

insights into the emotional upheaval of divorce as well as into parents' diverse strategies for coping. However, an attempt is made to differentiate between statements made from each of the two perspectives.

Chapter 2 primarily concerns a questionnaire study developed by the authors. The goal of the study was to compare the effects of joint custody, sole custody, and split custody on the post-divorce adjustment of parents and children. Previous research on children, parents and divorce throughout the United States is also presented. In addition, a brief history of child custody is outlined.

In the main body of *On Our Own* (Chapters 3 to 6), the practical issues of divorce and child custody are poignantly illustrated by the personal experiences of over one thousand single parents. Through these illustrations, the single parent reader may be able to validate his or her own experiences, as well as select information and advice. In a down-to-earth example, one father urges other single fathers to quickly acquire skills for meeting new responsibilities, specifically not to "... put off learning how to make ponytails" (p. 123).

In Chapter 7, the authors conclude that maternal sole custody, paternal sole custody, split custody, and joint custody are all potentially successful child custody options. Thus, it is not the structure of the family but rather the quality of interaction within the family which is the crucial issue. A semi-structured process is proposed for guiding parents in selecting an appropriate child custody arrangement from among the available options.

Suggested resources for single parents are provided in an Appendix. These include a reading list for parents and children; and information on support groups, counsellors, and social services.

The outstanding strength of *On Our Own* is the humanistic approach of the authors. First, sampling as well as self-report biases are acknowledged and the readers are encouraged to evaluate the results of the questionnaire study for themselves. Second, the authors resist the temptation to write more of their own words, instead favouring the direct testimony of single parents. Third, the authors treat humorously their own original assumptions which later proved to be incorrect. Fourth, the authors realize the limitations of current knowledge in the area of divorce and child custody. For example, only time will tell the long-term effects of divorce on a child. Finally, in summing up, the authors leave the reader with something to think about, "Perhaps human beings fool themselves by reaching for happiness, anyway. Life should be instead the search for manageable challenges" (p. 257).

---

Corby, L. and Clark, P. D. (1984). *You're Somebody — How To Be a Slim Kid and Somebody's Companion*. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishing.

---

*Reviewed by:* Marie L. Hoskins, University of Victoria

*You're Somebody* and *Somebody's Companion* are a set of books written for parents who are trying to help their children to control their diets. *You're Somebody* is the child's workbook and addresses the child directly, whereas *Somebody's Companion*

is written about the child's problems and addresses the parent. It emphasizes a parent-child partnership to facilitate the child's progress and is aimed at increasing the parent's knowledge of weight reduction. Although the main purpose of the books is to educate parents, it suggests that public health nurses, nutritionists, home economists, classroom teachers, and recreation leaders can also benefit. The message right from the beginning of the book is simple: accept your child without judgement, maintain a "you can do it" attitude and always be a friend.

Throughout the book, good sensible eating habits as well as participation in physical exercise are emphasized. Cautioning against fad dieting, it briefly mentions to be aware of signs of anorexia and bulimia. Behavioural techniques such as goal setting, contracting and record keeping are well laid out with a brief explanation of how and why they are used. The issue of improving the child's self-esteem is well handled without sounding like a criticism of the parent. It describes having children draw a personal banner illustrating their strengths and qualities, successes in their lives, and their happiest moments. The idea is to stress to the child an "I can do it" attitude by emphasizing other areas of accomplishment instead of dwelling on the lack of success in controlling his or her weight. Lots of encouragement and praise, as opposed to ridicule and criticism, is recommended to reinforce the child's attempt to change old eating patterns. Perfectionist thinking or an "all or nothing" attitude about eating is discouraged and a healthy, purposeful approach to life is the main focus. This book is very clearly written and easy to follow. For someone who knows very little about nutrition, Canada's Food Guide is presented. Even the more informed parent or adult can find interest in the layout and philosophical messages about the best ways to deal with children who are sensitive to their weight problem, without damaging their self-esteem or making them compulsive about dieting.

In *You're Somebody* the same issues are addressed, but this time directly to the child. It is written in the form of a workbook so that children between the ages of nine and fourteen can understand and use the exercises. The style of writing conveys the message that changing your eating habits can be an enjoyable adventure. Humour is used throughout the book with appealing drawings beside poems or trivia about food. For example; *How are tuna fish and a piano different? . . . You can't tuna fish.* The second half of the workbook has low-calorie recipes that children can cook themselves.

I would strongly recommend this set of books to anyone who comes in contact with an obese or overweight child. With the emphasis on healthy eating and exercise instead of compulsive dieting, it is a safe approach to changing behaviour. Parents can learn appropriate ways to help their children, and children can learn to improve their self-esteem not by being slim, but by gaining control in their lives.