

USA \$23.00  
CAN \$34.95

*I was still a mother, but not under any circumstance I recognized. I was no longer a wife. Instead of being someone who fit into my community, I became a woman who stuck out. I felt I was standing naked, exposed to some harsh environment, and I hadn't even noticed the layers of my clothing (or roles) being stripped away.*

—Sheila Ellison from *The Courage to Be a Single Mother*



# THE COURAGE TO BE A SINGLE MOTHER



## BECOMING WHOLE AGAIN AFTER DIVORCE

In this refreshingly real and honest book, Sheila Ellison conveys the story of her divorce, and those of dozens of other single mothers, to comfort and empower divorced moms. The raw emotional responses to divorce are shared by everyone who goes through this traumatic experience: grief, guilt, desperation, humiliation, rage, and loneliness. “Divorce strips away the facade of a happy family,” Ellison says, “and lets the world in on a painful personal secret. . . . Yet there is amazing freedom in revealing and finally living the truth, in having everyone see the imperfection, in surviving this huge life change and still coming out with yourself.”

Ellison says, it is from the inevitable despair, doubt, and fear surrounding divorce that women gain clarity and perspective to summon the courage to move from the darkest place in their lives toward the light. It also takes tremendous vision—“an ability to imagine the light even when you can't see it.” Ellison encourages divorced women to be open to new possibilities as they discover how they *really* want to live their lives.

Ellison also discusses the complexities of divorce, from the practical to the emotional and spiritual: telling one's children, family, and friends; finding an attorney; dealing with visitation and restraining orders; coming up with a

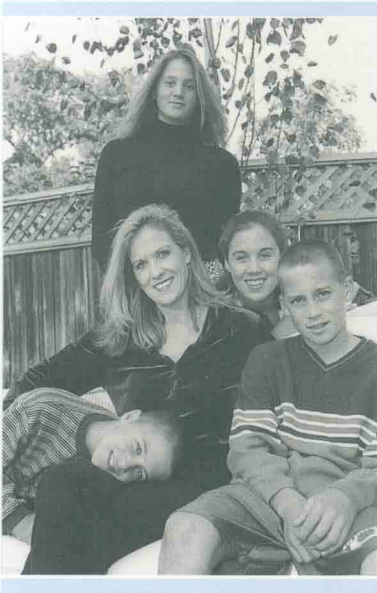
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SHEILA  
ELLISON

new and livable definition of “family”; nurturing angry, sad, and confused kids; enlisting support from friends and loved ones; quieting one’s inner questioning and guilt; finding faith; and more.

Wearing a new ring that symbolizes her ultimately liberating journey—her wedding ring melted down and redesigned, “just like my life”—Ellison is living proof that single moms can move beyond pain and mere survival to heal their souls, free their spirits, and build happier lives for themselves and their children.



SHEILA ELLISON is the author of several bestselling books for children and their parents, including *365 Days of Creative Play* and *365 Ways to Raise Great Kids*. She is the founder of community youth and mentoring programs. A nationally recognized speaker and workshop leader, she is the mother of four children. Visit the author online at [www.sheilaellison.com](http://www.sheilaellison.com)

Jacket design: Laura Beers  
Front cover photograph: Greg Miller Photography  
Author photograph: Mary MacGrath

**HarperSanFrancisco**

A Division of HarperCollinsPublishers

phx 0700

## THE PATH TO WHOLENESS

Step One: I Do Love Myself

Step Two: I Know What I Want

Step Three: My Family Is Still Whole

Step Four: I Can Choose Who I Am

Four simple steps. A world of truth. At last, a source of compassion and support for divorced mothers facing the realities of raising children when their lives are at their most vulnerable and their self-images at their most fragile. Sheila Ellison guides women along the path of divorce and single motherhood, through the endless decisions, the confusing emotions, and the painful memories—from admitting that their love story had no “happily ever after” to mourning the loss of dreams and even to negotiating child custody—toward freer, more stable, and happier lives.

Filled with practical, reassuring advice on single parenting in the modern world, this is much more than a book on coping—it is a source of understanding, encouragement, and strength that will help single women to nurture their children, resurrect their spirits, and create the life they want.

ISBN 0-06-251651-5



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