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## GROWING AGELESS

BY SABRINA PROTIC

Living an Ageless life starts with your mind. It's about rewriting the words in your head to embrace and celebrate your best you. Sabrina's empowering book will give you the advice, questions, and action steps to make every year, and every moment, your best!

## Chapter One: My Life is Over—Just Beginning

The day my divorce was stamped FINAL, I remember standing outside the courthouse and thinking, *my life is over*. All around me, people were moving about their lives, hurrying to jobs and families and success, while I stood in the sun and wondered who I was now that I was no longer half of someone else.

### ***How Did I Get Here?***

Twenty years earlier, I'd stood in the sun in a custom-made wedding gown with three hundred handsewn pearls trailing along the bodice, and pledged to love this man for the rest of my life. We did what you are supposed to do—bought a car and a house, and with it, we thought, the keys to happiness. We fell into a routine: regular spiritual worship, building our careers, hanging out with friends, and staying physically fit. While I was growing up, my mother always encouraged me to take care of my body, hair, and skin, and that was something that I continued to do throughout my married life.

We had two children, got a dog, and lived the picture-perfect suburban life. All the while, I felt the pressure of juggling full-time work with being a wife and mother, as well as chief dog mom and sole housekeeper. Maybe I did all of that because of the nurturing instinct a woman has, to take care of anything breathing that comes into the home.

### ***The Cost of Self-Sacrifice***

However, all this came at the cost of my identity. My energies went in every direction—making sure the laundry was done, homework completed, meals cooked, house clean, social calendars filled—every direction but into what I needed. I sensed there was something lacking, some need deep inside myself, so I decided to go back to school and get my college degree. The juggling act only got more difficult when I added school into the mix, but I did it, graduating four years later, with my children sitting in the audience beaming with joy and happiness.

I was smiling too, but inside, I wondered if my life was already over. Six months earlier, the divorce had been finalized and I was now a statistic: A mid-life divorcee with children. I stood on that stage, clutching my diploma, feeling empty, lost, and alone.

### ***Mourning What Was and Won't Be***

The next five years of my life were spent in sackcloth, mourning and ashes. My friends, who had been “couple friends” with me and my husband, struggled to decide who to include in their circle of activities. Others chose a villain in the breakup and ostracized one of us to maintain the

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friendship with the other. As I withdrew more and more, the invitations to join parties, attend events or to just hang out stopped coming. I sunk into a deep depression. For three years, I wore nothing but black from head to toe. My co-workers would tease me about always wearing black, but I couldn't seem to add any color to my life or to myself. In my head, wearing black made me look thinner and more invisible, and in those dark days, all I wanted was to disappear.

I felt old, ugly, and unwanted. Walking around with my head down made me feel less noticed. I couldn't accept a compliment and couldn't believe I would find love again, never mind date. How could I compete with the thin, fit women in their twenties and thirties? Who was going to want me, a woman in her late forties with two children?

My life narrowed and narrowed until all I did was maintain my spiritual routine, taxi the teenagers around, go to work and once in a while go to the movies alone. There were many times that I cried during those movies as I sat and watched someone else's happy ending unfold on the screen. In the dark, no one could see my self-pity and loneliness.

### *The Shift in Thinking*

The one good thing I did for myself was something my mother encouraged me to do. We booked an eleven-day trip to Hawaii, financing this dream trip to all three islands. A family friend agreed to take care of my children while I was away. My heart was pounding and my palms were sweaty as I boarded the ship knowing I was leaving my children behind. But as the ship pulled away from the dock, I began to feel more and more like the woman I used to be when I was young. My mother filled in the gaps for the relationships I had yet to form, becoming my

#### ONE THING TO DO TODAY

Because women often have massive To Do lists, I want you to just do one thing today. It's a simple one, but it can change your life. Today, adopt a new message of mental affirmation: *It is time for me to add life back into my life.*

champion and my stronghold. She encouraged me to stretch my wings and try everything the cruise ship offered—dance classes, art shows, offshore adventures and dancing in the club. The trip was divine, a pocket of light that gave me hope for the future. I had taken a bold step forward, with this first trip just for me, and that meant I could take another step, and another.

Things began to change, in tiny ways, after I got home. A friend of mine from the past relocated back to my hometown and reconnected with me. Right away, she invited me to a girl's night at someone's home. It was my first outing in a group setting, which scared me a lot. I was so afraid someone would ask me about my life and my divorce—AKA my failure, at least in my mind. I will never forget that night when we all sat in a circle and everyone had to share a little bit about themselves. My heart was pounding a thousand beats per minute when it was my turn.

The only thing I could say was my name. I had nothing else to add. I realized in that moment that I had allowed myself to completely disconnect from life. These ladies were so kind to me, giving me that moment to pause and think, before eventually circling back around to me. They drew me

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out with simple, easy-to-answer questions. One word after another, I began reconnecting with people, interacting with other women who were so much like me, and becoming engaged in conversation. At the end of the evening I felt life coming back to me. Not only had I opened up and breathed life into myself, but I also then shifted more of my attention to the other ladies and helped to breathe life into them by supporting their lives, passions and stories.

Most of all, I realized one vitally important, life-changing fact: *I was not alone.*

### ***The Importance of Others***

Years earlier when I stood on those courthouse steps, I felt embarrassed, like I had somehow failed at the one thing I was expected to do. Because of that, I lost myself and began to retreat from my life. While I sat there in a stranger's living room and listened to these other women, I heard a common thread—getting older, feeling lost and disconnected, needing to restore a sense of self. That common bond encouraged me to reach out and in turn, work on my own life and self.

That shift in thinking changed everything. It gave me a mental clarity that helped me make the shift from the depths of depression to a journey of ageless redirection, with hope, purpose, and vitality.

It was like someone turned on a light in my brain: ***My life was not over, it was just beginning, and the only aging I was doing was in my head.*** I started my ageless journey by recognizing the need to make internal and external changes, beginning with my wardrobe. Piece by piece, I replaced all the black in my closet with color. I joined a gym. I began to form friendships and go out with the girls.

A new me needed to break through the walls that I had built, but it had to start with my mind. Even as my body got toned, and my health improved, I had to work on the thoughts in my head. Living that empty, lonely life made me look, feel, think, and act older. To become truly ageless, I had to realize I was not a failure. Getting divorced was a stage in my life, not an ending.

### ***Success is How You Define It***

Society defines success with white picket fences and diamond rings. If you let the world give you a definition, you'll forever chase an impossible goal. Losing a job, getting divorced, starting over in any way is not a failure. It's a turn onto a new road.

That new road can lead to an eternal and rewarding ageless persona. Finding yourself, accepting yourself as you are right this minute, and then choosing to live the best you regardless of your age and circumstances is the start. You are never too old, too tired, or too anything to find happiness and fulfillment. You aren't competing with younger men or women—you are battling your own mind and mistaken thoughts. We must all take ownership of our status and stature in life by the way we choose to exist. Those choices include shifting to an empowered mindset, wellness, fitness, dress, grooming, and diet.

### ***Agelessness Attracts Others***

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The laws of attraction support ageless living and will open the doors for people who want to be around you, and thus expand the agelessness to them as well. As my thinking changed, so did my circle. My current husband said he noticed me because I looked like I was having tons of fun. We hung out together with mutual friends and before long, we were hooked on each other. We were in our fifties, yet acting twenty years younger.

It's never too late to live your best life and be your best you. Start right this very moment and make small changes in your life, your thinking, your outlook, your appearance, and your perception of yourself. Agelessness will come, and so will joy and a renewed sense of self. This book is about tiny redirections that every single one of us can do. Today, stop thinking your life is over because you are \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with whatever negative thought you have right now).

Instead, change those thoughts to reinforce that your life is just beginning. Say that to yourself right now: "My life is just beginning." Say it again. A third time. Say it until you believe it.

Then turn the page to take the next step in living an ageless, wonderful life!

## The Mirror Moment

At the end of every chapter, we will have a Mirror Moment, which is a self-examination question to think about. When we look in the mirror, we see all of our imperfections, blemishes, lines, wrinkles, and flaws. We focus on the things we need to fix, not the things that are already beautiful and perfect, and worth celebrating. Or we ignore the very things we need to change in order to live our best lives. So today, I want you to look in the mirror and ask yourself this:

***Have I allowed myself to think that my usefulness, purpose and value are over?***

If you have, then let's change that. Let's start by rewriting the thoughts in your head, and crossing out the thinking that leads to a loss of joy and purpose. Your life isn't over, it's just beginning (and yes, I'm saying that again and again in this chapter, in case you needed a reminder, as I did in those dark years). So let's begin with a new thought right this second!

***Buy the book in October 2019!***