

Choose Joy: The Fight Within

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Dedication

For Emily—

You are not gone.

You are felt.

In the quiet moments...

in the breath between what was and what is...

in every spark of joy that finds its way back to me.

You came to me in stillness—

not as memory...

but as presence.

A reminder that love does not leave.

It transforms.

I carry you with me—always.

In love.

In trust.

In becoming.

Forever and beyond

*The fight didn't end when I chose joy... it just moved
inside me.*

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The Fight Within

I thought choosing joy would be the end of the fight.

I thought there would be a moment—clear, undeniable—where everything settled.

Where the past loosened its grip.

Where the noise quieted.

Where the pain finally stopped asking for my attention.

I thought choosing joy meant I had arrived.

I was wrong.

Choosing joy wasn't the finish line.

It was the doorway.

The first book... that was survival.

That was me clawing my way through grief, trauma, loss, addiction, identity, motherhood, and the unraveling of a life I thought I understood.

That was me learning how to breathe again.

Learning how to forgive.

Learning that joy was even an option.

And for a while... that was enough.

More than enough.

It saved my life.

But here's the truth no one talks about:

Healing doesn't mean the fight is over.

It means the fight changes.

It becomes quieter.

More internal.

Less about what's happening around you—
and more about what's happening within you.

It shows up in moments that don't look like battles at all.

A conversation.

A reaction.

A relationship.

A decision.

A memory that surfaces when you thought you had already let it
go.

It's the moment you feel yourself tighten.

The moment your chest closes.

The moment your body reacts before your mind has time to
catch up.

The moment where the old version of you is still there—
ready, waiting, familiar.

And the new version of you...

Has a choice.

That's the fight within.

Not the one that destroys you—
the one that asks you to evolve.

I don't fight the way I used to.

I don't swing at everything anymore.

I don't push as hard.

I don't try to control what was never mine to control.

But that doesn't mean the fight is gone.

It means I've learned to see it.

To feel it.

To pause inside it.

To choose differently inside it.

And that...

That is a different kind of strength.

Not the kind that proves something.

The kind that allows something.

This book isn't about surviving.

You already know how to do that.

If you're here—if you've made it this far in your life—then you already understand what it means to endure.

You've felt the weight.

You've carried it.

You've walked through things that should have broken you.

And maybe they did—for a while.

But you're still here.

This book is about what comes next.

It's about what happens after you've done the work.

After you've chosen differently.

After you've stepped out of the version of your life that no longer fits.

Because there is a moment...

Where everything looks fine from the outside—
but inside, you know.

You know something has shifted.

You know you can't go back.

You know you don't belong where you used to.

And you don't fully know where you're going yet.

That space?

That in-between?

That's where this book lives.

This is the space where:

You start seeing patterns you used to live inside of.

You start hearing words differently.

You start noticing energy—not just actions.

You start choosing rest instead of proving.

You start allowing instead of forcing.

You start becoming instead of surviving.

And sometimes...

It's uncomfortable as hell.

Because growth doesn't remove discomfort.

It changes your relationship with it.

You'll still feel triggered.

You'll still feel fear.

You'll still feel the urge to fight, to run, to shut down, to protect yourself in ways that once kept you safe.

The difference is...

Now you see it.

Now you understand it.

Now you have the ability to choose something else.

Not perfectly.

Not every time.

But enough to change your life.

That's what this book is.

Not a guide to avoid the fight—
a guide to living inside it.

With awareness.

With compassion.

With strength that doesn't require force.

Because joy...

Real joy...

Is not found in a life without challenges.

It's found in the way you move through them.

You will meet people in these pages.

People who remind you of yourself.

People who speak truths you may not be ready to say out loud.

People who sit beside you—in rooms, in conversations, in
moments that feel ordinary but change everything.

You will see pieces of my life.

Not as a timeline—

but as moments.

Reflections.

Realizations.

Shifts.

Because this isn't a story about where I've been.

It's a story about who I am becoming.

And if you allow it...

It will show you who you are becoming too.

There is nothing wrong with you if you still feel the fight.

There is nothing broken about you if it still shows up.

There is nothing missing if you haven't "arrived."

You're not meant to arrive.

You're meant to evolve.

And maybe...

Just maybe...

The fight within you...

Isn't something to fear.

Maybe it's the very thing...

That's leading you home

Chapter 1: The Rooms Full of Angels

Angels don't always have wings—sometimes they just say, “me too.”

I didn't plan to walk into a room full of angels.
But that's exactly where the next part of my journey began.
I came for her birthday.
Sweet Lacy.
One year.
Three hundred and sixty-five days sober.
There is something sacred about those rooms.
You feel it before anyone speaks.
Not church-sacred.
Not polished.
Not perfect.
Real.

After the precepts and the twelve steps were read, the meeting didn't end.

It continued.

I almost laughed—not because it was funny, but because I recognized it.

This is where truth lives.

Terrance was there.
Tall. Bold. Gentle.

He looked at me as I walked in, and I knew — we had met before. Maybe not in this lifetime, but in the way people recognize each other when they've walked through fire.

He began to read from the Big Book.

“I was through forever... many times,” he said.

No performance. No mask.

“This is my third time. And this time... it's true.”

Then he said something that landed hard.

“If I had to go through it again, I would drink again.”

Silence moved through the room.

Not shock.

Recognition.

Recovery isn't romantic.

It's not clean.

It's not linear.

It's not pretty.

It's real.

Two months to the day since the man who made my life hell died.

Two months.

And here I am — sitting in a room full of people who understand suffering without needing explanation.

The angels reminded me.

Not the kind with wings.

The kind who sit beside you in metal chairs and say,

“Me too.”

That's what these rooms are.

Rooms full of angels.

I've spent years listening to sermons in churches.

Beautiful words. Structured messages. Hope wrapped in tradition.

But nothing—nothing—has ever filled my heart like this.

Because here, the word isn't polished.

It's lived.

“Maybe I'm worth it.”

The words came softly from across the room.

And somehow, they echoed louder than anything I had ever heard in a church.

Because belief sounds different when it's fought for.

Then Jamie spoke.

Quiet. Easy to miss if you weren't paying attention.

“One year,” she said.

Her birthday too.

Headphones resting around her neck, like she was still deciding whether to stay connected or disappear.

“Thirty years,” she added.

Thirty years of a journey.

“I got lost coming here.”

A town of 300 people.

Isolation doesn't just mean being alone.

It means not being seen. Not being reflected. Not knowing if what you feel is real because no one is there to say, “I understand.”

She had worked a program before.

Done the steps.

Followed the rules.

But without connection—

“I didn’t grow.”

The truth most people don’t say out loud.

You can do everything right...

and still stay stuck...

if you do it alone.

“The program saved my life,” she said.

Then softer—

“Mine too.”

“I want to make a difference with my story.”

And there it was.

The shift.

The moment where pain becomes purpose.

The room responded.

Eyes lit up.

Hands clapped.

Hearts opened.

We all felt it.

Then Bill spoke.

Yellow shirt. Glasses. Baseball cap.

Two years sober.

“Quitting drinking is the easy part,” he said.

We all leaned in.

“It’s not talking to my family for three years... that’s the hard part.”

Silence again.

Because we all knew.

Addiction doesn't just take substances.

It takes people.

Trust.

Time.

Pieces of you that don't always come back easily.

A man in a black toque didn't speak.

He came to listen.

I understand that.

Some days, speaking feels like too much. Like opening a door
you're not ready to walk through.

And yet—even when I don't speak—

It's still about me.

And it's still not about me at all.

It's about us.

Shared trauma is real.

And when it avalanches, it doesn't take one part of your life—

It takes everything.

Finances.

Family.

Health.

Identity.

All of it.

Recovery isn't just climbing out.

It's rebuilding from the bottom.

The nine promises were read.

I didn't just hear them.

I absorbed them.

Let them settle into the places in me that once believed none of it was possible.

Work. Work. Work.

Not punishment.

Devotion.

There is something beautiful about effort when it's directed toward healing.

The Lord's Prayer followed.

Not religion.

Grounding.

This was her day.

Lacy's moment.

And we were all part of it.

After the meeting, I checked in with Melissa.

Supporting her mom has been hard.

There's a quiet exhaustion that comes from loving someone through struggle.

But she saw the grace.

She described life like a snow globe.

Shaken.

Swirling.

Uncertain.

-9°C.

Spring trying to arrive... but not quite there yet.

She was walking home from the liquor store with a bottle of wine.

I was walking home to finish the last glass of my favorite bottle of Frind.

The one I bought to celebrate recording my audiobook—
Choose Joy: A Survivor’s Guide for Hope.

The irony wasn’t lost on me.
It rarely is anymore.

When I got home, Ralph was watching Dusk Till Dawn.
George Clooney. Vampires. Chaos.

“Don’t do as I do, do as I say,” he said, laughing.

He joked about finishing the bottle and smashing it over his head.

We laughed.

“Cheers to family.”

On the screen, a woman danced.

A snake around her neck.

Temptation made visible.

She moved like desire itself—pulling everyone in without effort.

Everyone watched.

Captivated.

Me too.

“Knockin’ on the devil’s door...”

The music was hypnotic.

She walked across broken glass like it didn’t hurt.

Kissed the villain.

Flames rose behind her.

And I knew what was coming.
The doors would lock.
The illusion would drop.
The feast would begin.
Blood.
Chaos.
Transformation.
One bite—
And he becomes one of them.

That's addiction.
It doesn't show up as destruction.
It shows up as seduction.
Relief.
Excitement.
Something beautiful enough to trust—
Until it isn't.

But then—
A young woman lifted a cross.
Not perfectly.
Not fearlessly.
But enough.
And she escaped.

That's recovery.
Simple.
Not easy.
But possible.
A choice.

A moment of remembering who you are—
before the bite.

We are not alone.
We were never meant to be.

And maybe the most powerful truth of all—
The one whispered in those rooms,
spoken through tears,
felt in silence—
Is this:
Maybe...
I'm worth it.

And as I sat in that room, listening, feeling, remembering...
I realized something I hadn't fully admitted before—
The fight didn't end when I chose joy.
It just changed.

Chapter 2: The Fight That Lives in Me

I have learned the art of compassion.

Not because life was easy—

but because it wasn't.

Compassion wasn't something I studied.

It wasn't something I practiced in theory.

It was something I earned.

Through trauma.

Through heartbreak.

Through walking straight into the fire of my own life... and choosing not to stay there.

Empathy came the same way.

Not from understanding people at a distance—

but from being broken open enough to feel them.

And still...

Relationships are where I am tested the most.

My knee-jerk reaction is fight.

Not hesitation.

Not withdrawal.

Fight.

I know it well.

I am comfortable there.

It is my take-my-power-back response.

My you don't get to do this to me energy.

The part of me that refuses to be small.
Refuses to be dismissed.
Refuses to be unseen.
And in the moment—
It feels right.
It feels strong.
It feels justified.
It feels like control.

But here's the truth—
That version of me was built to survive.
Not to live.

Death Isn't Dying
Death isn't dying.
It's more beautiful than that.

Yesterday took me somewhere I didn't expect to go.
Not physically—
Emotionally.
Spiritually.
Somewhere deeper than I've allowed myself to fully understand.

It's funny, because I've said for years that I understand death.
I've spoken about it.
Felt it.
Even believed I had made peace with it.
But the truth?
I don't have a fucking clue.
And maybe that's exactly where truth begins.

I saw Connie yesterday.
She is joy—
but not my kind of joy.
Her presence is softer.

Quieter.

Grounded in a way that doesn't fight for space.

And I realized, as I chose to sit at her table during the
Womanition Brigade event, that I was intentionally stepping into
something different.

I chose her table because I wanted to choose joy.
Not the version of joy I fought for.
Not the version born out of survival.
But something else.

My joy was forged in fire.
And once you begin to see life differently...
you can't help but see yourself differently too.

I survived.

I pushed.

I fought.

I became stronger because I had to.
That part of me still exists.
It always will.

But something shifted.

As I listened to the speakers, I found myself slipping into old patterns—

evaluating, scoring, critiquing.

And then...

I caught myself.

Instead of criticism—

I felt respect.

I honored them.

That felt new.

During the break, everything changed.

She didn't try to fix it.

She didn't overcomplicate it.

She simply met me with compassion.

And in that moment—

I felt it.

My shoulders dropped.

Sometimes, the greatest gift we can give someone is not answers

but presence.

A way to hold the unholdable.

Death is not just loss.

It is memory.

It is story.

It is reflection.

————

And something in me changed.

————

I don't fight the same way anymore.
Not everything needs to be a battle.

————

Now I see opportunities—
to connect,
to collaborate,
to build.

————

That feels like a different kind of strength.

————

Death isn't dying.
It is the space that reminds you—
you are still here.
Still breathing.
Still choosing.
Still becoming.

————

The Stage, The Fall, and The Sparkle
There is something about a stage that calls me forward.
Not gently—
but with a pull that feels like destiny wrapped in fear.

————

I knew I belonged there long before I believed I was ready.
And still—
every single time—
my knees wobbled.

————

I remember the drive to Kenora.
Miles of open road asking one question:
Who are you willing to become?

I didn't conquer fear.
I moved with it.
And that was enough.

Then the stage.
My arms were full.
Too full.

I didn't ask for help.
I walked up anyway.

And I fell.
Literally.
Everything spilled.

And then—
there was a hand.
Helping me gather what had fallen.
Not just the objects.
Me.

Strength is not carrying everything alone.
Strength is allowing yourself to be seen when things fall apart.

Now, I rise differently.

Soft.

Open.

Powerful.

I am not just the fighter.

I am not just the survivor.

I am the becoming.

Chapter 3: Dance, Love, Forever

Our wedding wasn't perfect.
It was real.

All of our people in one place.
Children.
Grandchildren.
Friends who became family.

I walked down the aisle with my dad and Rita—one on each side.

They have walked with me for many years, always supporting me.

Having them with me was an honour...
and a blessing.

Jessy, my matron of honour, helped me earlier with my wedding dress and my mom's pearl necklace.

Rita helped me zip up my dress.

I was surrounded by incredible women.

Held.

Supported.

Loved.

Carmine had produced the music for the song I walked down the aisle to—

A Thousand Years by Christina Perri—

and Aubrey sang it live.

Nate, our friend and officiant, stood at the end of the aisle with the wedding party.

And Ralph...

He stood there, looking so handsome—
glowing like the Puerto Vallarta sun.

“Heart beats fast, colors and promises...”

Wedding Vows

Ralph, do you promise to love Nancy Nance and make her your priority?

Nancy, do you promise to love Ralph and make him your priority?

Ralph, do you promise to hold Nancy’s hand and help her navigate through the sand so she doesn’t trip on any rocks?

Nancy, do you promise to allow Ralph to be your best friend—and laugh with him when life gets tough?

Ralph, do you promise to adore Nancy’s Betty Rubble giggle?

Nancy, do you promise to accept Ralph’s quiet moments, while he makes sense of the world and its many challenges?

Ralph, do you promise to help Nancy navigate the obstacles in her life as she continues to create a better world for herself and the people she loves?

Nancy, do you promise to find happiness in the special moments as you build and enjoy the life you’re creating together?

Ralph, do you promise to travel with Nancy as she adventures around the world?

Nancy, do you promise to cuddle, touch toes, and sleep beside Ralph for the rest of your life?

Ralph, do you promise to be brave when Nancy is afraid?

Nancy, do you promise to tell Ralph when you need him to support and encourage you?

Ralph, do you promise to care for yourself so that you can love,
care, and support Nancy?

Nancy, do you promise to care for yourself so that you can love,
care, and support Ralph?

“Forever.”

One word.

That’s all Ralph said.

My heart melted...

and I echoed the same.

Forever.

Then came the celebration.

The after party.

The most wonderful party ever.

We made our entrance to *Fireball* by Pitbull—

“Fireball... I saw, I came, I conquered...”

And then—

we danced.

Alive.

Electric.

Unapologetic.

Because this love—

is real.

Not the kind that asks you to shrink.

The kind that says—

Be everything you are...

and I’m still here.

Because this love—
isn't survival.
It's choice.

And even inside that choice...
I began to notice something I couldn't ignore.

The past doesn't disappear just because life gets better.
It lingers.
In the body.
In the nervous system.
In the moments you don't expect.

And that's where the next layer of my journey began.

The Trappings of Trauma
Trauma is not something you get over.
It's something you learn to live with—
and heal through.

It shows up unexpectedly.
Fear that isn't real—
but feels real.
Because the body remembers.
Even when the mind knows you are safe.

And still...
I am learning.

To sit with it.

To understand it.

To hold it.

Not run.

Not fight.

Just be with it.

And in that space—
something shifts.

I am not fragile.

I am rooted.

Strong.

And I am choosing joy—
again and again.

And in that space...
I stopped fighting myself.

The Bridge Between Two Lives

Sunday is quiet.

Sacred in its simplicity.

No pressure.

No performance.

Just life.

And underneath it—
a knowing.

Monday is coming.
The life that no longer fits.

And I see it clearly now.
The job is not the problem.
It was the bridge.

Bridges aren't meant to be lived on.
They're meant to be crossed.

I am not waiting.
I am choosing.

I am not lost.
I am crossing.

And just when I think I understand the fight...
life shows me another layer—
in loss,
in reflection,
in the moments I didn't expect to feel so deeply.

Because sometimes falling isn't failure—
it's the moment you learn
you don't have to carry everything alone.

And once you know it's a bridge...
staying no longer makes sense.

And for the first time...

I'm not trying to win the fight—
I'm learning
how to live inside it.

Chapter 4: The Trappings of Trauma

Trauma is not something you get over.
It's something you learn to live with—
and heal through.

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I'm learning
how to live inside it.

Chapter 6: Puerto Vallarta, Promise

When Ralph and I returned to Puerto Vallarta in January of 2026, we instantly felt like we were right back at home.

Adriana greeted us with the biggest hug as she welcomed us back to her casa. Our room was waiting.

It was as if we had never left.

This year, our plan was to travel further up the coast—

La Peñita.

Lo de Marcos.

La Peñita was absolutely adorable.

Chickens in the street.

Roosters crowing in the morning.

Dogs everywhere.

And a delightful, easy energy that made us want to stay much longer than the two days we had planned.

We met up with friends we had hoped to see the year before and spent an entire day basking in music, dancing, and truly being in our element.

Lo de Marcos was beauty beyond anything we had expected.

The beach—magnificent.

The restaurants—a culinary delight.

Horses wandering freely, adding to the magic of it all.

We fell in love.

And the longer we stayed...
the longer we wanted to stay.

So we started to ask the question:
What would it take to make this possible?

For Ralph, the answer came easily.
His talents in renovations opened doors anywhere.
We spoke with Adriana about the possibility, and she lit up with
excitement.

It felt doable.
Real.

And then there was me.

Sure, I could serve in a bar or sell timeshares—
but neither of those felt aligned with who I am.

I create.

So I reached out to my friend Cassandra and explored the idea of
helping her with social media—something I genuinely love.

Ralph and I walked over to Café Roma to talk it through.

She was all in.

And just like that—

a dream began to take shape.

We created a plan for how I could support everything from Canada.

Once I got to know the bands and gathered the right photos, scheduling content a week in advance became easy.

Of course...

I made a few mistakes.

Don't we all?

Now, as I sit in this winter wonderland, looking out at snow-covered rooftops, I have something to look forward to.

As I return to the routine of my daytime job—the dredge, yes... yuck—

I know this isn't forever.

Not yet.

But soon.

Before work, I do what I love.

I podcast.

I open my schedule and see what I've created in advance, and it feels aligned.

It feels right.

And the beauty—
the irony—
is that today's podcast is titled:
The best day to begin is today.

I didn't plan that to match this moment.
It simply happened.

And that's what life looks like...
when things start falling into place.

And that's what life looks like...
when things start falling into place.

And somewhere inside that clarity...
a quieter truth began to rise—
the life I was living every day...
no longer felt like mine.

Maybe nothing "fell into place" at all—
maybe I finally did.

Chapter 7: The Job That No Longer Fits

Clarity doesn't always come with a plan—
sometimes it just tells you what no longer fits.

Monday mornings at the construction company are a mad race to get done what needs to be done to get on site.

Without judgment, I watch.
I observe.

One guy is on my computer completing his safety orientation while the boss is already in a panic about making it to the site orientation on time.

This could have been done differently.
He could have completed it over the weekend.
But that's not how things are done around here.

I wait.

I file invoices from the last three months, match them to payments, and keep things moving in the background while the front end scrambles.

I ask about safety certifications needing to be uploaded to the payment portal.

“We don't need to do this,” he says.
Yeah... we do.

If we want to get paid.
“This is bullshit,” is the reply.

And there it is.
Not frustration—
confirmation.

This j-o-b is not in resonance with my life.

And the best part?
I’m not even upset.
I love the clarity.

This is how he operates.
This is how the industry operates.
Get the job done.
Get paid.

Safety?
A back seat driver.

There is a kind of fungus in this industry—
something that spreads quietly.
A mindset.
A normalization of cutting corners, pushing timelines, reacting
instead of preparing.

And I don’t belong in it anymore.

I am the office manager.

A role that is both complicated and, if I'm honest, underpaid and under-appreciated.

Not just here.

Systemically.

It's one of the reasons I cannot continue.

But it's not the real reason.

The real reason is this:

My life is calling me toward something else.

Something lighter.

Something aligned.

Something that actually feels like me.

And every morning I sit here, I can feel it—
that pull.

That quiet voice asking:

Why are you still here?

I am counting down to Wednesday.

Trista starts two days a week, and my whole body sighs in relief.

Teaching her the systems will take a month—
a month that gives me space.

Space to go to Kelowna in May.

To attend Terry's celebration of life.

To celebrate his birthday.

To celebrate Chance's birthday.

To be present for the things that matter.

I am over the moon about that—
even if I don't know exactly how it will all fall into place.

Terry's family isn't comfortable with me being there.
And I understand.

Because I don't want the weight of that on Chance's shoulders.
He cares deeply about how everyone will feel.
So do I.

Even though I am ready to lay down arms—
to choose peace—
to celebrate what matters—
not everyone is there.

Different lives.
Different beliefs.
Different healing paths.

I only know mine.
I don't need to understand theirs.

Back at the office, I manage accounts receivable, payable,
payroll, and safety for two companies.
I reconcile bank and credit cards for four.
Over a hundred transactions a month.

It's a lot.

And I know Trista will learn.

I know together, with guidance and structure, we will bring order to this.

What I don't know—
is how Cory will adjust.

Weekly reports.
Financials.
Data entry.
Reconciliation.

Last year's year-end was gruelling.
This year—
it needs to be different.

For me.
For the accounting firm.
For the system itself.

Files need to be compiled, updated, and organized—
both physically and digitally.

It's a big project.

“When does the new girl start?” Cory asks.
Wednesday.

And I want to say—
her name is fucking Trista, you tool.

But I don't.

Because throwing fuel on a fire that's already burning—
is stupid.

He asks when my “missing time” will end.
What my plan is.

And honestly?
“Toodle loo, motherfucker” is not the right answer.
Even if it feels like the honest one.

Because the truth is—
I like Cory.
In small moments.

And this isn't just a him problem.
It's a me problem too.

I remember when I started here.
The chaos.
The disorganization.
The mess.

And I made it better.

I created systems.
Structure.
Flow.

And now—

I want to leave it better than I found it.

For Trista.

For Cory.

For the companies.

I want success for all of us.

Even if that success...
doesn't include me staying.

And clarity...
is a powerful thing—
when you're ready to move.

I didn't outgrow the job by accident—
I outgrew it by becoming someone who could no longer stay.

Chapter 8: The Reconstruction of Joy

Healing didn't break me—
it rebuilt me into someone I hadn't met yet.

May my heart continue to heal,
and may my life be filled with more joy.

Who am I now?
And how do these pieces fit together?

When I finished my last book, I believed I had reached
forgiveness—

real, complete forgiveness.
I was stepping into a new life.
Planning my wedding.
Filled with excitement and certainty.

The wedding was perfect.
Everything I had ever wanted.

So why did I fall into a deep depression?

Money makes the world go around—
or so we're taught.

I needed more of it, so I went back into administration and
management.

It was familiar.
Structured.
Safe.

And I'm glad I did.

But it's not who I am.

I am not here to manage systems.

I am here to lead transformation.

I am a leader in the evolution of joy.

Construction taught me something, though.

It is destruction before creation.

Messy.

Dirty.

Necessary.

Just like healing.

But unlike healing, construction often forgets the individual.

It prioritizes the corporation over the human being—
bottom line over well-being.

And the truth is simple:

If you don't take care of your people, you don't have a
sustainable business.

You have burnout disguised as productivity.

I've seen it too many times.

Many of my clients are women leaving administrative roles.

Women who held everything together—
until they couldn't anymore.

They leave...
and then they collapse.

Not because they are weak—
but because they stayed strong for too long.

Burnout shows up in the body:
Renal failure.

Crohn's.

Colitis.

Chronic exhaustion.

The body keeps score—
and eventually, it collects.

Then come the questions:

Am I allowed to rest?

Am I allowed to receive support?

Am I allowed to not be okay?

We wrestle with receiving help as if it's undeserved—
forgetting how much we've given,
how much we've contributed,
how much we've paid in.

Needing support does not mean failure.

It means you're human.

Leaving a career carries grief.

It can feel like losing a child.

Losing identity.

Losing direction.

Because for so long—
that role defined you.

But grief is not the end.

It's a doorway.

And on the other side—
is a beginning.

This new beginning is about relationship.

Not with the world—
but with yourself.

Your relationship with your heart.

Your mind.

Your body.

Your soul.

Your joy.

It's about remembering how to play again.

Reconnecting with the part of you that existed before
responsibility became identity.

It's about deepening your relationships—
with the people you love,
with money,
with God,
with nature,
and with the warrior within.

This is not surface work.

This is reconstruction.

Mental health is not optional.

It is foundational.

Without it, we become a risk to ourselves and those around us.

Yet we ignore it.

Normalize the stress.

Accept the pressure.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

I didn't think about stretching my body or mind in that environment.

There was no guidance.

No recovery.

Until I chose it.

Working with Christopher Rausch, The Kickass Accountability Coach, changed my life.

I learned the basics we often overlook:

Hydration.

Nutrition.

Sleep.

Rest.

Recovery.

Peace.

Because life without peace—
is not sustainable.

And I know the difference now.

Balance is not a luxury.

It is a requirement.

We talk about the right to refuse in safety—
refusing unsafe work.

But we forget we have that right in life.

The right to refuse what harms us.

The right to step away.

The right to choose ourselves.

No one should be punished for protecting their well-being.

Pause is powerful.

Not as an escape—
but as a way of living.

A conscious choice to reset, realign, and return to yourself.
Again and again.

I am still becoming.
Still healing.

Still learning.

Still choosing joy.

Maybe the pieces don't fit together all at once.

Maybe they are built—
moment by moment,
choice by choice.

Like construction.

But this time—
with care.
With intention.
With love.

This time...
we build something that lasts.

I am not rebuilding my life from what broke—

I am creating it from who I have become.

Chapter 9: The Captain of My Own Ship

The moment I realized I was the captain...
was the moment I stopped blaming the storm.

That's going to be a battle.
I can feel it in my body before it even fully forms in my mind.

And wow...
the power of words.

I hear them every day.

“Fuck this, this shit is never going to end.”

“Are you sure the new girl is going to be any good?”

“She doesn't seem to have any experience.”

“Fuck, I need a vacation.”

“My wife spends too much money.”

It's constant.

Not loud enough to stop the day...

but steady enough to shape it.

And I notice now—

I don't hear it the same way I used to.

There was a time I would have joined in.

Agreed.

Added my own version of frustration into the mix.

But something in me has shifted.

Now I hear it...
and I see it.

The pattern.
The repetition.
The creation.

Because that's what it is.
Creation.

Words become thoughts.
Thoughts become feelings.
Feelings become actions.
Actions become a life.

And suddenly...
it makes so much sense.

Why I am where I am.
Why I've been where I've been.
And why I'm no longer willing to stay there.

My superpower isn't controlling the outside world.

It's this:
Knowing the power of my words, my thoughts, my actions—
and choosing them differently.

That's how I got into this boat.

And that's how I'm preparing for my luxury ocean liner.

I smile when I think about that—
because it feels ridiculous and true at the same time.

I am the captain of my own ship.

No one else.

Not the boss.

Not the industry.

Not the past.

Me.

I notice how I see people now.

If someone has integrity—
they're trainable.

That's it.

I don't look for what's wrong first.

I don't lead with doubt.

I see potential.

Unless something deeper—
something intuitive—
tells me otherwise.

And even then...

I don't judge it.

I just see it.

There's something in me that has stopped being surprised by mess.

By chaos.

By what other people call problems.

I see compost.

I see fertilizer.

I see what something can become...
not just what it is.

And I think that's why I don't burn out the way I used to.

I don't work myself into needing a vacation anymore.

I used to.

Push.

Prove.

Exhaust.

Then escape.

Now...

I build space into my life.

I step away before I break.

And I see things more clearly.

Men complaining about their wives spending too much money.
Wives complaining about broke or abusive husbands.

The stories go back and forth.
Around and around.

And I think—
Talk to each other.

Just... talk.

And if you can't—
then something deeper needs to change.

Because staying in complaint...
is its own kind of prison.

And I've lived there.

I know what it feels like.

I'm not interested in going back.

Tonight, I'm meeting Michelle.

And I can feel the shift in that too.

It's not just a meeting.

It's movement.

A conversation about something bigger than where I am sitting
right now.

Business.

Expansion.

A different way of living.

Upscaling.

Streamlining.

Ease.

Balance.

Grace.

Peace.

Inner freedom.

I laugh a little when I think of it as my world domination plan.

But it is.

In my way.

Not force.

Not control.

Expansion.

And I don't need to have all the answers.

That's new too.

I used to think I had to figure everything out myself.

Now I'm learning to sit in the question.

To invite in perspective.

To let things unfold—
instead of forcing them into place.

My mind doesn't stay in one place for long.

It moves.

Kelowna keeps coming up.

Terry's birthday.

The balloons I want to get.

The sparkle I want to scatter.

The way I want to honour him.

And right beside that—
the truth.

I'm not welcomed by his family.

And I understand.

More than I did before.

I wrote about them.

I wrote what I saw.
What I experienced.
What was real for me.

And now I can see—
that was real for me...
but not the whole story.

There are other sides.
Other feelings.
Other wounds.

And I don't need to fight that anymore.

I don't need to defend my place.
I don't need to prove anything.

I can just... understand.

And let that understanding soften something in me.

Not make me smaller.

Just...
less rigid.
Less reactive.
More at peace.

I have become more understanding.

And at the same time—
more fierce.

But it's a different kind of fierce now.

Not fighting everything.
Not pushing against the world.

Just standing in what matters.

And what matters is this—

Reaching people who are ready to change.

That's it.

That's the thread that runs through everything.

And I can feel it growing.

My speaking.

My voice.

My work.

It's not something I'm chasing anymore.

It's something I'm allowing.

Kelowna feels like part of that.

Healing.

Speaking.

Being in a different energy.

And I don't need to know exactly how it all comes together.

I leave that to God.

Not as avoidance—
as trust.

Because my job is to show up.
To listen.

To move when it feels right.

To pause when it doesn't.

I've learned something simple—
but it changed everything.

I take breaks now.

Not because I have to.

Because I choose to.

A walk through the shop.

Stepping outside into the snow.

A quiet moment in the bathroom.

A bite to eat.

A call to a friend.

Small resets.

They matter more than I ever realized.

Before, I would push through everything.

Override my body.

Ignore the signals.

Call it strength.

Now I see it differently.

Overworking doesn't make me powerful.

It disconnects me.

And I don't want to live disconnected anymore.

I want to feel my life.

Even the uncomfortable parts.

Especially those.

Because that's where the truth is.

And the captain of a ship doesn't just push forward blindly.

She adjusts.

She reads the water.

She pays attention to the weather.

She trusts what she knows—
and what she feels.

And somewhere in all of this...
I can feel it.

I'm not stuck.
I'm not lost.

I'm navigating.

And for the first time in a long time—
I trust where I'm going,

Chapter 10: Ladies Visits

Some of the most important moments in my life...
don't look like milestones—
they look like conversations.
I didn't plan the meetings I had today.

But somehow...
they were exactly the ones I needed.

The first was expected—
beautifully so.
A call the night before.

A maybe for today or tomorrow.
And then—
there she was.

Hailey.

A young woman.
An old friend.
A new mom.

I hadn't seen her in years—
since Adam's wedding.
Before life multiplied for her in the most literal way.

Now she has twin boys.

Tiny humans as adorable as cabbage patch dolls.
And a life that has expanded in every direction.

We sat.
We talked.

She brought me mail that had been sitting at her home.
We caught up on present moments, dipped into the past, and
peeked just slightly into the future.

We talked about homes—
roofs, concrete, debt.
Because owning a home often means carrying weight.

She told me she hadn't read my book yet—
only the newspaper article from the *St. Albert Gazette*.

And I smiled.
Because I had a copy in my vehicle.

Of course I did.

Signed.
Autographed.
Kissed.

I handed it to her like a piece of me wrapped in paper.

We hugged when we met.
We hugged when she left.

And in between—
we talked about life the way women do.

Honest.

Layered.

Real.

She spoke about her children.

I spoke about grandchildren.

We spoke about homeschooling, expectations, complications,
and the strange dance between what we plan and what actually
happens.

It was simple.

It was sacred.

Then the phone rang.

Another woman.

Another story.

This one—
heavier.

Mediation.

Arbitration.

Divorce.

Words that carry sharp edges.

Abuse.

Battery.

The quiet, suffocating weight of trauma.

Another friend.

Another mother.

And here's the truth—

I understand them both.

Because I am a little bit of each of them.

And somehow—

none of them at all.

I guide one through life.

I guide another through ending a marriage.

This is my work.

This is my life.

And I love every fucking minute of it.

Because this is who I am now.

Then I return to the desk.

Filing.

Stamping.

Entering data.

Five hours in—
and the pile is still winning.

But help is coming.

Trista starts in two days, and I can already feel the space
opening.

Not just for me—
but for her too.

Because if we don't create space from the lives we struggle
inside of...

we risk drowning in them.

I pause.

The cold bagel from this morning is still sitting there.

I eat it.

Because I'm learning.

Learning to nourish my body.

Learning to support my thyroid.

Learning to listen to what my gut has been trying to tell me for
years.

I'm still waiting—
bloodwork, scans, answers.

But awareness...
is a beginning.

And beginnings matter.

Some days are a mix of holy shit and pure joy.

Those are my favourite days—
when I remember to look for the sparkles.

Because if I don't—
the weight of everything else gets heavy fast.

The overflowing desk.
The endless pipeline of work.
More coming in than going out.

The staple that jams through my boot and into my heel—
a sharp reminder that life doesn't always ask permission before
it hurts.

I swear.
I pull it out.
I go outside.

And I breathe.

Collections calls today.

Not my favourite.

Voicemails.

Emails.

Follow-ups.

Cory says there's not enough rum in the world for this kind of work.

He's not wrong.

But I've learned something—

You can't dilute life enough to escape it.

But you can shift it.

Sparkles work better.

Every time.

Owning a business is not for the faint of heart.

My energy—
my sparkles—
land differently depending on the room.

Some people feel lifted by it.

Some people can't stand it.

That's frequency.

And I've learned something important—

I don't need everyone to like me.

I just need to feel right where I stand.

And when I don't—

I leave.

Music saves me.

Every time.

When I feel myself slipping into a heavy headspace, I change
the sound—

and the energy follows.

Backstreet Boys for a quick reset.

Twisted Sister when I need rebellion.

Slaughter when I need edge.

Spanish music when I want rhythm without overthinking.

Today, it was *Who Will Save Your Soul* by Jewel.

And then—

Feel Before Thought by Sayge Tolo Naa played as Cory told me
I wouldn't be allowed six weeks off next year.

I smiled.

Because everything is negotiable.

Some men just don't understand women who lead.

Lady bosses do.

And as I prepare for June 18—

The stage at the Shaw.

The Empower to Recover Foundation.

I already know my entrance song.

Fighter by Christina Aguilera.

I can feel it.

The lights.

The energy.

The moment.

I don't know exactly who will be there.

But I know exactly how it's going to feel.

Because that—

That is where I belong.

I didn't become who I am in the big moments—

I became her in the quiet ones... when I chose to show up anyway.

Chapter 11: Push and Pull

The real work isn't pushing harder—
it's knowing when to stop.

I've learned not to push myself too far.

It's 3:00 p.m. on a Monday, and the list is still sitting there—
Dollar store.

Canada Post.

Easter gifts.

Tissue paper for soaps.

A package in the back of my vehicle for Chance, Jessy, and the
girls in Kelowna.

Last week's list.

And I'm tired.

I have a 6:00 p.m. Zoom call—
one I paid for.

My money.

My business.

My future.

I'm not fucking this up by pushing myself too far.

Because I know what happens when I do.

Push too far...

and I have to pull myself out of a place I don't want to go back to.

I can hear it in my voice already—
that edge between exhaustion and empowerment.

It's a place I know too well.

I used to reach for another coffee.

Extra shot of espresso.

Push through.

Not anymore.

Now I go home.

I eat something real.

I take my digestive enzymes.

I pull a quilt over my body and rest.

Because rest...

is productive.

Eating before the nap matters.

Preparation matters.

Listening matters.

I'm grateful I don't have a headache yet—
because I know I would if I kept pushing.

My neck is tight.

My shoulders ache.

And it's only Monday.

I slept yesterday.

I used oils.

I did what I could.

But my body speaks clearly.

And I don't always listen.

I used to—

ignore it.

Push anyway.

Run like a vehicle with the engine light on—
hoping it wouldn't break down.

Today...

I choose differently.

Not today.

That's a win.

Driving home, I notice something simple.

On one side of the road—

the snow is melting.

The sun hits it just right.

On the other side—

still winter.

Still white.

Still cold.

Spring is coming.

It always does.

And I can see my future the same way.

A garden.

Wildflowers.

Tomatoes.

Raspberries.

Pumpkins.

Cucumbers.

Lettuce.

Potatoes.

Strawberries.

————

Life growing—
because I chose to plant it.

————

A new barbecue.
Lanterns glowing on the patio.
Furniture that invites people to stay.

————

An oasis.

————

For Ralph.
For me.
For our home.

————

Summer means more lake time.
More farm time.
More friends.

————

Less office.

————

Not what Cory wants.

————

But it's what I need.

————

And here's the truth—

————

Balance isn't a request.

————

It's a decision.

————

He knows what's best for him.

I know what's best for me.

And together—

we'll figure it out.

Wellness matters.

In business.

In life.

To be in good company—

I have to be good company.

That means:

Rest.

Food.

Hydration.

Sleep.

Vitamin C—every single day.

Simple.

Powerful choices.

There's still work to do.

2024 taxes to fix.

2025 taxes to complete.

More grants to write.
More chapters to finish.
More life to build.

And it feels right.

When I get home—
I'll change my clothes.

Work off.
Comfort on.

That small shift resets everything.

Energy.
Frequency.
Focus.

This is what I teach.

Not just in words—
but in how I live.

There are people I help now.
There are so many more coming.

And I don't question where I'm going anymore.

I set the GPS.

And I go.

Because even in the chaos...

I know how to find the sparkles.

And you can too.

I didn't lose momentum when I chose to rest—
I finally learned how to sustain it.

Chapter 12: The Purge and the Peace

I asked for peace...

but first, everything that wasn't peace had to leave.

Before I left for Mexico in December, I had an incredible session with my friend Kelly Wolfe.

We sat together, sharing our healing journeys—

Spiritual Response Therapy,

Bach Flower Essences,

Reiki,

yoga...

and the many paths that had brought us back to ourselves.

I told her about the Equine Spiritual Healing for Humans session I had experienced in November with Michele Keen at Infiniti Trails 4 Healing.

At the time, I thought it would be simple.

Horses.

Fresh air.

Grounding.

What I didn't expect...

was how deeply it would open me.

When Michele asked me my intention—

I froze.

How could I tell her the truth?

That I was terrified of leaving my mom.

That guilt was eating me alive.

That I was craving escape again—craving numbness.

So I texted her first.

And then, when I arrived—

I told the truth.

I wanted relief.

I wanted to feel safe.

Inside the stable, I lay on a table surrounded by six horses—
massive, gentle, aware.

They breathed with me.

They moved around me.

They felt everything.

And I could not ground.

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't root myself.

I couldn't settle.

It frustrated me beyond words.

When the session ended, Michele spoke of my inner child—

ages two, seven, ten, thirteen.

At first, it felt abstract.

Until it didn't.

Because I knew exactly what lived in those years.

Two—chaos, fighting, and trauma.

Seven—leaving my father, my world breaking apart.

Ten—Bible camp... and the year my mom almost died.

Thirteen - rape.

That fear never left me.

The next 30 days, I committed to grounding.

Meditation.

Breath.

Connection.

And something shifted.

Then came March 14.

The Sananga and Rapé ceremony with Carolina Pereira—
someone my friend trusted.

I didn't fully know what I was walking into.

Only that I was ready for healing.

The invitation had spoken of a Blue Lotus Vine Journey—
a phrase that lingered with me.

The blue lotus roots itself in mud,
rising slowly through dark waters until it reaches the surface—
and blooms toward the light.

A perfect metaphor for healing.

But what I was about to experience...
was not soft.

We sat together in a circle, drinking tea, sharing intentions.

When it was my turn—
I didn't hold back.

I wanted to release:
betrayal
resentment
anger
grief
rage

And I wanted to replace it with:
peace
balance
freedom

joy
sparkles

I asked for ease.
I asked for grace.

And very specifically...
I asked not to purge.

Sananga came first.

Two drops in each eye.
“Open your eyes.”

The burn hit instantly.

Like fire.
Like something ancient being cleared.

Tears flooded out of me.
Pooling.
Releasing.
Washing something away.

And then—
I was somewhere else.

Kelowna.
The dock where Emily had been laid to rest.

I walked through the scene—
first responders, familiar faces, energy I could feel but not
explain.

But she wasn't there.

Neither was her father.

It wasn't what I expected.

When I came back—

I felt... clear.

As though something had been wiped clean.

Then came Rapé.

A breath.

A signal.

And then—

impact.

I couldn't breathe.

Not the way I understood breathing.

It was deeper than fear.

Deeper than thought.

Primal.

Then the purge began.

Not gentle.
Not symbolic.

Real.

Deep bile rising from somewhere ancient.

Once.

Twice.

Five times.

I thought I was done.

I wasn't.

As my body emptied—
my mind opened.

I saw my chakras—
dark, heavy, shadowed.

One by one, they shifted.

Black to grey.

Grey to a deep, radiant lavender.

From root to crown.

Transformation.

Then more purging.

Ten times.

Fifteen.

I begged for it to stop.

And still—
something in me knew.

This wasn't punishment.

This was release.

When it finally settled, I collapsed onto the floor.

A pillow beneath my head.

A crocheted blanket wrapped around me.

Hands fanning me.

Voices whispering encouragement.

Love.

So much love.

And then—
silence.

Not around me.

Within me.

For the first time I can remember—
my mind stopped.

No noise.

No looping thoughts.

No chaos.

Just peace.

We shared food.

Fruit. Soup. Connection.

We shared stories.

I gave each person a copy of my book—
signed, kissed with my signature lipstick.

Because that's who I am.

Even in the middle of transformation...

I give.

That night, I slept deeply.

The next day, I rested.

Not because I was broken—

Because I had released something real.

Sananga clears what you cannot see.

Rapé moves what you cannot hold.

And the blue lotus reminds us—

that even from the mud...

we rise.

It was intense.

It was raw.

It was overwhelming.

And it was also...

beautiful.

I didn't find peace by avoiding the darkness—

I found it by finally letting it move through me.

Chapter 13: Before the Cup

Sometimes the hardest part of healing...
is admitting what you're still holding onto.

I've got to admit...

I'm a little nervous about today.

Today is the Blue Lotus ceremony.

It's just a cup of tea.

That's what they say.

And yet...

I already know—
this isn't about the tea.

My mind moves ahead of me, asking:
What am I ready to release?

And the answer comes quickly.

Resentment.

The resentment I carry toward Terry's family as his funeral
approaches.

The tangled web of connections that still exist—
even after his passing.

It's complicated.

It's strange to think of him on the other side... being friendly.
Even after the reading with Gail, even after Kelly shared what
she felt and knew—
it still feels impossible to fully grasp.

And yet...

There is compassion.

For the fifteen-year-old boy who chose a path that led to his
demise.

How could he have known?
How could any of us have known?

I understand that his mom isn't in my fan club.
His sister either.

And there are others—
extended family—
who have cut ties with me completely.

There's a sting in that.
A tinge of betrayal.
A quiet sadness.

And yet...

It's okay.

Because I have also attracted so many people into my life who truly adore me.

Who see me.

Who stand beside me.

Still...

I have to walk myself through what's coming.

His birthday—May 7.

His funeral—May 9.

Dates that sit heavy and sacred all at once.

And I hear Jarrett's voice in my mind:

Terry would want everyone to just get along.

To come together.

To honour what was—

however messy, however imperfect.

So I ask myself:

What would it feel like... to release all of this?

The answer feels simple.

Incredible.

And then the next question:

What am I willing to do to allow that to happen?

Whatever is necessary.

Will there be purging again?

Maybe.

Shaking.

Crying.

Wrapped in a blanket—surrendering to something deeper.

I don't know.

But I do know this:

Tomorrow is Good Friday.

And there is something poetic about releasing what no longer serves me—

right before a day that represents sacrifice, surrender, and renewal.

So what is my intention?

To release:

resentment

confusion

emotional entanglement

And to call in:

Clarity.

Clarity around my speaking engagements.

My audiobook.

My next memoir.

The abundance already moving toward me.

And then there is the practical life.

This job.

This place of perpetual paperwork.

Payroll.

Journal entries.

Bank statements.

January.

February.

March.

Oh my.

And Jarrett.

Where does he fit into all of this?

Could he help me with my social media?

With the podcast?

What would that look like?

What direction are we going?

Sometimes it feels like *Life of Pi*.

Like I'm on a raft—
floating,
not fully knowing where I'm headed.

An animal.
A survivor.

And yet...

I'm not just an animal.

I'm a woman.

Maybe I'm both.

And maybe...

that's exactly what I'm here to discover.

Until then...

I continue.

The paperwork gets done.
The timing unfolds exactly as it should.

I work until noon.
The pump operator comes in to write his exam.

And somehow...
even this feels aligned.

The timing is perfect.

The timing is divine.

And I accept it.

Amen.

I don't need to know what the cup will bring—
I just need to trust what I'm ready to release.

Chapter 14: The Softness of Snow

Growth doesn't always feel like strength—
sometimes it feels like softness where there used to be fire.

Anger serves no purpose.

And yet...

my blood still boils.

Not the explosive kind.

Not the fire that burns everything down.

This one is different.

A slow simmer.

Soft.

Like snow falling in the dark.

I was watching a beautiful movie.

Lost in it.

Feeling it.

Until I wasn't.

A message.

A problem.

Not an emergency—
just something heavy from someone else’s world landing in
mine.

And I get it.

That’s where compassion lives.

In the movie, she was singing,
“That’s what love is for.”

And she’s right.

Love shows up.
Even when it’s inconvenient.

Even when it interrupts.

I find myself driving back to the office...

In a housecoat.

A long warm spring jacket.

Blue plastic sandals.

I laugh out loud.

This is my life.

All I need to do is turn off the lights, set the alarm...
and respond.

It's 9 PM on a Friday night—
except it's Thursday.

And tomorrow is Good Friday.

Time feels blurred.

But I feel clear.

Earlier today, I had the most beautiful session with Carolina.

It wasn't what I expected.

No Blue Lotus journey the way I imagined.

No performance of healing.

Instead—

It was real.

Shamanic.

Grounded.

Sacred.

Smudging.

Breath.

Presence.

And then—

conversation that went straight to the places I don't always visit
willingly.

—

The heaviness on my shoulders.
The tightness in my neck.
The ache in my jaw.

—

The grief.

—

The kind that never really leaves.

—

The loss of a child.
The fear for the ones still here.

—

The echoes of a childhood that looked good on the outside...
but held emptiness inside.

—

Two beautiful parents...

—

And still—
something missing.

—

And then there was her.

—

My Oma Helena.

—

That love—
deep, warm, unwavering.

—

I feel her now more than ever.

—

In nature.

In stillness.

In the quiet knowing that I am not alone.

She holds me from the other side.

And I trust that.

On the drive home, the numbers appeared:

000

111

222

333

444

Over and over again.

Messages.

Winks from something greater.

And for once—

I didn't question it.

I received it.

There's a softness in me now.

A surrender.

Not giving up—

but letting go of the fight.

Ralph is asleep.

Peacefully.

And there's a small part of me that wonders if he'll wake up and worry where I am.

That old pull.

That old responsibility.

But I don't go there.

Not anymore.

I can feel the difference.

I'm not rampaging.

I'm not reacting.

I'm aware.

Maybe a little annoyed—yes.

But also understanding.

And that...

That is growth in action.

The light turns yellow.

Then red.

I brake.

Snow falls softly across the windshield.

The wipers move back and forth.

Water splashes beneath the tires.

Heat blows gently on my feet.

And I see it.

All of it.

Life isn't rushing me anymore.

There is so much to do.

And so much to undo.

And somehow...

it's already done.

That's the peace.

That's what I wish more people knew.

And I will teach it—

to those who are ready.

Because this...

this is a choice.

A choice in chaos.

A choice in challenge.

A choice in how we respond.

I don't doubt the way I used to.

I don't dwell.

I don't run.

I don't abandon myself to keep the peace.

I know my worth.

I know my calling.

And I trust the timing of it all.

The lights are off.

The alarm is set.

The message is sent.

Relief.

Then the old whisper—
What happens next?

But it's quiet now.

It doesn't run the show.

Because I know this:

I cannot control the outcome.

Only my response.

I send love to every woman
holding more than her share.

And I send a prayer to every man
who believes she should.

And then I catch myself.

Because that edge—
that fire—
that “grow the fuck up” energy...

That's still me too.

Just...

softer now.

More aware.

I remember being a little girl.

Grade two.

Mrs. Bonnie.

She wouldn't let us go to the bathroom.

My friend wet his pants.

I never forgot that.

Or the girls in junior high—
the bullying.

The pushing.

The fall.

And then the moment I stood up.

Knocked one of them down.

My mom watching from the window...
smiling.

Proud.

Because I got back up.

I always get back up.

The snow falls heavier now.

Then melts in patches.

Just like me.

Not frozen anymore.

Not hardened.

Softening.

Thawing.

Becoming.

I thought about bringing work home.

I didn't.

I know that slope.

Monday will come.

And I will show up—
like I always do.

Strong.

Clear.

Grounded.

A little more done than expected.

I am not racing anymore.

I am not forcing.

I am not fighting for my place in the world.

I am standing in it.

Life is falling into place
exactly as it needs to.

And this time...

I'm letting it.

I didn't lose my fire—

I learned how to let it warm me instead of burn me.

Chapter 15: Enjoy the Ride

As I turned the corner onto 155th Ave, a blue sports car sat in front of me.

Its license plate read:

2 ENJOY

I laughed out loud.

Of course.

Of course that's what I needed to see.

I had just been thinking about names.

Should I change them?

Protect identities?

Cory becomes Chad...

or maybe Larry...

I laugh again.

What's the point?

What's the purpose?

I don't even know anymore.

And somehow...

that feels like freedom.

Because the truth is—

I'm not writing to expose anyone.

I'm writing to express.

To release.

To process.

To create something real.

So maybe the message isn't about names at all.

Maybe it's this:

Enjoy the process.

Enjoy the writing.

Enjoy the remembering.

Enjoy the becoming.

Let the editor do her magic.

Let the words evolve.

I loved working with Judy.

Maybe I'll work with her again.

Or maybe someone new will arrive.

I trust that too.

I know I'll publish with Becky.
I know I'll record with James.

Those pieces feel solid.
Aligned.
Fun.

And isn't that the whole point?

It feels like driving my green car.

I love her.

We've been through things together —
roads, moments, memories.

There's a dent in the door
from when Mom was in the hospital.
A broken mirror from another day.

And I smile.

Because none of it matters.

They're not flaws.

They're evidence.

Proof that I've lived.
That I've shown up.

As I back into my parking stall—
perfectly straight, I might add—

I feel proud.

Grounded.
Capable.
Safe.

Coffee cup in hand, I smile.

I love my people.

Nonna.
Little Miss Sunny.
Lennon.
Amanda.
Sarah.
Jessy.

All my girls.

My sparkles.

And yes...

I'm one of them.

April is here.

And I can feel it.

Something is shifting.

Blooming.

Softening.

Spring is almost here—

and so am I.

In the elevator, I overhear two women talking.

“I hope you gave him hell.”

I laugh.

“I really hope you did,” I say.

We all chuckle.

And then I hear it.

His name.

Cory.

I pause.

You can't make this shit up.

As she walks away, I glance at her name tag.

Terri.

With an "i."

I shake my head and smile.

I love my life.

Back upstairs, I rewind the movie.

Unsung Hero.

A true story.

A beautiful family.

A strong, gentle woman.

A husband trying to hold it all together.

Children watching... learning... feeling everything.

And God—

woven through it all.

There's a line that lands deep:

"You can do anything... just make sure it's the real you who does it."

Yes.

That's it.

And then another:

“Son, your family... they're not in the way.
They are the way.”

That one hits harder.

Because how often do we forget that?

I watch the father unravel.

His anger spills out.

Sharp.

Cutting.

Loud.

And I see it.

Not just him—

but all of us.

The moments we break.

The moments we believe we're not enough.

He blames himself.

Calls himself a failure.

He wants to protect them—

but ends up hurting them.

Because he's hurting.

She believes in miracles.

He doesn't.

She sees answered prayers.

He sees pity.

Judgment.

Failure.

And then it comes.

The line that splits everything open:

“Just because you had your dreams dashed
doesn't mean I'm going to stand here
and let you crush hers.”

And then the words...

The ones that echo in so many lives:

“You will never be enough.”

The slap.

The silence.

“Leave.”

And there it is.

The moment.

The breaking point.

The place where everything either falls apart...

or begins again.

The hero's journey.

Oh boy...

Do I get it.

Because I've lived it.

I've felt the anger.

The doubt.

The not-enoughness.

I've seen how quickly pain turns into projection.

How easy it is to wound the people we love—

when we don't know how to hold ourselves.

And now...

Now I sit here—

rewinding the movie,
laughing at license plates,
feeling the softness of snow,

and choosing something different.

Not perfection.

Not control.

Not even certainty.

Just this:

Enjoy.

Enjoy the ride.
Enjoy the process.
Enjoy the unfolding.

Because life isn't asking me to get it all right.

It's asking me to be real.

And for the first time...

I am.

I didn't find joy at the end of the journey—
I found it in finally allowing myself to live it.

Chapter 16: Good Friday – A Decision Point

There comes a moment when healing stops being something you work on—

and becomes the way you choose to live.

It's interesting how life can change in a millisecond.

Not the kind of change you plan.

Not the kind you ease into.

The kind that arrives as a knowing.

A line drawn—

not in anger,

not in reaction—

but in clarity.

This is what I will no longer tolerate.

And from that moment...

everything begins to shift.

There's always a choice in how it unfolds.

The slow burn...

or the fast roar.

I've lived both.

I've burned bridges so completely that there was nothing left but ash.

I've also stood there—
holding onto something long after it was already over—

slowly suffocating under the weight of what I knew needed to end.

I don't do that anymore.

I don't burn bridges.

And I don't torture them either.

I end things with clarity.

There is a quiet power in that.

A strength that doesn't need to prove itself.

Discernment has become one of my greatest allies.

The ability to look at both sides—

without distortion,
without attachment—

——

and ask one simple question:

——

Where do I fit?

——

Not where do I wish I fit.

Not where I used to fit.

——

Where do I fit now?

——

This is where the rubber meets the road.

——

Or maybe...

——

the mat.

——

Like yoga, life asks for presence.

——

Breath meets movement.

Effort meets surrender.

——

And in that space—

between inhale and exhale—

——

truth reveals itself.

——

I know that where I am is not where I am meant to be.

——

And yet...

here I am.

There is no resistance in that statement.

No urgency to escape.

Just awareness.

Relationships matter deeply to me.

They always have.

But I've learned that every relationship begins with one—

the one I have with myself.

From that place, everything else becomes clearer.

I no longer chase connection.

I choose it.

I observe.

I feel.

I decide.

Who fits.

Who doesn't.

And sometimes, the hardest truth is realizing—

that someone who once fit...

no longer does.

I don't wait anymore.

I don't wait for someone to call me and tell me I've been chosen.

I don't wait for permission to step into the next version of my life.

I create it.

I create.

I create.

I create.

There is something deeply empowering about becoming the one who chooses.

I look around at the life I've built...

and I smile.

Not because it's perfect—

but because it's mine.

This is my home.
My haven.
My safe space.

This is where life is built—
intentionally.

Not in chaos.
Not in reaction.
Not in constant demand from the outside world.

There are no voices pulling me in every direction.

No roles I am forcing myself to fit into.

There is only me—
moving forward,

placing each piece exactly where it belongs.

Today is Good Friday.

And I have decided—

it will be a good Friday.

That's the thing about choice.

It doesn't require permission.

It doesn't wait for circumstances to align.

It simply is.

I don't need to silence my phone.

I already know whose calls I will answer...

and whose I will not.

Whose messages I will respond to...

and which ones I will leave untouched.

Peace is not something I create by controlling the world around me.

It's something I create by choosing how I respond to it.

After this coffee, I'll shower.

I'll try on one of the new outfits that finally arrived—

the ones I waited so patiently for.

There's something beautiful about that too.

The waiting.

The anticipation.

The quiet knowing that what is meant for me will arrive—

on time.

I'll choose one for Easter.

And this year...

I feel something different.

Not excitement tied to plans.

Not happiness dependent on people or outcomes.

Something deeper.

A steady, grounded joy.

The kind that doesn't need the world to behave a certain way—

in order to exist.

Because the truth is—

I don't know what's coming.

None of us do.

Will the world shift in ways we can't predict?

Will life surprise us in ways we never saw coming?

Maybe.

But I'm not living there anymore.

I'm here.

I trust.

And I move forward.

Today is a good day.

And I am ready...

for whatever adventure it brings.

I didn't find my way by waiting for life to change—
I found it the moment I chose to.

Chapter 17: My Home, My Peace

Peace isn't something I found—
it's something I learned to protect.

I love how Ralph answers the calling of my questions.

I told him I went back to the office last night because of Cory's
text message and phone call.

I didn't answer his call.

Ralph did.

Simple. Direct.

“He thinks he owns you.”

And just like that...

it landed.

It reminded me of someone I knew before.
Another man who thought he owned me.

Wow.

Yeah.

That's exactly it.

You think he owns me.

He's a narcissist.

He just doesn't know it.

Most don't.

They have no idea of the quiet resentment that surrounds them—
the ex-wife,
the former employees,
the current ones,
the people in the industry.

It's interesting.

And I'm always in awe of how my life collaborates to show me
the pieces...

and how they fit together.

Ralph has this steady wisdom.

Calm.

Grounded.

"I can spot an asshole a mile away."

I laugh.

And I find myself in the kitchen, smiling.

Oh, how I love to cook.

It's sacred for me.

I know that what I create is either made with love...

or something else.

And today—

I'm cooking with love.

I'm snipping spinach, letting it soak in the sink, watching it
come back to life.

Some for stuffed mushrooms.

Some for dip.

Goat cheese.

Bocconcini.

Feta.

Chorizo.

Sausage.

Marble.

Cheddar.

Mozzarella.

Tomatoes.

Mayo.

Red peppers.

Green chilies.

Jalapeños.

A little yogurt.

Ground beef.

Ground deer.

The options are endless.

And then my hot sauces—

every one of them made with intention.

See, creativity is how I move energy.

It's how I take what's grinding inside of me...

and turn it into something that flows.

Laundry in the wash.

Another load drying.

Bathrooms getting cleaned.

Floors vacuumed, then washed.

Fresh sheets on the bed.

New pillows.

Everything I am creating in my life is love.

Ease.

Joy.

Grace.

This is my home.

Our haven.

Our safe space.

And no one takes that from us...

unless we open the door and let them in.

So what happens when I leave?

How do I stay safe without running back home from the
madness?

Awareness.

Acknowledgement.

Strength.

And knowing—

I get to choose.

I get to choose my life.

My direction.

My adventure.

And oh my God...

it's fun.

Not everyone gets me.

Not everyone is meant to.

Because I am a gift.

Just like you.

And you can choose—

to be railroaded, dominated, treated like shit...

or you can shut the door.

The front door.

The back door.

The side patio.

————

Wherever that cold breeze is coming in—

————

you do not have to accept it.

————

You don't have to take it.

————

Instead—

————

you tend your fire.

————

Light your candles.

————

And remember:

————

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

————

It really is that simple.

————

There is a beauty in recovery that I am deeply in love with.

————

And I will allow nothing—

————

no one—

————

to take that from me.

I am the keeper of my castle.

My spirit.

My home.

My mind.

Freedom.

Balance.

Peace.

These are the points on my road.

And as I look ahead...

I see the simplicity of it all.

This is the one place I do not allow intruders.

No bullies.

No haters.

No liars.

No cheats.

Not anymore.

I didn't build this life just to survive in it—
I built it to feel safe, free, and fully at home within myself.

Chapter 18: Dirty Laundry

Not everything that demands your attention...
deserves your energy.

I used to think the noise meant something.

————
That if people were loud enough, angry enough, dramatic
enough...

————
it must matter.

————
That the stories being told—
the complaints, the outrage, the endless analysis of what's wrong
with the world—

————
held some kind of truth I needed to pay attention to.

————
But the truth is...

————
most of it is just noise.

————
Dirty laundry.

————
A constant cycle of people airing grievances that don't heal
anything.

————
Opinions without responsibility.
Judgment without self-reflection.

Voices that are louder than they are wise.

And it's everywhere.

It's the old man yelling at two in the morning about how the world has changed.

It's the guy in the back alley making noise, trying to survive in a way someone else doesn't understand.

It's the conversations about why people don't work hard enough, don't care enough, don't live the way we think they should.

It's aging parents and frustrated children.

It's siblings who stop speaking.

It's families that fracture quietly and loudly at the same time.

It's the new normal.

And maybe that's the hardest part to accept—

there are no "good old days" waiting for us behind us.

There is only now.

Turn on the news and it's the same story, dressed up differently.

Who's in power.

Who's failing.

Who's lying.

Who's winning.

Who's losing.

Follow the money.

Follow the mess.

Follow the outrage.

People don't trust politicians.

People don't trust each other.

People don't even trust themselves anymore.

And honestly...

can you blame them?

It's a sad, sad world—

if that's all you're looking at.

If that's all you're feeding.

But here's what I've learned:

You don't have to participate.

You don't have to pick up every piece of dirty laundry that gets thrown in front of you.

You don't have to carry it.

You don't have to sort it.

And you sure as hell don't have to wear it.

Because if you do—

it stains you.

It pulls you into a life that feels heavy, bitter, and disconnected from anything real.

And then...

there are moments like today.

The Saturday before Easter.

We're together as a family.

The smell hits first—

ham in the oven, potatoes cooking, something warm and familiar that wraps itself around you before you even step fully into the room.

There's laughter.

There's movement.

There's life.

Wine and beer are flowing.

Not perfectly poured, not carefully measured—

just shared.

Sara is playing with a bright yellow balloon,

completely absorbed in her own little world.

Grandma Tracy is right there with her—

smiling in that way only grandmothers do.

Soft.

Patient.

Present.

Ralph is deep in conversation with Grandpa Mike,

talking politics like men do,

trying to make sense of a world that rarely makes sense
anymore.

Amanda is in the kitchen,

moving between tasks, pulling everything together.

Matt is trying to coax Sara into the living room,

negotiating with a child who has already decided exactly where she wants to be.

And outside—

Ralph's dad spills wine on the deck and complains about the cold.

Of course he does.

It's not quite spring yet.

It still feels like winter.

And somehow...

it's perfect.

Because this is real.

Not the headlines.

Not the outrage.

Not the endless stream of problems that we are told to care about

—

but can't actually change in that moment.

This.

This messy, beautiful, imperfect gathering of people

who are showing up just as they are.

This is what matters.

I advocate for addiction and recovery

because I've seen what happens when people get lost in the
noise.

When pain turns into escape.

When escape turns into addiction.

When addiction turns into disconnection—

from self, from family, from life.

I know that path.

And I also know the way back.

It's not found in the drama.

It's not found in blaming the world.

It's not found in consuming every piece of negativity that gets handed to us.

It's found right here.

In choosing something different.

Today...

I chose joy.

Not because the world suddenly became better.

Not because everything is fixed.

Not because the noise disappeared.

But because I decided not to give it my attention.

The world can keep its dirty laundry.

I'll be right here—

with the smell of ham and potatoes,
with laughter and spilled wine,
with a little girl and her yellow balloon,
with people who are real, imperfect, and present.

And that...

that is more than enough.

But even in the fullness of those moments—

the laughter, the warmth, the presence—

the world doesn't go quiet.

The noise doesn't disappear just because I choose not to engage
with it.

It lingers.

In the background.

In the body.

In the nervous system that has learned to listen,
to scan,
to brace.

And I've learned...

that it's not enough to walk away from the noise.

I have to return to myself.

Not once.

Not occasionally.

——

But daily.

——

Gently.

Intentionally.

——

With the same care I give to others.

——

Because if I don't clear what I've heard,

——

if I don't soften what I've carried,

——

if I don't come back home to my own body—

——

the noise finds a way to stay.

——

And that's where the real work begins.

——

Not out there...

——

but in here.

I don't need to clean up the world to feel at peace—

I just need to come home to myself.

Chapter 18: The Ritual of Returning

Coming home isn't a place I go—
it's a practice I return to.

It's easier to lay here.

To linger in my bed.

Afternoon naps.

Evening rituals.

I close my eyes and allow the heaviness of the bed to take me.

I turn toward the window—
eyes still closed—

and I am immediately transported.

Back to the lake house.

Where I lay.

Where she lay in my arms.

Where I was safe.

Secure.

Happy.

My mind fills with a soft cloud—
pink and white.

——

I invite it in.

——

Into my eyes.

My ears.

My mind—my racing, racing mind.

My neck.

My throat.

——

Then I bring in a beautiful aqua blue.

——

Into my chest.

My ribs.

My shoulders.

My collarbones.

The back of my neck.

The back of my shoulders.

——

It blends gently into my throat—

——

where the pink still lives.

——

I roll over the other way now—

——

toward the bathroom,

the closet,

the nightlight.

——

This is my ritual.

This is my routine.

I go there daily.

As I write, I rub German chamomile into my hands,

mixed with sweet almond oil.

I think of my grandmother—

my Oma Helena.

In these quiet moments, I realize...

this is how I care for myself now.

This is how I soften.

This is how I return.

I just came from the kitchen.

I took the ham from yesterday's dinner—

the bone—

and placed it into my largest pot.

Black cast iron...

or maybe aluminum.

It's light.

I'm not sure.

I add celery, garlic powder, onion powder, vegetable powder.

I don't have the strength today to chop onions and garlic.

Not yet.

And that's okay.

Today is a day of gentle, working joy.

Earlier, I unwrapped the soaps.

The ones made with honey.

The ones where I pressed bubble wrap into them—

leaving their imperfect imprints.

Lemongrass.

Lavender.

Sunflower.

Avocado.

Coconut.

Almond.

Olive.

They didn't turn out as I imagined.

The wrap didn't release cleanly.

And still—

in their imperfection,

they are exactly what they need to be.

Just like me.

Next time, I'll use a different mold.

Next time, I'll have a different result.

Today holds more Tarot.

More YouTube.

More Instagram.

More LinkedIn.

More emails.

Maybe even taxes.

A thought of going back to work on Monday.

And more time...

savouring today.

Because today doesn't last long.

Someone dies.

Always someone dies.

Unexpected.

A sweet aunt.

A grandmother.

A sister.

A mother.

A dear friend.

So many people touched by her love—

and now touched by her loss.

Grief moves quietly through the day,

woven between ordinary moments.

And still...

I celebrate all that I am.

And all that I have to give to the world.

This is how I help others.

This is how I hold space.

This is how I send love.

This is how I keep going.

By choosing to believe—

that something wonderful is always about to happen.

Even here.

Even now.

I cancelled my flight to Kelowna.

The return no longer fit.

I filled out the bereavement form.

Attached the death certificate.

Listed Jarrett as executor.

I will book again.

And this time—

I will not choose basic.

I will choose economy.

So I can change what needs to be changed.

Because life changes.

Plans change.

We change.

And I am learning to honour that...

as it happens.

In the pink...

in the blue...

in the breath...

in the becoming—

I remember who I am.

And I choose joy.

I don't return to who I was—

I return to the truth of who I am becoming.

Chapter 19: Sundays Are for Surrender

Not every day is meant for action—
some days are meant for surrender.

I'm in an exceptionally motivated mood.

It's what happens when I bake.

Four loaves of banana bread—

chia seeds,
hemp hearts,
different varieties.

Chocolate chips.
Semi-sweet.
Dark.

Coconut, walnuts, cinnamon, honey.

I can smell them now.

As I wait, I decide to take action.

Another letter to the lawyer.

The meeting with the accountant is set for Monday.

I don't like being kept waiting.

And yet...

I wait.

I sent a letter—

an email to Jarett—

letting him know the details.

His presence is required.

I know he'll be there.

He always is.

So I turn to what gives me calm.

Television.

A series I've been watching.

Every family has secrets.

Every family has lies.

Some days, I like to watch other people's—

instead of dwelling on my own.

It makes my life feel less dramatic.

It reminds me...

there is nothing I can do about the current situation until tomorrow.

“Mom... it’s Sunday,” Jarett reminds me.

And he’s right.

Sundays are days of surrender.

They are meant for lying in bed with a blanket.

Banana bread baking in the oven.

Maybe popcorn later tonight.

Likely a glass of wine.

Two loads of laundry—

because it is Sunday.

No vacuum cleaner.

I don't want any noise.

Ralph's going to watch the hockey game

and yell at the television.

I'm not going outside—

it's too damn cold.

Spring in Alberta hasn't happened yet.

The snow is still falling.

I'm not going to the store.

I'm not going to the mailbox.

I'm not going to look at a work email.

I'm not even going to pick up the phone to make any calls.

If anyone wants to talk to me—

they can call me.

It's Easter Sunday.

And everybody deserves to be doing whatever it is that they are doing.

Let sleeping dogs lie.

Let Easter bunnies hop.

Let chocolate be found by children.

Today is a day for celebration and family.

Yesterday was our celebration.

Today is my home time.

This morning, I recorded a beautiful YouTube video—

about triggers, trauma, addiction, and recovery.

There is so much that can be done in one day...

and yet—

nothing that needs to be done.

And maybe that's the lesson.

That not every moment needs to be filled.

Not every space needs to be productive.

Not every thought needs to become action.

Sometimes...

the most powerful thing I can do—

is nothing at all.

To rest.

To breathe.

To trust that what is meant to move...

will move.

Tomorrow will come.

The emails.

The meetings.

The decisions.

They will all be there.

And I will meet them—

clear.

grounded.

ready.

But today—

I surrender.

I didn't fall behind by slowing down—

I gave myself the space to move forward with clarity.

Chapter 20: Dancing Through the Day

Joy isn't something that waits for the perfect moment—
it's something you choose in the middle of everything.

I love weddings.

I love the vows, the music—

the way two people stand in front of everyone and say,

this is it... this is my person.

There's something about that moment—

hopeful, electric, full of possibility.

Love never lasts long enough...

and yet somehow—

it lasts forever.

Life feels the same way.

There are never enough moments.

Never enough time.

Never enough *I love you's*.

And yet...

when it's real—

it lingers.

It echoes.

It stays.

So the next time I go to a wedding—

I'm going to embrace every magical second of it.

Every laugh.

Every tear.

Every song that pulls people onto the dance floor—

whether they planned to dance or not.

Because it's so much better than a funeral.

And there have been too many funerals.

Too many goodbyes.

Too many moments where time just...

stops.

Too many names I don't even want to count anymore—

the ones that already happened,
the ones that feel like they're coming,
the ones I don't even know about yet.

I don't want to count them.

Instead...

I'll count the minutes in today.

I'll let go of the minutes that already passed—

the ones filled with hatred and heartache,
betrayal and bitterness,
regret and remorse.

Those minutes don't get to define this one.

Today—

I choose something different.

Today, I put on *Dancing Queen*

and let myself laugh in the kitchen.

Banana bread in the oven.

Music in the air.

My body moving in that soft, subtle way—

where no one is watching...

or maybe they are—

and I don't care.

See that girl, watch that scene...

Yeah.

That girl is me.

There's something sacred about ordinary joy.

About choosing light—

in the middle of everything that could pull you under.

Today feels thoughtful.

Maybe it's because of the season—

Good Friday,

Easter Sunday,

Lent,

Passover...

——
all these days woven together with meaning

——
I don't always remember in the right order.

——
But I know what they represent.

——
Endings.

——
Reflection.

——
Rebirth.

——
And maybe that's what today is for me.

——
A quiet resurrection—

——
in my own kitchen.

——
I don't want to live another day hurting—

——
or hurting someone else.

——
I know those days will come—

——
the sharp words,
the misunderstandings,
the moments that land wrong

——
and linger too long.

But what comes after?

That's the part I get to choose.

Will there be laughter?

Or will there be more sadness layered

on top of what already hurts?

So I choose this.

I choose to dance.

I choose to dance like it's the last dance—

disco lights in my imagination,

music in my bones,

joy rising up from somewhere deeper than pain.

Every single day.

Because the other option...

is just yucky.

Tomorrow will come with its numbers and responsibilities.

Bookkeeping.

Safety reports.

Bank accounts and credit cards waiting to be reconciled.

There will be tones—

Are you done yet?

It's taking so long.

You're not disappearing again, are you?

I can already hear them.

But maybe...

maybe it will just be a nice day.

No pressure.

No heaviness.

Just steady, simple movement forward.

Actually—

it will be a nice day.

Because I will choose it.

I will not allow another person to rain on my parade.

I will not let anyone take up space in my mind

that they haven't earned.

I will not hand over my joy

because someone else forgot how to hold their own.

This life is mine.

These moments are mine.

And today—

with banana bread rising in the oven

and music filling the room—

I choose joy.

I choose laughter.

I choose to dance.

I didn't wait for life to feel good before I danced—

I danced, and that's what made it good.

Chapter 21: The Limb

And maybe...
that's where the shift really happens.

Not in the big moments.
Not in the declarations.
But in the quiet decision
to choose joy
when everything else could pull you under.

Because the real transformation?
It doesn't announce itself.
It whispers.

Because I've been here before.
Hanging out on a limb—
once again—
holding on tight.

Not because I wanted to win...
and also because I did.

You can want peace...
and still be wired to fight.

That's the truth of me.
I've always been both—
competitive and completely vulnerable.
Strong and soft.
Driven and wide open.

I am not one thing.
I am the integration of everything I've survived.

I would do anything for my children.
I always have.

But this time...
this time it's for me.
And choosing me
doesn't take away from them—
it teaches them how to rise.
And somehow, I know—
when I fight for my future,
I'm fighting for theirs too.
Because when I rise,
they rise.
And something has shifted.
Not only do I want to speak on stages...
I'm ready to read my book out loud.
In rooms.
In front of people.
In my own voice.
There comes a moment
when healing turns into expression.
As I put that request out into the universe,
I surprise myself.
This is my ask now.
Not survival.
Not healing.
Expression.
Expansion.
Joy—out loud.
I am no longer asking to be okay.
I am asking to be seen.

Ralph and I laugh more than ever.

I love it.

Between the minutes of writing
and his hockey game,
we exchange smiles and giggles
like it's our own private language.

Simple.

Easy.

Real.

The kind of connection
you don't have to force.

The right love doesn't feel like work.
It feels like coming home.

Then I look at my email.

TikTok.

Instagram.

YouTube.

I linger for a moment—
deciding where my attention will go.

And then...

I don't choose any of it.

I don't have the energy to engage.

And for once...

I don't feel guilty.

Not everything deserves your energy—
even if it once did.

I smile as each notification pops up.

Not today.

Not anymore.

Today, I rest.

And it feels good.
Rest is not a reward.
It is a requirement.

I sip my protein drink,
letting it nourish me.
I sink into my easy chair.
The dishwasher hums in the background.
The dryer turns another load.
Life is happening all around me—
quiet, steady, supportive.
No urgency.
No chaos.
Just rhythm.
Peace doesn't always arrive loudly.
Sometimes it hums in the background.

The hockey game is tied in overtime.
Ralph is fully in it—
he knows the stats, the standings, the stakes.
I watch him in awe.
I don't even understand the blue line rule...
but I love that he does.
Five on three.
A power play.
A penalty for high sticking.
An advantage in overtime.
What will happen?
Five forwards on the ice.
And then—

They score.

The crowd erupts.

First goal in his NHL career.

You can feel it—

that moment when someone's dream
collides with reality...

and lands.

Dreams don't arrive quietly.

But the work to reach them does.

And I feel it too.

That joy.

That celebration for another person's win.

That's where my competitive nature
softens into something bigger.

Because I know now—

We don't have to take turns winning.

We don't have to compete for worth.

Your success does not take anything away from me.

And mine does not take anything away from you.

There is enough.

Enough space.

Enough success.

Enough joy.

We all get to win.

Abundance is not a concept.

It is a decision.

And maybe that's what this chapter really is.

Not about hanging on the limb...

But realizing
I'm not about to fall.
I'm about to fly.
The limb was never the danger.
It was the place I learned I had wings.

Chapter 22: Grief Doesn't Leave... It Changes Shape

This thing called grief...
it's getting harder
in ways I didn't expect.
Not louder.
Not more chaotic.
Just... deeper.

Grief doesn't always break you open—
sometimes
it settles in
and becomes part of you.

It's why we need the friends who answer the call—
the ones who come
in the darkest moments...
who sit with us
in front of the fire...
sharing stories
of what was...
and what is now.

The people who stay
when there is nothing to fix—
those are the ones
who matter most.

I find myself listening more these days.
Taking it in.
Holding space.

Sometimes healing looks like
becoming the safe place
you once needed.

Until...
I'm the one
who doesn't know how to move forward.

And then...
someone sits with me.

And that's how we survive this—
we take turns
holding each other.

It's strange, this shift in life...
not planning funerals anymore.

For so long,
it felt like I was bracing...
waiting...
wondering
who would be next.

Living in survival means
you're always preparing for loss.

And now—
I breathe.

I feel lighter
than I have in a long time.

Peace can feel unfamiliar
when you've been wired for chaos.

Because instead of preparing for loss...
I'm planning for life.

Birthdays.
Celebrations.
Moments that expand
instead of contract.

This is what healing makes space for—
not just surviving...
but living.

My baby boy
is turning 30.

Jessy and I
are planning it together—

The Man.

The Myth.

The Hero.

And I am so excited.

There is something sacred
about getting to celebrate
the people
you once feared losing.

As I sit here,
cuddled up with Ralph...
I feel it all at once—

The grief.
The gratitude.
The love that never left.

Grief and joy
are not opposites.
They exist
in the same breath.

And the knowing...

How incredibly precious
this life is.

Nothing is guaranteed—

and that is exactly
what makes it sacred.

Chapter 24: Grief Doesn't Leave... It Changes Shape

This thing called grief...
it's getting harder in ways I didn't expect.

Not louder.
Not more chaotic.

Just deeper.

Grief doesn't disappear with time—
it settles into the spaces we've made for it.

It's why we need the friends who answer the call—
the ones who come in the darkest moments,
who sit with us in front of the fire,
sharing stories of what was...
and what is now.

The ones who don't try to fix it—
just stay.

I find myself listening more these days.
Taking it in.
Holding space.

There is a quiet wisdom
that comes from surviving what should have broken you.

Until I'm the one who doesn't know how to move forward.

And then...
someone sits with me.

Healing isn't something we do alone—
even when it feels like it.

It's strange, this shift in life—
not planning funerals anymore.

For so long, it felt like I was bracing...
waiting...
wondering who would be next.

When loss becomes familiar,
you start expecting it.

And now—
I breathe.

I feel lighter than I have in a long time.

It takes time to trust peace
when you've lived in survival.

Because instead of preparing for loss,
I'm planning for life.

Birthdays.
Celebrations.
Moments that expand instead of contract.

This is what healing looks like—
making space for joy again.

My baby boy is turning 30.

Jessy and I are planning it together—
The Man. The Myth. The Hero.

And I am so excited.

There is something sacred
about getting to celebrate
what you once feared losing.

As I sit here, cuddled up with Ralph,
I feel it all at once—

The grief.
The gratitude.
The love that never left.

Grief doesn't replace love—
it reveals how much of it was always there.

And the knowing...

How incredibly precious this life is.

Nothing is promised—
and that is what makes every moment matter.

Chapter 23: The Baton and the Balance

The question isn't whether I'm tuned in.

The question is—

am I willing to tune up?

Because tuning in is passive.

It listens.

It observes.

It receives.

But tuning up?

That's participation.

Awareness is only the beginning—

alignment requires action.

That's stepping forward with intention and saying:

I am not just part of the collective energy... I am contributing to it.

This morning, I felt it.

That subtle shift in the air.

Not dramatic. Not loud.

But precise.

Like something reorganizing beneath the surface.

A recalibration.

Not just in me—

in everything.

Not all shifts are visible—

but you can feel them when you're paying attention.

We talk about awakening like it's this grand, mystical event.

But what if it's not?

What if awakening is actually structure?

What if balance isn't about floating above reality...

but standing firmly inside it?

Real growth doesn't remove you from life—
it roots you deeper into it.

Because today, reality looked like this:

A conversation my boss wants to have.

A structure he wants me to follow.

A system that doesn't quite fit the way I move.

And my first instinct?

Resistance.

Of course.

Because I don't want to be controlled.

I don't want to be boxed in.

I don't want to show up at 6 AM.

(Truthfully, neither does he.)

Freedom and resistance often look the same—
until you look closer.

But then something shifted.

Because this isn't about control.

This is about social contracts.

The unspoken agreements we step into when we say yes to
something.

Employment is a contract.

Time is a contract.

Energy is a contract.

And awakening doesn't remove those contracts—
it asks us to become conscious inside them.

You don't escape responsibility when you grow—
you relate to it differently.

So I ask myself:
Who do I think I am?
Not from ego.

From truth.

What do I honour?

What do I cherish?

What does my soul actually say matters?

Identity is not what you say—
it's what you consistently choose.

Because I can't build a life out of misalignment
and expect it to feel like freedom.

And I can't reject structure
just because it's uncomfortable.

Discomfort is not misalignment—
sometimes it's expansion.

Structure...

might actually be the container my energy has been asking for.

Chaos creates momentum—
but structure creates sustainability.

I've already proven I can create it.

Four bank accounts.

Multiple credit cards.

Foreign companies.

Reconciliations stacked on reconciliations.

And somehow...

I made it work.

I created a system that flows.

So the question isn't can I build structure?

The answer is already yes.

The real question is:

Can I build structure that honours me?

Success without alignment

will always feel like pressure.

Because right now, my body is telling me something.

My jaw is tight.

My shoulders are heavy.

There's tension in my back, my hands... everywhere.

And my body doesn't lie.

It never has.

Your body will tell you the truth

before your mind is ready to hear it.

So this is where the baton comes in.

I can feel it in my hand.

Not literally—

but energetically.

Like I'm conducting something unseen.

A rhythm.

A direction.

A frequency.

I can wave it in frustration...

or I can wave it in creation.

Power is not in what you feel—
it's in what you do with it.

Because belief is a decision.

And today, I choose to believe in something different.

Not perfection.

Not control.

But alignment.

Alignment is not about ease—
it's about truth.

Alignment doesn't mean everything feels good.

It means everything is honest.

So here's what's honest today:

I will meet with the accountant.

I will wait for the email from the lawyer.

I will continue entering the data, finishing the reconciliations.

I will do what is in front of me.

Clarity often looks like
doing the next right thing.

Because today is the only place I have power.

Tomorrow?

Uncertain.

Yesterday?

Done.

Your power has never lived in the past or future—
only in this moment.

And somewhere between the spreadsheets and the structure...
there is still magic.

Magic doesn't disappear in responsibility—
it weaves through it.

It's in the banana bread I made on the weekend.
Still warm in memory.
Still grounding me in something real.

It's in the pause at 10:30.
Coffee in hand.

A breath between tasks.

It's in the quiet thought of family—
of loss, of love, of Easter,
of the strange space where grief and gratitude meet.

The sacred is not separate from your life—
it's hidden inside it.

This is the balance.
Not escaping life.

But standing inside it
with awareness.

Balance is not found—
it's practiced.

Even the word “source” shifts for me now.

On paper, it's deductions.

Numbers.

Government requirements.

But in my body...

Source is something else entirely.

God.

Universal spirit.

The unseen force that holds me together
when everything else feels like it's pulling apart.

What you call it doesn't matter —
what you feel does.

And maybe that's the real awakening.

Not leaving the world behind...

but seeing it differently.

Awakening is not escape —
it's perception.

So today, I don't reject the structure.

I refine it.

I don't resist the contract.

I become conscious inside it.

And I don't wait for permission
to believe in magic again.

Permission was never required.

I pick up the baton.

I lift my hand.

And I remember —

I am not just responding to life.
I am conducting it.
And that changes everything.

Chapter 24: My Own Worst Enemy

There are some lyrics that pull me back into a soft, quiet place.
Out of my head... and into how I actually feel.

Tongue tied and twisted.

That's it.

I don't always have the words.

I get so caught up in them... that I lose them.

Not everything needs to be explained—
some things are meant to be felt.

So I make a cup of coffee.

Except—

the water reservoir is empty.

And I laugh.

Because I'm the only one here.

No one to blame.

No one to point at.

No one to carry it for me.

Just me.

At some point, responsibility replaces blame—
and everything changes.

And honestly... I'm not looking to blame anyone anymore.

I'm enjoying the pause.

Sitting.

Standing.

Being.

Not feeling pulled in every direction for once.

Peace isn't something I found—
it's something I stopped interrupting.

The sink is still leaking.

So I turn on the water and let it drip into the pail below.

At least it's clean now.

No smell.

No chaos.

No pretending it's fine when it's not.

I handled it.

And I smile a little because—

this isn't even my home.

Or maybe it is.

Because I work from home.

Because I build from where I stand.

Because wherever I am... I'm creating something.

Home is not a place—

it's the energy I bring into it.

Espresso.

A little honey.

My last coffee for a while.

I need more water today.

Simple things.

The kind that remind me

I'm paying attention.

Awareness lives in the small choices.

I sit back down.

Back up my programs.

Because I've done a lot of work—
and I'm not losing any of it.

Not again.

Not in any way.

Protecting what I've built
is part of honoring myself.

I pray.

Not perfectly.

Not on schedule.

Just... throughout the day.

In moments.

In breath.

In awareness.

It's beautiful like that.

I don't try so hard anymore.

Connection doesn't require perfection—
just presence.

It's funny.

If I could have seen this version of my life—
me... doing bookkeeping?

I probably would've run the other way.

Tried something else.

Chased something shinier.

But if I hadn't landed here...

I wouldn't be moving toward exactly where I want to go.

Not everything that builds your future
will excite you in the moment.

Most Likely to Succeed.

That's what they called me.

Edmonton Business Women's Association.

And here I am.

Still succeeding.

Just... not always in the way I thought I would.

Success doesn't always look like the vision—
sometimes it looks like persistence.

I'm building something.

Something real.

Even while I'm closing out debt.

Even while I'm tying up loose ends.

Even while I'm laughing at the irony of it all.

It is what it is.

And I'm still moving forward.

Progress doesn't require perfect conditions—
just continued movement.

I sit there, putting checkmarks on a bank statement...

And I laugh.

Because this?

It doesn't bother me.

But it also doesn't inspire me.

It doesn't light me up.

It doesn't spark anything inside me.

And I'm so grateful I know that.

Clarity isn't just knowing what you love—
it's knowing what you don't.

Because I know what does.

I've felt it.

I've lived it.

And when I'm in it—

I am alive in a way that can't be faked.

Full.

Lit up.

Certain.

Alignment has a feeling—

and once you know it, you can't ignore it.

I used to think I was my own worst enemy.

Blaming everything.

Everyone.

Anything that made it easier not to look at myself.

But sitting here...

With my coffee.

With the drip in the sink.

With the quiet.

I see it differently now.

I'm not my enemy.

I'm my responsibility.

And responsibility is not a burden—

it's power.

Because if it's me—

Then it's mine to shift.

Mine to rebuild.

Mine to choose differently.

I don't have to be perfect.

I just have to be willing.

Willingness will take you further
than perfection ever could.

Willing to notice.

Willing to change.

Willing to choose again.

And today...

I choose joy.

Not because everything is perfect.

But because I am willing to see it differently.

Because I am building something meaningful.

Because I am no longer waiting for life to change—

I am changing with it.

Change doesn't happen around me—

it happens through me.

And maybe...

I was never my own worst enemy.

Maybe...

I've always been my own way forward.

And I'm finally walking it.

Chapter 25: The Road Home

I once had this beautiful card.

It looked hand-painted—

a mountain, or maybe a landslide,
covered in every kaleidoscope color imaginable.

It wasn't just a picture.

It felt alive.

Like a waterfall made of light.

Like something breaking open... and becoming beautiful.

I don't remember the words.

But I remember the feeling.

Love.

We don't always remember what was said—

but we always remember how it felt.

I don't even remember if I gave it

or if it was given to me.

But I remember love.

I think of that card now

as I prepare for the meeting with the accountant.

Jarett and I are sitting down to go through his father's taxes.

My stomach is heavy.

That kind of heavy that doesn't ask permission.

The kind that sits in your throat and whispers,
you might not hold it together today.

And still—

I'm proud of him.

So proud of the way he's stepping into this.
Of the responsibility.
Of the quiet strength it takes to be an executor
when you're still grieving the man you lost.

Strength doesn't mean you're not hurting—
it means you keep showing up anyway.

We have the death certificate.

We sent it to the accountant.

We're waiting on the will.

Still waiting.

I don't think it will go to probate...

but I don't know.

There's paperwork missing from the Armstrong property.
A second demand letter already sent.

There are steps.

Always steps.

Healing doesn't remove the process—
it changes how you walk through it.

And yet—

we are a good team.

I smile when I think about that.

Because it wasn't always like this.

We've always worked together...

but not like this.

Not as a team.

Not with this kind of quiet understanding
that doesn't need to be spoken.

Growth doesn't always announce itself—
sometimes it shows up as ease where there used to be effort.

I think about May.

Kelowna.

His father's birthday.

I land on May 6.

And I can already feel the hug waiting for me.

Chance.

Jessy.

The girls.

But especially Chance.

We both need that hug.

The kind that doesn't fix anything—

but somehow holds everything.

Some connections don't need words—

they just need presence.

Because this has been hard.

Really hard.

I haven't cried since February.

Tears for the man who died.

And maybe that's what grief does sometimes—

it doesn't stay loud.

It settles.

It waits.

It moves quietly through your body

until something touches it again.

Grief doesn't disappear—

it softens into something you carry.

There are still more steps ahead.

More forms.
More conversations.
More waiting.
And then—
May 9.
The celebration.
And I feel it in my body
before I can even think it through.
That deep, heavy... ugh.
I try to reach out.
I try to explain it to the boys.
“I’m nervous,” I say.
But the truth is—
I don’t even have the words
for what I’m feeling.
Not everything you feel
can be explained—
and that’s okay.

I drive past City Ford
and memory doesn’t ask permission.
It just arrives.
Our family.
Maya in the truck—
head out the window,
carsick and stubborn.
I laugh.
Because even that feels like love now.
Time has a way of turning even the hard moments
into something we can hold with tenderness.

I remember pulling over once
to help a woman on the side of the road.

Emily was with me.

Always watching.

Always learning.

And then—

the cemetery.

Christa.

And Ralph's mom in the mausoleum.

So much has happened on this road.

So much life.

So much loss.

And now—

it's the road I take home.

The places that hold our memories
also hold our healing.

The sky is gray.

It matches me.

It's not warm yet.

Not even close.

I'm cold.

Cranky.

Tired.

Not just tired—

that deep, bone-level exhaustion
that shows up after the day is done
and doesn't fully leave.

Bookkeeping drains me.

It takes more than numbers.

It takes presence.

Focus.

Energy I don't always feel like I have.

I don't think my boss understands that.

And I realize—

I don't actually need him to.

Not everyone needs to understand you
for you to understand yourself.

I'll go home early.

Make something warm.

Maybe a protein drink.

Something to bring me back into myself.

A green drink doesn't feel right today.

Too cold.

Maybe tea.

Something that softens the edges.

Sometimes the most important thing you can do
is return to yourself.

I'm looking forward to my coaching call with Christopher
Rausch.

I don't think Marianna will be there this week.

Family comes first.

I understand that.

Still—

it's nice to have something to look forward to.

I like how we talk.

Wins.

Challenges.

Truth.

And I've had both.

These last few weeks—

I've had both.

And somewhere in the middle of it all...

I feel it.

I feel like I'm winning.

Not in the loud, celebratory way.

But in the quiet way.

The way that says—

I'm still here.

I'm still showing up.

I'm still choosing how I move forward.

Winning doesn't always look like success—
sometimes it looks like not giving up.

Maybe that's what the card was.

Not something I held.

Something I became.

A landslide of color.

A waterfall of feeling.

A life that doesn't stay contained

but spills over,

crashes,

breaks open—

and still somehow...

becomes beautiful.

You don't just experience transformation—
you become it.

And this road—
this long, winding, memory-filled road—
isn't just where I've been.

It's where I return to myself.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Home was never a place—
it was always me.

Chapter 26: The First Step Forward

I did what I needed to do before the call.

And still... I was nervous.

Not just surface nervous—the kind you can shake off with a deep breath—
but the kind that sits in your stomach, heavy, swirling, whispering *this matters*.

When something matters...
your body lets you know.

So I reached for what I trust.

The cards.

I asked Spirit how many.

Three... then four.

I smiled. Of course. It's never just simple—it's layered. It's always layered.

Life is rarely one answer—
it's a series of unfolding truths.

The first card was for me.

The World.

Completion.

A cycle closing.

An outcome already in motion.

I exhaled.

Because something in me knew—this wasn't just about taxes.
This was about endings.
And stepping into something new.

Endings don't ask for permission—
they arrive when it's time.

The second card was for Jarett.

Five of Pentacles.

Loss.

Sadness.

That feeling of being alone...

But not truly alone.

Help is closer than you think.

I felt that one in my chest.

Because this is his weight right now.

Executor. Son. Man stepping into responsibility most people aren't
ready for.

And yet... he's not alone.

He has me.

And now—we have support.

Even when it feels like you're alone—
you're not meant to carry everything by yourself.

The third card was for Terry and Lisa, the accountant.

Five of Wands.

Brainstorming.

Moving pieces.

A little chaos that can actually create clarity.

Perfect.

Because nothing about this situation is clean or simple.

It's layered, interwoven, unknown.

But that doesn't mean it's impossible.

Messy doesn't mean wrong—
it often means something is being worked out.

And then...

The fourth card.

The outcome.

Wheel of Fortune.

Prepare for the unexpected.

The closer you stand to the center...

the less you are affected by the spinning.

That one landed deep.

Because life is spinning right now.

Papers missing.

Answers unknown.

Timelines unclear.

But if we stay centered...

We'll be okay.

Stability isn't found in circumstances—

it's found in where you stand within them.

And then the call.

All three of us on the line.

That alone felt like a miracle.

Jarett had just made it to Port Alberni in time to get a connection.

Lisa's voice was steady, calm, experienced.

“Have you contacted CRA yet?”

“No,” he said.

“That's the first step.”

Simple.

Clear.

Doable.

Call them.

Get authorized as a representative.

You'll need the death certificate.

You'll need the will.

Step by step.

No overwhelm—just the next right move.

Clarity removes overwhelm—
one step at a time.

We explained what we knew.

And more importantly...

What we didn't.

The possibility that taxes hadn't been filed in years.
Since the divorce.

We don't know.

And we won't know...

Until we know.

Uncertainty isn't failure—
it's part of the process.

"Mom, are you taking notes?"

I smiled.

"Yes. I am."

Of course I am.

I'll send the email.

The CRA contact info.

The app for scanning documents.

This is what I do.
I hold structure when things feel uncertain.
Your role reveals itself
when things feel unclear.

“Any more questions?” she asked.

Yes.

“Can you help Jarett reassess his taxes?”

And without hesitation—

“Of course.”

Relief.

Real, grounded, tangible relief.

Because this isn't something we have to figure out alone
anymore.

Relief arrives the moment
you realize you're supported.

When the call ended...

Jarett smiled.

And that smile said everything.

This is the hardest thing we've ever done together.

And we're doing it.

Together.

Hard things feel different
when you don't face them alone.

There's no rush.

And yet—there is movement.

A meeting set for Friday.

A next step already in place.

I don't overstep anymore.
I've learned that.
I stand beside... not in front.
Support doesn't mean taking over—
it means standing with.
But then the text comes through:
“You'll be there Friday, right Mom?!”
I laugh.
“Of course I will.”
Always.

I step into the kitchen.
Dishwasher.
Simple things.
Plates. Forks. Knives.
Everything finding its place.
And there's something about that...
The knowing.
Because life is like that too.
We work through the unknowing
until pieces begin to fit.
And sometimes...
They don't.
Sometimes it's like multiple puzzles mixed together.
Pieces from San Francisco, pieces from somewhere else—nothing
quite matching at first glance.
But if you stay with it...
Eventually...
You find the edges.

Clarity doesn't come all at once—
it reveals itself over time.

Ralph is in the kitchen.
I can hear the rhythm of chopping.
We both love that space.
And we both love it... differently.
He's making fried rice and fish.
It's never the same twice.
That's the beauty of it.
No sesame oil today—so peanut oil it is.
Life is substitutions.
Always.
Life rarely goes as planned—
but it still comes together.

Instead of stepping into his flow...
I create mine.
Candles.
Smudge.
Incense—rock form, rich, almost intoxicating.
A gift from Melissa.
It makes me laugh.
Because to me... it smells like crack.
And no one else in the house gets that joke.
But I do.
And that's enough.
Because I know how far I've come.
Your past doesn't define you—
but it gives you perspective.

I bring a candle into my office.
Homebody.
I smile.
Because I am.
I love my home.
And maybe...
I need a little less of the world right now.
Or maybe...
It's not the world.
Maybe it's the voices.
The ones in my head.
The conversations with people who aren't even here.

And I know...
I'm not the only one.
We all do it.
We replay.
We rehearse.
We revisit.
Maybe that's healing.
Or maybe it's just being human.
The mind revisits—
but awareness chooses where to stay.

But I don't spiral like I used to.
Now...
I anchor.
Sticky notes on the window.
Little truths I choose to live by:

- Breathe before you speak
- Grow or die
- Stagnation is worse than death
- Choose joy
- Feel everything
- Take back your power
- Protect your peace
- Prioritize yourself
- Keep your word— 100% of the time

And my favorite...

Why are you being so serious?

Growth is built on the truths

you choose to live by daily.

Because this life...

Even in the middle of grief, responsibility, and unknowns—

Is still meant to be lived.

Life doesn't pause for healing—

it invites you to live alongside it.

And today...

We took the first step.

And that...

is everything.

The first step doesn't solve everything—

but it changes everything.

Chapter 27: There Is No Finish Line

I woke up this morning, wrapped my arms around my shoulders, gave myself a hug, and told myself how much I loved me.

And I meant it.

Self-love stops being a practice...
when it becomes your truth.

Years and years of practicing self-love have brought me here—
to a place where it finally feels natural.

Not forced.

Not something I have to convince myself of.

Just... true.

So here is the answer to the question people ask,
but don't always know how to hear:

How long does it take to heal from the loss of a child?

You don't.

I didn't.

I haven't.

And I don't know if I was ever meant to.

Some losses are not meant to be healed—
they are meant to be carried with love.

What I have done...

is learn how to live with it.

Maybe some of the lightness I feel today comes from
yesterday's meeting—
another step forward, another layer of the mess being untangled.

Sitting there, knowing we had someone on our side...
someone helping us make sense of the chaos, the taxes, the
aftermath—

That felt good.

Relief doesn't erase grief—
but it gives it somewhere softer to sit.

Support doesn't remove the weight—
it helps you carry it.

And then there are the people.

Melissa.

Daphne.

Ralph.

Friendships like these...
they hold the Jell-O mass of my life together.

Because that's what it can feel like sometimes—
not broken, not shattered...

Just unsteady.

Moving.

Shifting.

Trying to hold form.

And yet somehow...

it does.

You don't need to be perfectly held together—
just supported enough to keep going.

I'm beginning to understand my relationships differently now.

Less obligation.

Less obedience.

Less shrinking.

More independence.

More truth.

More choice.

Growth often looks like
choosing yourself where you once didn't.

I used to think there would be a place—
a destination—
where I could finally say:
“I've arrived.”

But there isn't.

There are moments.

Aha moments.

Little awakenings.

Tiny clicks where something shifts inside
and you see things differently.

But there is no final landing.

No finish line.

Healing is not a destination—
it is a way of living.

There is still dread.

There are still messages on my phone I don't want to look at—
not yet.

Not before coffee.

Not before I've grounded myself in something steady.

There is still so much to do.

So much life to move forward.

So many pieces to organize.

So many steps to take.

But I am moving.

Progress doesn't mean everything is easy—
it means you keep going anyway.

And more than that—

I am becoming someone who can help others move too.

Someone like me.

Someone who is willing.

Because willingness...

that's everything.

Willingness is the doorway to change.

Healing is a game.

A strange, unpredictable game.

Chess pieces moving across a board you didn't choose.

A mix of Alice and Dorothy—wondering how you got here,
trying to find your way home,
realizing the path isn't straight and the rules keep changing.

But I'm less bitter now.

Less reactive.

More grounded.

Better.

You don't have to understand the path
to walk it well.

And what surprises me most...

Is what feels good now.

Helping.

Yesterday, my friend Devi asked for the name of a grant writer.

“Can I have their number?”

“Yes. Yes, you can.”

And in that moment...

I felt something shift.

That felt better than balancing numbers on a spreadsheet.

And I love when things balance.

But balancing lives...

That matters more than balancing a cheque book.

Purpose is found

in how you impact others.

I think about my family.

Chance—building his roofing company, becoming the man he's meant to be.

Joshua—stepping into something new.

Jarett—finding his way through responsibility and loss.

Jessy and the girls.

Amanda.

Sara.

Matt.

I love helping my family.

I love being part of something bigger than just my own healing.

Healing expands

when it includes others.

And that's what happens when you work with me—
when you choose me as your guide.

I walk beside you.

Not ahead of you.

Not above you.

With you.

A companion on the road to recovery.

Because this path...
it's not meant to be walked alone.
We are not meant to heal in isolation.
You can trust me.
I will empower you.
I will hold you accountable.
I will remind you who you are when you forget.
This—this is my résumé of recovery.

And to those who have already chosen me...
Cheers.
To those who haven't yet stepped into their own power...
I see you.
And when you're ready—
I look forward to meeting you.
Your readiness is not rushed—
but it is waiting.

There is something I'm beginning to understand now—
Healing doesn't arrive all at once.
It doesn't knock on your door and say,
“You're done now. You made it.”
It comes in layers.
In small realizations.
In subtle shifts.
In the way you respond differently
to something that once would have broken you.
Healing is measured
in how you respond—not what you avoid.

It comes in the quiet moments—
When you choose yourself without permission.
When you pause instead of react.
When you stay present with what hurts...
without abandoning yourself.
Because that's where everything begins to change.
Not out there.
In here.
Your life changes
the moment you choose yourself differently.

And the more I sit with that truth...
the more I see something else.
The patterns in my life—
the relationships, the conflicts, the repeated frustrations—
They're not random.
They're reflections.
Mirrors showing me where I have been
over-giving,
over-extending,
overlooking myself.
And once you see the pattern...
you can't un-see it.
And once you can't un-see it...
you are given a choice.
Keep playing the same role.
Or change the rules of the game.
Awareness gives you the power—
choice is where you use it.

And that's where I am now.

Not finished.

Not done.

Not "healed."

But aware.

Willing.

Choosing.

Again and again.

There is no finish line—
only the next choice.

Chapter 28: The Bambi Clause

The one common denominator in all of this...
is me.

Not just me—
but it always comes back to me.

The pattern may wear different faces—
but eventually, it asks the same question:
What am I available for now?

In all my years of helping others,
of studying the humanness of life,
of watching patterns repeat themselves
in different faces, different situations, different stories...

I've come to understand something deeper.

It's not about working for a man or a woman.
It's about how you are treated.

It's about what I call the Bambi Clause—
the unspoken law of the universe.

Karma.

Cause and effect.

Treat people the way you want to be treated.

Simple.

But not easy.

Kindness is simple.

Boundaries are simple.

Living them is where the work begins.

Because here's the truth no one likes to say out loud—

Just because you are kind...
does not mean others will be.
Sometimes, the opposite happens.
You become the one who gives.
The one who bends.
The one who understands.
And slowly... quietly...
You become the doormat.
The danger is not kindness.
The danger is kindness without limits.
For people who do not live by the same code.
They will push boundaries.
Take more than they give.
Expect more than they offer.
And no matter how much you do—
it will never be enough.
Not enough doing.
Not enough giving.
Not enough being.
Some people do not want your best.
They want your access.
It shows up everywhere.
Different faces.
Same pattern.
And here's the shift—
It's okay.
More than okay.
It's awareness.
You begin to see clearly.
Awareness is painful at first—
and freeing after that.

There are people who will not meet you where you stand.
And they will continue...
Until you decide you are no longer available for that role.
That is the moment everything changes.
Change begins the moment
you stop volunteering for what hurts you.
You set boundaries.
You close the door.
You step back.
Not forever.
Just long enough to choose differently.
Because life is a game.
And you are not here to lose.
You are here to play it well.
You are here to win.
Winning is not controlling others.
It is no longer betraying yourself.
That means your schedule may not match theirs.
They will expect consistency
while living in inconsistency.
They will expect accountability
while avoiding their own.
And this time...
You don't fold.
You don't over-explain.
You simply say:
"No. I'll be in at my scheduled time, as we discussed."
And that's it.
They may not like it.
And that's okay.

Because they have a right to their expectations—
and you have a right to your standards.

A boundary is not a fight.

It is a decision.

So you return to the truth:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot
change...

The courage to change the things I can...

And the wisdom to know the difference.

That wisdom?

It's built daily.

In the small things.

Your sparkle habits.

Did you sleep?

Did you drink water?

Did you nourish your body?

Did you step outside?

Did you move?

These are not small.

They are foundational.

This is where your power rebuilds.

Self-respect is built in the habits
that bring you back to yourself.

And then comes the line—

“I'm not doing this anymore.”

A line in the sand.

A separation between who you were...
and who you are becoming.

One choice at a time.

One step at a time.

Because change isn't a crash.
It's a ripple.
Most transformation does not explode.
It accumulates.
And right now—
There is only enough change in the jar
for today.
So don't break everything.
Just take what you need.
Make one move.
And then another.
And another.
And surrender—
not to giving up...
but to becoming unavailable
for anything that asks me
to abandon myself.

Chapter 29: On the Other Side of the Desk

It's different sitting on the other side of the desk.

Across from Trista, I watch as she creates invoices, entering pump slips into Excel with focus and care. Every so often, she pauses to ask a question—always followed by a soft, genuine thank you.

And I feel it.

Gratitude.

Not just for her...

but for this moment.

Cory is out of town, and for once, there are no interruptions. Just space. Just work. Just flow.

And what a gift that is.

Because there's a shit ton of work to do.

And yet—we're doing great.

She's really stepping into understanding pricing now, and it's changing everything. The workflow feels smoother. Lighter. More aligned.

The tedious part?

Excel.

Always Excel.

The kind of work that requires patience, presence, and discipline. The kind of work that builds the backbone of everything else—month-end, accuracy, clarity.

It's April.

And we're working on February.

I'm about 60 days behind on bank reconciliations, credit cards, and the pump tally report.

And logically?

It's manageable.

But the mind likes to play games.

Because there's that date...

April 25.

The invisible pressure.
The voice that says, You have to get this done.

And that's where the shift happens.

Because today, I choose differently.

Attitude must match the champion to succeed.

That's why I'm wearing my Faith Over Fear shirt—teal blue, bold, unapologetic. A bright contrast against the endless snowfall outside in Edmonton.

I am so over the snow.

And yet... here it is.

Still falling.
Still teaching.

I can't control the weather.

But I can control how I show up.

So I adapt.

I check Gmail from my phone, keeping the pace steady while Trista works on the computer. We move together in rhythm—quiet productivity, mutual respect.

No chaos.

No rush.

Just presence.

And something even deeper settles in...

Patience.

Patience is a beautiful place to be.

I love holding space for her as she learns, grows, and contributes
—without fretting about what's next.

Because what's next will come.

It always does.

And then...

The snow stops.

Just like that.

It's supposed to melt in the next couple of days.

A reminder—

Nothing stays forever.

Not the overwhelm.

Not the backlog.

Not even winter.

I think about Kelowna... warmer.

I think about Puerto Vallarta... 30 degrees and sunshine.

And I smile.

Because I already know something deeper than weather forecasts.

Next year, I won't be here.

Not like this.

Not in the same way.

Because I'm building something different.

One moment.

One mindset.

One choice at a time.

Chapter 30: This Is the Life I Choose

It's been an interesting day.

Two YouTube lives.

One for Recover Your Joy—talking about sparkle habits.

The other—Wednesday Wisdom with Kitty.

And my heart is full.

Not the kind of full that comes from doing too much...

The kind that comes from doing what matters.

Fulfillment doesn't come from volume—

it comes from alignment.

I got TeamViewer working on the construction computer today.

That might sound small to someone else—

But for me?

That's freedom.

That's momentum.

That's catching up and stepping forward at the same time.

Progress is personal—

and it deserves to be recognized.

Now I'm on my way to a networking meeting...

Snow falling in Edmonton, roads messy, drive slower than usual.

And I'm okay with that.

Because I trust this:

I will get to where I need to be... when I need to be there.

Trust replaces urgency

when you know you're on your path.

I've been thinking about relationships.

There are levels.

Basement people.

Obligatory. Draining. Necessary at times... but not nourishing.

I have fewer of those now—and that feels really, really good.

Main floor people.

Safe. Steady. Supportive.

The ones who bring comfort and reassurance.

Jarett.

Chance.

Ralph.

Jessy.

Melissa...

These are my people.

And then—

The balcony people.

The ones I look up to...

And who look up to me.

We inspire each other.

We grow together.

We build something bigger than ourselves.

That's where I live now.

That's where I choose to live.

Your life changes

when you become intentional about who gets access to you.

This morning I ordered more paperback copies of *Choose Joy: A Survivor's Guide for Hope*.

And that felt really, really good.

Because it's not just a book...

It's a message.
A movement.
A reminder that healing is possible.
What you create
becomes the bridge for someone else.
I also ordered mugwort and ginger patches...
More soap supplies.
Simple things.
Creative things.
Soul-filling things.
This is the life I'm building—
Intentionally.
A meaningful life is not found—
it is designed.

I don't expect Cory to understand any of this.
And I'm not explaining it anymore.
He's a basement relationship.
That doesn't make him wrong.
It just makes him... not mine.
We have a working relationship.
That's it.
And I'm finally okay with that.
I know my value.
I know what I bring.
And whether we find a way to work together or not—
I'm good.
Peace begins
when you stop needing validation from the wrong people.

Jarett sent the will this morning.

Hard to look at.

Heavy.

But necessary.

There are things to follow through on—companies to check,
details to uncover.

And I see my role clearly.

I guide.

I support.

I hold accountability.

And he doesn't just appreciate it—

He honours it.

That's the difference.

The right people don't just receive from you—
they respect what you bring.

Some relationships increase your value.

Others measure it.

And once you see that...

You can't unsee it.

Discernment is the result of lived experience.

“Soo many mistakes on these invoices.”

That's the text I got when I got home.

Ugh... now what.

And immediately, I can feel the difference in perspectives.

From my point of view—I know my work.

From his point of view—he sees mistakes.

From the eagle view... it's all just information.

And then there's the rat view, the mouse view...
the tiny, reactive, survival perspectives that distort everything.

Perspective determines experience.

It reminds me of a book I read a long time ago about editing—

How an editor doesn't just read words...

they see structure, intention, clarity,
and what the reader actually needs.

That's why I'm hiring an editor for this memoir.

Because I trust that kind of vision.

Scholarly insight mixed with intuitive knowing.

The kind that sees what's really being said—
and what still needs to be refined.

Not criticized.

Refined.

Growth is not about being judged—
it's about being refined.

This morning, my coffee cup says wanker.

And honestly... it fits.

Because sometimes people lead without leadership.

They speak without awareness.

They react without understanding.

And I get to choose how I respond.

You can't control behavior—

but you can always choose your response.

I reconnected with my friend Iva yesterday.

Iva the Diva.

If you read my first memoir—you remember her.

She's unforgettable.

I invited her to a charity function—karaoke for ACES.
A beautiful foundation my friend Dorothy runs.
I'm proud of Dorothy.
She's one of my balcony people.
The ones I look up to.
The ones who expand me.
The ones who meet me in integrity.
And then there are basement people.
The ones who pull.
The ones who project.
The ones who haven't done their own work yet.
And I don't judge that anymore.
I just... see it.
Seeing clearly removes the need to react.
Like Melissa said—
Honour and integrity.
That's how I end this relationship.
That's how I close this chapter.
Not with force.
With clarity.

Timing isn't everything.
It's God's timing.
And something in me has softened.
I'm less impatient now.
Maybe it's the lavender I soaked into my skin last night...
or listening to Cosmic Consciousness with Ginette—
Another balcony person.
She connects to something higher.

And I understand that space.

I feel it.

I'm so excited to see her at the Summit in Whistler.

To hug her.

To be in that energy.

Avalon... it feels magical already.

Anticipation is a sign you're moving toward alignment.

And now—I'm here.

In my space.

In my vibration.

And it feels good.

Peace is not somewhere you go—

it's something you create.

Tonight, I'm going to prayers.

A funeral.

Or rather—a gathering of love.

It's been a long time since I've been in a church.

The last time... was also for a funeral.

They do seem to go hand in hand.

But what I feel now isn't heaviness.

It's connection.

It's honouring someone who has crossed over—

to a place we can't see,

but still feel.

And I understand that space too.

Love doesn't end—

it changes form.

This morning, I'll shower again.
Water over my body—
like a daily baptism.
A reset.
A preparation.
Just like my mornings.
Set the coffee maker.
Sometimes I prepare it the night before.
While it brews, I do the dishes.
Simple rituals.
Grounding rituals.
And it feels good.
Rituals create stability
in a changing life.

I have everything ready for soap this weekend.
Supplies.
Labels.
New ideas.
I wrapped more yesterday.
I'm using a large tray this time—
a bigger batch.
Expansion.
I love being excited about my day.
Weekends feel different now.
Spacious.
Aligned.
Mine.
When your life aligns—
your time feels like yours again.

When I was talking to Iva yesterday,
I told her I'm moving away from this role.

“What will you do?” she asked.

“Another job?”

No.

I'll do what I do... full-time.

“Speaking?”

Some speaking.

And then I explained more.

The healing.

The Bach remedies.

Scalar wave energy.

Working with people... and animals.

Transforming trauma.

Recovering joy.

And as I spoke...

I felt it.

My shoulders dropped.

My jaw softened.

My heart opened.

Truth does that.

Your body recognizes truth
before your mind confirms it.

There are still things to tend to.

I need to book a doctor's appointment.

Follow up on the tests—
my arm, my gut, my body.

And for once...

I'm not avoiding it.
I'm not dragging it out.
I'm looking forward to the information.
Because information brings clarity.
And clarity brings next steps.
Avoidance delays growth—
awareness accelerates it.

This is the life I choose.
Not reacting.
Not resisting.
Not forcing.
Just seeing.
Choosing.
And moving forward—
with honour,
with integrity,
and with joy.
And that...
is enough.

Chapter 31: Beyond the Ego Grid

There is a tension in the world right now.

A pull.

A constant tug-of-war.

Ego against ego.

Tit for tat.

Right versus right.

And it's not just in my world—it's everywhere.

I can feel it in conversations.

In energy.

In the unspoken spaces between people.

The collective is stirred.

You don't have to watch the news

to feel what's happening in the world.

And yet...

At the very same time, there is an opening.

A doorway.

An opportunity to rise above it all—

into higher consciousness.

Not just for me.

For everyone.

Where there is tension—

there is also opportunity.

In my world—

my family, my friends, my workplace—

I see the choice clearly.

I can look through the lens of ego...

It's about me.

My side.

My truth.

My way.

Blinders on.

Or...

I can lift my gaze.

I can soften.

I can see the bigger picture.

Perspective is a choice—

and it changes everything.

Not everyone can do this.

I understand that now.

And while that doesn't make it okay...

it does make it easier for me to choose differently.

Here.

In this moment.

In my space.

You don't need everyone to rise—

you just need to choose it yourself.

Because what I see is this:

People are not coming together in oneness.

Not yet.

Dominance is still loud.

Still leading.

Still fighting to be right.

And I feel it in myself too.
Awareness doesn't remove ego—
it reveals it.

I notice it when I clench my hands.
Tight.
Rigid.

My knuckles sore—
a quiet signal from my body that I've been holding on.
Holding tension.
Holding control.
Holding ego.

Even unconsciously.
Like so many things I've done in life.
The body always speaks—
the question is whether we listen.

But today... I choose differently.
Today, I soften.
I release.
Even in the smallest ways.

A manicure.
A shift in colour.
From deep merlot red...
to something lighter.
Softer.

A reflection of the energy I'm choosing to embody.
Small choices reflect big shifts.

Because I know this:

When I connect to higher frequencies—
higher energy—
I step out of the grid.
That tit-for-tat loop.
That energetic gridlock that isn't just mine...
It's global.
Collective.

You don't have to fight the system—
you can step out of it.

And every time I choose differently...
I shift something.
Not just within me—
but within the field.

Your energy doesn't stay with you—
it affects everything you touch.

We are all part of this shared space.
This collective soup of energy.
And when I add light...
even just a little—
it ripples.
Through my workplace.
Through my relationships.
Through my children.
Through my circles.
And beyond.
Change doesn't start with everyone—
it starts with someone.

One shift becomes many.
Many shifts become movement.
Movement becomes change.
Transformation is a chain reaction.

A bubble forms.
A beautiful, expanding field of loving light.
And I get to contribute to that.
You are not separate from the field—
you are part of what shapes it.

So I ground.
Deeply.
Intentionally.
With Earth.
With water.
With presence.
With Gaia.
Grounding is how you stay steady
in an unsteady world.

Water is medicine for me.
A bath.
A shower.
Even washing my hands.
Simple rituals.
Powerful release.
I let everything I don't need flow out of me—
into the water.
And when it drains...

so does the weight.

Release doesn't require complexity—
just intention.

Because the truth is—

I am picking things up.

We all are.

Energy. Emotions. Tension.

The world is loud right now.

And it impacts the nervous system.

Whether we realize it or not.

You feel more than you think you do.

But when I ground...

When I anchor into the Earth—

I reconnect.

To my higher self.

To stability.

To clarity.

Even in the winds of change.

Stability is something you create—
not something you wait for.

And I trust this:

There is more happening than what we can see.

Divine intervention exists.

In ways we don't always understand.

Conversations.

Decisions.

Moments behind the scenes.

Shifts already in motion.
Not everything important is visible.

I feel it.
Not just globally—
but locally.
In my office.

In my space.
In the subtle dynamics unfolding around me.

There is pressure.
Yes.
But there is also opportunity.
Pressure reveals what is ready to change.

And my role?
Is not to control it all.
Not to fix everyone.
Not to win.

My role is to hold my frequency.
Steady.
Clear.
Grounded.
Your power is not in control—
it's in consistency.

That doesn't mean I won't get triggered.
Or pulled in.
Or feel the weight of it all.

I will.

I do.

But I come back.

Again and again.

To clearing.

To grounding.

To choosing differently.

Daily.

Intentionally.

With awareness.

Growth is not one decision—
it is a daily practice.

Because every time I do...

I step out of ego—

and into something far more powerful.

Connection.

Light.

Oneness.

And that...

is how the shift begins.

Not out there—

but here.

Chapter 32: ID-10-T and Other Human Systems

Systems are solutions to problems.

That's what I remind myself as I sit with a stack of papers—payables, receivables, GST deadlines circling like quiet pressure in the background. The intention is the 20th. The hard stop is the 31st. The Visa needs to be paid before it locks again.

This isn't chaos.

This is a system asking to be built.

What feels like overwhelm

is often just a system that hasn't been created yet.

I sort the papers one by one. No more piles that grow teeth. No more "I'll get to it later." Every piece gets touched once and moved forward—paid, logged, clarified, or followed up.

Simple.

Clean.

Done.

Clarity is created
one decision at a time.

And underneath all of it, something deeper is shifting.

Cory looks at me and asks,

"How are you going to handle the invoices that are wrong?"

"I'll fix them and send revised," I say.

That part is easy.

But then he adds,

"Oh yeah... how are you going to handle it without making us look stupid?"

And there it is.

Not the problem.

The perception of the problem.

I feel the difference immediately. Not tension—clarity.

“Wow,” I think. “That’s easy. I don’t ever look stupid.”

And I mean that—not from ego, but from knowing.

Mistakes happen.

Invoices get corrected.

Systems get tightened.

Nothing about that defines me.

Mistakes don’t define you—

your response does.

But that moment? That’s a character difference.

I’ve seen this before.

Back in my time in IT, we had a term for it:

ID-10-T error.

If you write it out, it spells “idiot.”

But what it really meant was:

User data entry error.

The system wasn’t broken.

The process wasn’t broken.

Someone made a mistake—and sometimes reacted by blaming the system, or someone else, or getting frustrated instead of fixing it.

It wasn’t about intelligence.

It was about state.

Pressure.

Reaction.

Ownership—or lack of it.

Most problems aren't technical—
they're emotional.

That's what I'm seeing now, just in a different setting.
Two operating systems.

Mine:

Fix it. Send it. Move on.

His:

How does this look? What will people think? Will this reflect
badly?

Neither is evil.

But they are not the same.

And if you don't recognize that difference, you start taking on
energy that isn't yours.

I don't.

Not anymore.

Not everything you feel
belongs to you.

So I build structure.

Names instead of "this guy" and "that guy."

Roles instead of "the new girl."

Purchase orders attached to work.

Invoices matched cleanly.

WCB confirmed before anyone steps on site.

No PO?

No payment.

Not because I'm difficult.

Because I'm clear.

Clarity eliminates confusion—
and confusion is where problems grow.

Because I'm done living in the land of:

"I didn't know."

"You didn't tell me."

"That's not what I meant."

Everything gets written.

Everything gets named.

Everything gets tracked.

And suddenly...

Things don't fall apart.

Structure doesn't restrict freedom—
it protects it.

At the same time, life doesn't stop.

Jarett needs tires.

Wholesale.

And just like that—done.

No hesitation. No overthinking.

Family first.

In every moment.

That's another system.

Not written on paper.

But built into who I am.

Your values are the systems
you live by without thinking.

And then something shifts.

I notice it before I even think about it.

I'm humming.

No—singing.

“So long, farewell...”

It’s The Sound of Music, of all things.

Whistling as I move from one task to the next, papers still in front of me, systems forming, structure locking into place.

That’s how I know.

I’ve moved out of stress.

Back into flow.

Flow is what happens
when resistance disappears.

It makes me think about something bigger.

About villains.

About antagonists.

About all the moments where someone feels like “the problem.”

Because earlier, I could have made Cory the villain in that story.

The one focused on image.

The one worried about looking stupid.

But that’s too simple.

Too small.

Because in another version of the story?

I might be the villain.

The one who doesn’t care enough about perception.

The one who feels too direct.

Too unbothered.

Too confident.

And that’s the truth most people don’t say out loud:

You are the hero in your story...

and the villain in someone else’s.

At the same time.

Perspective decides the role you play in someone else's life.

Even in *Beauty and the Beast*, the lines blur.

The Beast looks like the monster—until you understand him.

Gaston looks like the hero—until you see his need for control.

Perspective changes everything.

Understanding dissolves judgment.

So I stop needing a villain.

I don't need Cory to be wrong.

I don't need myself to be right.

I just need the system to work.

And it does.

Because I build it that way.

When you focus on solutions,
you stop needing someone to blame.

The invoices get corrected.

The Visa gets handled.

The GST is in motion.

The subcontractors get names, roles, and structure.

And the noise?

It fades.

Replaced by rhythm.

By clarity.

By a quiet kind of confidence that doesn't need to prove anything.

Confidence doesn't get louder—
it gets quieter.

There will always be mistakes.
There will always be pressure.
There will always be moments where someone reacts instead of
responds.
That's human.
But systems?
Systems hold the line.
Structure steadies what emotion shakes.
And me?
I'm not here to argue about who looks stupid.
I'm here to make sure things work.
And maybe...
Sing a little while I do it.
That's mastery.

Chapter 33: The Place of Purpose

Oh, how I do love the place of purpose.

It feels different here. Softer. Stronger. More honest.

Purpose doesn't always feel loud—
sometimes it feels like quiet truth.

I am learning—really learning—the power of my words... and the agreements I make with myself.

I can see it now.

The way my thoughts shape my world.

The way my beliefs echo back to me through people, through moments, through experiences that feel almost too aligned to be coincidence.

Your life reflects the agreements you keep with yourself.

I am blessed with so many friends.

Reminded, again and again, that the world I walk in is not separate from me... it is a reflection of me.

The outside world mirrors what lives within.

And today, I carry a pen.

Not just any pen.

Your pen.

I carry it with intention. With purpose. With sparkles and joy.

It rests in my hand like a quiet reminder:

I choose who I am in this moment.

Even here.

Especially here.

Identity is not found—
it is chosen, moment by moment.

Because I am going to work...
to the JOB that sometimes feels like JAIL—lol.

And yet... I know better now.

Words matter.

So I pause.

And I breathe.

And I shift.

This is not a jail.

This is a place of purpose.

A place that has supported me.

A place that has provided for me.

A place that is now... completing its role in my life.

Not every place is forever—
some are preparation.

I am transitioning from full-time to part-time.

And even that transition feels like a dance that hasn't quite
found its rhythm yet.

The woman I brought in to support the shift is very part-time.

Her schedule hasn't aligned.

My boss is feeling it.

I can see it.

The pressure.

The frustration.

The need to control.

It shows up as nitpicking.

As pointing out every mistake.

As tension in the space.

And I feel it.

There are moments—real moments—where I want to walk out with a roaring fire in my chest and never come back.

But I don't.

Because this time... I am doing it differently.

Growth is choosing a new response
in an old situation.

I am not burning the bridge.

I am walking through it.

Consciously.

With awareness.

With choice.

Because this chapter is closing... and I can feel it in my body.

That tightness?

That urge to run?

That's not failure.

That's transition.

Discomfort is often the signal
that something is changing.

Earlier today, I sat in the nail salon.

And I smiled.

Because I love it there.

It's not just the nails.

It's not just the colors.

It's the conversations.

The laughter.

The stories.

The shared moments between women who have lived full lives...

raised kids... loved deeply... lost things... found themselves again.

We choose colors together.

We reminisce.

We connect.

And I listen.

Not just to my own conversation... but to all of them.

Every voice in that room carries something.

Problems.

Promises.

Potential.

And I feel it all.

Not as something to fix.

But as something to witness.

That is my gift.

To see people... beyond where they think they are.

Not everything you feel is yours to fix—

sometimes it's yours to witness.

“Give Me One More Reason” plays in the background.

And I smile again.

Because music always finds its way in.

Even here.

Even now.

Joy finds you

when you're open to it.

In the middle of it all, Jarett calls.

He got the information he needed for his dad from CRA.

One more step forward.

It's strange... navigating something like this.

At one point, I didn't even have a social insurance number anymore. I didn't need it.

And now here we are... moving through systems, paperwork, grief, responsibility.

I'm grateful.

Grateful that the accountant—our mutual friend—was still willing to help.

Grateful that the CRA agent was kind.

Grateful that Jarett is stepping into what needs to be done.

There is healing in that.

Action inside grief.

Movement inside something that could so easily keep someone stuck.

Healing moves
when you take action inside it.

And now...

I am tired.

Not just a little tired.

Deep tired.

The kind that settles into your bones after holding space... after creating... after navigating emotion and responsibility and transition all at once.

I sip the caramel milk bar drink from the salon, just enough energy to get me home.

Because I know what I need.

A nap.

Not avoidance.

Not escape.

Integration.

Letting my body catch up with everything my spirit has been moving through.

Rest is where integration happens.

Because what comes next...

Matters.

The church.

The prayers.

The space filled with love and sadness and tears and remembering.

Goodbye.

There is no performance there.

No “be strong.”

No fixing.

Just presence.

And I am readying myself for that.

Not by forcing strength...

But by allowing softness.

Allowing truth.

Allowing myself to simply be.

Strength is not always holding it together—
sometimes it’s allowing yourself to feel.

Kelowna is coming.

May 6th to the 17th.

And I can feel it already.

It’s more than a trip.

It’s a shift.

A space where something new is waiting.
Where clarity will land a little more gently.
Where I will step further into what is already unfolding.

There will be family.

A memorial.

And on the 16th... my son's 30th birthday.

Life holding both endings and celebrations in the same breath.

Life doesn't separate joy and grief—

it weaves them together.

And through all of this...

I return to the same knowing:

I am aligned.

Even in the tension.

Even in the uncertainty.

Even in the spaces that still feel heavy.

Because I am choosing.

Choosing my words.

Choosing my perspective.

Choosing who I am... moment by moment.

The world reflects that.

It always has.

And today, I see it more clearly than ever.

As I hold the pen in my hand...

I remember:

I am not trapped.

I am transitioning.

I am not reacting.

I am creating.

And this...

This is the place of purpose.

And I am exactly where I need to be.

Chapter 34: The Love We Carry

Funerals have a way of bringing people together.

It is love.

Not just spoken love—

but felt love.

The kind that moves through a room without words.

The kind that softens hearts and opens something deeper within us.

Love does not need language—

it is felt long before it is spoken.

Together, we heal.

It's more than mourning.

It's reflection.

It's recovery.

It's a beginning.

Grief is not where the story ends—

it is where a new one begins.

Grief is not the end of love.

It is proof that love was here... and still is.

Grief is love

with nowhere to land—

until we learn how to carry it.

We cry... and through those tears, we gather pieces of that love to carry forward.

Sometimes it's something we can hold.

A rose from the wreath, taken gently before the casket is
lowered into the ground.

A photograph, carefully chosen and brought home.

But even when our hands are empty...

we are not.

We leave carrying love.

You never leave empty-handed

when love has been present.

Afterward, we gather again—around tables instead of graves.

The luncheon.

And it's never really about the food.

Yes, there is coffee.

Meats, cheese, bread, desserts—prepared and shared.

But what nourishes us in that space is connection.

Stories rise.

Memories are spoken—sometimes for the first time in years.

We laugh.

We cry.

We remember.

And in that remembering... something shifts.

We begin to move—not away from them,

but forward with them.

We don't move on from love—

we move forward with it.

The slideshow plays, and time folds in on itself.

Moments flicker across the screen—

laughter captured, love held in a frame.

And the tears come again.

Not just from loss...
but from recognition.
They were here.
They mattered.
They still do.
Being remembered
is another form of being held.

Today, the sun is shining.
There is something sacred about that.
Life continues.
Light continues.
And so does love.
Even in loss—
light finds a way through.

I took a moment to visit my niece Krista's grave.
I stood there quietly, aware of more than what the eyes can see.
Because I know this now—
we are more than our physical bodies.
Energy does not disappear.
Love does not end.
It transforms.
It expands.
It continues.
Love changes form—
but it never leaves.
Her beauty is everlasting.
Her smile.

Her laughter.

Her love.

It lives on—in me, in us, in every moment we choose to remember.

She is not gone.

She is carried.

The ones we love
become part of how we live.

And as we drive to the luncheon for Aunt Rosina, I feel it again

—
Love.

Full. Present. Alive.

We each carry our own memories of her.
Each one unique. Each one sacred.

We honour her in different ways,
but the thread is the same.

Love connects us
even when our memories differ.

I remember her generous heart.

The way she gave so freely.

The beautiful meals she made—food that nourished more than just the body.

And the pickles.

Such a simple thing...
and yet, not simple at all.

Because it wasn't about the pickles.

It was about the care.
The thought.
The love behind them.
It's never the thing—
it's the love behind it that stays.
She welcomed me into her home, again and again.
And every time...
I felt it.
I felt loved.
And that is what remains.
At the end of it all—
what remains is how we made each other feel.

Not the final moments.
Not the grief alone.
But the love we were given...
and the love we now carry forward.
We do not honour them by staying in sorrow.
We honour them by living.
By loving.
By remembering.
By choosing to carry their light into the world.
Love is honoured
when it continues through us.

This is the work.
This is the healing.
This is the choice.

To feel it all... and still rise.

To grieve... and still open.

To remember... and still become.

Healing is not choosing one feeling—
it is allowing them all.

This is how we recover.

This is how we continue.

This is how we choose.

Choose Joy.

And in the quiet moments between the memories and the
conversations...

between the love we carry and the grief we are still learning to
hold...

there are also choices.

Choices about what we continue to carry—
and what we are finally ready to release.

Because love is meant to stay.

But not everything we've been holding... is.

Love stays.

Pain can be released.

Chapter 35: Cutting the Cord

I have been vacillating between answering and not answering.
Phone calls.

Text messages.

Emails.

Each one pulling at me.
And today... I am exhausted.
It is my day off.

I am at a funeral.

I have made that clear.
And still—he continues.
Cory keeps reaching.
Disregarding.

Interrupting.

Pulling at my energy as if it still belongs to him.

Access is not ownership—
and I no longer give mine away freely.

But this moment matters.

Because how I respond to this moment
will shape my day.

And my day becomes my tomorrow.

And my tomorrows become my life.

Your life is built
one response at a time.

So in this moment—
I choose to cut the cords.

I close my eyes.

I go inward.

I ask:

Who steps forward to guide me?

And I feel it.

I see it.

My hands rise—pointer finger and middle finger extended—and

I begin.

Cutting.

Back and forth.

Back and forth.

Like a sewing machine undoing a stitch.

Thread by thread.

Energy by energy.

Release.

You don't have to carry

what no longer belongs to you.

The vision shifts.

A man in a mask.

A sword.

A swan.

And then—

It is done.

Self-discovery.

Personal transformation.

A never-ending quest for knowledge.

This is something I remembered.

The ouroboros, an ancient symbol of a snake (or dragon) eating its own tail, forming a circle.

Life. Death. Rebirth.

Endless return.

The infinity within me.

The knowing that nothing truly ends—
only transforms.

What feels like an ending
is often a return to yourself.

And today—

in the middle of grief,
in the presence of death,
in the honoring of love—

I chose myself.

I chose my energy.

I chose to cut the cord.

Choosing yourself
is not rejection—
it is reclamation.

And in that choice—

I returned to my power.

There is a stillness that comes after release.

A space where the noise softens.

Where the pull is no longer constant.

And in that space... something unexpected happens.

Not a grand transformation.

But a quiet, steady return.

A remembering—
that even after everything...

I am still here.

And I can rise.

You don't need to become someone new —
you just need to return to who you are.

Chapter 36: Still I Rise

It's been a day.

A week.

A month.

A year.

And still—I rise.

Rising is not a moment—
it is a pattern.

Not because it's easy.

Not because I always feel strong.

But because something inside me refuses to stay down.

Resilience is not loud—
it is relentless.

Rising doesn't always look like power.

Sometimes it looks like rest.

Sometimes it looks like silence.

Like not answering the call.

Not responding to the demand.

Sometimes rising...

is choosing peace.

Peace is a form of power.

Grace lives there.

In the quiet moments when someone reminds me of who I am—

And I remember.

So I rest.

Not to escape—
but to return.

To myself.

To truth.

To why I am here.

Rest is not retreat—
it is return.

I am not here to give up.

I am here to rise... again and again.

Joy is not accidental.

Joy is chosen.

Sometimes softly.

Sometimes fiercely.

Joy is not found—
it is decided.

Sometimes it looks like boundaries.

Sometimes it looks like breathing.

Sometimes it looks like cutting the cords that pull at me.

Back and forth...

until I feel myself again.

Every return to yourself
is a victory.

My family is my priority—after myself.

Because when I am grounded...

I show up differently.

Stronger.

Softer.

More present.

They see it.

They feel it.

They understand.

And that matters.

When you rise—

the people around you feel it.

Rising doesn't mean doing it alone.

It means standing in your power

while allowing yourself to be supported.

Strength and support

are not opposites.

Rest is not weakness.

Boundaries are not rejection.

Choosing joy is not denial—

It is devotion.

Devotion to yourself

changes everything.

It's been a day.

A week.

A month.

A year.

And still—

I choose.

I choose to rise.
I choose to rest.
I choose to remember.
And above all—
I choose joy.
Choice is where your power lives.

Rising didn't begin here.
It began long before I had the words for it—
in moments I didn't fully understand.
Moments that shaped how I held joy.
How I protected it.
Some of those moments are still with me.
Waiting.
To be seen differently.
Healing continues
as long as you are willing to see again.

Chapter 37: The Dreams That Still Speak

Last night came in fragments.

Not a single story...

but a collision of memories, emotions, and truths I have carried
for years.

A mishmash of a life I once lived.

I was there again—

in the chaos, in the confusion, in the constant attempt to hold
something together that was never truly stable.

Pieces of survival.

I saw myself doing the best I could.

Trying to raise my children.

Trying to create stability in instability.

Trying to believe things would change.

There was always hope.

Hope that he would change.

Hope that this time would be different.

Hope that the next promise would become real.

But deep down, I knew.

I always knew.

And still... I stayed.

For the children.

For the dream.

For the possibility.

They were always my focus.

Their safety.

Their future.

And beneath it all—

a fear.

That the chaos would take something from them.

That staying would cost them more than I could protect.

That fear never left me.

And there is still a whisper of guilt.

Because we didn't go through it alone.

We all lived it.

We all carried it.

And yet...

They grew.

Strong.

Resilient.

Still learning.

Still becoming.

Just like me.

Because recovery isn't a finish line.

It's a lifelong commitment.

To healing.

To awareness.

To choosing differently.

Even when the past comes back in dreams.

Even when the body remembers.

Tonight, I step into another layer of that journey.

Not because I question it—

but because I honour it.

I may wonder how many layers there are...

But I never question the worth.

Because trauma may shape us—

but it does not define where we go next.

I am an advocate for recovery.

Not because I am finished—

but because I am committed.

For life.

Chapter 38: I Answer to Me

After a hot shower—scrubbing the walls, the tub, every surface

—
something shifted.

That familiar edge rose up in me.

That don't give a fuck energy.

And just a few steps beyond that...

the sharper voice:

Why don't you go fuck yourself.

Not directed at one person.

At many.

At systems.

At dynamics.

At people who think they govern over me... over my time, my energy, my sovereignty.

Freedom doesn't always sound gentle—
sometimes it sounds like truth with teeth.

And here's the truth—

That reaction?

It's not about anger.

It's about freedom.

Inner freedom is not optional for me.

It is something I cherish.

Something I honour.

And because I honour it...

I protect it.

What you honour—
you protect.

That's the fighter within.

So what's next?

Life doesn't stop for revelation.

There are things to do.

Simple things.

Grounding things.

I'm mailing Jessy's package.

Dropping Jarett's package at Canada Post.

Returning a car filter through Purolator that doesn't even fit.

Easy.

Power is not just in big moments —
it's in how you move through the small ones.

This is the part of me that leads.

The manager.

The one who executes.

Who organizes.

Who gets things done.

It's like payroll.

Yesterday, I input everything.

No approval from Cory.

Still — processed at 11:30 PM... which was 12:30 AM in the
company's time zone.

Because systems don't run on excuses.

They run on responsibility.

Responsibility is what keeps things moving —
even when no one is watching.

And here's where it gets clear for me —

There is a difference between a manager...

and an owner.

A manager inputs.

Tracks.

Organizes.

Ensures things are ready.

An owner?

An owner decides.

An owner borrows, lends, receives, and pays what is theirs.

My condo? Paid.

Property taxes? Paid.

Mortgage? Paid.

Phone. Internet. Employees.

Handled.

Because ownership is not about control—

It's about accountability.

Ownership is not power over others—

it is responsibility for what is yours.

And when something goes wrong?

When there's a glitch in the system—

The owner doesn't panic.

The owner steps up.

Solves the problem.

Reassures the people.

Everything is fine.

Because leadership isn't about perfection.

It's about presence.

Leadership is calm in the middle of pressure.

So I ask—

If you are a business owner...

How are you doing?

Really?

How are your employees doing?

When was the last time you sat down—
not to assign tasks,
not to rush through a meeting—
but to actually listen?

To create space where people can speak freely?

Where feedback goes both ways?

Because that requires something most people avoid:

Being coachable.

Growth requires openness—
even at the top.

It's easy to say:

“That sounds like a you problem.”

But what if...

it's potential?

What if it's an opportunity?

That shift—that perspective—

is why I solve problems the way I do.

I don't just see what's broken.

I see what's possible.

Perspective turns problems
into possibilities.

Today is simple.

Intentional.

Connected.

Follow up with people from networking.

Respond to the video producer.

Review his work—find the alignment I’m actually looking for.

Yes... I can look on his website.

There it is.

Page one.

On yellow lined paper.

Because I like yellow paper.

It feels familiar.

Grounded.

Highlighters.

Different colours.

Organized thoughts.

Clear mind.

Clarity outside

reflects clarity inside.

And then there’s the in-between.

Lights left on in the bathroom.

The laundry room.

The hallway.

The kitchen.

Because I’m not done.

Not with the day.

Not with the process.

Completion happens

when you choose to finish.

I pause.

Right here.

On purpose.
Because this matters.
This moment of awareness.
This connection.
Awareness is where choice lives.

There are still things to line up.
My human design session—I need to schedule that.
My taxes.

Inputting numbers.
Estimating cash sales from book sales—some gifted, some sold.
And I laugh.
Because here it is—
Algebra.
The thing I swore I'd never use.
The thing I dismissed for years.
And now?
I'm using it.
Naturally.

Effortlessly.
What you resist
often returns with purpose.

And it hits me—
Algebra and alchemy...
aren't that different.
Both take something unseen
and make it make sense.
Both require structure... and transformation.
Both reveal truth—

when you're willing to work with them.

Transformation requires both logic and intuition.

And that's where I stand today.

In the balance.

Between structure and flow.

Between responsibility and freedom.

Between the manager...

and the owner.

Between algebra...

and alchemy.

And at the center of it all—

I answer to me.

Self-trust is the highest authority.

Still here.

Still choosing.

Still rising.

And no longer asking for permission.

Chapter 41: The Space Between

There is a moment after surrender...

A quiet, sacred pause.

Not quite who I was—

And not yet who I am becoming.

A space between.

Transformation lives

in the space between what was... and what will be.

This is where I find myself now.

Not in the intensity of the journey...

But in the integration of it.

Where the noise softens.

Where the body exhales.

Where the soul begins to speak in whispers instead of waves.

Growth is not always loud—

sometimes it is deeply quiet.

I have walked through something.

I may not yet have words for all of it.

I may not fully understand what has shifted.

But I feel it.

Something within me has opened.

Something within me has softened.

Something within me is... different.

You don't need to explain change

to know it has happened.

There is a temptation, in moments like this, to rush forward.

To define it.

To label it.

To make meaning out of it before it has fully landed.

But I am learning not to rush.

I am learning to sit in the space between.

Because this space...

This in-between...

Is where integration happens.

What you allow to settle...

becomes part of who you are.

It is where the mind begins to catch up with the soul.

Where the body learns it is safe to release.

Where the truth settles—not as a concept, but as a knowing.

I notice things differently now.

Subtle shifts.

Quiet nudges.

Energy moving in ways I didn't fully recognize before.

It's not dramatic.

It's not loud.

It's... refined.

As if my senses are stretching beyond what they once were.

As if I am remembering something I've always known.

Awareness expands

in subtle ways.

I no longer feel the need to prove anything.

Not to others.

Not even to myself.

Because this is not about performance.

This is about presence.

This is about relationship—

With myself.

With energy.

With the unseen.

Presence replaces the need to prove.

There is a deep trust emerging.

Not forced.

Not declared.

But felt.

A trust that I am guided.

A trust that I am supported.

A trust that I am safe to explore what lies beyond the visible.

Trust grows quietly—

until one day, it simply is.

And with that trust...

Curiosity returns.

Soft at first.

Then steady.

I begin to wonder:

What else is here?

What else can I feel...

Perceive...

Understand?

Not from striving.

But from openness.

Curiosity opens doors

that force never could.

I realize now...

This journey was never about becoming something outside of myself.

It was about remembering.

Remembering how to listen.

Remembering how to feel.

Remembering how to see beyond what is immediately in front of me.

You are not becoming—
you are remembering.

And as I stand in this space between—

Grounded, open, and quietly aware—

I feel the doorway.

Not behind me.

But in front of me.

An invitation.

Not to escape reality...

But to experience it more fully.

More deeply.

More magically.

The next level of life
is deeper presence—
not escape.

Because what I once called “other”...

What I once saw as separate or distant...

Is not separate at all.

It is here.

It has always been here.
Waiting for me to notice.
Waiting for me to engage.
Waiting for me to believe.
What you seek
is often already present.

And now...
I am ready.
Not to force.
Not to control.
But to explore.
To step into a way of being that honors both the seen and the
unseen.
To live not just in survival...
But in awareness.
Not just in log

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Waiting for me to engage.
Waiting for me to believe.
What you seek
is often already present.

And now...
I am ready.
Not to force.
Not to control.
But to explore.
To step into a way of being that honors both the seen and the
unseen.
To live not just in survival...
But in awareness.
Not just in logic...
But in connection.
Wholeness comes
when you allow both worlds to exist.

This is the space where the journey changes.
Where healing becomes embodiment.
Where understanding becomes experience.
Where curiosity becomes devotion.
Embodiment is where healing becomes real.

And from this place...
A new chapter begins.

Not because I arrived—
but because I am ready.

Chapter 40: The State of Enchantment

Witchcraft and psychic ability are not merely practices or crafts.

They are a state of being.

An orientation.

It is how I choose to exist within my environment—both seen and unseen.

Magic is not something you do—
it is a way you choose to perceive.

There is a mystical reality that transcends our ordinary sense of the physical world.

And I like being in that space.

I am actively deepening my relationship with meditation, magic, and manifestation.

I was not born into the occult.

I was not naturally predisposed.

And yet...

I am becoming.

Becoming does not require permission—
only commitment.

I understand now that I didn't need to be born with a gift or labeled as "naturally talented."

What I need—what anyone needs—
is earnest effort and dedication.

The more I practice, the more I perceive.
The more I perceive, the more I understand.
Perception expands with practice.

The metaphysical world is often experienced through what are called the Clairs.

“Clair” means clear in French.

These are heightened perceptions—extensions of our five physical senses into something far more expansive.

Sight becomes clairvoyance.

Hearing becomes clairaudience.

Touch becomes clairtangency.

Feeling becomes clairsentience.

Smell becomes clairalience.

Taste becomes clairgustance.

And beyond these...

There is claircognizance—clear knowing.

And clair empathy—deep emotional awareness.

These are not unreachable.

They are natural—just not commonly practiced.

What is rare is not unnatural—
it is simply underused.

As physical beings, our senses are limited.

But as spiritual beings—before and after this incarnation—
our perception is limitless.

I have come to understand intuition and psychic ability in a way that grounds me.

Intuition feels like my middle self processing information from my lower self—
subtle cues, patterns, sensory awareness.

Psychic ability feels like my middle self receiving from my higher self—
information beyond the physical senses.

Both are valid.

Both are powerful.

And both are worth developing.

You do not have to choose between logic and intuition—
you can refine both.

There is a concept within the occult called noir perception.
“Noir” meaning dark.

It is not darkness in the way most people fear—
it is simply the inability to clearly perceive the energy being
manipulated.

And yet... the energy still moves.

Even without conscious awareness.

To me, this is not dark.

It is beautiful.

Because it reminds me that energy exists and flows—
whether I am aware of it or not.

Energy does not require your awareness
to exist—only your attention to be understood.

The psychic witch lives in direct relationship with the unseen
forces of reality.

She communes with the spirits, the rocks, the streams, the stars,
and the wind.

She observes patterns.

She understands cause and effect—
not as theory, but as lived truth.

She sees how one moment creates the next.

How energy moves forward and echoes back to its source.

She sees possibility where others see limitation.

A door... where others see a wall.

Perspective is the difference
between limitation and possibility.

I live in a state of enchantment.

Not because life is perfect—

But because I choose to see it as magical.

The universe is not fixed.

It is composed of infinite possibilities.

Everything is connected.

Everything is in relationship.

And I am part of that.

Enchantment is a choice—
not a circumstance.

Magic, to me, is not illusion.

It is the conscious direction of energy.

It is the manipulation of subtle forces with intention—
to influence an outcome.

Through altered states of consciousness and focused will,
I engage with energy purposefully.

That is magic.

Intention directs energy—
and energy shapes experience.

Reality itself is energy.

Magnetic fields.

Radiation.

Wireless signals.

Ultraviolet light.

All invisible—yet undeniably real.

So why is it so difficult to believe
that energy can move between people?

A thought of someone—and they call.

A feeling about a situation—and it proves true.

Déjà vu.

Dreams that unfold into reality.

These are not coincidences.

They are signals.

What you dismiss as coincidence
may simply be something you have not yet learned to read.

The precision with which I perceive and interpret energy
strengthens my abilities.

Energy carries information.

And when I learn to read that information,
I gain clarity.

Clarity about people.

About situations.

About my path.

And beyond receiving...

I can also send.

I can influence.

I can participate in the unfolding.

You are not separate from energy—
you are part of its movement.

There is a powerful connection within our brainwave states.

Gamma — transcendence, universal love

Beta — waking life, thinking, focus

Alpha — relaxation, visualization, subconscious access

Theta — deep meditation, dreaming, inner awareness

Delta — deep sleep, healing, regeneration

It is within alpha and theta that I do my deepest work.

That is where the psychic witch lives.

Depth is accessed

when the mind becomes still.

To enter these states, I practice.

I slow down.

I focus.

I count backwards from 100 to 0.

If my mind wanders, I begin again.

No judgment.

Just return.

Each time, I begin with an affirmation.

Today, it is simple:

I am curious.

Because curiosity opens doors.

And I have learned...

There is always another door.

Curiosity is the gateway

to everything you have yet to discover.

Chapter 41: Quiet Joy – Held in Peace

On the peak of her home, a robin sang—announcing his presence.

Kelly had told me he would appear to us in the robin.

It's funny, the mixed feelings I had at first.

Annoyed.

Aggravated.

Of course he would be here.

And yet...

As I entered the yurt, something shifted.

The space was soft.

Sensual.

Smoky.

The most beautiful music filled the air.

Colours danced across tapestries that seemed alive in their own quiet way.

Ten women.

Two men.

All of us gathered in ceremony with Grandmother Aya.

It felt as though I had stepped into an entirely different world.

And somewhere within that awareness, a thought moved through me:

What took me so long to get here?

And just as quickly...

I knew.

I am here in the most perfect time.

Arrival is not about timing—
it is about readiness.

I journeyed into a quiet peace that I did not expect.
This was my ayahuasca experience—
held in sacred space,
guided by Grandmother Aya.

There was no storm.
No unraveling.

Only stillness...
and something softer than I could have imagined.

Healing does not always arrive as intensity—
sometimes it arrives as peace.

I entered this experience with intention.
With openness.
With a quiet longing that has lived within me since Emily passed
away.

Not from curiosity.
From knowing.

A knowing that something within this sacred medicine was
waiting for me.

And still...

I expected intensity.

I expected to be broken open.

To purge.

To release in ways that would be visible, undeniable, raw.

But that is not what came.

Instead...

I was guided into a deep state of consciousness.

A place so still,
so peaceful,
that it felt like something inside me finally exhaled.

Not my body.

My soul.

True rest begins
when the soul is allowed to soften.

The kind of rest that doesn't come from sleep...
but from surrender.

Grandmother Aya met me there.

Gently.

Lovingly.

No force.

No urgency.

Only presence.

Only peace.

You do not have to be pushed into healing—
you can be held in it.

And in that peace...

They came to me.

Jarett.

Emily.

What beauty.

I do not remember the details.

Only the feeling.

Only the joy.

And somehow...

that feels like everything.

Not all experiences are meant to be remembered—
some are meant to be felt.

How is that possible?

To experience something so profound...
and not need the story?

To be given connection...
without explanation?

And yet, I understand now—
I didn't need to understand it.
I only needed to receive it.
Receiving requires less effort
than understanding.

Emily was there.

Not in a way I can fully explain.
Not in images I can recreate.

But in presence.
In knowing.
In love.

And it was enough.
More than enough.
Love does not need form
to be real.

For so long, I believed healing had to be hard.
That it had to hurt.
That it required breaking before becoming.
But this experience showed me something different.
Healing can be soft.

Healing can be quiet.

Healing can be a gentle return to yourself—
without the storm.

Not all healing requires breaking—
some requires allowing.

As I continue writing *Choose Joy: The Fighter Within*,
I see it more clearly than ever:

This journey is not about proving my strength.

It is about allowing my peace.

About trusting that I don't have to fight for every breakthrough.

That sometimes...

I am simply held.

You are allowed to be held—
not just strong.

And in being held...

I remember.

I remember who I am beneath the pain.

Beneath the story.

Beneath the years of surviving.

I am here.

Alive.

Breathing.

Feeling.

And for the first time in a long time...

I am not searching for something to fix.

I am experiencing something to love.

Life is not something to fix—
it is something to feel.

This life.

This moment.

This breath.

I am so deeply in love with the experience of being alive.

And that...

is enough.

Chapter 42: The Space Between

I thought the ending of this book would arrive with clarity.
With direction.

With a knowing of what comes next.

But that's not what I was given.

What I was given... was peace.

Not the kind that answers questions—
the kind that quiets the need to ask them.

I don't know exactly what comes next.

I don't know how it all unfolds from here—
Kelowna, the job, the stages across Canada, the book in your
hands.

But I do know this:

I trust it.

I trust the timing.

I trust the path.

I trust the becoming.

Trust replaces the need to control.

Because for the first time in a long time...

I am not trying to control the next chapter.

I am allowing it.

Allowing is a form of faith.

Grandmother Aya did not give me a plan.

She gave me something far greater:

Stillness.

Balance.

And the reminder that I am already held.

You do not need all the answers
to feel safe.

So this is where I leave you—

Not at the end of my story...

But at the beginning of the next version of it.

And maybe that's the point.

Not to arrive.

Not to finish.

But to continue—

With faith.

With joy.

And with the quiet knowing...

That what comes next
will meet me exactly where I am.

Life meets you
at the level you're willing to trust it.

For Emily—still with me.

Always.

BACK COVER COPY

What if healing didn't look the way you thought it would?

What if it wasn't a finish line...

but a series of quiet decisions?

To rise.

To rest.

To choose again.

This is not a story about overcoming.

It's a story about remembering.

Remembering who you are beneath the pain.

Beneath the patterns.

Beneath the life you learned to survive.

Because the truth is—

You don't arrive at healing.

You learn how to live with it.

And somewhere along the way...

You stop trying to fix your life—
and start feeling it.

Inside these pages, you will find:

The quiet moments where everything shifts.

The courage to walk away from what no longer fits.

The strength to sit in the space between who you were... and who
you are becoming.

The realization that you were never broken—only becoming.

This is a journey through:

Grief that softens instead of shatters.

Love that never leaves.

Boundaries that reclaim your energy.

And a life that expands when you stop asking for permission.

Because...

You are not your past.

You are not your pain.

You are not finished.

You are learning.

You are remembering.

You are rising.

And maybe, just maybe...

Joy was never something you had to find.

It was something you had to choose.

Choose Joy.