

THE GOSSELIN SAGA

TLC



CAN GOSSELIN KIDS LEAD NORMAL LIVES?

Herald report -- Rocky Spino is a national board certified (NCC) licensed professional counselor (LPC). He also is a specialist in providing mental health services to children and adolescents, and skilled at relating to the concerns of parents. He recently conducted an online interview with the Myerstown Herald:

The eight Gosselin children have been under the spotlight for more than three years. The world has seen them grown up. How will this affect the kids later in life?

ROCKY SPINO: Actually, the best answer to this is that nobody knows. There are many variables that would determine particular outcomes for them like any other kids. Part of this would have to do with how they and their significant others interpreted life in the spotlight. If their experiencing of growing up with an audience has been very positive, then there may be few concerns.

If the mix of kids and camera crews in their lives has increased tensions, then things may go in a different way. How supported the children have felt in coping with their special life circumstances also plays a part. Otherwise, the only predictable result here is that it will be highly individual.

Can the children live "normal" lives after this?

RS: Yes they can...unless they can't. A "normal" life after is kind of up for grabs. Maybe "normal" means that we no longer get to see what happens.

Why do child stars have problems later in life?

RS: Well, I guess we're assuming that they do have more problems than average rather than their problems just being more public?

A reason that has often been pondered is that having success and then losing it is tough for even adults to bounce back from let alone children.

Or maybe the issue is more about the loss of access. Either way, we imagine there are issues of change here for child celebrities that are, for most of us, tough to imagine. Beyond that, one difference between a Ron Howard and a Dana Plato may just be the process of having more ways of coping available than ways of feeling overcome.

Coping with divorce is difficult for children. What advice would you give Jon and Kate in dealing with the situation?

RS: First, as a counseling professional, it would be impossible (and unethical) to act as if I know these individuals and to give any specific advice.

More generally, I often find myself reminding divorcing parents that they may no longer be a spouse, but they are still a mom and a dad. Accordingly, their kids are entitled to the best relationship possible with each of them and to a cooperative upbringing.

As a child therapist, I am committed to helping parents resolve the things that commonly get in the way of this for the long-term sake and safeguarding of their children. For Jon & Kate, or any others that may be struggling with parenting through divorce, the best suggestion would be to not hesitate to find appropriate help if needed.

Why would you tell the children?

RS: If you mean what should or shouldn't be said about the divorce, it is important to let children know about the changes that now will be taking place and, in a very general way, why. Most importantly, there should be

reassurances that they did not create the situation and that they will still be mutually loved and cared for by both parents in whatever schedule meets the child's needs.

Again, respect the fact that children of different ages, among other things, may have different needs in a divorce situation. It is important to be alert to those needs and to respond in actively supportive ways.

How critical is it for Jon and Kate to work together in raising their children -- even after the divorce?

Again, I would have to know the parents involved in order to respond to their specific situation. Otherwise, in general, working together in raising your children after a divorce -- particularly in front of your children -- can be crucial.

Kate has mentioned that the divorce rate higher for parents of multiples is higher. Why is it that rate higher?

RS: We would have to know what research she is referencing here. Most parents would admit that more kids in a household place more demands on the family system and possible strains on the marriage. When those kids come all at once, we could expect this to be compounded. If these strains lead to a divorce...well, then we're talking about the stress of multiples and perhaps single parenting. Or, if both mom and dad remain in the role, shared but separate parenting.

Were the Gosselins wrong for putting their kids on the show in the first place?

RS: This question is probably best left to the Gosselins. Whatever the response, if cohabiting becomes unlikely, healthy co-parenting is still in reach.

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