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# Introduction



The beginning of the beginning—  
how one day changed everything.

December 19th, 1991—the date that my journey began.

It was a day of great emotional pain, the day I started to wake up and regain my personal power. I was 32 years old.

I have a story to tell that I know will help you. It is about how I came awake and figured out how to have the life that I really want. In some ways, my story is similar to those of many other women; in other ways, it has some angles that are unusual if not unique.

The main part of the story takes place in George, Western Cape Province, South Africa. A tourist destination any time of year, it became home for me when my husband Tom and I moved there in my early 20s.

It was a move prompted by a lifelong desire to own my own business. George was one of the two fastest growing towns in South Africa and the only one near the coast. I had trained to become a goldsmith in the executive capital,


Pretoria, and was fortunate enough to learn my trade at a very reputable jeweler whose owners happened to be good friends of my parents. Just like us, they were Viennese and it was at their suggestion that I tried on goldsmithing for size and found an instant connection with it.



SMART  
WOMAN QUOTE

*When a woman tells the truth she is creating the possibility for more truth around her.*

~ Adrienne Rich



Tom was not qualified at anything and had been working at the weather bureau when we met. I heard that an old school colleague, Peter, who had also become a goldsmith (and who I knew was not a very good one) had moved to George to open the first manufacturing jewelry shop there. He was doing well (being the only one) and

I thought that I needed to give him some competition. Because of the training I had received, I was considered a very good goldsmith and designer, so that was the catalyst for our move to George. It was not a surprise when, shortly after we moved there, Peter sold his shop.

I had met Tom at a nightclub and we had had a one-year courtship before getting married in 1980. Looking back, I realize that the feelings I had for Tom had nothing to do with love. At the time, however, it seemed like love. He was a terribly handsome man who was very smitten with me. I had never experienced such intensity from a man before and thought he must really love me.

Being 20 years old did not make me an expert on love. When I did have niggling feelings of doubt and try to pull away, Tom would be so intensely needy that I felt sorry for him. I confused that feeling with love. Whatever it was, it was enough to push me into a new life in a new town with a new husband.

George is a small city or a big town, not quite 100,000 inhabitants. It is a vacation destination for South Africans, sitting along the Indian Ocean coast in a perpetually mild climate. The environment suited me, and I enjoyed establishing myself in the jewelry business as well as in the community at large.

Social life in George was limited, and the “friendship pool” among permanent residents was finite. Tom and I liked to socialize, and we joined the local tennis club shortly after taking up residence, seeking likeminded souls with whom to socialize, play tennis, and generally serve as our friends’ network.

One of those souls was Candy, wife of Martin, another club member. A quiet, apparently delicate woman, in many ways she was my antithesis. Where I was strong, assertive, and ready to converse on any topic, Candy was shy, unassuming, and more comfortable listening than talking. However, she was an excellent tennis player and golfer, and the men found her physically attractive.

In some ways, Candy was a “traditional” woman, a helpless waif who looked to men to guide her through life. Her self-esteem was so low that when a man paid her attention, she blossomed. Of course, the novelty wore off after a while and she would become demanding and draining. I had no idea when I first met her how powerfully attractive that kind of woman can be to a certain kind of man—the kind of man I chose.

Candy and Martin were our first close friends in George, and we got to know each other very well. Apart from playing tennis once or twice per week, we also spent each weekend playing cards and socializing together.

Actually, Candy and Tom got to know each other well—*very, very* well. I discovered that they had fallen in love with each other less than two years into our marriage



## Power Point #1

### MARRY THE LIFE YOU WANT TO LEAD.

During my “fully single” years, later on in the course of my journey, I met a woman who had been happily married for 22 years at that point. She said that her mother told her something that had stuck with her. She told me, and it stuck with me, too:

#### **Marry the life you want to lead.**

Often we will “fall in love” with someone who has very different interests or life plans than ours, and we think that things will change—love will find a way. That we will grow to like what they like and they will like what we like. But it doesn't. As time passes, those differences may become amplified and affection can diminish.

Start out asking yourself, “Would I have the life I want with this person?” It is very important.

As I said, this tip stuck with me. When I met Arlen, my current and future husband, I recognized that with him I would have the kind of life I wanted. It has nothing to do with money or stuff—it is how you relate, your interests, shared values, your goals.

Keep this tip in mind and you will benefit greatly. I promise.



and approximately six months after we moved to George. Frankly, I took the revelation calmly—relative, that is, to how I took similar news a few years later. Tom admitted that he had fallen in love with her, but that he did not know what to do about it because he loved us both. My overriding feeling was one of hurt pride.

I had married a weak man, someone who leaned on me for the simplest things, and that weakness made him vulnerable. According to him, his feelings for Candy “just happened,” he loved us both, and he did not know what to do. Candy, a married woman herself, apologized to me, saying how sorry she was but that there was nothing they could do about it, and a lot more in the same vein.

My decision about how to handle the situation was more or less made for me when I fell pregnant in the midst of all the hubbub. We stayed together through the birth of our son, and less than two years later, our daughter. We stayed married, in fact, for another five years after the big revelation.

## **Enter Dick**

Tom and I divorced when I was 29 and I entered another relationship. Dick was a much better person than Tom (or so I thought), and I was confident that this time there was a solid foundation for a bond that would last for years. This new (and improved) man in my life was a very good tennis player and a life-of-the-party type. He regularly arranged barbecues, games evenings and parties.

Dick moved in with me about five months into the relationship, and this man who was so different from my ex-husband enriched my life. The difference in my relationship with Dick was that we connected well intellectually and had great fun sparring verbally – something I had not had with

Tom at all! I found it very stimulating and exciting to stretch my intellectual muscles.

Dick created quite a large social circle—a circle that included Candy and Martin (yes, Martin had stayed with her after her fling with Tom). In such a small community, it was impossible for me to distance myself from my ex-husband's ex-lover, so I made the best of the situation.

Actually, as strange as it may seem, I really liked Candy. Our relations were cordial, we played tennis periodically and all socialized together, with Dick organizing most of the parties. Martin was more of a golfer, so did not hang out at the tennis club that much.

### **Déjà vu all over again**

I was sitting at a Bridge table the night of December 18th in 1991, with Dick, Candy and Martin. We were engaged in a sociable game, accompanied by a nice red wine that all of us were fully enjoying. I do not remember now what prompted me to look under the table—perhaps I leaned down to get something out of my purse, or I dropped my napkin—but whatever it was, what I saw shook the foundations of my world.

Candy and Dick were playing footsie under the table, bare feet caressing each other.

I could not believe what I was seeing at first. Then events took a Hollywood turn, as we all behaved like characters in a nighttime soap opera. My wine-sparked emotions spurred me as I stood up and began a tirade that did not end until we got home.

“So now you're at it with another of my men,” I remember saying to (or rather, shouting at) Candy. “What's the matter with you?”

There was much protestation and apology, both at the Bridge table and on the way home in the car. Dick assured me that this was all a tempest in a teacup, that nothing was going on, that he was sorry. I listened to everything he had to say, then took myself off to bed in an attempt to get some distance from the situation before discussing things further.

Predictably, I did not sleep well that night. It was the eve of the worst day of my life, the day that everything fell apart and the day I began to put it all back together again.

## **Waking up**

My life is the reflection of the realization of my internal quest over all those years, and I find that now is the time to share my journey with others. That is what this book is about. It is a guide for waking up, based on my own journey from sleep to full consciousness. My story is meant to resonate with you, to inspire you, to show that any woman can reach the place where life is full and healthy and relationships are fulfilling rather than dramatic.

**Ladies, let's get rolling...and start turning around the things in your life that are sapping your power and aliveness.**

### **The Power of 3**

Sets of three have a special power to the human brain. I do not know why, but it is so. To tap into the "power of 3," I will include a question at the end of each chapter that asks you to think of three of something. To start things off:

**What three situations or challenges in your life need resolution?**