

Wobbly Woman Memoirs: Looking for Love (Preview)

Foreword

“Owning our story and loving oneself through that process is the bravest thing we will ever do.”

(Brené Brown)

When I told someone that I was writing my memoir, they gave me a “Who the fuck are you?” kind of look. I am not famous. I haven’t won the Pulitzer Prize. Hell, I’m not at the end of my life or career. So, who am I to be telling my story? And...why would anyone care?

Brené Brown, author, and researcher on vulnerability and shame says, “Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.”

By sharing my story, I’m opening the door to vulnerability. I feel splayed across the white pages, but I know this is my purpose. Words, like blood, course through my veins, keeping me sane and alive. Transfusing help, or hope or inspiration in other lives.

The title says it all. I am a Wobbly Woman. I don’t pretend that my life is perfect. This book is about sharing my “not-so-perfect” life to show you how everything that happens is perfect. A friend once said to me, “Things just happen to you, Leeza Baric.”

Yep, they sure do.

But then it’s not so much a matter of things happening to me but the choices I’ve made in my life. Looking back, I realise that I’ve been heavily influenced (or easily persuaded) by the men in my life. I can say the same for the women in my life, but that’s another book. For most of my life, I’ve wanted to please everyone. I’ve lived according to the dictates of others. And, in that process, I forgot who I was. What I wanted.

Wobbly Woman Memoirs is a love story. It’s about the breakdown of my marriage and remembering my quest for love. My stories are raw. I swear. I talk about things that most people keep buried. I ask some hard questions— mostly about myself. So, if you can’t handle that—close the book now. This book is not for you. You’ve been warned. And, Mum, if you’re reading this, CLOSE THE BOOK NOW.

If my stories trigger painful memories or emotions, please get help. There's no shame in getting help or talking things through. Seeing a counsellor is a part of my life and I'm grateful for that.

My intention is not to hurt anyone in the telling of my story. I hope that as I write and share my stories, I will come to more understanding and compassion towards the people who I believe hurt me. They are human and have their own sufferings. As do I. I believe in telling our truths (even if we all have a different perspective) and being vulnerable because it helps us understand ourselves and others. It helps us forgive ourselves and others. It helps us heal.

Hold on and enjoy the ride, as I take you on my wobbly adventures—looking for love.

Prologue

“People think a soul mate is your perfect fit, and that's what everyone wants. But a true soul mate is a mirror, the person who shows you everything that is holding you back, the person who brings you to your own attention so you can change your life.” (Elizabeth Gilbert—*Eat, Pray, Love*)

I knew it was over when I couldn't see myself written on his goal card.

This is what it said... “I am so happy and grateful that...”

He had a new house, a new car, a boat, a successful business, AND he was a great father. But there as no mention of me, his wife of 11 years, his partner for 13. I was the mother of his children, the one who moved house and state many times so he could further his career. I was nowhere in his vision of a happy life.

No me.

The acid from my stomach crept up into my throat. I got a drink of water from the kitchen and knew that when I went back into our bedroom, our lives would be changed forever.

Slow sips.

I stood beside the bed. He stared at the ceiling.

“I don't want to be with you anymore,” he said to the ceiling.

“What?” I asked.

A long silence. I was prepared to wait.

“It's you!”

Another long silence. This time he had to wait.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, look at you,” his eyes scrolled me up and down with contempt.

“What’s wrong with me?” I asked, standing before him 20 kilograms overweight, wearing holey pyjamas, hairy legs, and a five-centimetre dull regrowth in the part of my otherwise blonde hair.

He looked away.

“Guy, what’s wrong with me?”

More silence.

I stood there crying, shaking my head at him, throwing back the contempt.

The ceiling still held his interest.

I slammed the door shut so loud the house shook. The kids came running out of their bedrooms, rubbing their eyes.

“What’s wrong, Mum?” Connor asked. He was six.

“Mummy,” Airlie hugged me. She was two.

“It’s OK, go back to bed,” I tried to hide my tears.

I lay on the uncomfortable lounge, consumed with rage, thinking he was no fucking Mr Universe.

Guy shook our life up like a bottle of exploding champagne, lots of spillage, waste, and sweet sticky mess. I loved him, and I hated him. Our life together had been turbulent, both of us taking turns to shake the bottle, both of us taking turns to cork it in time. Not this time. I made him leave the next day. I couldn’t stand him to be in the house; for Connor and Airlie to breathe in the dense air of anger and resentment between us.

“I think we need a separation, time to think things through but with the view of getting help, seeing a counsellor,” he said, confusing me with hope. I nodded.

The first weekend he took the kids, I packed their bags worrying whether they would be cold, or hot, or hungry or sad, but gave them bear hugs and told them to have a great time, as if they were going on a fun day out. They were going to Dad’s new house, two stories with a beautiful view. They stood between us, not knowing what to do.

“I love you,” I waved, tears betraying the forced smile.

I closed the door and couldn't breathe. I thought I was having an asthma attack and called an ambulance. I've never called an ambulance for myself before.

When the ambulance officer arrived, he stuck something on the end of my finger and asked, "Is there anything going on in your life that is upsetting you?"

I looked at him wide-eyed and broke down, nodding, wiping away the tears with the back of my hand, wondering where the tissue box was. It wasn't pretty.

Tears turned into a kind of howling, and then I couldn't breathe—again.

"Take a deep breath."

After he left, I drank half a bottle of Wild Turkey and watched the movie, "PS, I love you." Very bad move!

The next morning, I got up in my ten-year-old pyjamas, hairy legs, regrowth, still 20 kilograms overweight and with a hangover. I looked at the stranger in the mirror. Puffy eyes, red blotchy skin, and uncontrollable tears. We eyed each other's misery, felt each other's pain and realised we didn't like each other very much.

The Rooster (The Tenth Sign of the Lunar Cycle)

I am on hand

To herald in the day.

I thrive by clockwork and precision.

In my unending quest for perfection

All things will be restored to

Their rightful place.

I am the exacting taskmaster,

The ever-watchful administrator.

I seek perfect order in my world.

I represent unfailing dedication.

I AM THE ROOSTER.

(Theodora Lau—*The Handbook of Chinese Horoscopes*, p. 385)