

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

During my marriage, as I was planning how to leave, I had a safe deposit box where I kept emergency cash, a Living Will and a Durable Power of Attorney. I also kept a written record of every abusive and violent incident that my ex-husband inflicted on me. I would add my written notes to the documents in the safe deposit box on a regular basis. I did this in case anything ever happened to me and I wasn't able to communicate who injured me... or worse. I had it all written down. Each event was documented in detail with the dates and times noted. My parents had a key to the safe deposit box. They didn't know what was in it. I just told them "If anything ever happens to me I have important documents" in there that they should get.

It wasn't my intention to write a book. My only intention, at that time, was mentally staying two steps ahead of my then husband, trying to anticipate his actions (which were always unpredictable), and creating my safety plan as I prepared to leave the marriage. I was in survival mode. It wasn't until I was out of the marriage and I was sorting through papers that I came across my detailed notes and was inspired to write the book.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO FINALLY GET STARTED?

It wasn't until my marriage was over and I had processed much of the trauma with a domestic violence therapist that I began to consider writing my story. I only had the thought of writing my story after I had found my way back to a place of strength and power and healing. I have always been a writer and I knew that I could communicate my experience in a way that would help other men and women in abusive relationships.

I also wanted to bring awareness to the fact that domestic violence doesn't have a certain "appearance." Domestic violence can happen to anybody. I waited until I was 35 years old before I got married. I owned my own home, was financially independent, had a successful career, and a good education. I was a strong person and I came from a solid home where my parents were still married.

Author Q&A

There were very subtle red flags that I wish I had recognized. They were subtle, but they were there. Domestic violence and abusive relationships are so much more prevalent than people realize. So many people are living it, but they don't talk about it. I knew I had to use my experience to help others. I wanted to help them recognize the subtlest of red flags. Because I lived it, I wanted to help them understand their own conflicting feelings and understand why an abuser does what he does, as well as whether or not an abuser can change. I wanted to help family and friends of someone who is being abused know how to help in the most effective way. Because I lived it, I know what is useful and what is actually detrimental, despite family and friend's best intentions.

HOW LONG WAS THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF WRITING THE BOOK?

Once I decided to write the book, a couple years after my marriage ended, I formed an outline of the key points I wanted to communicate in the book. All of my detailed experiences had already been written down in the notes from the safe deposit box. Then, I let it all sit for nearly eight more years. Once I felt moved to finish writing and expanding all my hand written notes into chapters, the words just poured out of me effortlessly and I completed the book in about three months.

WHY DID YOU LET THE PARTIALLY WRITTEN BOOK SIT FOR EIGHT YEARS?

I wasn't sure how I would feel about mentally and emotionally reliving the abuse in order to write about it.

WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF WRITING THE BOOK?

I truly believe that in order to write well, a writer must feel what they are writing. In order to do that effectively I had to "go there" again. I had to mentally relive and emotionally connect with each of the experiences that I write about. Without reliving the experience and connecting to the feeling states of the events, I would not be able to communicate effectively to the reader. It is not my goal to simply write words, but to share feelings, elicit emotions, and invoke thoughts in a way that will make a positive impact in the readers' lives.

WAS THERE AN EASY PART ABOUT WRITING YOUR BOOK?

When I really buckled down and committed to writing, it was very easy. The words just poured out of me, effortlessly. The book was ready to come to life and it did! I think I needed those years of distance and healing in order to revisit the abuse from a place of strength. It is only from a place of strength that I can write in a way that will serve others.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOTIVATIONAL PHRASE AND WHY?

The motivational phrase that resonates so strongly with me is “Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.” Our experiences are part of who we are. We can’t change them. We can’t pretend they never happened. We can decide what we are going to do with them and how we are going to let them affect us. We can hold onto the pain and the fear and allow those experiences to keep us from living our best lives, or we can use those experiences as motivation for change and turn them into spring boards toward real happiness. Sure, it is brutally painful at the time, whether you stay or whether you go, but the pain of leaving an abusive relationship is a temporary pain. The pain of staying in an abusive relationship is permanent.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS DIFFERENT ABOUT YOUR BOOK COMPARED TO OTHER BOOKS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Unique to my book on abusive relationships is my personal understanding that to create lasting change in our lives we have to gain our own realization of the problem. Change occurs when we can finally recognize the problem and find the truth within ourselves. Many books on domestic violence and abusive relationships are written by professionals or written by victims.

I have the unique perspective of writing from a personal as well as professional perspective, allowing me to connect with the readers in a way that other domestic violence books don’t. In a concise format, I share my story in a way that allows readers to recognize the abuse they may be experiencing within their own relationships. I gently guide the readers toward a way out, and

Author Q&A

then discuss moving on and getting their life back. The purpose is to educate, inspire and empower, and I do so in a voice that the readers can feel safe and supported.

Also unique to my book is the awareness I bring to the overlap of domestic violence with pet abuse. Many victims of abuse stay within an abusive relationship because they fear leaving their pet with the abuser. I provide an index of pet shelter options, including state domestic violence shelters known to accept pets, and pet friendly hotels for those who are suffering abuse and need to escape.

WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND?

I graduated from the University of Southern California and I am a licensed Physician Assistant who has spent the past twenty four years treating patients in Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, and Women's Health. I hold additional certifications in domestic violence, abuse, and trauma, as well as alternative and complementary medicine. I am a professionally trained Life Coach and Mind-Body Coach.

I am a member of The Academy of Violence and Abuse and I serve as a member of the Domestic Violence Task Force for Los Angeles County. I have been recognized by the National Association of Professional Women for my contribution to domestic violence awareness, as well as my training and skills as a Life Coach and Mind-Body Coach.

My coaching practice is located in Seal Beach, California and I coach clients throughout the world. With 24 years experience as a health care provider, I now use tools and techniques that allow my clients to maintain a healthy balance between thoughts and emotions, resulting in, not only improved physical health and mental well being, but improved job satisfaction, personal relationships, increased creativity and improved clarity.

I am the author of "Marry Me" Doesn't Mean "I Love You": How I Escaped an Abusive Relationship and Found My Rhythm Again. In it I connect with the reader on a personal level,

Author Q&A

sharing my own story out of domestic violence, as well as my professional insight into the cycle of abuse, how to better understand it and how to begin navigating your way out.

My second book, “Finding My Rhythm Again: A Pocketbook of Domestic Violence Resources” is scheduled for release in early 2018.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PROJECTS?

Having spent 25 years as a clinical health care provider, and also having experienced trauma myself, my passion is the connection that our thoughts and feelings have on our overall mental, emotional and physical health. “Health” doesn’t simply involve the physical body, but the thoughts and the emotions and how those thoughts and emotions affect our bodies and contribute to physical disease when not managed.

Chronic stress and chronic nervous system activation have proven to be detrimental to a person’s physical health. Chronic stress and over activation of the nervous system can actually lead to heart disease, cancer and other physical disease.

Managing our thoughts and emotions in a healthy way that allows us to face them and work through them has shown to not only improve physical health and mental well being, but improve job satisfaction, personal relationships, increase creativity and improve clarity and decision making about one’s own life.

I love working with clients and helping to guide them in uncovering the buried thoughts and emotions that are keeping them from living their best lives. Recognizing and working through these allows us to reconnect with ourselves and begin to hear the quiet voice within that is calling us toward our true passion in life, which is where our unique gifts and purpose are often found. We just need to sift through the layers of life experiences, hurts, pre-conceived ideas, and limiting beliefs that they are buried under. It is a special place to be when I am able to hold that space for someone as they begin finding and expressing their passion and gifts that they are meant to put forth in the world... and doing it in a healthy, whole way.

Author Q&A

I continue to coach clients through the various cycles of change and new beginnings. My personalized coaching packages assist clients in recognizing and healing limiting beliefs that are keeping them from living their best lives. I then use tools and techniques to assist them in obtaining clarity on their true passions. We begin to set specific goals and take the necessary steps toward implementing those goals so they can build the life they desire and start living it in a healthy, whole way.