

INTRODUCTION

I've stopped and started the writing of this book for a whole host of reasons...and every time I talked to someone about my idea for writing it, I would always get a warm reception, a smile and a comment like, "so when is it going to be done?"

Good question...Why did it take me so long to pull it together??? Why all the hiccups?

In the weeks before plunging myself into writing mode, I had to think about all of the pauses, the stops and starts. I could easily make excuses about how busy I was (and still am), that was as good a rationale as any, but after much thought, I realized it came down to this: How I was trying to capture everything was inconsistent with how I was living my life. I was trying to tell the story in a nice, neat and linear fashion. I wanted to line everything up, make this an orderly and structured read for you, the reader. You know "A, B, C...then Z happens." But every time I tried to "organize" my material just so, life would happen – events, things that would divert my attention or time away from writing.

Then, it dawned on me. I was sitting in my car at a stoplight, thinking about yet another way to reorganize the chapters when it hit me: What I'm about to share with you is about life – mostly my life and the lives of a few others...but life is never orderly. Life doesn't happen in an ordered or sequential way, it unfolds with each day, with each moment. Our society and culture tell us what should be benchmarks for life like what age you should finish school, what age you should get married and to whom, what age you should accomplish X, Y & Z. Thus, as human beings *we* are the ones who impose a sense of structure to how we live, but in actuality life, by its very nature, already has its own sense of flow. We need only listen, allow and follow the flow in order to truly live.

Thus, my journey in waking up to what keeps showing up is punctuated by the events that happened over these last eleven years. There are prominent themes of pain and difficulties because what I discovered as major barriers to living my life more authentically had to do with the myriad of ways I had buried pain and difficulty with little regard as to how deeply old wounds – if left to fester, can infect the heart. You will also see a storyline here about my relationship with a friend – Carlos, who impacted the development of content here. His entering into my life is in large part the only reason why this book experienced a revival of sorts – he believed it was important stuff and he spent many hours prodding and poking me along to write. But ours was an unconventional relationship, and so you will glean from it how I made sense of the lessons to be learned through it.

In my process, I allowed myself to shed light on parts of myself that I had not wanted to see...to discover the painful remnants of the self that still needed healing. But more importantly it helped me to continue to keep the heart open so that I might take note and grow from the richness of these experiences we call "life."

You will find that initially, I am talking about situations or patterns of our lived experiences as are our wakeup call, and then my narrative transitions to more “interpersonal” occurrences like emotional triggers or control issues. That’s because once awake, the natural progression is to see more. You begin to notice other patterns to the self that need tweaking or reworking. It’s as if you have expanded now your field of vision – from myopic to panoramic. With eyes wide open, I began to notice how I was doing life, from one moment to the next...paying attention to my everyday interactions with people. And in doing so, becoming much more intentional in my use of language, to whom and how. I started to pay attention to the wisdom of my heart, letting my brain figure out the rest as a matter of action.

Once awake, you give greater volume to your inner voice...listen to it, it has something to say.

And so the story begins...