

HER PHOENIX RISING

A JOURNEY TO HEALTH AND
HEALING THROUGH SELF-LOVE
CHRISTIN COLLINS AUTHOR'S NOTE

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Smack dab in the middle of my life, I found myself going through a modern-day mid-life crisis. Fifty years in hot pursuit of happiness, wealth, tropical vacations, fancy things, a loving marriage, and all the glitter and gold that we pursue during our time on this planet.

I had it all.

Have you ever been on vacation, but instead of being present and enjoying it, you were planning your next trip? Or three weeks after bringing home that upgraded car you thought would be the best thing ever, you found yourself starting to fantasize about the next car you'd get in three years once the lease on this one was up? How about that promotion at work or—better yet—a pay raise?

This was literally me. The minute I obtained that new purse or drank that very delicious and expensive bottle of wine, I was searching for what would be next. The more I seemed to consume, the hungrier I found myself to be

This type of consumption isn't sustainable, and something deep inside of me finally got my attention. I honestly forget which disappointment had just occurred, or what thing I was trying to control that blew up in my face. However, one day right around my fiftieth birthday, I heard these incredibly clear questions bubble up from inside of me.

What's the purpose of all of this?

Why are we here?

Is this all there is?

Life can be insane. I felt like I was perpetually on a gerbil wheel, spinning round and round and round with no clear destination in sight, and certainly not leading to true meaning and satiation. This self-realization caused me to pause.

I mean really, truly pause.

I was excelling at work, incredibly involved in serving my community, and focused on being loving and generous. My family was equally amazing, my marriage was incredible, and my surroundings were plush. So what was missing? Why was I constantly searching for the next thing? And why was my health far from thriving? All of these questions opened the path to an incredible journey.

This book is my reflection of my journey and how it has led to more vibrant health and personal wellbeing. It documents my navigation toward true health, which required intense physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual collaboration.

These stories share how I've learned to sit with myself, and get really, really comfortable in my own skin.

To know, love, and forgive myself, and those who have hurt me.

To release judging others.

To sit in the present moment and let go of what I don't control.

To find my inner connectivity, voice, and wisdom.

I had to stop allowing distractions to prevent me from reconnecting with my inner knowing and let the rest magically unfold. On this journey, I've met many people who, like me, are searching. Sometimes, exactly what they're searching for is unclear. Or, perhaps, they are too distracted and busy to even notice they're trying everything and anything to fill a deeply rooted inner void.

Something has brought this book into your life, whether it was a friend who suggested it, a post you saw on social media, or a gift from the universe. Are you open to finding the root cause of your void, take a pause, sit with it, and heal? In order to find true health and happiness, we must each make an authentic connection to ourselves, which involves both self-love and introspection. I believe it's from this place of honesty and wholeness that we can become who we were created to be.

These stories are an act of healing. I share all of this without shame, sadness, or ego in hopes that when you absorb them,

something inside of you stirs. My life's purpose is to achieve and inspire awakening. I'm on the discovery path to actualize this purpose, experience total wellbeing, stop filling my void with external stimuli, and become whole through self-love, care, and actualization. May this collection of stories inspire you as you begin or continue your journey.

be.

love.

CC

MEGHAN'S INSPIRATION

Late 2015

It was a warm, southwest Florida evening, and I sat on my back lanai with my husband, David, and stepdaughter, Meghan, taking in the damp air, the smell of the salty waterway, and the sounds of nature settling in for the evening. The rustling of the wind in the trees, soft splashing of the water against the dock, and the whispering of crickets created a symphony of calmness and serenity. The sun set behind us as I exhaled with fullness and that pleasant, tired feeling you get when you've put in another full day and can marvel at your output.

David has been my biggest supporter since the day I met him twenty years earlier on a blind date on which neither of us wanted to go. His steady, calm, intuitive support laid a foundation for me so that I could take risks for my own personal growth. While he encouraged me, he also kept me tethered to reality. Without David, I would've come out of the gate too hot and intense and would have crashed and burned quickly.

Another gift that David gave me was the opportunity to create a family with his two beautiful children. I met the kids when Brendan was seven and Meghan was five. Since then, I've soaked up the opportunity to be a part of their growth and upbringing. My journey as a stepmom has been one of my greatest joys, and this particular pleasant Florida night was one of those extra special moments that ripped my heart wide open and planted seeds that would affect me for decades to come.

Meghan was working toward her master's degree in clinical social work. Since meeting her fifteen years earlier, she had developed a knack for saying the most profoundly deep things in a quiet, concise manner; they were like atomic bombs of wisdom, coming out of her tiny body with big blue eyes. Throughout the years, these one-liners would occasionally arise, and I would stop dead in my tracks. That night, she said, "People are on their own journey, healing from early experiences, and finding their way."

Wait. . . what did she just say? How does she know that? I'm more than twenty-five years older than her, and I just figured that out last week!

What a blessing to share life with such an old soul. I had no doubt that our connection wasn't an accident. We were meant to walk this lifetime together, and I cherished the opportunity to be a Collins.

As David, Meghan, and I sat out back, we reflected on another hardship that I had navigated and learned from. It wasn't often that the three of us had time to sit together at home,

delve deep into conversation, and celebrate the reflection. Fortunately, this was one of those very special evenings. As we were concluding our deep dive into the wonder of the journey, Meghan looked at me with her immense kindness and compassion and said quietly, “It’s amazing what you’ve been through throughout your life. And you not only survived but have grown through it all to become as successful as you are. No one knows this about you. Your life looks so easy and carefree from the outside. You would help inspire so many people if they had any idea what you’ve overcome. You should share your stories and write a book. It would inspire others. They’d know that if you could do it, they can, too.”

Boom.

I felt like the whole planet had just shifted as I let her words sink in. Deep. I had a soft spot for helping others, so if there was anything I could do to support someone else’s growth, I was in.

She was right. She was always right. My life did appear rather fun and easy from the outside. Don’t get me wrong, sometimes it was. But I’d also been through a number of major life experiences that were incredibly difficult. Not one or two, but many. Yet, there I sat, stronger and more alive than ever, giving thanks for the opportunity to experience and grow from my wounds.

That was the moment that planted the seed for this book.

“You should write a book. You should share your stories.” I’d

heard it before—including from David—but I hadn't been ready to open myself up to the idea. That humid Florida night, as we sat together on the back lanai, this book idea actually began to grow.