

## FOREWORD

### *An Important Message to Survivors*

This ground-breaking poetic memoir takes you on Robin Brooks's deeply personal journey of healing. Travelling into the abyss of her past, exploring the depths of her experiences with brutal incest, violence, and torture, it follows her awe-inspiring quest for the uncovering of her authentic self. With enormous courage, vulnerability, and indomitable spirit, she invites you to bear witness to the painfully intimate truths of a child growing up in a house of horrors. Robin allows you, the reader, to stand by her side as she digs down into her psyche and soul, sharing from her deepest self a voyage of many years.

This poetic memoir is unique in that it is not only a record of Robin's pain and anguish, but also a testament to how she survived, healed, and became whole. Her fervent

desire is for this book to be a healing vehicle for you. Her hope is that these poems will touch and resonate with your own secret past, a past that your heart and mind hold in waiting for you to awaken to and acknowledge.

If you are holding this book in your hands and reading these words, know for certain that there is a part of you that desperately wants to explore your own hidden story. Robin's memoir may help guide and encourage you. It may enable you to move from the silent dark shadows where your untold and unheard pain resides to then travel on an inner journey to greater self-awareness and healing. This memoir is Robin's gift to us all.

Joy, light, and fulfillment are your birthright as you move towards your authentic self. The details of your own life may be quite different from Robin's. But the depth of feeling and experience she so courageously unravels will touch you to the very core of your being. You will know in your heart that you are not alone in your feelings of shame, humiliation, doubt, and confusion.

#### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is not a book to read from beginning to end. Rather, it is one that draws you to search out those themes that speak to what you are feeling at any given time.

While Robin's memoir appears to be written in linear form as it moves from one stage of emotion and experience

to the next, healing is certainly never linear. Although there is a general sense of progression from despair to wholeness, the journey to healing more closely resembles a big jigsaw puzzle. You might find yourself focusing on a particular section at one point, with pieces fitting here or there, but then you might be drawn to another part of the puzzle entirely as feelings and memories emerge. In this way you acknowledge reverence and respect for what your inner psyche is truly ready and desiring to explore.

In the healing process, there is a general sense of continuity from deep darkness to emerging light, as well as increasing skill at finding and using a set of healing tools. Emotional triggers may indeed evoke old and difficult memories and feelings, but your ability to cope with and provide solace for yourself becomes more and more predominant as healing progresses.

In her book, Robin chooses to share her experiences in small segments through the medium of poetry, which allows for brief emotional encounters that are finite. This invites you, the reader, to pause and reflect as needed, encountering whatever might emerge.

Robin speaks of feelings that are common to all trauma survivors: depression, hopelessness, grief, desperation, rage, and the intrinsic sense of “badness” survivors often feel as part of the response to traumatic events. She also clearly expresses her sense of the ecstatic awakening that came as she learned to be truly present in her own life.

Great thought and deliberation went into the organization of this book with you, the reader, always in mind. It was important to arrange the book by chapters that contained specific themes and emotions that relate to the healing process. This can help you move easily to a section that most closely mirrors emotions you are feeling in the moment.

*Part One* introduces Robin's history – some of the poems are quite graphic as they describe the horrors of her childhood. It is here that careful attention is needed in terms of pacing yourself with discernment and gentle kindness.

*Part Two* incorporates the greater portion of the intense healing process. This also needs attention to pacing. From the start of this chapter to its end, there is a gradual metamorphosis as awakening comes. As well, an awareness emerges of the need for and the discovery of her own ability to rescue herself.

As *Part Three* unfolds, Robin begins to rise out of the ashes like the phoenix. The chapter on *Alchemy and Healing Rituals* is notably a blueprint or guide for specific methods of healing that you can bring into your life, regardless of the unique details of your own past.

A good way, perhaps, to begin your reading of this book might be to look through the *Table of Contents* and find a chapter that quickly jumps out at you, one that corresponds most closely to your feelings in that moment or to what you most need for encouragement, reassurance, hope, validation, comfort, or release; try to read only what you feel most drawn to in that moment.

You may decide it feels right to read one poem alone or to continue on to read an entire chapter. Perhaps you will move to a different segment of the memoir as it calls to you. In this way you will be taking part in the creating of your own healing experience.

As you delve into the book, you may find yourself reading a poem that coincides deeply with your own emotions. If so, ask yourself: How do my feelings, after reading this poem, touch my own personal experience? What do these feelings remind me of from my past?

Paying attention to your thoughts and feelings is an invitation for you to get to know your authentic self better. You might consider making a few notes so that your own story is brought to life. Most likely, doing so will keep this part of your story present in consciousness, rather than allowing it to submerge again into the murky waters of your subconscious. By keeping it present, you may find further clues or insights into your past.

I have heard many accounts of trauma over the years, yet it is rare to come upon one captured so perfectly and expressed with such candor, beauty, and grace as this poetic memoir. Robin Brooks's inexhaustible courage, perseverance, and insight through the maze of self-discovery and healing are reflected in every one of her poems. She poignantly reveals her deepest vulnerability in an effort to share her story and process with other survivors. With great

success she conveys that the journey from the darkest imprisonment to the light of freedom is indeed possible.

It has been a privilege and an honor to walk with Robin through the depths of hell into the clean cool waters of the lotus.

It is my most heartfelt wish that you, the reader, find the deep truths and hidden secrets of your own personal story so that you too may journey and come to your own awakening. My hope is for you to embark on the flight of the phoenix, to be reborn, and to live in the light. It is through your deep acknowledgment of self-love, self-worth, and self-acceptance that you will discover – with great astonishment and wonder – that you have become the flower that blossoms in the lotus pool of your own life.

*AnDréya Wilde, Ph.D.*

*May 2013*

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

My relationship with my therapist, Dréya, has been one of the most crucial in my life. I could not have accomplished this alone. Without her, I would not be where I am today, nor would I have written this book.

I want to stress the importance of getting help so much that I have asked Dréya (Dr. Wilde) to address this, as well as to offer guidance in finding the right therapist for you. These are her words:

*If you are a trauma survivor and are desiring to use this memoir to explore your own healing, you may feel reluctant and resistant to sharing your history. Shame and secrecy may be predominant in your life, guarding all that haunts you, keeping you isolated and so alone in your sorrow and despair. To help you on your path of healing, it is critical – especially for a trauma survivor – to work with a therapist, in particular one with a high level of training and years of specializing in trauma work.*

*Besides having strong credentials, your therapist should be someone you are truly comfortable with. The chemistry must be right between the two of you, so that you feel “emotionally held” as you navigate the most intimate and vulnerable experiences that cry out to be revealed – actually spoken – truly heard, acknowledged and validated. It is in allowing this intimacy and connection with a caring, seasoned, knowledgeable therapist who is truly present for you and with you that true healing occurs.*

*Dr. A.W.*