

## **FOREWORD: MASTERING HAPPINESS**

*"I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become."*

*Carl Jung*

**I chose happy**... I am fundamentally a happy person - always have been, always will be. No one will ever take that from me. Perhaps that seems like a strange introduction for a book that recounts a number of abuses running the gamut from childhood sexual abuse to attempted spousal murder.

You don't "**find**" happiness though - you **make** it. That's how I have maintained my happiness, my smile, my laughter, my open spirit, my **unbreakable** zest for life and my ability to **love profoundly**, despite traversing through those events. **Happiness is within you, not without**. It's not dependent on someone, some thing, some place. That to me, my friends, is one of the most beautiful thoughts I can think of. If you harness the power of happiness within you, **no one, no trauma, no event** can take it from you. If that's not empowering I don't know what is....

This is not a book about abuse. Although I endured various traumas throughout interludes of my life, they do not reflect the "story of my life". They represent brief chapters at most. I am not one-dimensional. I live multi-dimensionally, spherically. This is a book about **blessings**. Yes, I have experienced dark moments of trauma - as have we all. That's all they are though - dark moments interspersed in an otherwise bright life. My abuses never defined me or my life and those dark moments cannot extinguish my light. Indeed, you need the darkness to see the luminous twinkling light of stars...

This is my journal of love. **Self-love**. The most loving thing I have ever done for myself. Indeed, I have never worked harder on anything in my life. I'm writing this as a cathartic expression of a lifetime that encountered traumatic experiences along the way. I finally realized that this cathartic release is sufficient motivation in and of itself.

I also realized that although my periodic moments of darkness could not extinguish my essence - my light of happiness - my light could not shine as brightly as I wanted it to until I truly healed from my unresolved traumas. I needed to release the **grip** the **past** had on my **present** to live life **authentically**, to the **fullest**.

This is also a story of the incredible power of **self-healing** and the transformative power of **gratitude**. This story chronicles my healing journey including the priceless contribution of my "earth angels", my truest friends and random beautiful souls, who helped me get through and past the darkest moments of my life.

My journey of self-healing is an **empowering** one. I was finally able to appreciate that it was fully within my control to stop the cycle of abuse I had endured throughout my life. I remember seeing a quote along the lines of "Don't blame the clowns for being clowns. Ask yourself why you are going to the circus?" I don't know the author's identity but the quote profoundly

resonated with me. I needed to **stop going to the circus**. This book is the story of how I was able to gain **control** and **stop the abuse**, something that had eluded me for decades despite my desire and determination that things be different.

This is a very raw, vulnerable account chronicling my very personal journey of healing. I share the details to give context and insight into the trauma psyche, not because I want anyone to feel sorry for me or for shock value. Quite the opposite, as my “ending” is a happy one. Indeed, I view it as the “beginning”, free of the figurative psychological and physiological shackles of my traumas.

I’ve lived an incredible life and I truly believe the best is yet to come. Both of those distinctly in and of themselves are extraordinary blessings which I do not take for granted. I am writing this book to truly put the dark moments in my life behind me. For decades, I had thought I was moving “forward” by repressing past traumas and running from one distraction to another. In reality, my unresolved past haunted me, continuing to condemn me to a pattern of abusive, disrespectful relationships and numbing behaviors. I finally realized **why** I needed to heal and, equally importantly, **how**. These realizations catapulted me on my healing journey. Despite my long and varied history of abuse, I was able to start **profoundly healing** from my traumas relatively **simply and quickly** once I *appreciated I needed to, believed I could and discovered the guidance as to how I could*.

I humbly and fervently hope that this is an empowering book of inspiration to help others in some small way navigate overcoming their own unique traumas. Everyone’s healing will uniquely be their own but I humbly share my pathway in hope of providing some useful insights to others. **Healing does not happen in silence**. It’s time to “**Roar**”. It’s time to **embrace yourself** and **your limitless life** with **savage self- respect and love**.

**I never gave up. I hope you never give up** on you, your dreams and your desires. **You owe you** to live your fullest, most authentic life. My healing enabled me to stop running aimlessly and **truly move forward** with the passionate, open-hearted intensity that has always defined me. I am **primed for peace**. I am now firmly on a path where I confidently believe the rest of my life is the best of my life. Life is good; it’s going to get great. **Happily ever now**. Watch out world. Here I (we) come. Let’s **roar**.

## **PART ONE: CHILDHOOD: LOSS OF INNOCENCE**

*“See the world with the innocence of children.  
Approach the world with the daring of children.  
Love the world with the readiness of children.  
Heal the world with the purity of children.”*

*Change the world with the wisdom of children.”*  
Neale Donald Walsch