

WEDDING DRESS FOR SALE

Cheri Dayn-Ryan



A WEDDING DRESS FOR SALE

Once full of happily ever after
now tells a different tale
of broken dreams and stolen laughter
Its details of threads and lace
she never could replace
like her damaged heart of hearts
that lay scattered in many parts
the fit is of perfection
and this captures her attention
once what she always dreamed of
has nothing to do with the word love
she is left with only to question
what really is perfection
is there any room for fear
because it comes with every tear
would the final sale of this dress
even begin to fix the mess
it is difficult to know
because the healing takes time to show
it will get a new beginning
and be purchased without fail
It's all about the timing
It's a wedding dress for sale.

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Dear Reader,

I hope you find this little book as healing to read as it was to write. I want to mention how this book was written. I was not a journaler, there was something about seeing my thoughts on paper that freaked me out, except for the season you are about to read. I felt compelled to journal during this time. As I was reading my writing I realized I was writing as if someone else would read my words. A scary thought for sure, but these journal entries would become this book. I believe God had your name in mind when I painfully penned these words for you to hopefully find some healing or maybe share with a friend. I want to dedicate this book to the other three humans that had to walk this journey with me, my children, Blake, Madison, and Conner. Welcome to the pages of my journal.

XOXO, CHERI

EARTHQUAKE EDITION

Becoming a single mom is something most women don't plan. There is no instructions, or manual, or even in some cases warning. I have done many things in life I never thought I would do, but this is one I didn't think I would want or need to experience. The number of single moms seems to continue to rise and as I have walked this journey and attempted to recover and find some sort of normality in a situation that the word normal just doesn't fit, I thought writing about the depth of the journey would help me not only reflect on how far I have come but hopefully enable others to feel hope. I found that knowing there was someone else out there that could honestly just relate to the madness seemed to be comforting. I am no expert on being a single mom and learn every day what to do and what NOT to do, but have found that life is not over when your journey happens to detour onto this very interesting and challenging tour of yourself, your children, your world, and your future. So welcome to the land that there is no name for because it changes from day to day and sometimes, minute by minute.

BACKGROUND CHECK

I became a single mom at the age of 36. I got married at 19 years of age and was married for 15 years, I had three children, and they were 14, 11, and 8 when they would begin an experience that would change their life forever. Life stopped for us. I would face the most difficult months of my entire life. I suffered from depression, fear, major weight loss, and wondering if life would ever even be worth living from this point on. I looked in the eyes of the three most important people on the face of the earth to me and felt despair and heartache. Their life had been completely shattered. It became evident that this journey would be complicated by the fact that I was not going to take it alone.

We were the perfect family from the outside view of the traditional family. This event was something that only occurred in other people's homes. We had it all together and I was foolish enough to think we were untouchable. I was taught, told, and warned to guard my marriage; however, I had a false interpretation of what this meant. I was raised in a preacher's home with strong morals and values. I worked at the church and attempted to support and help those who were in the situation I was now facing. I quickly realized that I had no idea of what they face in a day to day routine if they could even begin to find a routine. So adjustment would be the understatement of the century in our now shattered home.

That is the background of my story. We all have one and our backgrounds look different. How we came to this point is different in every case, but what I have found is that how we get there really isn't the commonality of being single, it's truly the marching orders that follow, that bond this large part of society that exist out there with little encouragement as they attempt to get through every day, one day at a time.

TASER TREATMENT

Shock is the only descriptive word that comes to mind as you sit and try to assess how you will even begin to face the dawn of the morning hours. During this season of the journey, I found that existence was the only way to get from the morning to the night. I did my best to keep the necessities provided for the children. You know them well, feed them, clothe them, and get them to bed at night. Honestly, this was about all I could accomplish. I picked my battles on what needed to be done and realized that this just wasn't the time to teach chores and responsibility. Not only did I personally not have the energy but they were dealing with emotions I could not begin to understand. We spent a lot of time together, doing absolutely nothing, or was it absolutely nothing? I look back on these moments and believe these were times of rejuvenating. See it would only take the few hours of explaining that we were getting a divorce to completely destroy a perfectly healthy child. On the contrary, it would take an entire season or even a lifetime to repair the swift action of two parents separating. I needed them and they needed me. We were the safest place for each other, we could find, as this life that went from a park to a jungle. We lived in a two-story house, at the time; the upstairs was literally like another home. The kid's clothes and furniture were up there and that's about the only thing that occupied the space. We lived basically in the downstairs kitchen front room and my bedroom. They slept with me, they ate with me, we watched TV together, and I barely could use the restroom alone. I tend to be a very orderly person and feel that it can be very disturbing to me to not have some sort of order but my house looked a lot like my life messy and out of order. The normal functions I thought at one time were so important like the house looking like a model home, and no one even living in it, was just so far removed from my ability to accomplish. Our focus was on each other and that's about it. It takes a lot of downtime to begin to repair the tattered emotions of divorce. Let me tell you what I learned. I learned that existence is very simple and we had complicated it with very insignificant things that in the end didn't mean much to anyone. I learned that our simple existence of a family was something that doesn't require much energy, it requires much attention. Undivided attention on each other, I needed theirs and they needed mine. This was a very interesting emotion for me to encounter. The idea of needing my children's attention was sometimes disturbing to me, but it truly was like fuel to a car. Something so easy to give yet so seldom done. In this day of complete distraction, between technology, work demands, social status, and the attempt to have any kind of relationships at all, it completely cancels out the word's undivided attention. Here is where I learned a valuable lesson I still practice today, this attention will never be asked for, it is simply given.

It is given in moments that are not always easy to create and don't come at the most convenient times but when they exist they rejuvenate the soul. Don't be too distracted to experience the attention of the ones that have the potential to change the inside of your soul. This is so good I want you to read it again, "Don't be too distracted to experience the attention of the ones that have the potential to change the inside of your soul."

SHOOTS AND LADDERS!

Have you ever seen the board game? Go get it! This is what life at this moment was like. You get through a couple of days and are doing well and you land on a day with the ladder that slides you right back to two weeks ago. Emotions are everywhere! For me, I was clinically depressed. I never wanted to go to counseling; I didn't have anything against it. It was just very difficult for me to think it would require paying someone to listen to me, let alone medication, to have any sort of existence. Not everyone gets to this point or requires the same thing as I did, but I have spoken with so many women that struggle with this concept. For myself, the stress had taken such a toll on me physically that I truly was unable to balance. I just wanted to stay in bed all day, I wanted to crawl in a hole and never come out, and getting my hair combed and clothes on my body seemed to be impossible. The only real reason for living at this point was for the sake of those children they needed a mother and I was the only one they had. I did seek counseling and I was on medication. I struggled with sleeping, eating, crying, being alone, and honestly sometimes just looking in the mirror. But valuable and life-changing lessons would I encounter during this very dark season. I was never a very emotional person in public. If you saw tears streaming down my face something was probably very wrong. But control of this emotion was something I was unable to get a hold of, I remember going to Hobby Lobby, and making a purchase. We had a lot of items and we needed help getting everything into the car. My mom went and got the car and pulled it up to the front of the store. For absolutely no reason tears just started streaming down my face. Now I don't know if this is a normal occurrence for you but for me, this was not! We had a gentleman helping us load the car, he was an older man, I often wonder what the poor people that had to endure these moments with me must think, but, he didn't even flinch, and neither did I. This was the most out of the ordinary experience for me, but it seemed to happen very frequently at this point in my life. I just continued to load, and let the tears fall. The emotions were something that I could not control and after battling this day after day, I realized that the tears were going to come and they were going to fall. It was as if they had a mind of their own, they would come and fall whenever, wherever, they chose and for a person that always had a hold on herself this was something that took a lot of getting used to. The game shoots and ladders is such a great picture of the emotional journey. Play the game with your kids, you just might find it to bring some clarity to this overwhelming emotional side of yourself you never really knew existed and maybe find a smile in the midst of it all.

I am shocked at how many of us go through this and struggle with the necessity of receiving help. I realize that as moms we sometimes resist the aid of things we have no clue can be so helpful, for whatever reason, but I wanted to shed some light for those of you who like me, couldn't see that at this point assistance was much needed and extremely helpful. I had all the same fears that most do, *remember one day at a time*, and for a visual "Shoots and Ladders" and most importantly, "it's normal!" During this, I learned that tears can cleanse the heart, in my situation, it was as if they were in a holding tank, that was so polluted and the only way to clean it was to empty it, and there my friend, was where the extremely uncomfortable process of cleansing my heart began and I learned to play the game of "Shoots and Ladders."

GARDENS OF GROWTH!

If you are still reading you have learned to play "Shoots and Ladders." Emotions are not in control but identified, and at least you have an awareness of these small, but valuable, drops of water that will choose to fall at any moment. These small drops of water create a "garden of growth." I am not an expert in gardening by no means but have found it to be very relaxing and have had the amazing accomplishment of actually being able to eat something I grew, in my garden, which I chose to start in the middle of the drought. As I reflect on my recent experience of gardening which I worked so hard and was determined to accomplish, it looked a lot like what life was like after learning "shoots and ladders." The weather was hot, and no rain, I had to water every day, and when I missed a day the leaves would start to wither. I had to fence off the area in which the garden would grow, and at one point I even had an umbrella to shade the area from the extreme rays of the sun. It is as if getting your emotions under control isn't enough, you have to continue life and in this season, you have to build your garden. I found it interesting that a garden would be what I would relate to at this point because I always saw a garden as beauty, and in looking at my circumstances it was everything but beautiful.

If you look at a garden, in the beginning, it is also everything but beautiful. You have this patch of land that is fenced off with nothing in it, just like a home after a divorce, it is empty and bare, it might be filled with all the weeds but after they are cleaned out you have this space that now has a surface to build on. In and of itself can be a beautiful thing and a very scary place at the same time. But remember you are building!!! The foundation is so important. I was raised in a preacher's home and filled with biblical truth, a lot was discussed on what you build your foundation on and mine was my faith. What are you building yours on? Because starting over although it is challenging and something you might not want to be doing, I KNOW it's not something you ever want to do again!!!! So take some time to build your garden very carefully. Build your fence; it is a very vulnerable time for you and your children. Protect them and yourself, it's not only to keep things out but to keep you in. I have seen so many women just honestly flip out and do so many things that not only they would not ever do but simply regret later. You are going to make mistakes, please don't be too hard on yourself. Trust me I made plenty, but build your fence and build it well. You do deserve a lot of things you think will make you feel better but in the end, it will hurt you. Pamper yourself, but do it with healthy things and things that will build you up and make you a better mom. *Remember one day at a time* If you venture outside your fence, simply find your gate, it's that simple. Remember you are safe here!!!!

Preparation is difficult in the storm. I told you earlier, I had put up an umbrella to shade the garden at one point, it finally decided to rain one day and not just a little, I'm talking torrential rain. The umbrella was flying everywhere and it was inside out. I ran out there in the lightning and the pouring rain to get the umbrella before it mutilated the garden. Life can feel a little like this, things are hitting you from all sides, you have no control, you can't see through the debris, and you're chasing this thing that won't seem to land long enough to get a grip. Catch your breath and simply breathe. You do learn to cooperate with the weather; you roll with the thunder, stand in the heat, enjoy the shade, and welcome the rain. Because in all these seasons you are building your garden.

THE EX

This book isn't about him, it's about you!!!! Stay focused on what's important!

VISIT THE GRAVEYARD

Death is a strange thing. We most often think of the death of a person, but, in this case it is the death of a dream. We grieve over the loss of what could have been. We grieve over the loss of this home that we dreamed of for our children. No matter how it turned out or how horrible your home was, it didn't start that way. It started with a dream of a life with a person that you did love at one time (quit denying it you're just mad). A home that consisted of love between two people that loved each other and would raise their children together. This was a very difficult thing for me to get through. I told you from the American perspective we were the model. We had it all together and I never thought I would ever be in the situation of raising my children alone. Part of the process I had to recognize was to grieve this dream that was dead, it was no more. Not that I could not move on and remarry, but the dream didn't consist of that and I had to face this loss. The struggle for me was a large one, guilt, regret, the loss of years, and the stability for my children. These were all things I didn't take lightly, I came from a home where my parents were both there every step of the way and were together, and still are. So attempting to not only understand what my children were going through I was facing my own loss. The memories, the traditions which would now be performed alone. I remember our first holiday with just the kids and me, I was a big girl and felt like "I could do this" but the reality just didn't feel right, it was empty and awkward. The idea of what could have been still leaves a lump in my throat. I have seen people deal with grief, the loss of a person. In many ways, it was much like this, but has dynamics that complicate the process and make it very confusing. Anger, rejection, and sadness are hard enough to deal with in a death situation, but this isn't something that can be buried. The grief process is long and grueling and sometimes can creep up on you without you even knowing it. The crazy thing is unexpected and unpredictable and sometimes unidentified. I have found this is one of those time healers. I hate them too, I am "a deal with it and move on" kind of person but, some things don't fall that way. This is one that over time gets easier, and it is in your time, so be patient with yourself, and when the time comes to grieve, visit the graveyard!

THE GAVEL GARBAGE

This detour is not common to everyone and if you are one that has to experience it, let me apologize to you now. It seems that after all the fighting and all the coming to agreements here and there and the lawyers and the courtrooms, you would think your life can attempt to begin and for most this is the path. As for me and some of you out there, it was not the end and the hell was about to begin. After the arguments of the stuff and the meaningless items that have to be divided is distributed. It seems that the children become the only thing to argue over and quite honestly the most painful. Please take some very valuable advice and if you continue to read you will find the advisor worthy of your attention. When you fight regarding the children you only hurt the children!!!!!! I understand there are some very difficult ex's out there and maybe even impossible ones, but please, please, please, attempt to work out your differences among yourself regarding your children. Once the court steps in you have lost!!!! I ended up in a very difficult custody battle and I lost my children for some time. If I haven't already expressed how important those kids are through the words of this book to me. Let me tell you in plain English, they are everything to me, I would do anything for them and have. This was the most painful thing I have ever been through by far more difficult than a divorce. I am not trying to minimize a divorce but the day in and day out existence without my children was grueling and relentless. Please be cautious of allowing the court system to have any control regarding your children. A mother's heart was shattered and destroyed in a matter of 24 hours. I have no words to express the emotion of this season. I will not go into much detail regarding this (maybe another book) but wanted to express the background by which this is so important. Remember when the gavel drops, it drops hard!

THE MAIN EXCHANGE

We exchange money, we exchange clothes, we exchange items, but how in the world do you exchange children? I wish there was a step by step procedure for this function of existence. Everyone does it differently and some don't do it at all. The conclusion of this monthly event I am sure lies buried beneath the surface of divorce land, which no one can seem to find. I mean, if your homes looked the same you wouldn't be living at separate addresses, and behind every front door, in this entire world, is a unique existence. Most likely if you are divorced, behind the two front doors in which your children will reside, the existence is as opposite as night and day. Not only do you deal with the differences in that capacity, how do you make the actual exchange of these human lives even somewhat cordial? I am not here to give you the answer to this ridiculous question, we attempted many different ways to accomplish that part but, dealing with the aftermath of the shuffling from one house to the other, quite honestly took a very long time. I would love to say I conquered this extremely difficult task, but, that my friend, would be an absolute lie. It was very difficult for me to even grasp the concept that my children would go and reside with the very same person I no longer did, and there lies the problem. Now, figuring out how to work with this person regarding all these responsibilities seemed impossible and complicated. At first, I was very stressed about what they did, where they were going, and who they would be with, all the normal functions of a mother. If the children are with someone irresponsible and unable to think regarding their safety, other measures must be taken. But, in most cases, although things are not done the way we would do them, and schedules are not kept the way we would keep them, the kids are safe. I finally came to the great conclusion that they would all be fine. My responsibility was what happened behind my front door, and it seemed that at times I spent so much time worrying about what happened behind his front door, it interfered with my ability to move on and heal. Again, if safety is an issue, that is a different story. But for those of us that this is not the case, we must remember, it is going to be different than the way we would do it (even though we know our way is right) just joking!!!! And things are not always going to be just as we want them to be. God created mothers to be the caretaker He put in us specific abilities, to care for our children. Those abilities are naturally inside us, I only say this, because, once I realized this and could understand why things were not done my way, it gave me a little relief of concern and worry. Children are pretty resilient and just because they miss a bath or their hair isn't combed exactly how you would have it, or they go to bed a little later than you want them to, I promise they will survive, you won't like it and it will still bother you, but be selective about what you stress over and you allow to raise that already high blood pressure. Know in advance that the great exchange will change on a very regular basis. Do what works for different times of life and don't make the main exchange the main challenge.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Solitary confinement, all I know of this in actual life is what I see on T.V. Divorce has an interesting way of placing us in solitary confinement; it can be a very lonely room with no freedom at all. Your personal struggles of your new identity, the bearing weight of responsibility, and the fear of the now cell walls that have suddenly slammed down so hard that opening them is just impossible. The picture of this is so real, the walls that you can slip your hand through but only your hand, not your heart. You feel protected by them and restricted by them, they don't move easily, and even when an opening occurs vulnerability quickly replaces the open space with now-familiar bars. This is such a deep place for most and is probably as difficult to read as it is to write. I would love to say I have broken out of solitary confinement and in many ways I have, but like most humans who have experienced deep hurt, the bars signify the walls that so easily can slam down as the sight of a prison guard closing the cell and turning the key. Throughout this experience, there have been moments I could almost hear the noises of a cell door, the sliding of the metal, and the clanking of the latches. It can be a very exhausting emotion. Identifying these walls is a challenge in itself but, after realizing the true existence of them is when the work begins. This is a very individual view of you, and sometimes the walls are painful and difficult to look at, and some of them we simply don't see. Please remember I am no psychologist, I am simply opening myself to help those who need to relate to another human being, if I may offer some encouragement to get out of jail. The difference between this confinement and real solitary confinement is that little by little these bars bend. As time heals your heart and in my case, my faith mended my wounds, these walls begin to fold, they didn't fall, they simply got smaller. I will tell you they have a way of flying back up, but bending them each time gets easier. I didn't go into exactly what these walls are, because for each person they are different, be careful in your breaking free you don't create walls that are not yours. I think it's great to relate to each other but not to consume each other which is why, only descriptions, of this lonely place I chose to discuss. If you have them you know them!!!! Once you exist in solitary confinement this becomes a place that is permanently engraved in your soul, I challenge you to grow from it and let your memories keep you free.

I promise if you continue to trust, there will be a day when not only your hands reach between the bars, your heart will dance as if they never existed.

BUTTERFLY BEAUTY

Did you know there are no two butterflies that look exactly the same? Their appearance is created by many circumstances, like what time of year they are born, if the caterpillar ate a lot of food or only had enough to survive, the temperature in which they were born, these all contribute to the appearance of the butterfly. Those of us, who have gone from a marriage to a single life, really need to captivate the creation and beauty of the butterfly. I got a phone call from a dear friend one night, she was sobbing on the other end. She was recently separated and attempting to keep her life as normal as possible, she had gone to her small group from her church that in reality she most often attended alone, even when she was married but this night her appearance of truly being alone would stare her in the face. She would find herself in a room of so many that cared, supported, and attempted to understand, and never even noticed her appearance as much different. But, as she sat surrounded by a group of people, the only feeling she felt on that night was "different". She looked different, she felt different, her home was different, and her future was different. She asked the question that we have all asked: "do you ever just feel that you don't fit in?" This adjustment for me personally was not a difficult one, but over the years, I have had so many share this struggle. I have watched as this particular concern has isolated and held captive those that only see this picture as they enter the crowded places of life, where people are coupled up and grouped together. The most challenging part is that even if your spouse didn't participate in your group functions you still could qualify to be group rated. How many restaurants do you walk into and see a table with three chairs, or just one chair? That weird moment when it's you and all your friends who are married, that you counted on your spouse to entertain the other husbands so you can visit with the girls. Now it's as if everything you want to say has to be directed to both of them, and let's face it, sometimes we just want the girl's conversation. I am sure there are many other experiences we can relate to each other, some good and some not so good. Like I said, in the beginning, I didn't struggle with this so much, but for those of you that do. Remember the butterfly. Like these beautiful creatures that fly among us, there are no two that look alike and their appearance is created by the circumstances in which they were birthed. So spread your wings and embrace your individuality and remember that in the group moments, you are technically standing among a group of individual butterflies, that no two look alike. If you can grasp this concept, and enjoy the view, you will see the beauty of the butterfly.

TABLE TOPICS

Table topics were a valued gift from a valued friend. It is a small box that sits in the center of our table with buckets of information. I don't know about you but I had dreams and visions of what the environment would look like in my home as I raised my children. I had orchestrated moments to build memories, and a strong desire to explore the unique individuality of every child, God chose to bless me with. Our front door was an open door; very seldom did the kids even ask if they could invite someone over. Dinner at our house was not just a routine, it was an event, the center of the event was "table topics" This small box consisted of random questions. The rules where you had to answer the question and you couldn't say the same as someone else. Like most kids when I got this small box that would become a large part of our evening event, I was told how incredibly stupid this idea was and how they didn't want to participate. I looked at it as I created the food, and if they wanted to eat, they had to eat my way and my way was to play table topics. There was an overwhelming feeling of loss when we divorced that this vision I had of the family that sits around the table and discusses the day, which I know most people don't do anymore and that is another book altogether, but, I was determined that our family was going to meet at the table at least the majority of the week and interact with one another. With all the emotions and shock you experience in the beginning stages of becoming a single mom, this is most definitely a difficult thing to do. But as you get a hold of routines, and emotions, and you settle into doing things your way, don't forget that a family is the consistency of people who care, support, accept, and exist together, through the ups and the downs of life. I was puzzled as to how I was going to create this picture with no man, I have two boys, and at one point, I gave up the idea that this was just a part of the dream that had to be buried, I couldn't do this one on my own. However, my personality can tend to be very strong, and this is one thing I couldn't let go of. So when the kids wanted their friends to come over, again the front door was open and this is when I introduced them to table topics. If they had friends for dinner the friends got to play, and like most kids, they each have their best friends, you know the ones that appear on a very regular basis. The game that once was snubbed in the worst way was now requested, by not only my own but those who came to visit. My daughter played volleyball, and after the last game we went out with the team, and guess what topic came up? You guessed it "table topics" we explained how we play this at our table at home, and there with the entire volleyball team we played the game that has the ability to not only bring us together but gives a small window into the world of these beautiful lives that are full of life and wonder. We still play the game today, and I am constantly amazed at how much I learn in the short 30 to 45 minutes, we take out of our day, to just stop and admire those that matter most.

We have gone through the questions so many times, we had to get a new version, I am giving our current version to my neighbor for Christmas, with a note of instructions that states when they are done with this small box that they pass it on to another family, to discover the inside of those they love. How do you discover the inside of those who matter most? Because there is a world of information, just waiting to be explored, and the exploration can simply be accomplished with a table and a topic.

STAY AWAY FROM THE FAIRGROUNDS

How comfortable are you in the fairground? I mean these rides that you see put together in a matter of hours. Are you supposed to entrust your life with those eye-appealing rides that blink and glitter???? Yes, they provide the thrill, but the thrill is only momentary to the few short seconds of this expensive experience. How in the world does this eye-catching, thrill riding place that is created in a matter of moments with unstable creations that you entrust your physical life to, manage to attract so many people? It's the ground that many of us stumble upon, and ride, these unstable rides, that in some cases we look for the thrill, but most of the time we only find disappointment. How many times have you said, "it just isn't fair?" What is your definition of a mother? I would like to share mine: A female human, who has the honor and opportunity, to actually experience the ability to be able to give life to another human being; to care for and nurture, to love unconditionally and selflessly, and to admire and wonder in the amazement that she was selected and entrusted, to care for the well being of another human life. In many cases, the mother is given most of the responsibility in a divorce. I am not the Webster dictionary, but there is no room for the word "fair" in the definition of a mother. I completely understand the role of the father and he does have one, and it is very important, but today, it is the honored role of the mother we are highlighting. The fairground is a place that in my opinion, only the children get hurt, and you get frustrated. Keeping score won't ever add up. It is hard to juggle and sometimes can seem impossible. Most likely, it won't be fair, and attempting to find what is fair, in this land of divorce, is simply an impossibility. Maybe you are one of the lucky ones, where parenting together even after divorce, is something you have been able to accomplish. I must commend you, and challenge you to continue your efforts. For those that find themselves landing in the fairground, can I encourage you to take some time to look at this awesome responsibility that you have been selected to accomplish? Look into the eyes of the lives you have been so blessed with, and it is there you will find the enticement of the lights and the thrill of the ride and the self-discipline to stay away from the fairground.

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL!

We look in one every day, whether we want to or not, we manage to visit the mirror, and most of the time we ask the rest of the question: You know the words "Who is the fairest one of all?" For most of us, even without a divorce, we do not usually answer this question with our name. It's just a girl thing, right ladies? We always find someone prettier, thinner, taller, shorter, longer hair, shorter hair; the list goes on and on and on. Why do we do this? What makes us want everything we are not? Well to answer these questions, would take another entire book. This question seems to be a haunting question for divorced women; you can struggle with your appearance and self-image. You can truly feel discarded and unwanted. The mirror becomes your enemy, and the question is just not asked. I feel for this subject because it is so real and so difficult for us to recover from. For some of us, the appearance does change, depending on how our body deals with stress. We get bigger, for some we get smaller, but no matter which it is the appearance changes. I wanted to briefly walk down this very difficult trail to bring some awareness to your sweet soul that you are not alone!!!! There is some comfort in the realization of knowing that a journey, particularly, a difficult journey, has some company. So for all of you out there that stand in front of the mirror, and think your name will never be mentioned when asked "who is the fairest one of all?" please realize that you don't stand there alone. For each person, the journey to healing on this incredible, individual, experience, seems to be very unique and different. What is most important is that even if you can not place your name behind the question mark of this difficult question at this time; please remember you are not the only one. Can I encourage you to see yourself differently? It takes guts and courage to face you. You will be your toughest opponent, and in this bedtime story, facing your opponent is half the battle. So congratulations you are in position, you're not alone, and you're halfway there. Before you know it the question will not have to be asked, and the mirror will speak for itself. Mirror, mirror, on the wall.....

SUNSHINE

We all love it, we need it, it is energizing, and uplifting. It signifies the beginning of a new day. It creates growth and produces a harvest. It is bright, beautiful, and warm. Sunshine can shine for part of the day, or just expose itself, through the clouds one ray at a time. But the best performance sunshine can give us is when it consumes the entire sky. Through this entire journey, we experience every exposure of the sun. As we lift our head off the pillow each morning our days are created and formed by much of our circumstances. There are some days it takes half the day to see, and then others that all we can manage is a simple ray of hope for a moment to exist. The beauty of each individual is that no matter who she is, she possesses this amazing thing called sunshine! Even when life rains, lurking in the darkness, waiting to reveal her beauty, is this glimmer of light that is destined to shine. Through this remarkable journey, my prayer for each friend who finds themselves facing the many ups and downs life can throw is that through this small view into the window, of really, just an ordinary person, you have found a smile, maybe a much-needed teardrop, a surge of energy, a heartfelt moment of compassion, a large dose of encouragement, and the ability to give the performance of your life and let your Son, Shine.

ROSES

This flower that supplies meaning in so many ways. The variety of shapes and colors, and the beautiful stages of life as these roses start from a small bud, and open to a beautiful flower. The fragrance of a lifetime. Its stems are armed with sharp thorns but yet its petals are soft and sensitive. It sounds a lot like the turbulent travels of love. Now, I am not in any way an expert on this topic and don't even claim to have insight on how this thing called love works, but everyone at least would have comments on the topic, and I thought I would share mine. I do know that love in its purity is a lot like the beauty of the perfect rose. I see so much relation, of this flower to our much-needed emotion of love. Have you ever thought about the fact that just to hold the flower; you have to get through the thorns? Did you know that over the years the rose has been the symbol of love, beauty, war, and politics? Did you know that the three things it takes to grow roses are 1. Pick the right rose for your garden, 2. Plant it in the right place, and 3. Water regularly? It seems so simple!!! Yes, simple, but definitely work, a lot like this thing called love. Our love is the symbol of so much, our past, our hurt, our successes, our failures, our passion, our lack of what we didn't get, and for some the abundance of what they did get, our religion, our emotions, our attention, and the list goes on and on!!!! The three steps to grow a rose are simple and apply so well but, it can seem nearly impossible as we apply them to our individual lives. The beauty of the flower does not exist without the thorns of the stem. This is the picture that just blows my mind. I truly believe we all have experienced love this way and it truly explains this emotion in one complete sentence.

DEAD END

Life can be full of them. We reach them in almost every area of our life. Our careers, our relationships, our personal goals, it can, at times feel as if it never ends. The dead-end in this chapter is one that most people don't face, no one wants to talk about, and few truly know how to handle. It is truly reaching a point of no return, reaching a false realization that you have no other way out but to end it yourself. Suicide is real and it is grueling. It can grip like no other thought you can imagine. Many of you don't need this chapter and thank God, some of you have casually wrestled with this, and for some, it has consumed you to the point of hospitalization. It truly is a sickness that is so hard to understand and so difficult to explain. It seems selfish and weak, to those who must survive the aftermath of such a tragedy. I was a casual dealer with this sickness; I found that my self-worth was as much as lying in a coffin. Trash was the best description I could come up with for myself, and those that cared for me would be better off if I was thrown away. If this is your thought process and you can not get it under control, Please, Please, Please, go get some help. I mentioned earlier I did receive help; little was coping specifically with this topic. Most of my help was dealing with why this topic was even in my life. The eyes of my children were the diversion of this terrible illness. Many who experience this either don't live to talk about it or simply don't want to talk about it. I completely understand why, but if this saves one soul it was worth the complete exposure of me. I thank God every day for saving me from this destruction, for saving my children from having to be a survivor of such a tragedy. This is a very dark and desperate place, please don't walk it alone. Most of all please don't let it become your reality, you have much to live for and many to bless, and this dead-end is not your final dead end. I know this is a very heavy subject but this tragedy of divorce can leave so many in such dark places, as I have mentioned in so many other chapters, sometimes it's just knowing that another person can actually stare you in the face and say the words "I know how you feel" will save a life from a very destructive Dead End!

If you are dealing with this please tell someone or contact your local suicide line. There is a lot of help out there to get you through this!

GOOD GOSSIP

You are either sitting on the edge of your seat waiting to hear the best gossip ever, or you are sitting cross-armed thinking "there is nothing good about gossip. But, can we gossip about something that you might find good? I have teenagers, I know all kids have drama, but teenagers take the cake when it comes to reality TV. for me when it comes to reality TV. My favorite shows are the ones that take place right inside my very own house. I don't watch too much reality TV. simply because I feel like I am living in one. So what's the point? When was the last time you sat down with your kids and just let them talk about everything going on in their life? Here is a harder question; do your kids feel safe enough to even talk to you about everything going on in their life? I don't know how you would answer those questions, but I have made it a priority to be a regular observer in the lives of my children. We have an open forum for conversation. This can get a little difficult, I do have boys and girls, and separation is a must, some of the time, but there are no limits on what we can talk about. I look at it as between the TV, the music, their friends, and every kind of social media tool out there, they can get advice and talk about anything they want. So why wouldn't I make that available to them myself? It allows me to pass along MY values, MY concerns, and MY priorities. This is critical in the world we live in. We have sat and watched TV. and had an hour of conversation regarding the sometimes very controversial subject. These opportunities are priceless and will enable you to understand exactly where they are in developing themselves as an individual. These opportunities will shed light on their struggles and difficulties. When you make the time for open forum conversation with your children and they talk, that is good gossip!!!

THE WIND OF THE WORDS

Thank you so much for walking through some difficult emotions, and for some of us actual experiences that exist deep within the guts of our inner self. I wanted you to know that the scariest thing for me to do was to not only allow the feelings to exist but to place them on a page. I had to face the truth, and, maybe within the readings of this small accumulation of emotion, you did too. Sometimes, we experience the painful emotions over and over again, like a scab that gets ripped off only to repeat the healing process. Many of the chapters, written with tears pouring out of my eyes, much like the rain that falls on a cloudy day, but, with each chapter completed, it was as if another personal healing was accomplished. Honestly, it was truly an amazing experience. I often thought how humorous it was that I was penning the words of a book and, although I value the opportunity to read, realize that it is a very difficult thing for me to sit down and do. My heart, for each person that comes across this simple book, is that if any of these experiences are something you identify with, that you would find some sort of encouragement to walk another day, and know that in the sea of this world we live in, that at times we find ourselves standing in the midst of millions, we can only feel the loneliness of one, that you realize, you truly are not alone and understand the significance of simply identifying with another human soul, can change an entire experience. I must give the credit of the words that exist in between the covers of this book to God himself, and there my friend if you read this, and you find some comfort and you will know that it was the almighty God that had you in mind, when for several months, a simple-minded lady, was directed to place some words on a page, of a book that you now hold, that He truly was thinking of you. He knew, my friend, that in this season of life, you would need to hear the Wind of the Words.

SHE

SHE can be shaken but will always find stable ground

SHE will never forget her background

SHE may be shocked for a moment, but will always find her way back to simplicity

SHE has the Ex factor figured out

SHE is the champion of the game Shoots and Ladders

SHE has the best garden on the block and learned how to build it herself

SHE is not afraid of the graveyard and visits it often

SHE respects the gavel and knows its place

SHE realizes, she is exchanging her most valuable possession in the main exchange

SHE breaks out of solitary confinement, and dances as if the bars were never there

SHE sees the beauty of herself in the freedom of the butterfly

SHE provides the topic for the table

SHE is not fooled by the lights of the fairground

SHE not only looks in the mirror, she likes what she sees

SHE is SunShine

SHE knows "the beauty of the rose does not exist without the thorns of the stem"

SHE will overcome every Dead End

SHE loves to have a good gossip session

SHE listens wisely to the words of the wind and is captivated that it actually blows her direction.

SHE is amazing!!!!!!!!!!

If you enjoyed this little book, stay tuned for the print edition which will include a journal and bonus chapters. I'd love for you to sign up for my email list so we can continue to connect [HERE](#). You can also visit my website at www.imcheri.com. **Most importantly this was written to be shared so others will know they are NOT alone!!!** [CLICK HERE](#) for the link you can use to share the book.

XOXO, CHERI