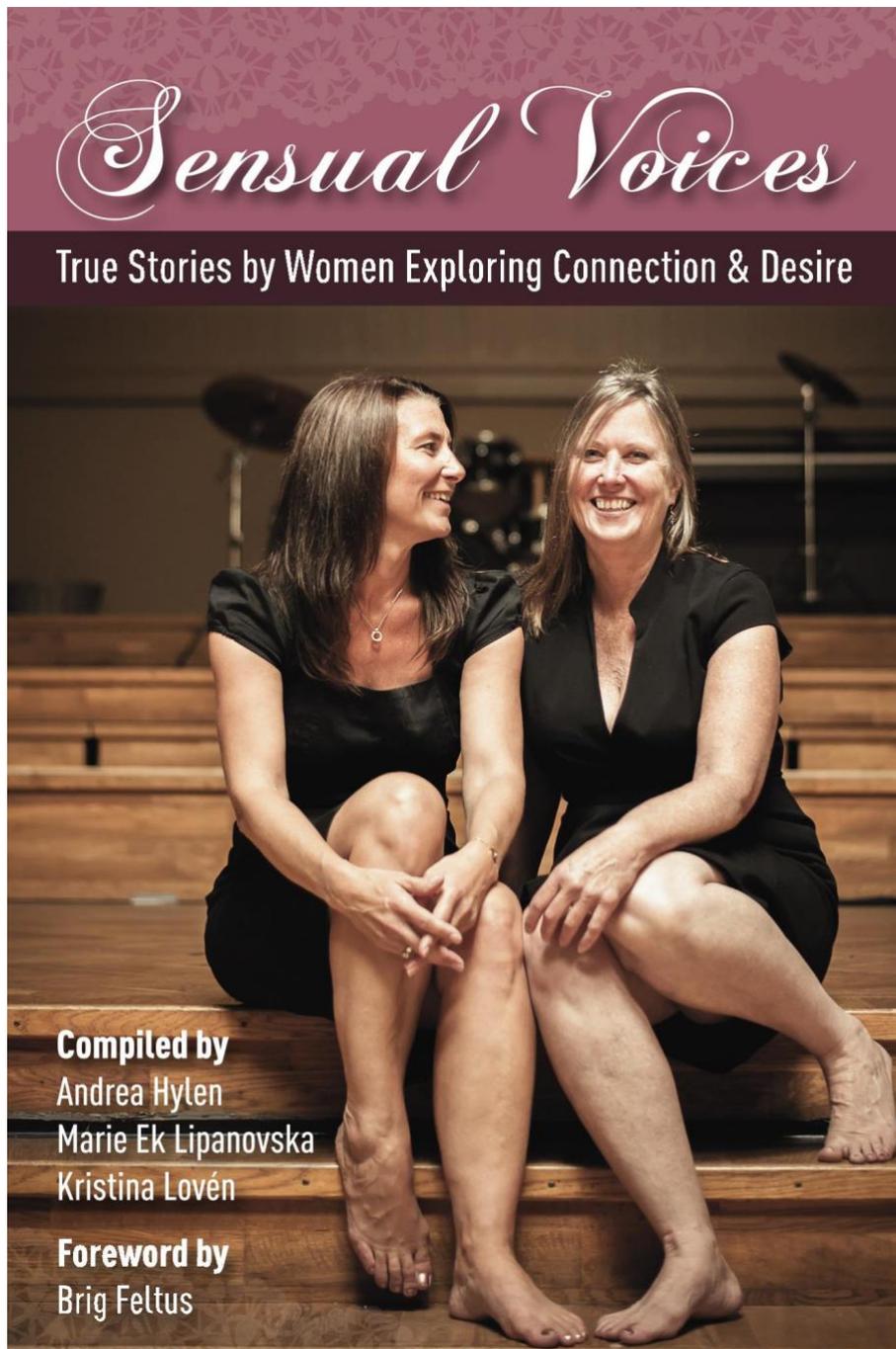


Study Guide

Sensual Voices: True Stories by Women Exploring Connection and Desire



Dedication

To the writers:

Thank you for your willingness
to share a story with
vulnerability, wisdom, power and courage.

To the readers:

We honor your journey, your voices and your heart.

We encourage you to write your story now.

We are listening.

Blessing

Laurel Lozzi

Come, Sit.

Hands detect a tender spot
Slowly they inquire
What are you?
What treasures await
In this tender spot?

Memories, stories unfold
Like a rose
Petal by petal
By petal
By petal
Revealing the fragrant gems
Stored in the center

Ah, sweet openings
Into you

Come, Sit
Right here, next to me
I have stories to share
All you need to do is listen

You will see, all will be revealed
You will be revealed

Come, Sit
Right here, next to me
Just listen
The rest will unfold

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#exploringconnection #desire #thebody #women #storiesbywomen #womensstories
#awomansvoice #healing #poetry #truestoriesbywomen #laurellozzi #california

Introduction to Sensual Voices Study Guide

By Andrea Hylan

All over the planet, we are bringing our voices out of the well-lit caves in which we shared vulnerable stories in circles of women. Now, we are all ready to go deeper and rise higher. It is a time of awakening for women and men. We are being deeply called to shift to a new perspective and change. The study guide was created as a tool and resource to encourage you to awaken to more of your inner authority, to reflect on your choices and to tune in to the gifts and wisdom gained from your own experiences. It is divided into sections by each woman's story. There is a short description of the story topic, reflective questions about the story, resources that the author shared and a quote from the author's story.

The book is available on Amazon and this link will take you to all of the Heal My Voice Books: <https://www.amazon.com/Andrea-Hylen/e/B002C1XZCU/> if you are interested in reading more of the stories from other books and from this study guide: Sensual Voices: True Stories by Women Exploring Connection and Desire. For now, look through the study guide, read the quotes, notice the stirring of your voice, reflect, write your story!

Check out our Instagram page and please, share with others.

<https://www.instagram.com/healmyvoice/>

Individual Reflection

The study guide can be used for individual reflection, meditating and journal writing. If you have a copy of the book, read each story and write about what it stirred in you. A feeling, a memory, a desire. If you do not have the book, read through the questions and reflect on them in general. The questions are for you to discover more of you, in whatever way you choose. Let the quote inspire and awaken something in you that wants to be healed and expressed now.

In reading the stories in this book or reading the quotes, you may want to start a journal and explore your relationships with women: A grandmother, mother, sister, aunt, cousin, neighbor, teacher, mentor, classmate, friend. Is there something you want to heal? Do you have a different perspective now?

Conscious Book Circles

If you want to start a conscious book circle to read the books, here are some tips and suggestions.

Set a structure

*Is this an ongoing circle or a defined amount of time? (4 weeks, 8 weeks, 12 weeks)

*How often do you meet? Once a week? Once a month?

*Choose a Day and Time

*Pick a location: This can be at different homes or the same home or a quiet, safe space in a library or coffee shop.

*Is this free or is there a cost? Donation? Fee?

*Do you want a co-leader? If you are going to different homes, is the woman who is hosting the circle, the leader or facilitator or time keeper of the group?

Confidentiality:

Ask everyone to give a verbal yes to confidentiality. We each need to feel safe and to know that we can share our voices. Confidentiality creates safety in the group, enhances our ability to be vulnerable with each other and it helps expand the potential for new awareness, healing and exploration. Ask all group members to respect and honor one another and the sacredness of this conscious book circle space.

Open and close the circle with intention for the group:

Light a candle. Close your eyes and breathe together for a few moments. Turn off your cell phones. A short centering or meditation. Read a quote. Ask everyone to take a moment to tune in to their own intention for being in the group today.

Holding Space:

Some women share easily and can speak for a long period of time. Some women need silence and empty space to formulate their thoughts and feelings before speaking. Allow space and quiet in between each woman's sharing. You can go around the circle or do it like popcorn style but make sure that every woman says something. Set a timer for a first round of sharing and then go around again. Welcome all feelings. One woman may have had the worst day of her life. Another woman had the best day. Encourage women to share feelings that are loss and celebration, anger and joy. All feelings have the same importance and value in the circle.

Set a Personal Intention:

An intention is a starting point and an opportunity to set a conscious desire. An intention may be to listen, to speak up, to decompress, to open to new awareness, to learn something new. It is a way of setting your internal GPS to keep you focused on bringing your heart and mind into a connection.

Establish Guidelines for the Group:

A women's circle with friends can be tricky during a time when one or two members are going through a crisis. Divorce. Cancer. Death of a loved one. Set a boundary around the intention of the group. Set up time to provide additional support for the women who are in crisis outside of the circle. Follow the intention of the book circle and create a separate space for supporting the friend in her crisis. A group can quickly deteriorate and fall apart if you turn this into a crisis management circle.

Set up boundaries:

No fixing or giving advice. Share your own experiences. No formal teaching. This is a space for sharing and reflection. A place for sharing vulnerability and to process experiences that can be turned into wisdom. It is not a space to preach to other people. Create an environment for asking questions, sharing your voice and sharing your process. We are all teachers for each other by being who we are and sharing our own journey. We all have our own inner guidance and it is important to honor and respect that. No one needs advice. Share your experience without expecting someone else to navigate life the way you have. Safety in the group allows each woman to tune into her inner guidance.

Start and end on time

One example is to open the doors and have 15 minutes for going to the bathroom, informal conversation and getting settled into a space to sit. Then, begin. Keep track of the time, bring the conversation to a close and have a closing.

General Questions for Each Story Reflection:

These questions can be used as a reflection with every story. Read the quote, then ask:

**How is this story like my own?*

**What choices for peace will I make now?*

**Is there a new perspective I see now at the age I am now?*

It is my greatest hope that reading the questions and the quote in each section will help you to remember your own stories. Your voice is needed in your family, community, business and the world.

Your voice matters.

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Tribute to Roberta A. Creeron

Heal My Voice Mission

To purchase book: <https://www.amazon.com/Sensual-Voices-Stories-Exploring-Connection/dp/0692452931/>

Heal My Voice and Heal My Voice Sweden Book List

Foreword: *Sensual Voices* **By Brig Feltus**

In this Foreword, Brig Feltus talks about the power of vulnerability and desire, as she invites you to read the stories in this book.

Reflective Questions:

**What is your relationship with vulnerability? Do you see it as a powerful tool? Why?*

**Create a grounded phrase or affirmation to support yourself. Brig uses the phrase, "I have everything I want."*

**Make a list of 10, 25, 50 or 100 desires. Begin where you are and write them down. Keep adding to the list.*

Resources:

*The Hungry Beast Sessions

*Spiritual Practice

Quote:

*"So, yes, I am practicing having everything I want. The trick is that I am not referring to surface wants. I'm referring to what my higher self, my inner beast, my uninhibited master desires. That's what I'm committed to. And it actually works. I have everything I want. There is no more powerful statement an individual can make. And vulnerability, it turns out, is key.
~Brig Feltus*

To learn more about Brig, go to: https://www.instagram.com/brig_feltus/

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#vulnerability #desire

An excerpt from the Introduction **by Andrea Hylan**

In college, I studied Human Sexuality as part of my Social Work degree from Temple University. Reading the book, "Our Bodies, Ourselves," written by the Boston Women's Health Collective was the first time I can remember hearing the voices of women sharing their experiences with vulnerability and information about a woman's body. One evening, I sat in a woman's circle where every woman was handed a plastic speculum, a mirror, a flashlight and lubrication. We were taught how to do the breast exam and pelvic exam on ourselves. All of the women took off their pants and underwear, lay down on blankets and pillows and prepared to follow the step-by-step instructions to touch and examine our own bodies. I remember the exclamations of awe and joy and tears when a woman saw her cervix for the first time. Women empowering women in a circle gathering. That was 1978 and I was 22 years old.

During the late 90's, I taught medical students at Johns Hopkins University how to do the pelvic and breast exam, first with words and instructions. Then I gave each of them a hands-on-experience, using my body as a practice patient. Dressed in a hospital gown, I taught them how to hold and use the speculum, guiding their hands to insert the speculum into my vagina with me as their first patient. I talked about the importance of creating a safe environment and using a gentle touch to preserve each woman's dignity. In five years of teaching, I had over 500 pelvic and breast exams with 500 different medical students and nurse practitioners.

In 2013, I entered a new experience with my body when I was introduced to a 15-minute partnered practice called Orgasmic Meditation (OM). In this partnered practice with a man, I experienced the potential for us to heal our sexuality through better communication, attention and connection. No goal. 15 minutes of connection, sensation and the awakening of desire. I practiced OM with multiple partners in a safe community environment and learned how to teach the technique by taking courses with a company called OneTaste. I have now taught individuals and partners around the world how to practice Orgasmic Meditation.

All of these experiences have led to this book project called Sensual Voices. My deepest desire has been for women to have a place to connect, have conversations, share vulnerability and support each other. This 9th Heal My Voice/Heal My Voice Sweden collaboration has been a place for women to have conversations about the body and write about their own experience of sensuality, connection and desire.

In the beginning of launching Sensual Voices as a program, there were challenges in finding women who would sign up to participate. Sensuality as a topic was not embraced

by the masses and there was a point where I only had a few women enrolled in the program. We needed 20-25 participants to make it a viable group and to support it energetically and financially. I might have given up except for three things:

1. I was living in a community house in Venice, California with ten people and I had “permission and encouragement” to talk about sensuality, power, sexuality and desire. Any time of the day and night. Breakfast, lunch and dinner.
2. A dear friend, Roberta Creeron told me it was an important topic to write about, talk about and make visible in the world. She said, “You have to do it and you have to do it now!” A few hours later Roberta died suddenly and unexpectedly from an abdominal aneurysm.
3. I took a six-week trip to Sweden where I stayed with Marie Ek Lipanovska, founder of Heal My Voice Sweden who had the same desire and the same idea for a book topic. We decided to collaborate on this project and create a bridge between Sweden and the United States.

Thank you Marie. Thank you Roberta. Thank you dear Venice House community.

We finally found the twenty women who were ready to dive into this topic and go on a journey of exploration; Twelve women from Sweden; eight women from the United States with co-facilitators from Sweden and the U.S. We gathered in a secret Facebook group and stoked the fires to stir up the burning embers of desire, connection and sensuality hidden within our souls. We explored universal experiences of a woman’s body. Menstruation. Childbirth. Menopause. Sexual Desire and Trauma. We discussed body sensations of sensuality, power, grief, abandonment, life and death with courage and vulnerability. Our experiences included writing and speaking, healing, reclaiming power tied up in an old story, connection with community, intentional space, deep listening and at the end of the process, clarity around the next step in leadership. It also involved the willingness to have conversations about how this particular topic was connected to our lives.

When we started to write, I thought I was ready, really ready, to reveal my own journey. It wasn’t until I began to write my personal story, I felt a new vulnerability and resistance to writing and exposing my story even to myself. I found my hands hovering over the computer keyboard afraid to write anything. I had a flood of fearful thoughts: *Can I really tell this story? How will it affect my business? Will Heal My Voice lose all credibility if I write a sensual story about desire and sex? Can I really write about looking at Playboy magazine when I was 11 years old? Can I write about the desire to have sex now that I am 58 years old and a widow,*

a mother, a grandmother? Can I write about the sensuality essence that is waking up in me? I had to walk my own path by diving in over and over to write my own story.

This is the ninth personal story I have written in a Heal My Voice/Heal My Voice Sweden book program and it is the first time I was afraid to put my words onto paper even in the privacy of my home. And that was a clue that I am not the only woman who feels vulnerable to admit my desires, embrace the sensations and to have open conversations. I knew I had to write a story about Sensuality that connected to my Sexuality.

It was the women in this community of co-authors who read the drafts of my story, who acknowledged my courage and who told me to just write the story without the need for approval and without justifying why I felt the need to write it now. Each woman was held with the same love, care and encouragement. And as each woman completed her story, it opened the door for the next woman to keep writing and complete her story. We held each other, shared our voices, one word at a time, until twenty stories were completed. We are in this together...

Introduction

by Andrea Hylen, Founder of Heal My Voice

This is an overview of the project, Sensual Voices: True Stories by Women Exploring Connection and Desire and a reflection of some of the experiences of twenty women who wrote stories while healing together in an on-line community. This was a collaboration between Heal My Voice and Heal My Voice Sweden.

Reflective Questions:

**Have you connected with women in a circle to share a vulnerable experience? What was that like? How did it support you?*

**How did you learn about your body? Did someone talk to you? Did you read books? Did you explore on your own?*

**Is there a conversation you wish someone had with you when you were a teenager?*

**Write about your journey with your body.*

Resources:

**Our Bodies Ourselves by the Boston Women's Health Collective*

**Orgasmic Meditation*

**Eleanor Roosevelt*

Quote:

*"I invite you to open yourself to a new perspective, as you read the stories, and ask yourself some questions. *What if we could spread Universal Love by donating energy, money and time to empower women and girls? What if women supported each other with parenting tips instead of judging and comparing and competing to be the best parent with the best child? What if we shared our vulnerability, wisdom, and claimed our personal power and inner authority? ~Andrea Hylen*

For more information on Heal My Voice, go to: <http://healmyvoice.org/>

For more information on Heal My Voice Sweden, go to: <http://healmyvoicesweden.com/>

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#connection #AndreaHysten #california #maryland #seattle #sweden

Part One:

I Am Longing

“Longing, felt fully, carries us to belonging.”

~Tara Branch

Author of Radical Acceptance

Story One: Welcome Beautiful Life
By Annaparjata Jasmine Sandström

This story is about the author giving birth to her son and the challenges she faced in labor and breastfeeding that led to support from another breastfeeding mother.

Reflective Questions:

**Have you given birth to a child or helped to deliver a child? Was the birth natural? Did it go the way you had planned and hoped? Write about the experience.*

**Think about a time in your life when you needed someone else. What did it teach you receiving and the connection to all of life?*

**Where have you surrendered? Did you come out of the situation feeling stronger or weaker?*

**Was grief part of your experience? What was on the other side of grief?*

Resources:

*Midwife and doula

Quote:

“Grieving for what I could not give him turned into gratefulness for what I could do, and new possibilities opened. I found energy to continue breastfeeding with the device, nursing him could therefore continue in this unnatural but amazing way. Soon, I also came across a mother who had too much breast milk and she wanted to donate the excess to me. I believe it was the most loving gift I have ever received, and he drank her milk with joy.” ~ Annaparjata Jasmine Sandström

To connect with Annaparjata, email: annaparjata@hotmail.se

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#AnnaparjataJasmineSandström #sweden

Story Two: The Road to “Not Lost”

By BettyAnn Leeseberg-Lange

The author tells a childhood story that in the blip of a moment took away her innocence which made her doubt her safety and who she could trust.

Reflective Questions:

**Thinking back to childhood, write about an experience with your family or in school, when you lost the innocence of trust. How old were you? What happened?*

**Do you ever feel terror or so unsafe that you have to talk yourself ‘off the ledge?’*

**How do you do support yourself during those times? Are there words you use? Is there a healing process you use?*

**How did this experience shape the way you navigate life?*

Quote:

“And the terror is always there. Yup, not was - is! Whenever I don’t know where I am on a road, I become that little eight-year-old girl. I still have to talk myself down from the terror. ‘I will be OK; I have gas in the car; there are information signs; I have my cell phone. I can get off the road at any time, go to the nearest gas station and ask for directions.’” ~BettyAnn Leeseberg-Lange

To learn more about BettyAnn, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/Talking-Well-Consulting-188161394579011/>

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#connection #childhood #mantras #feelingsafe #BettyAnnLeesebergLange

Story Three: Sparkling Turbulence: The Uncovery **By Ellen Koronet**

The author tells a few short stories about becoming a woman from the awkward, confusing night she got her period to the moment she felt electricity in a connection with her husband ten years later.

Reflective Questions:

**Were you teased or bullied at school or in your family? Write about the details and what you need to heal or what you have healed.*

**Write about some of the rituals of becoming a woman. When did you first shave your legs and underarms? When did you begin to menstruate? When did kissing and sex enter the conversation or your social scene?*

**How do you feel about being a woman?*

Resources:

**Turkish delight sweets*

**Adventures in new places*

Quote:

“When it was time for him to leave and I took his hand to say, ‘thank you for coming,’ I felt a crazy kind of shock that seemed to emanate from his deep brown eyes. In a split-second, that ‘electricity’ surged through my body in what can only be described as a tidal wave of recognition, a sense of belonging, and of being Seen.” ~Ellen Koronet

To learn more about Ellen, go to: <https://lnkcreative.com/>

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#connection #becomingawoman #menstruation #firstkiss #fallinginlove #EllenKoronet

#ankara #turkey #newjersey #maryland

Story Four: *My Love Story*

By Petra Brynell

The author shares a story of looking for home and belonging and finding that home within herself. Learning to parent her son, a divorce and recovery to begin a new life are all part of her story.

Reflective Questions:

**Belonging is a fundamental human need. Explore your relationship to belonging. Was there a time in your childhood when you felt you belonged in your family or a friend group? How did that change over time? Do you feel a sense of belonging now?*

**Where is your home? Write a story about the journey of finding your home.*

**Are you codependent? Did you grow up in a household where you were trying to figure out how to be you in the family or in school?*

**What have you learned about loving yourself and loving your children?*

Resources:

*Psychologist

*Personal Growth Books

Quote: *“My new home is nice, small but beautiful with a lovely energy. The new beginning has slowly clicked into place: My neighbor’s friendly welcoming smile, the morning sun glowing on my face when I drink my first coffee on the stairs outside my house. The couple sitting next to me on the bus who are passionately discussing a book they both love. Each day is a new day.*

~Petra Brynell

To contact Petra, email: PetraBrynell@gmail.com

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#connection #mylovestory #codependence #belonging #home #midwife #photography
#petrabrynell #sweden

Story Five: Awakening a Silenced Motherhood **By Carina Halvardsson**

The author writes a story of healing her 17-year-old self by giving her a space to feel her anger and then re-focusing that energy on love, Universal Love.

Reflective Questions:

**Imagine going into surgery, at the age of 17, for a gastrointestinal disorder, waking up during the surgery and finding out, you can no longer have children. What has happened in your life that created a loss of power or choices because of someone else?*

Tune into your childhood. Imagine yourself between the ages of 0-5, then 5-10, 11-15, 16-20. What age pops up with a memory? Ask your child self, what she is feeling. Give her a space to talk with you in meditation, with a walk in nature or through writing, art, dance. What does she want to say?

**Who stood up for you when you were a child? Who do you wish had stood up for you?*

Resources:

- *Vision for All
- *Restorative Justice Programs
- *Universal Love
- *Qi Gong

Quote:

“My mission in life is to spread Universal Love. I use all of this love inside me and pour it into the children in the world, the love I would have used with the dream from my childhood, a house filled with children and love. I listen and find God’s vision for me. ~Carina Halvardsson

To learn more about Carina, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/HalsaochUtveckling/>

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#connection #qigong #motherhood #universallove #restorativejustice #carinahalvardsson
#sweden

Part Two:

I Am Shifting

“I was learning to differentiate
between my needs and my wants
and this powerful lesson had to be mastered
before I could move forward.”

~Sarah Ban Breathnach,
Author of Simple Abundance

Story Six: *The Freedom Story* **By Tazima Davis**

The author writes about a difficult conversation with a partner that led her to reflect on other conversations about race, gender and sexuality.

Reflective Questions:

**What are the most difficult types of conversations? How have you learned to navigate them? What do you want or need to learn?*

**Do you feel responsible to explain your life or speak for others?*

**What is your freedom story? Where do you feel free? Where do you feel stifled, controlled and not free?*

Resources:

*Coco Chanel Quote

*Sex and Relationship Coaching

Quote:

“The most difficult kind of conversation is one where the person on the receiving end (the receiver) must reveal that the person on the giving end (the giver) has participated in racist behavior even though the giver wants to be seen as a ‘good person.’ This conversation was made more complex since the white man, with whom I was about to speak, was a sexual partner. Our most recent sexual encounter was just a few days prior to the moment that he thought it was ok to use the n-word with me as a term of endearment.” ~Tazima Davis

To learn more about Tazima, go to: <https://www.infiniterelating.com/>

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#connection #racism #sexualexpression #inclusion #diversity #chicago #tazimadavis

Story Seven: *Tangle*

By Karen A. Porter

This story is the author's reflection of untangling layers of sexual trauma to heal from the past and committing to the ongoing process.

Reflective Questions:

**Have you ever had the feeling that you wish that you were different? Have you wanted to be seen and accepted for who you are without needing to change?*

**Do you have a 'broken place' inside of you? What have you done to repair, fix and accept that place?*

**Make a list of strengths you learned from your parents, siblings or relatives. How have those strengths served you?*

Resources:

*Workshops

*Therapy

*Books

Quote:

"I don't have it all sorted out, yet I know it is possible to start feeling whole and happy and deserving and perfect right now in this minute. I commit to continuing this process. By seeing more, and feeling deeper, I am closer to sorting it out. The knots are many and tight and I have all the patience and skill I need." ~Karen A. Porter

To learn more about Karen, go to: <http://mamaporter.com>

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#connection #sexualabuse #trauma #tangle #karenaporter #mamaporter #Baltimore
#Seattle

Story Eight: Unfolding the gift from God

By Marie Ek Lipanovska

The author writes a story about discovering how to live a graceful life and stay connected to the divine gift of God.

Reflective Questions:

**Are you aware of your ability to co-create with God, the Universe and others? What are some of your co-creative experiences? Write about them and see what is common in each.*

**What is the vision you have for your life? Write it down and create a system of checking on it monthly, quarterly or yearly.*

**Write an "I AM..." statement about who you are. Put it in a place where you can see it and remind yourself of who you really are.*

Resources:

*Vision Cloud

*Retreats

Quote:

"One day I sat down in front of my big golden mirror and looked deeply into my own image. I saw a pair of brown eyes filled with so much pure love and compassion. I witnessed a brave heart so devoted to serve God that I could give up my life if that was what He wanted. My eyes were deeper than any ocean. I felt the vibration and the power in my feminine attraction. I finally understood the significance of Her, the woman in me. Gently, I asked myself what She truly wants and desires." ~Marie Ek Lipanovska

To learn more about Marie, go to: www.healmyvoicesweden.com

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#marieeklipanovska #sweden

Story Nine: Conversations with my Body: Shifting from Shame into Self-Acceptance and Love

By Shawn Catherine Fisher

This story is about the author's experience of being diagnosed with genital herpes. She shares some of the journey of healing shame, practicing forgiveness and living fully and mindfully.

Reflective Questions:

**The author writes about getting genital herpes and how it changed her ability to receive and give touch. Have you had an experience that changed your ability to receive and give touch? What is your current relationship to giving and receiving touch?*

**Do you feel shame connected to your body? What have you done to heal it? What do you need now?*

**Do you have a practice of forgiveness for yourself and others? How do you practice compassion for the choices you have made in the past? How are you loving yourself in the present?*

Resources:

*Forgiveness practices

*Poetry

Quote:

"Here is the truth: it was not the herpes diagnosis that was doing this 'to' me. It was my abject fear that I could have no more pretenses in any relationship I wanted to develop. I had to be direct, honest, communicate more. Finally, after fifty years on this planet, I needed to face facts: stringently negotiating and attempting to control every square on my cleverly built chessboard was not the same as mindfully, fully living." ~Shawn Catherine Fisher (Safira)

To learn more about Shawn, go to: <https://www.instagram.com/iamscofisher/>

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#connection #mybody #genitalherpes #acceptance #mindfulliving
#ShawnCatherineFisher #maryland

Story Ten: *The raw Truth*

By Kristina Lovén

The author tells her story of unworthiness and the path to recover from addiction and connect with her feminine power.

Reflective Questions:

**What stories from the past are you carrying around with you? Which stories have the most power inside of them? Are you ready to write those stories and reclaim the power?*

"There must be something more..." This was the point when the author knows that she has the power to change something in her life and she must. What was the point when you knew you wanted more and that you would begin to change your life?

**What is your relationship to trust? Do you trust life? Do you trust your body? Do you trust others?*

Resources:

*Addiction treatment

*Girlfriends who are emotionally healthy

Quote:

"I am here to let life love me without apology until I crack wide open. I am here to let her challenge me, pull me to the edge of evolution, kiss my cheeks, caress my neck, dance with me, seduce me, make love to me until I let go into the unknown and all that is left is the sensation of the raw beauty that creates life itself." ~ Kristina Lovén

To connect with Kristina: kristina_loven@yahoo.se

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#connection #feminineenergy #sisterhood #darknightofthesoul #worthiness
#addictionrecovery #KristinaLovén #sweden

Part Three:

I Am Surrender

“When resistance is gone, the demons are gone.”

~ Pema Chödrön

Story Eleven: *Time to Stop Hiding*

By Lisbeth Jönsson

The author shares the steps of entering her new home and beginning to build a life with friends and community after ending a 16-year-old relationship.

Reflective Questions:

**Write four words on a piece of paper to call in the energy of what you want to feel when you are in your home.*

**What are a few special items you have in your home? Why are they special to you? Write about the meaning and when they came into your life. Write a story about each item. Give them life.*

**What does your home mean to you?*

**Do you want to spend another year like last year? What do you want to change?*

Resources:

**A wall decoration: "Deep Rest for the Soul"*

**Forgiveness School*

Quote:

"My body is returning to life. My period has been away for over a year. Last week it came by to say hello. The love for life is returning slowly. Fresh air is running in my veins. I recall a sentence I heard a couple of years ago. 'Be the change you want to see in the world.' It's never too late to let magical things happen in your life. Every trip of ten thousand miles starts with one step. Mine has just begun." ~ Lisbeth Jönsson

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#newhome #LisbethJönsson #sweden

Story Twelve: *The Curse of Kindness*

By Charlotte Cronquist

This story is about the ending of the author's marriage and her awareness that kindness kept her from being vulnerable and stopped her from asking for what she really wanted in the relationship: Love.

Reflective Questions:

**How do you demonstrate love?*

**How do you nourish your inner child? Do you stand up for her? Do you give her a voice?*

**Write about a relationship that ended. What did you discover about yourself? What scared the shit out of you?*

**Have you used a 'good' quality like kindness to try to get love? Has it worked? Is there anything you would like to change?*

Resources:

**Writing*

Quote:

"And here I stand, knowing what is necessary to do:

I need to be kind to me.

I need to surrender to being weak.

I need to listen to my inner voice.

I need to listen to my heart.

I need to say no to what doesn't serve.

I need to say yes to what serves.

And it scares the shit out of me."

~Charlotte Cronquist

To learn more about Charlotte, go to: <http://www.charlottecronquist.org/>

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Story Thirteen: Codependent to Interdependent

By Ingrid Banheden Breisner

This story is about the author's codependent relationship with her first husband and the rebuilding of her life, after she left him. It is a story of awakening and love.

Reflective Questions:

**Have you been in a codependent relationship? How did you know? What age were you when you realized it? What steps did you take to make a change?*

**The author talks about giving up and feeling like she should be content with what she has and not wish for anything else. Have you ever felt that way? Do you feel that way now? Write about the feelings.*

**Write a list of 10 simple things you could do to care for yourself. Pick one and do it this week.*

Resources:

*Books and courses

*Massage

Quote:

"Suddenly I realized and made a decision: what picture would I let my children have of a parent, especially a daughter of her mother? What would she take with her into her relationship if this was the normal one? Finally, I decided to leave, to take my children with me with these words ringing in my ears: it's better to save three persons than letting all four perish. Nothing mattered but my children." ~ Ingrid Banheden Breisner

To learn more about Ingrid, go to: <https://banhedenbreisner.se/>

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Story Fourteen: *Witnessing My Self*

By Renée Jonsson

This story is about the author coming to terms with being in a relationship with a man who was emotionally abusive and what it took to leave the relationship.

Reflective Questions:

**Have you been in an abusive relationship? When did you first realize it? Did you leave? Why or why not?*

**What can a woman learn about herself by living alone?*

**Has the #metoo movement awakened an old memory? How are you healing from that? What do you need?*

Resources:

**Therapy*

Quote:

“The love I feel for myself right now is tender and soft. It’s almost like I’m a newborn. Being on my own helps me awaken the light I have always had inside. My gratitude to God, universe and life itself is larger than I’ve ever imagined possible. I got help when I really needed it, and so can we all! Leave it in the hands of God! ~ Renée Jonsson

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#connection #feminineenergy #relationships #selflove #RenéeJonsson #sweden

Part Four:

I Am Sensation

“When all is said and done,
we exist only in relation to the world,
and our senses evolved as scouts who bridge that divide
and provide volumes of information, warnings and rewards.”

~Diane Ackerman

Story Fifteen: *The Legacy of a Lake* **By Sandy McDougall**

The author describes a visceral body connection to the lake where she swam during the summer, as a child, and her connection to sacred experiences in nature. Our body is a gateway that connects us to the wisdom and love in nature and to each other.

Reflective Questions:

**Write about how you spent your summertime as a child. Did you take vacations or go to the same locations every year?*

**What lessons and wisdom have you learned from nature?*

**How do you tap into stillness and take quiet time for yourself? What is the benefit of that?*

**Do you take time to daydream?*

**Have you ever had a conscious sacred experience with nature? Describe some of the details in a journal.*

Resources:

**Quote by Rita Ghatourey*

Quote:

"Slowly, the world as I had known it melted away, slipping gently somewhere vast and silent. For a time measure, the edges of my body merged with all else, and I no longer sensed where "I" ended and "all else" began. I was embraced by a sea of warm welcoming peace, aware only of my breath and the exhilarating sense of an astonishingly blissful connection to the lake, to the earth, and even to the universe. " ~Sandy McDougall

To learn more about Sandy, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/themaverickedge/>

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#legacy #summertime #SandyMcDougall #maryland #canada

Story Sixteen: *I Will Survive the Landslide with Chocolat and Ou La La* **By Alecia Caine**

In this story, the author tells a story of emptiness, passion and betrayal while weaving a batch of dark chocolate truffle. She describes changes in her life and, "in my emptiness, the dreams and desires are awakening in waves."

Reflective Questions:

**Have you ever experienced empty nest syndrome or an experience when something ended and you felt empty for a period of time? What did you learn in the emptiness? What passions began to awaken?*

**Do you have a story about a moment when a "sister" betrayed you? Was there jealousy and competition? Did you resolve and heal the situation with her?*

**What legacy have you left the next generation in your family? Have you broken a dysfunctional pattern? What is shifting?*

Resources:

**Erik Satie music*

**Chocolate*

**Gloria Gaynor*

Quote:

"In present time, I see my sons grown into happy, loving young men, flourishing in their chosen life paths and in healthy relationships and I know, with all my heart, that I have shifted the negative tides. But my work isn't over. It is time to shift this back to me. I see the patterns I have broken for my sons. What else can I uncover for me? Where have I been hiding and putting up with the agenda of other people? ~Alecia Caine

To learn more about Alecia, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/sweetlifeitaly/>

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#connection #emptynest #passion #legacy #chocolate #AleciaCaine #California #Italy

Story Seventeen: *Follow Your Bliss*

By Louise Weibull

This story is about the author's longing and desire to connect with her creativity and sensuality.

Reflective Questions:

**Reflect on an intimate love relationship you have now and from the past. How did you create space for longing to rise and be met? Write about the experience of being met, longing to be met or what you believe is possible.*

**What has changed about your desire and sexuality during your lifetime? What do you want to change?*

**How do you embrace your femininity?*

Resources:

*Poetry

*Walk in nature

*Creativity

*Tea bag with a message

Quote:

"I understand that if I want to be sensual, be happy, be that creative soul I am born to be, I need to connect. Connect with life, with my partner, with my creativity and the most important to connect with myself. It does not need to be expensive or complicated. It can be a walk in nature, cooking a nice meal, feeling creative, going swimming, visiting the local art center." ~Louise Weibull

To learn more about Louise, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/louiseweibullfotografi/>

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Story Eighteen: Surrender

By Sofia Sjöblom

By surrendering and diving in to do some deep healing and personal growth work, the author discovered, in this story, that she is fearless.

Reflective Questions:

**What is your relationship with surrender?*

**Did you go to parties when you were a teenager? Reflect on how the “good” and “bad” experiences shaped your self-esteem. Do any of those experiences still affect your relationships today?*

**When did you first become aware of sexual feelings? How did you handle them? Who did you talk to about it?*

**What was your role in the family? Did you feel seen and heard? How did that feel?*

Resources:

**BDSM play: Ropes*

Quote:

“Something changed in me from that experience. I felt like I landed down to earth and deep down inside of me. I was more aware in daily life, more aware of myself, of the energy in my body, more aware of what’s happening inside. It opened me up to new perspectives when old feelings came up in different situations. I felt that I was finally seen. All of me.” ~ Sofia Sjöblom

To learn more about Sofia, go to: <https://www.aifos.se/>

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#connection #trust #surrender #ropes #bdsM #SofiaSjöblom #sweden

Story Nineteen: *Slut: A woman with the morals of a man* **By Andrea Hylen**

This story is about the author's sexual awakening as a teenager and diving back in as an adult to discover and explore her body.

Reflective Questions:

** When did you first get your period? When was your first kiss, first sexual experience?*

**What is your relationship to intimacy and your authentic voice?*

**What are the desires that are bubbling in you now?*

Resources:

**Orgasmic Meditation*

**Desire Based Coaching*

Quotes:

"Inside of me were these different parts that seemed incongruent:, the mother, the slut, the nice girl, the bitch, the soft feminine, the determined warrior. Most of the time, I felt like I had to shut down the desires of the slut. I rarely let her take charge and claim her lusty, natural desires."

~Andrea Hylen

To learn more about Andrea Hylen, go to: <http://www.andreahylen.com/>

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#connection #sexualexploration #OM #orgasmicmeditation #AndreaHylen #california

#maryland

Part Five:

I Am Loved

“When a woman becomes her own best friend,
life is easier.”

~Diane Von Furstenberg

Story Twenty: Att älska mig i nöd och lust "to love me in need and desire"
by Rinella Rioda

The author tells a story of connecting to nature and listening to the wild, feminine girl who was there all along. (This story is in Swedish.)

Reflective Questions:

**Do you ever hear critical voices from a parent or another adult in your head? How do you handle the feelings when you hear critical voices from the past? Are there certain activities that bring up the voices more than other activities?*

**Is there a wild girl inside of you? Do you let her express herself? What does she want to do next?*

**What is your experience of your body and nature?*

Resources:

*Travel

Quote:

“Så där låg jag på den smutsiga bryggan i min vita sommarklänning. Något nytt föddes inom mig i detta ögonblick och det var dags att ta ett beslut. Nu fanns det bara ett enda val för mig och det var att kasta mig utför livets klippa i tillit till att det bär mig, såsom det alltid har gjort. Jag valde att leva livet. Jag hade återvunnit mitt Sanna Jag. Hand i hand vandrar jag nu med livet. I nöd och lust. Tills döden skiljer oss åt.

So, there I was on the dirty dock in my white summer dress. Something new was born within me at that moment and it was time to make a decision. Now there was only one choice for me and that was to jump off the cliff of life in confidence that it would carry me, as it always has. I chose to live life. I had recovered my True Self. Hand in hand I now walk with life. In need and lust. Till death do us apart.~Rinella Rioda

To learn more about Rinella, go to: rinella@rinella.se

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Heal My Voice Mission:

Heal My Voice empowers and supports women and girls globally to heal a story, reclaim their inner authority and personal power and step into greater leadership in their homes, businesses, communities and the world.

www.healmyvoice.org

www.healmyvoicesweden.com

This book was released in the United States and in Sweden with two different book covers. Two different people wrote the Introductions to the books. All of the stories are in English except for one which is in Swedish.

To purchase the book, **Sensual Voices: True Stories by Women Exploring Connection and Desire**, go to Amazon. Available in Kindle and Paperback:

<https://www.amazon.com/Andrea-Hylen/e/B002C1XZCU/>

To purchase the Swedish version of the book and more go to:

www.healmyvoicesweden.com

A Tribute

to

a Sensual Woman

Roberta A. Creeron

*November 27, 1953-
January 5, 2014*



In the Introduction, I mentioned the phone call I had with Roberta Creeron as one of the reasons this project happened. Her life ended unexpectedly, a few hours after our phone call. It seems fitting to share a few words about her as we bring this book to a close.

Roberta was a passionate, sensual woman who deeply cared about people. She was the type of woman who would ask questions and sincerely want to know why you thought and felt that way about an issue and about life. People loved her and sometimes feared her. She asked questions that were curious, loving and “inappropriate”, the kind of questions that most people would shy away from because it would draw attention to the elephant in the room that no one wanted to see. She wasn’t afraid to stir things up and the funny thing is that most of the time she didn’t even know she was stirring things up. She just asked the questions with innocence and then wondered why it upset people. She had a voice and she wasn’t afraid to use it.

Our last conversation, on the last day of her life, was an example of the power of connection, following our desires and listening to our intuition:

Roberta sent me a text with an SOS: “Help! Is there any way that we can talk on the phone today?” Roberta had lost her job. She wasn’t feeling well physically. The weather was extremely cold on that day in January 2014 and she felt isolated. There had been a series of friends and family with illness and death over the last few months. She had experienced a wave of disappointments and she felt lost. She reached out to me for support and uplifting words. She wanted to infuse herself with some positivity at a time when she was spirally down emotionally and had lost hope. She reached out for CONNECTION.

It had been six months since we had talked on the phone, both of us busy with building businesses and careers and immersed in the relationships we had with local people. I was in California. Roberta was in Maryland. We talked for an hour and shared deep, vulnerable words and feelings. We had been friends for 25 years and it was easy to pick up where we left off.

I was in a deep exploration around Sensuality and the connection to Power and Money and Sexuality. I shared the things I was learning about myself and that I wanted to lead a Heal My Voice project around Sensuality. Her last words to me were about the Sensual Voices project. She told me it was an important subject and it was time. She had just finished watching the film, *The Sessions*, starring the actress Helen Hunt. She said, “You have to have this conversation. If anyone can create a safe space for women, it’s you! Write stories from the body, about the body. Write about desire and sex. Talk about orgasm and connection and desire. Don’t wait.”

We ended the conversation by making plans to see each other a month later when I would be in Baltimore. She wanted to write a story in this book and share her own journey of sensuality. A few days later, I received a call from Roberta’s sister and learned

the news that Roberta had died a few hours after our conversation from an abdominal aneurism.

Roberta was a renaissance woman who lived her life with authenticity, sensuality and wide-eyed wonder. She inspired and loved so many people throughout her life. That was her sensual expression: LOVE.

She pushed against the norms in life and experienced a wide range of sensations and experiences while still trying to fit in. Born in New York City to a large Catholic family she traveled as a young adult to San Francisco where she was a member of the Unification Church, a "Moonie." She was drawn to the messages of anti-Communism, pro-America and the words Love, Unite, Forgive, which were a fit for Roberta who was a seeker and a woman who loved community. She married, gave birth to two daughters and divorced her husband who later became a famous baseball game announcer. Like many of us, she tried to fit into a "normal life" with a big personality that called her to live and experience everything.

Roberta defined herself as a heterosexual woman who also fell in love with a woman and lived with her for six years. When Roberta tried to make sense of this, one of her daughters said, "Mom, I think you just love who you love." That was Roberta.

She loved making life beautiful. Cooking delicious meals for friends. Creating flower arrangements and decorating her home. She surrounded herself with beautiful things and beautiful people. She was the epitome of generosity.

I miss her presence in my life deeply.

I end with a few words from Roberta:

An email sent to me after an evening gathering with Roberta, a friend, Kater Leatherman and me:

Yesterday was a treasure. Thank you for all of it. What a comfort our friendship is, a beautiful, downy "throw" pillow on the sofa of my life.

You are a brave loving soul, and all the paths in your life are converging in your quest to bring more love and peace into the world now. Enjoy the journey. Reap the blessings.

One of her desires from an affirmation in her journal:

*Thank you Father for my beloved,
A magnificent, mind energy
A mirroring of me in the masculine,
Healthy, robust,
Blending spirituality with intelligence and tenderness and unselfishness
Who is nurturing
And curious
And hilarious
And perfect for me now.*

And an article about life that inspired her. This is the way she lived her life:

Written By Regina Brett, 90 years old, of The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio

"To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 44 lessons life taught me. It is the most-requested column I've ever written. My odometer rolled over to 90 in August, so here is the column once more:"

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.

19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
25. Frame every so-called disaster with these words "In five years, will this matter?".
26. Always choose life.
27. Forgive everyone everything.
28. What other people think of you is none of your business.
29. Time heals almost everything. Give time, time.
30. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
31. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
32. Believe in miracles.
33. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
34. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
35. Growing old beats the alternative -- dying young.
36. Your children get only one childhood.
37. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
38. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
39. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
40. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
41. The best is yet to come.
42. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up, and show up.
43. Yield.
44. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.



Roberta A. Creeron

*November 27, 1953-
January 5, 2014*

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