

*‘Sometimes letting things go is an act of far greater power than defending or hanging on.’*

ECKHART TOLLE

## **Chapter 1**

### **Unravelling**

After I separated from my first husband, I started getting better at being alone. I slowly explored my creative side, through encouragement from some self-help books I’d been reading at the time. Louise Hay’s ‘Heal Your Life’ and Wayne Dyer’s ‘Intention’ had been my buddies for some time, along with Dan Millman’s ‘The Life You Were Born to Live’. This was thanks in part to a beautiful psychotherapist I had met who literally changed my life and helped me get at least one foot on the ground. Through her, I learnt about meditation, consciousness, and psychic awareness, and to trust my intuition.

My absolute favourite books, then and now, were Paulo Coelho’s novels, which I’ve journeyed with many times. They always seemed to find their way into my hands when I was travelling somewhere and, notably, always shared the exact message I needed to receive at the time. I think it was Paulo’s and OSHO’s books that had the biggest impact on me; asking me to step into life in a more conscious way, to be courageous, vulnerable and brave. They really highlighted for me the shadow work and the understanding of experiential learning and integration. When reading Paulo, I felt like I was journeying with him; I felt like I

understood the pilgrim's journey, as I too, was a pilgrim. I think my inspiration for writing and sharing my story, in the hope it will help someone else, came from him.

However, the book I was reading on our last family holiday together before the separation resonated with me. Elizabeth Gilbert's 'Eat Pray Love' gave me the understanding of what I was seeking; connection, purpose, and the depth of a love that created an expansion of the heart.

After I left my ex-husband, I experienced many 'firsts'. I was in my thirties and felt I had not had a 'rite of passage'. I guess I missed out on that, being a young mother, and now, here I was with the chance to do my teen years and twenties all over again.

There was my first music festival, my first drunk night out alone, my first joint, my first sexual relationship other than my ex-husband, my first overseas trip alone, buying my first house alone, my first walk of shame, my first road trip, my first open mic session, my first concert, and the list goes on...

I met so many amazing, wonderful characters who brought to life stories and parts of myself that lay dormant, like seeds waiting for the sun to shine upon them. Like the cliched butterfly metamorphosis, I morphed, transformed, changed, broke down, deconstructed, and reconstructed. It did not stop.

There were so many 'normals' and it brought me to this place of reinventing myself the way I wanted to be, instead of being a rolling stone at the mercy of the bumps and knocks. It was up to me to create me, and I loved the creating part.

Often people around me struggled with the changes they witnessed and at times, I felt judged, alone and caged. So many of these feelings about me were, in fact, my own fear. Fear of being judged and rejected or ostracised by the tribe. The strange or perhaps truthful part was, I never felt part of the tribe anyway. It was never a fit for me. It always felt too small and restricted and to be a part of it, I had to play small. I no longer wanted to

play that role in this community. I wanted to find my own tribe. I needed to connect.

The more I listened to my soul, my creativity and intuition, the more I was able to step fearlessly out of the mundane, the safe haven; and every time I left my comfort zone, I grew.

I know now that I am not alone and that many people I have met have experienced so many things, yet this does not always define who they are. I love that two of my dearest friends, each twenty years older than me, had so much wisdom to share. They shared with me openly and showed me it was my rite of passage to explore this world with every ounce of enthusiasm and in every aspect. To sail the widest stretches, trek mountains and sleep in a stranger's bed were all legit experiences and could never be judged; because when we choose to act on something in the moment, we usually choose what we want to experience.

It was important to be conscious at least and take responsibility for that. Everything that I felt the desire or needed to know about being human on planet earth was there to be experienced if I chose, not judged or limited. Earth is a playground in which to explore and learn. This amazing ability we all have to create and be a part of creation is within us all.

So just prior to my fortieth birthday and after an emotional court battle with the ex-husband, I was exhausted and drained. It was here that I had a revelation and a harsh realisation that in order to move on completely, I had to let go. Let go of everything. I faced my deepest fears and looked at myself honestly. I saw how much my misery, depression and toxic connection to the ex-husband was hindering my abilities to be a good mother and human in general.

I was not in any state to be the person I wanted to be. Despite fighting so hard for my daughter and winning the case, for my soul, for my heart and for her too, I needed to let go.

I could not endure any more fighting. I had tried multiple times

in different ways to connect and create an amicable relationship for the children. I could not understand my ex-husband's actions and behaviour and no matter how much I may have been able to have a friendship with him, perhaps he just could not.

The lawyers, as they do, loved the case; they saw lots of dollar signs (at least seven of them). My lawyer's advice was to pursue and get what I deserved as the mother of four children. However, I realised the mental health of their father, me and the kids was more important. So, I took a payout to end the case.

I was exhausted emotionally and did not understand why this had all happened. It was later I dropped my bundle. I could not fight anymore. I had nothing left in the tank. The extra money gave me an opportunity to take a break from life... So I took it. I let go of everything.

It was his turn; the children needed to know him, the real him. I had to stop protecting them from their reality, from the reality of him. They deserved the truth, as I did. I had always been there and sacrificed for them. I could give them no more and in trying to, I was constantly running ragged, which meant they did not get the best version of me. If I wasn't able to follow my heart, how could they? I owed them the truth of who we both are, their father and me. No longer could I live a lie, trying to be something that I was not. It was imperfectly perfect; the universe had provided me with what I had been asking for and I had never seen it until this moment.

I had the perfect youthful parents who were active and present in my children's lives and lived in a stable domestic environment. I had an ex-husband who did the same. He earned plenty of money, had a good (new) wife and a big house, and he also desired to have his children with him. Despite our differences, he wanted the best for his children. For the first time, the timing was perfect.

The following weeks brought about one of the hardest decisions I had ever made. In the days after sending my daughter to live

with her father, I cried in the bathtub and considered ending my life. I considered many things and was judging myself very harshly as a failure as a wife, mother and, fundamentally, as a human.

I was certain everyone around me thought I'd lost my mind. In a sense I had. I had listened to my heart, and this was one of the first times I noticed that listening to the heart required bravery and courage. I was in this moment cracked and broken apart. Vulnerable.

After a few days, my son reminded me he was going to Nepal for a trekking holiday. I immediately felt the pull to revisit Nepal. As soon as I had that thought, he suggested I go with him. Not knowing what the universe had in store for me and with nothing holding me back anymore and nothing more to lose, I booked my ticket.

I was in Nepal on 25 April when the 7.8 earthquake brought the country to rubble, and as it deconstructed, so did I.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Heart Opening**

We met Govin at the airport and as soon as I saw him, all the feelings came rushing back. You see, I met him for the first time back in 2013. I was guided to come to Nepal then too; my cousin had suggested it after I had broken up with my first husband a second time.

Nepal had certainly stolen a piece of my heart. It has an energy I cannot describe, and I found myself trekking in the Himalayas with my youngest son.

I felt an undeniable connection between two souls as soon as Govin and I made eye contact, and here it was, two years later, and the strangest feelings re-emerged. I knew the first time we met there was something special about him. When I left after that three-week holiday, I vowed to return. Although that feeling had escaped me until I returned and looked into his eyes again in 2015.

The first time we met in 2013, he was so young and I was still grieving many things about the loss of my marriage and previous life. I did not allow myself to consider him as a lover. But I could not understand the feelings I had. They were so foreign to me, like nothing I had ever known before. There was a familiarity about him. It did not make sense. I dismissed the feelings that surfaced about him because of his age, and to be honest, I was not ready for love at that time. Nor was my heart open to receive anything unconditionally without judgment.

So here I was once more on Nepal soil and this time it was 2015. Arriving back in Pokhara, a gorgeous lakeside at the base of the Annapurnas. I was confused about how I was feeling and decided in the moment to just go with it and not judge it. Maybe it was just the feeling of connection after a harrowing eighteen months, but something else told me it was more than that and to stay open, so I did.

Within a few days, my son went trekking with him and I decided to focus on healing activities. I had got sick on the journey over, so sick that I ended up doing nothing for the first few days. I did some meditation with Baba G, a funny yogi dude who is a conundrum of sorts and, by Australian standards, probably completely mad. However, I found him a welcome distraction and a light-hearted soul at a time when I needed it. I did a little yoga and immersed myself in the Nepali culture.

Govin and my son were away trekking. It was so strange; I missed Govin so much, I could not understand the feeling, it was like a grief. I still did not really know him, although something in me felt like I knew him better than anyone. It was weird. Like nothing I'd experienced before, so I vowed once again to not judge and be open.

It took a while for my health to come good and I decided it was just great to be in Pokhara, writing, relaxing, meditating, walking and exploring Nepali life. I focused on the culture and learnt about Nepal. During the next three weeks, I went to a Nepali wedding, visited villages, explored Nepalese life, and I genuinely started to relax.

When Govin and my son returned, Govin invited us to his home in Baglung. This was common in Nepal, as most of the locals loved to take foreigners to visit their homes. We, of course, accepted the invite and took the four-hour taxi ride to Baglung.

Baglung was beautiful. It felt so natural. I felt so connected to the Nepali people and especially Baglung village, that I can

honestly only describe it as a familiar feeling of coming home. It was so strange and as I was so open; I was experiencing this visit in a way that told me this would not be the last time I visited. Something about Baglung was oddly familiar and comfortable. I felt I could just set up a little home there and live. This was one week before the earthquake in Nepal.

Still, to this day, the most memorable moments were sharing with him – his family, his village, the music, and many conversations. Although sometimes challenging due language barriers, somehow, I felt we understood each other; it was truly amazing. I really felt connected to something deeper, a knowing, almost like I was being divinely guided to be a part of his world and him mine. It was like we had some divine gifts for each other; and even if the humanness in us was not aware of what they were, some part of us knew we were exchanging something meaningful.

Whilst visiting Baglung, we went for a lovely walk and Govin pointed out the Kali River. I recalled my small amount of knowledge on the goddess Kali (a Hindu goddess) and remembered she was the goddess of destruction and creation. I had meditated with Kali and asked for her guidance as I moved through destructive periods of my life. I had asked her to guide me in the dark moments so I could find my way to the light and start creating again.

I even brought the Kali necklace with me to Nepal on this trip. Whilst packing, I came across the necklace, which my girlfriend had gifted me a long time ago, and it ignited my interest in the goddess. Why it had popped up at that moment, just as I was about to head to Nepal, was a mystery to me.

In the past six to eight years, I had been deconstructing and recreating regularly and felt quite an affinity with Kali. Like being reunited with an old friend in the land in which she was born, through thousands of years of ritual, culture and religion.