



## FAMILY

# Genetic Seams in Family Ties

Hers, His and the glue that binds a modern blended family *By Jason Tesaro*

**B**efore our official 2012 merger, we were but two divorcees and four children. Now, mere weeks after our copper anniversary, no matter how messy our situation may be, it fits neatly into a modern haiku:

*Each of us had two  
But to family-bind our crew  
We begat some glue*

That glue was little Julian, our late-harvest kindergartener in whom each of the blended children has an equal stake. He is the intersection of our Venn diagram. And it's as though Julian holds two passports. He is a dual citizen of the HERS triad (Amy Lee, Isabella, Brooks) and the HIS trio (Jason, Sebastian, Cecilia). The rest of us, despite being naturalized by marriage, observe certain political boundaries drawn by blood. We see it in our seating arrangements — HERS by her, HIS by him — and charades' teams.

Sometimes, these genetic seams are rendered invisible. We all share loves for travel, flying discs and disco, for instance. Yet, there are moments when nature trumps nurture and reminds us exactly in which direction each

bloodline runs. HERS love steak and comedies. HIS love fish and musicals. HERS have strong teeth, delicate hearts, and they tap-tap-tap the snooze button but can blast out the door in two minutes flat. HIS have more cavities, less emotional vulnerability, and pop right up in the morning but need an extra 10 minutes for proper primping.

In our early days, I chalked-up our divisions to growing pains and tried to mash our two worlds into one, attempting to sand down the seams into a smooth polish. As with so many unnecessary struggles in life, the answer was simply to surrender and let it be. Because while the biological fault lines might forever be apparent when it comes to Netflix, flossing, and the green vs. yellow banana debate, it's not about how or where the lines are drawn, it's how you navigate them. Tempting as it is to feel more entitled with our own blood, genetic primacy does not necessarily afford extra privileges. I cannot undermine my wife's authority over my two kids, for example, by pulling rank as the bio parent.

For extra insight, I checked in with a certified parenting coach, MegAnne Ford, owner >