

## What This Stepmom Knows For Sure, Two Decades And 22 Grandkids Later

“Every family has its hills and valleys, including ours.”

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Brittany Wong Divorce Editor, The Huffington Post



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The author's grandkids call her Honey instead of Grandma.

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*As part of our [Blended Family Friday](#) series, each week we spotlight a different stepfamily to learn how they've worked to bring their two families together. Our hope is that by telling their stories, we'll bring you closer to blended family bliss in your own life! Want to share your family's story? Email us at [divorce@huffingtonpost.com](mailto:divorce@huffingtonpost.com).*

One of the most rewarding parts of raising a big stepfamily? All the grandchildren you get later on in life, said Chicago-based [lifestyle writer Susan "Honey" Good](#).

"I have 22 grandchildren and one more on the way come June!" she said. "I refer to them as my 'grands' — and grand they are, in every way!"

Below, Good tells The Huffington Post more about her family and shares her best advice from 25 years of step-parenting.

### **Hi Honey! Please introduce us to your family.**

My husband Sheldon Good (a real estate auction pioneer) and I have a blended family of four children and 22 grandchildren. My two daughters, Jenny and Kim, and Shelly's, two sons Steven and Todd, have given us the good fortune and pleasure to be their childrens' grandparents. In my musings on [HoneyGood.com](#), I write often about trips with the grandkids!

### **What were the early years like with Sheldon?**

My late husband Michael and I raised our daughters in beautiful Honolulu until Michael passed away when I was in my forties. One year later, I decided I needed the emotional support of my parents and extended family and moved to Chicago with my two daughters. I was immediately introduced to Shelly, a widower, who surprised me with these words on our first date: 'I've been searching for a wife for six years. You're the first woman to meet all the qualities I am looking for in a wife and I am going to marry you!' My little heart went pitter patter and it has been pitter patter for the last 25 years.

Every stepfamily has its hills and valleys, including ours, but I have found putting our time, effort and lots of love into each relationship has been extraordinary and fulfilling.



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Honey and her husband Sheldon at the wedding of their grandson Logan to granddaughter-in-law Annie.

**What have been some of the biggest problems you've faced as a family through the years?**

The biggest complications have come from our adult children. The combination of the loss of a parent (it's hard to see your parents fall in love with someone new) and a natural jealousy put a strain on our relationships with our children. Fortunately, our strong bond would not allow anything to come between us. There are only occasional problems with the "grands"; the grandchildren blend very well with one another and with us.

**What's the best part of having such a big blended family?**

In our wildest imagination, Shelly and I never dreamed we would be the grandmother and grandfather to all of these "grands!" The children have had the experience and exposure of enjoying a huge family. We are kind of like a large platoon when we all gather and that gives me a warm and fuzzy feeling. That's what family is all about — love!



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Honey and her husband Sheldon have been married for 25 years.

**What's your best advice for parents struggling to keep the peace in their households?**

To the grandmothers and mothers who are facing stress with their blended families: I try to think about how it's not about me, me, me — it's about my grandkids. And you get further with sugar than with vinegar. It's also of the utmost importance to always put your spouse first. Let nothing come between you. When the adult children or "grands" see you united, they will respect your relationship. Lastly, do not try to compete with [another grandmother](#). Be yourself! Come from love and I promise you will be adored in return.