

Nicole Biggs lives in California with her four children, ages 9 to 20. She has received numerous awards and is currently researching the mind/body connection. She has studied religion, metaphysics, hypnosis, addiction, and is completing her psychology coursework at Chapman University. Nicole plans to continue writing, coaching, and enjoying life.

Excerpts from The Single Mother's Journey to Wholeness-Hope and Help For Single Moms

Divorce is never fun. At the time of my separation I had no idea what it would take to raise four children on my own. So much had happened in my life. I was still mourning the loss of my grandmother, who was a major support to me in raising my children while I was still married. Right after my grandma's funeral, Don (my ex) left for good. Actually- and certainly not to my credit-this was my second divorce from my second husband. Little did I know that by the time everything was over, my ex would steal my car, my son and I would steal it back, and my mother would break her hip and give me one more person to take care of-along with my already challenging brood of four children. . . but I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

The children and I had moved into my mother's side of a duplex we owned so that we could rent out the other side for extra income. Jasmine, my youngest, was in preschool; the two middle children, Shelbi eight, and Ryan ten, were in elementary school on a year-round schedule, and my oldest son, Cheyne, was about to enter high school. Living in the desert, the hot July sun only seemed to accentuate my situation. Then, as if nothing else could happen, I got a phone call at work from a friend telling me my mom had broken her hip and was in the hospital. It was then that I knew if I wanted my life to work, I would have to make some changes.

Stephen Covey in *First Things First*, states that if you have a jar with sand and rocks in it, most people filling up the jar would fill it with sand and then attempt to stuff the rocks in. The students doing this experiment could never fit in the allotted number of rocks. However, by putting the rocks in first and letting the sand flow over and into the crevices, the jar could be effectively filled. Rocks are our priorities and sand is the other stuff. We just need to determine what our priorities are and spend time on them.

Early on after my divorce, I found that one of the most positive things you could do for yourself and for your children was to acknowledge your feelings-no matter how negative. After doing this as best you can, you should look into what you can do to meet new people and find some healthy friends or acquaintances to talk things over with. You'll need an outlet and friends are a good start.

How about Parents Without Partners? This international organization can put you together with single moms and dads in your area, and also provide many resources. Positive moves like this will allow you to be more adept in handling negative feelings

and-at the same time-prepare you for dating when that time comes. (Yes, you will date again)!

You may find that networking with others in similar predicaments can give you a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel, and if you feel that negative emotions are overtaking you and you feel trapped, remember that time can be your ally (with the exception of extreme ongoing depression that requires medical attention). Tell yourself daily, 'this too shall pass' and then one day-as you repeat this mantra and when you least expect it-you will find that many of the feelings have passed. You have probably been so busy and time has passed so quickly (even if some days do seem endless) that before you know it and despite yourself, a transformation has taken place.

98% of the population quits when things seem difficult or impossible. In sales I have experienced so much rejection that at times I would feel like crying. Persistence is what kept me going and that, in turn, led to bigger and better opportunities and more income. I remember so many times feeling the urge to run away or quit, and I had to will myself to stay where I was. I recalled John Maxwell saying in *Failing Forward*, "80% of success is just showing up." I would get through just one more day by reminding myself to just show up and do my best one moment at a time. Excuses don't work when you are being persistent.

I really had to work on my transformation as my self-esteem had spiraled downward to the point where I doubted everything about myself. How would this ever work out? Luckily, synchronicity was working with me since- without giving it much thought or planning- I quit my job and then enrolled in school. While I was there, I learned about grants and took out some student loans, which not only turned out to be a boon for me, but also helped our family financially. Shortly after that, I was recognized by the Soroptomists and Alumni for Excellence in Scholastic Achievement by Women in America. With the extra confidence this gave me, I became bold enough to apply for some scholarships and learned how to begin loving myself again. Time was still my ally.

My journey had started in earnest and I was on my way. There would be many things to challenge me on the road to wholeness, but I would be persistent, diligent and practice life's lessons over and over again. Along with my children, I made dream boards, and we had fun cutting out pictures of our dreams and desires, whether it was a yacht, a new husband for me, or just a nice house with a picket fence for us. I would make a collage and then, when I felt down and out, I would make a dream box or a prayer box. This was what I called my Loving and Emotional Practice. Later I would open the box and see how many dreams and prayers had been answered. In my book, *The Single Mother's Journey to Wholeness: Hope and Help for Single Moms*, there is a Loving and Emotional Practice and a Loving and Emotional Affirmation at the end of each chapter. My affirmation for the dream board chapter is I live and dream in this moment. I show up for life!

As a single mom, you'll ultimately have to show up for life-ready or not-so enjoy the journey.