

Starring in Your Own Reality Show

Before a recent swimming pool workout, a friend of mine swam over to me. "You know," she said, "aside from trying to figure out that catalog, the library is wonderful. When I was thinking about divorcing my husband, I read twenty-three books on the subject - then interviewed three lawyers, picked the best one, and got a good settlement. Since then, I've gone back to the library and read the rest of your divorce books." This woman clearly has been able to begin moving on, and could probably go on the lecture circuit. Know someone in the same situation? Let us recommend a new title, *The Healthy Divorce*. It can be reserved, but obviously other good ones can be found in the regular collection. If a marriage is worth saving, consider *Lies at the Altar: the Truth about Great Marriages*.

At an earlier stage in life, people fantasize about a potential mate, and I'm not talking about Facebook or MySpace. Save yourself a lot of grief and find out how to begin making better choices. Why not read *Falling in Love for All the Right Reasons*?

Suppose you're a young man whose girlfriend has delivered an ultimatum: learn to be romantic...or else! This can be a formidable task, but if you come to the library for help, you'll get it only in the form of a good book on the topic! We happen to have *A Practical Handbook for the Boyfriend*, as well as *Women Can't Hear What Men Don't Say*.

A really touchy issue is the matter of raising kids. Do you hear yourself screaming a lot? I know they're your children and they're cute, but frankly, they're driving you crazy. You may have no energy left to read. However, some children take naps. Turn off the tv, turn off the phone – this is your own reality show – and read *The Happiest Toddler on the Block* or perhaps *Toddler 411*. If you work, take the book with you and read it on your break or at lunch. Don't have time? Look at the table of contents and read just the relevant chapters. Put the book or at least a chapter to work for you and your family.

Children have a way of growing up in front of our eyes, and it's not always pretty when they hit the teen years. Are you worried about an athletic but slightly pudgy daughter? How about a readable book on nutrition for teens, something that would not offend your daughter and one the girl might actually pick up and read? Get her *Ask CosmoGirl! About Nutrition and Fitness*. Help the cause along with *The Mom's Guide to Meal Makeovers: Improving the Way Your Family Eats, One Meal at a Time*.

Finally, if you know someone who has lost a child and is having trouble coping, tell her about *Beyond Tears: Living after Losing a Child*. *Living with an Empty Chair: a Guide through Grief* is a touchingly wonderful book for helping anybody deal with losing a loved one, no matter what age.

Absent professional counseling (which is the best recourse), the library easily functions as a kind of bridge to where patrons want to be. All of the above scenarios and more have come up recently at our library here; similar ones occur at libraries elsewhere. With just a little bit of help – if needed - readers can go straight to the shelves for private, expert written advice on any problem bothering them. The right information can help you understand that the drama in your life doesn't have to be so painfully intense.

You can eventually lighten up, you know, but you have to address the situation. My swimming friend had the right idea and came to the library first. She's so smart!

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