## **Contents**

Introduction
Chapter 1: Creating the Future First
Areas You Have Control Over • Impact On Children • Your Commitment To This Book • Family Vision • 7 Reasons To Read This Book • Questions For Reflection
Chapter 2: Fatal Mistake #1—The Parent Basher: Saying Negative Things About Your Child's Other Parent or Guardian
Parent Basher Quiz • How Negative Comments Harm Your Child • Breaking Parent Basher Cycle • Why You Want Your Co-parent To Be Successful • What If My Child Says Negative Things About Co-parent • Your Terrible Ex-Partner ≠ Terrible Parent For Your Child • Your Co-parent ≠ Your Parent • Be Responsible For Your Choices • Children Want To Freely Love Both Parents • Leave Anger Behind And Love You • Co-parent Never Wanted To Spend Time With Child Before • Exercises To Break The Cycle • Questions For Reflection
Chapter 3: Fatal Mistake #2—Turning Your Child Into Gumby
Stuck In The Middle Of Child Support • Stuck In The Middle Of Parental Issues • Anger And Jealousy Negatively Impacting Child • Triangulation • Impact Of Anger And Negativity On Your Child • Negative Intimacy • Sharing Custody • Co-Parent For Life • Take The High Road • Pick Your Battles • Don't Act In Anger • Don't Battle In Courts • Business Meeting Guidelines For Co-Parents • Problem Solving Method • Communication Guidelines • Healthy And Functional Boundaries • Co-Parenting Job Description • Questions For Reflection
Chapter 4: Fatal Mistake #3—Not Understanding The Impact Of Your Behavior On Your Child's Development And Growth
Fighting, Fighting • Three Types Of Co-Parenting:

Conflicted, Parallel, Cooperative • Impact of Communication
Style on Your Child • Moving Communication From Conflicted
To Parallel • Assessing Your Communication • Being Too Lenient
With Child • Keeping Children Safe • Upside Down Parenting
• Treating Your Child As A Friend • Sharing Financial Details
• Impact of Parent Behavior On Children • What Children Of
Divorce Need In Order To Thrive In Life • Going To Court •
Questions For Reflection

#### 

Guidelines For Connecting With Your Child • How Therapy Assists Children • Questions For Potential Therapists • Telling The Children About The Divorce • Sample Conversation Outline • Consistency, Rules And Structure • The Grief Process • Children's Feelings And Fears • Developmental Stages Of Children • Divorce And The Adult Child • Importance Of Extended Family • Transitions Between Homes • Reasons For Children's Misbehavior • Parenting Time As Your Child Grows • Ouestions For Reflection

## Chapter 6: Fatal Mistake #5—Choosing Not To Heal Your Pain And Not To Take Responsibility For Your Actions.. 146

Choosing To Heal And Move Forward • Relationship Ending Exercise • Relationships As Mirrors • Choosing Partners That Assist Us In Our Own Healing • Codependent As Co-Parents • Codependency Questionnaire • 50% Responsibility • Moving Into The Future As Your Path To Freedom • Taking Responsibility • Resources And Activities To Move Forward Into Your Future • Ouestions For Reflection

#### 

Dating Signifies End Of Marriage To Child • Children And Jealousy • Co-Parent's Anger And Jealousy • 9 Divorce Dating Game Rules • 13 Dating Questions To Ask Yourself About Your Dating Partner Prior To Introducing Them To Your Child • Questions For Reflection

# The 7 Fatal Mistakes Divorced & Separated Parents Make

Chapter 8: Fatal Mistake #7—Checking Out On Your Children
4 Reasons Parent Leave Or Check Out On Their Children • Why These Reasons Are Not Valid • What To Tell Your Child If Your Co- Parent Checks Out • Moving Your Child • The Parent Who Wants To Reenter Your Child's LifeThreads • Questions For Reflection
Chapter 9: Strategies For Effective Parenting After Divorce— Staying Connected To And Meeting The Needs Of Your Child
Staying Connected To Your Child When You Are Apart • New Traditions • Positive Feedback Techniques • Family Meetings • Have Fun! • Parent's Promise • Apologizing • Clear Consequences • Children Are Not Bad • Telling Other Important Adults • Be Available • Listening • Chores And Responsibilities • Empowering Your Child • Questions For Reflection
Chapter 10: Hope for the Future222
You Have A Choice • Forgiveness • Past, Present And Future • The Journey Of Love • Final Exercise • Questions For Reflection
Appendixes229
A. Letter To My Co-Parent
B. Age-Appropriate Responsibilities and Chores
C. Parent's Promise
D. Child's Promise
E. Developmental Ages and Stages
F. Fun-ometer
G. Feelings Chart (print and post)
H. Anger Scale
I. Parenting Plan (Sample)
J. Taking Responsibility
K. Co-Parent Invitation To Participate
(Letter From Shannon R. Rios)
Bibliography251
Reference Notes