

BECOMING AN EMOTIONAL EXHIBITIONIST



HOW IS IT THAT SOME PEOPLE have picture-perfect lives in which they maintain fabulous figures, manage successful careers, have perpetually clean houses, take romantic getaways with their gorgeous spouses, lead the parents volunteer program at school, create charming scrapbooks for their children, and always have that blinding smile plastered on their pimple-free, wrinkle-free faces? Please tell me I am not the only one who wonders what sort of contract with the devil these rare freaks of nature have signed.

The truth is that no one is without flaws, regardless of how it looks to the casual observer. Every one of us has secrets, scars, and skeletons. As an energy healer and meditation facilitator, I have worked with hundreds of people who have a great recipe and all the right ingredients for a fulfilling life, but who consistently don't like what comes out of the oven. Their joy is muted, and they often struggle to find meaning among the clamor of jobs, relationships, domestic responsibilities, and other obligations. They *want* to be happy, but they're not.

I know so well how they feel because I have walked the same path. On the surface, it would seem that I have my act together. I am a happily married woman and mother of the most fabulous first grader on the planet. I earn a living as an alternative healer, meditation guide, and motivational speaker, helping people discover their own relationship with the Divine. For the most part I'm a happy camper. But that's just one side of me.

Like nearly everyone else, there is a hidden side to me. To the outside world I am a grounded, confident woman, but in my private moments, I sometimes morph into a raving lunatic riddled with insecurities. How is it that I can be a dynamic woman one moment and a Little Miss SuperWuss the next? Because I *am* both of those people. Some days I am in the groove: feeling great, creating the day as I desire, trusting that all is well, and experiencing life as a blissful romp. Then there are days when I become easily distracted, struggle against every little obstacle, and get paralyzed by fear. At this point my goal is to be a powerful, spiritual beacon as often as possible and minimize (dare I say eliminate?!) time spent as a powerless, whiny weenie.

Opening the Kimono is a tell-all, diary, rant, confession, and healing guide all rolled into one. Writing it was like going to therapy each and every day. I describe how my life isn't always fun, how I sometimes make terrible choices, how insecure I can be, and how I work to heal old childhood wounds. I also share how life is a glorious gift filled with amazing opportunities for happiness, growth and recovery despite the challenges it sometimes brings.

I think we all wear kimonos of some kind. A kimono is an exquisitely adorned, multi-layered garment that completely covers one's nakedness, one's essence. Similarly, we wrap ourselves tightly in layers of propriety, calculation and protection, never allowing anyone to see us at our most vulnerable. By doing so, we insulate our fragile interior while presenting an appealing, socially acceptable exterior for the judging eyes of the outside world. *Opening the Kimono* is about exposing our soft underbellies and the power

that comes from that act of courage. Through opening my kimono I have become healthier, more present, and best of all, more joyful than I ever dreamed possible.

By baring my gunk for all to see I have freed myself from its chokehold. I reveal secrets I've kept from family and friends for decades and dig into deeply buried emotional traumas. My stories, raw and intimate, give a private glimpse of my innermost thoughts and feelings regarding my mother's illness and death, marriage and sex, parenting, addiction, career ups and downs, and a lifelong battle with weight.

You will read all sorts of icky stuff, every bit of which was terrifying to put down on paper. In fact, I made a promise to myself I would not write anything that didn't scare the crap out of me. In the process, I learned that diving into the scary stuff wasn't so bad after all. On the contrary, life got juicier when I walked through the fire to conquer my biggest demons. Living and speaking the truth were therapeutic, empowering and liberating even though it terrified me and sometimes made me seem like a crazy person.

Over the years I have undergone major transformations and experienced dramatic shifts in consciousness through awareness, honesty, faith, and good old-fashioned guts. I have gotten closer to Spirit as I know It and have made some fairly decent choices. Hopefully I will show that one can be deeply spiritual while being irreverent, sassy, sexy, and sometimes downright crass.

Make no mistake; I am not professing to know all there is about living the perfect life. In fact, it often seems I have more break-downs than breakthroughs. As you read my stories and the lessons learned, I give you full permission to take what I say as complete bunk. I'm very confident in my belief system and have no problem with someone thinking I don't know what the heck I'm talking about.

Having always encouraged my students and clients to practice discernment, I now suggest the same for you. Run everything through your own filter and take only those lessons with which

INTRODUCTION

you resonate. Read each chapter like you are going through the racks at your favorite department store. Find the gems you love and take them with you; leave those that don't quite fit your belief, style, body or budget. I trust you will find a few nuggets to assist you on your journey toward a happier, healthier, and more meaningful life.

It is my fervent wish that while reading my tale, you recognize your own experiences and find inspiration, comfort, and guidance as you walk your personal path. At its core, *Opening the Kimono* is a celebration of life, affirming that each of us is a spiritual being destined to revel in joy, beauty and love. This isn't a dress rehearsal, baby, so let's get out there and start living juicy!