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3-18-2020

Spears, Syretta, "Misconception About Childless Adults Can Be Misguided" (2020). *UCF Forum*. 395.

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Misconception About Childless Adults Can Be Misguided

By Syretta Spears
UCF Forum columnist
Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Adults not related to children can provide advice, new perspectives, new experiences, financial support and, more importantly, time to them.



(Photo by Chayene Rafaela at Unsplash)

Well-meaning adults often tend to have the mistaken belief that childless adults must not like kids; this misconception can be so very far the truth and misguided.

I recently invited readers in a [UCF Forum](#) to contemplate their views on childless adults. Readers were encouraged to think about reasons that other adults had lives without children, to be empathetic to those who may not have had a choice to be a parent, and to rethink the narrative of our subconscious thoughts and actions that often influence the next generation of young women and their ability to make choices freely about what family might look like in their future.

Hopefully, mindsets are shifting enough to further deliberate if childless adults (especially those child-free by choice) still have a place in their hearts for children.

The goal of some professionals is to be an advocate for children and create a connection they may not have with children otherwise.

For some, very special relationships were created because they do not have children of their own. Like most of the people I've talked with, these bonds first often occur with family members, nieces and nephews, or children of close friends. Some adults choose career paths that require them to be involved with and closely interact with children. The goal of these professionals is to be an advocate for children and create a connection they may not have with children otherwise.

An acquaintance shared that her dedication to a career of service is her way of leaving a legacy that she may not otherwise be able to share.

“Being a counselor, I am able to impart upon a child tools and skills that they will hopefully use throughout their lives,” says. “Knowing that I shared those tools to help guide children through tough situations is me leaving my mark on the world, even though I don't have children of my own, this is my legacy.”

While a career dedicated to children is a meaningful way to create a lasting impact in the lives of children, others simply choose to enjoy a few occasional, yet priceless moments with those closest. Some choose to give their friends with children a mental (and occasionally a physical) break by hosting kid-friendly play dates at their home, recreation center or amusement parks. These friends are often viewed as back-up parents, role models or seen as an older sibling of sort—a win-win situation for all.

For other child-free adults, they take a more formal approach, such as mentoring and volunteering through official organizations. These adults believe that through volunteering and mentorships they are able to reach multiple children. They want to make a lasting impact in the community as a whole.

As mentors, these adults have the ability to utilize their networks, often enlarging them, to provide a greater impact on more children than they could possibly do on their own or if they were consumed with children of their own.

Although some adults that have families do not include children, they can still play an important role in the lives of all children. They can take on the roles of dedicated professionals, such as teachers, doctors, or counselors; they can be role models, “big”

sisters/brothers or formal mentors. They can provide advice, new perspectives, new experiences, financial support and, more importantly, time—to children (and often their parents), providing significant and meaningful relationships for both child and adult. In most cases, having nonrelated adults in a child's life builds self-confidence and social skills.

For the adult there is often a sense of gratification knowing that they've made an impact on the life of a child that may last a lifetime. These relationships not only benefit the children but also the parents, knowing that someone genuinely cares for their child with no expectations in return is priceless.

Recognizing the time and love that child-free adults place into the children of others clearly demonstrates their selflessness and love for children, even when they've chosen to be child-free.

So, as cliché as it may sound, it truly takes a village to raise a child – and child-free adults are often a part of many villages. Misconceptions aside, child-free adults have the love and spirit to care for many.

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