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POINTS TO RAISE AT INQUIRY INTO FAMILY COURT
PROCEDURE AND EFFECTS OF ORDERS.

1. My step children do not want to have children, the 13 year old said he was not going to have children because if he left his wife then he would not be able to see the children because that is what mum did.
2. My younger stepson, who is now 12, said that mum would not allow him to take his girlfriend to lunch even though the mother would be present. The mother said that he should not have a girlfriend or any relationship as he would get his heart broken and be miserable for the rest of his life.
3. I work as an Aboriginal Tutorial Assistant at West Dubbo Infants and a number of the children are moderately intellectually affected, the counsellor at west told me that two students in particular were having difficulties because they wanted to see their father more, she wrote and telephoned the mother's solicitor and got no response except that the father must obey the orders of the court. The counsellor then rang the mother seeing that this would improve the children's learning and the mother's said they had no problem with the father being involved and have allowed the father's to have extra time with the children in the mornings and afternoons. This point highlights the destructive behaviour of the lawyers involved, and their unwillingness to settle without litigation. There is a common factor here regarding this particular firm.
4. My husband and I had domestic violence orders put on us by his then wife after he left simply for the purpose of being in a better position at the custody hearing. No violence ever occurred from the husband – it was actually pointed out in a later hearing by the

wife's barrister that she had indeed been domestically violent to the husband.

5. My oldest stepson will not talk to me due to the pressure currently and in the past put on him by his mother. Until two years ago, my husband had not seen his oldest son or daughter since January 1995. He now has to meet his oldest son who is now 19 on the quiet because his mother gives him hell if she finds out they have seen each other.
6. The mother of these children is still, after almost 10 years she is still relentlessly pursuing an intention to cease all contact between the children and their father. She told the youngest child that she would stop him playing weekend and school sport if he told his father that his big brother was home doing work experience.

We are not alone in this situation. Unfortunately once the [REDACTED] lawyers become involved the agreements and civility reached at time of break-up is out the window.

The most distressing fact in all of these problems is that many children are being raised never knowing a male person, there are only 17% of teachers who are male, most children in separated families live with their mother, many sport coaches are female. The only male contact many children have is the coach of their sporting side and their siblings, if and only if they have brothers. This means that at the most many children are only living in a female dominated world.

Every young child suffers but when it comes time for puberty in boys and they need and want a man to talk to, this situation is made impossible because of the lawyers. The major problems with situations like this are that the children end up not trusting anyone. The resident parent can tell as many lies and make as many threats as they like and the children always lose out. This is especially true if the resident parent does not gain another relationship, then, if the non-resident parent has another working relationship, the children see that one parent is happy and the other is not. The children then feel sorry for the unattached parent and feel responsible for their happiness. This then causes low self esteem in the children which in turn causes behavioural problems and delinquency in the worst cases. Overall, mood disorders result, criminal tendencies become apparent, social skills are non evident, therefore eventually we are raising socially inept, derelict, psychologically impaired children. The next generation of the children I have worked with are unskilled socially, unskilled

academically, therefore turning into loners and in some cases, as stated before, juvenile delinquents.

With one in every two marriages failing these days, we need to provide security and hope for our children. The ones from broken homes need to be able to see working relationships. I have especially noticed this problem in my own stepchildren as they see their father and I having a loving, stable relationship and their mother according to them is always cranky, always yelling and they are spending much of their time grounded for the most obscure reasons. The other obvious problem with the family court orders in general is that they are not enforced, the resident parent breaches them regularly with no regard for the children's needs, this in turn causes mistrust and animosity in both the non resident parent and the children. The court must start to make orders enforceable and workable. The court must also make orders to suit the individual case, not the same down the line orders for everyone.

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