

From: Dan Jewel <djewel@bauerpublishing.com>
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2012 9:33 AM
To: Kathy Campbell <kcampbell123@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: 1231 Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise--Suri in the Middle, Psychologist

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From: Heidi Parker <hparker@bauerpublishing.com>
Date: July 13, 2012 5:41:42 PM EDT
To: Oliver Coleman <ocoleman@bauerpublishing.com>
Cc: Jordanna Lippe <jlippe@bauerpublishing.com>, Mark McGarry <mmcgarry@bauerpublishing.com>, Kevin Dickson <kdickson@bauerpublishing.com>, Kara Feigeles <kfeigeles@bauerpublishing.com>, Annabel Vered <avered@bauerpublishing.com>, Christina Rath <crath@bauerpublishing.com>, Dan Jewel <djewel@bauerpublishing.com>, Janet Giovanelli <jgiovanelli@bauerpublishing.com>, Dan Wakeford <dwakeford@bauerpublishing.com>, Karen Aanonsen <kaanonsen@bauerpublishing.com>, Dylan Gadino <dgadino@bauerpublishing.com>, Juliet Izon <jizon@bauerpublishing.com>, Jackie Strause <jstrause@bauerpublishing.com>, Laura Lane <llane@bauerpublishing.com>, Chantal Waldholz <cwaldholz@bauerpublishing.com>, Jared Shapiro <jshapiro@bauerpublishing.com>, Terri White <twhite@bauerpublishing.com>
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1231

KATIE HOLMES AND TOM CRUISE--SURI IN THE MIDDLE, PSYCHOLOGIST

Q&A With Therapist Beth Proudfoot, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist of San Jose, CA
INTERVIEWED BY L&S TEMP Lisa DeLena

Q: How is Suri feeling?

A: Divorce is always traumatic for children and families. The family constellation centers around the parents working together and living in the same house. Sudden change is like an earthquake for a child. Their fundamental beliefs seem to be destroyed and it is very difficult for them.(LD1)

Q: She's so young, but she must be exposed to what's going on?

A: Children are very ego-centric and listen for conversation that relates to them. What home will I live in? What school will I go to? Will I lose Dad? Will I lose Mom? Can I call Dad or Mom at any time? It's very important that the children never hear parents bad-mouthing each other. During

the divorce, children are listening to everything, they are hyper-alert.(LD1)

Q: Is it likely that she will take sides?

A: Most kids don't want to be put in the position of having to chose a side to be on. Again, the parents should try to say nice things in front of the child, however hard it may be.(LD1)

Q: Do children act out? How do kids in a divorce act out?

A: There are endless possibilities for children acting out. They can regress, have tantrums, return to bed-wetting, claim more tummy aches, refuse to get dressed, and refuse to go to school.(LD1)

Q: Do daughters usually want to stay with their mom?

A: Every child wants to stay with both parents all the time. It tears them apart to see their parents separately, especially at that age. Usually, there is a 50/50 time share in place. As they become teens, they make decisions based on fact. For instance, a teen may choose to live with a parent because their best friend lives across the street, or that parent's house is near their school. It's based on practicality.(LD1)

Q: There are more cameras and reporters on Suri than ever, is her drama magnified because she's in the spotlight?

A: Absolutely. We torture famous people in this country. If the parents are smart, and I am sure they are, none of these photos are ever shown to their daughter.(LD1)

Q: Will kids at school tease her?

A: No, I don't think she will be teased. Half of all kids are involved in a divorce, so they are usually sympathetic with other kids. She is a bit of a princess, so I think she will treated as such.(LD1)

Q: What should a parent do to protect their child during a high profile divorce?

A: Again, it is crucial for both parents to be very conscious of what they say around the children. It's important for the child to know they are loved and cared for. They should learn to say positive things when the child is going off to visit the other parent, like "You will have so much fun with Daddy and he can't wait to see you." They must maintain her daily life, and keep her routine stable. In Suri's case, it is essential that she is not exposed to the photographs in the media, and that the parents agree on some very basic rules and parameters for raising her.(LD1)

Q: Tom and Katie will raise Suri very differently, will she be confused going btwn Scientology and Catholicism? Between being catered to and spoiled (which Tom does) to being given rules (which Katie does)?

A: They may choose not to be very religious on either side. She won't be confused by learning the two religions, because it is equivalent to having two teachers, and children have many teachers. For example, if one parent spoke French and the other English to the child, then that part of the child's brain will be on when she is with that particular parent, and she will speak French in one case, and English in the other. Later on, when children become teens, critical thinking will lead them to make a decision about religion. That is unless they are pressured to make a choice.

(LD1)

She could be confused by two different styles of parenting, however. Despite the divorce, the parents need to work together on behavior. They must agree on a few basic rules based on core values. Even just a few rules. With regard to gifts and the question of how much you give, it is best to be on the same page. (LD1)

end

LD1 Beth Proudfoot, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist of San Jose, CA, as told to Life & Style temp, Lisa DeLena. OK TO NAME