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## COMMENTARY

# Jeffery Leving: Older men like Robert De Niro should consider more than finances when it comes to having kids

By Jeffery Leving  
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Robert De Niro and Tiffany Chen arrive at the 16th annual Chanel Tribeca Artists Dinner on June 12, 2023, in New York. (Evan Agostini/Invision)

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Recently, two of Hollywood's most respected actors made news unrelated to the film industry.

In May, Robert De Niro announced the birth of his seventh child the previous month. The 79-year-old Oscar winner welcomed his daughter, Gia Virginia Chen De Niro, with girlfriend Tiffany Chen.



Later that same month, Al Pacino, 83, and girlfriend Noor Alfallah announced that they are expecting a baby later this year.

Both of these stories raised some eyebrows and also became the subject of jokes and stories in publications such as [The Onion](#) because of the ages of De Niro and Pacino.

Having a child is a decision parents should make by themselves and should not be mocked by others.

However, even jokes in bad taste can bring up real concerns that should be considered. In similar scenarios in which older men are considering having children, they should consider several things before moving forward.

Presumably, De Niro and Pacino have the financial means to set up these children for life. There will likely never be any question about paying for child care, private schools and college. The children of these men will likely never have a material need that cannot be met. However, there is a lot more to being a father than providing material items or even paying for school and day care.





The current life expectancy in the U.S. for men is approximately 73 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While this is an average and varies based on genetic makeup and lifestyle choices, it is something for a would-be father to consider, especially if he is several years beyond 73 and considering having a child.





Actor Al Pacino backstage before his conversation at the 92nd Street Y on April 19, 2023, in New York. (Andy Kropa/Invision)



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Children need their fathers, and no amount of financial stability can take the place of having a father. Men in their late 70s and 80s who are thinking of having children should strongly

consider that they risk not being around for the most important periods of their children's lives.

I'm not just referring to the obvious events such as grade school and high school graduations and walking one's daughter down the aisle when she gets married. I'm referring to the everyday nurturing, advice-giving and example-setting that occur between a father and his child.

Numerous studies have shown that children tend to do much better behaviorally and emotionally when both of their parents play a meaningful role in their lives. Those studies have shown that children who are raised in sole custody households are more likely to develop behavioral problems than those who spend time with both parents.



While there is not a high likelihood that the newly born and future-born children of De Niro and Pacino will become criminals, the Fatherhood Educational Institute has shared statistics showing that 72% of all teenage killers grew up without fathers, 60% of rapists were raised in fatherless homes and 70% of kids now incarcerated in juvenile corrections facilities grew up in a single-parent environment.

One can probably make a strong case that older fathers bring more wisdom and financial security to their newborn children. I'm not arguing in favor or against older men having children. But I urge all older men who are considering becoming fathers to really examine their own situation beforehand and keep in mind that there is much more to being a father than providing financial stability.

*Jeffery Leving is founder and president of the Law Offices of Jeffery M. Leving Ltd. and is an advocate for the rights of fathers. He is the author of "Fathers' Rights," "Divorce Wars" and "How to Be a Good Divorced Dad."*

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