAY.**

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

YOU ARE OKAY JUST

THE WAY YOU ARE.

MUM and DAD have SPLIT UP

is partly a book and partly a creative journal. Creativity can help us get through difficult emotions and stop us from feeling helpless. It also makes it easier for us to understand and cope with what's happening.

- The book helps children navigate their parents' divorce more easily.
- It gently promotes creativity and contains more than 60 activities.
- It seeks to encourage communication on this sensitive topic.
- It is aimed at children and teens from about 10 years of age.
- For children aged 6 and up, with parental guidance.
- It may also help adults who experienced their parents' divorce as children.
- It includes some pages for parents.

From
the author
of the book
Sensitive



This book is a personal project inspired by the author's experience, not a professional guide. It aims to provide support for both children and parents.