



Q&A with Phoebe Leona
author of *Dear Radiant One*

1. What made you want to write *Dear Radiant One*?

After my dad died and I went through a sudden divorce in 2013, I knew I had to write this book. It was a story that was somewhat unbelievable, even though I lived it. First, I wanted to make some sense of it for myself. I wrote a very emotional first draft in 2016 but it wasn't ready for anyone to look at yet. When I finally came back to write it in 2021, I found a way to not only make sense of it for myself but for it to be a service to others.

2. Who is this book for?

This book is for anyone who has held a story close to them and has been scared/ashamed to share it or hasn't fully processed it yet, and anyone who is looking to be seen in their story and wants guidance as a way to recover, heal, and transform.

3. Are there any life experiences that shaped how you wrote this book?

Yes. This entire book is based on my own life experiences. How I approached storytelling by writing letters to emotions came from a practice that I was doing in my journal for years to help process emotions. I also knew I didn't want the story to be told linearly to show how the past of my childhood was affecting the present or rather, the more recent past. I wanted to show how it was all connected.

4. What was your process for writing the book?

My process for the first few years was writing chapters that were stories I was living through as I processed them. I wanted to capture the emotions in real time so that I could tap into them when I was ready. When I sat down to write in 2021, I went through them and used them as reference. I saw how writing the letters to the emotions would allow me to feel them again and layer in the more recent stories that were woven into the emotional tapestry. I knew this story was not just about me so I needed to turn the focus to the reader at some point. This was where I added sections that offer the reader a way into their own story and how they dance with their emotional landscape and then offer resources for the reader to utilize as a way to recover.

5. What was your transformation after the book?

I had been a part of a multi-author book that was published in the summer of '21. I remember how angry and resentful I was that I had to go through so much trauma in order to write something that could help others. There was probably a lot of fear in there too about how it was going to be received. By the time I got to publish *Dear Radiant One*, I had been able to go

through that whole journey with my editor who really allowed me to be seen and held as I processed these vulnerabilities. Since then, I have felt a huge weight of my past life lifted with a deep knowing that it is out there to serve others. I have to say, I can't remember feeling this happy in a very long time. The saying, "the truth will set you free" is real!

6. What do you hope the reader will receive from this book?

My hope for the reader is they receive whatever they need to receive. It might be that they need to receive a story about someone who came out on the other side of a traumatic childhood that inspires hope for themselves. It might be that they need to receive an understanding of their own emotional landscape that has hindered them in some way. It might also be that they receive tangible practices to befriend their emotions and make changes in how they relate to them. They might just need to simply receive a new perspective. My hope for the reader is they find whatever they need in this book is some kind of elixir for living the human experience.

7. What are the core lessons?

The core lessons that are in this book is that everything is connected. Our past, present, and future are embodied in our humanness at all times whether we are conscious of it or not. When we become aware of them, is when the transformation occurs. Another core lesson is that emotions are not bad or good. Emotions are all necessary, they are simply energy moving through our bodies, and we get to choose how they participate in our life when we become more self aware.

8. What makes this book unique?

I think the letters to the emotions as a way to share a story is what makes this book unique. It allows a way into my inner emotional landscape with an invitation into the reader's own inner emotional landscape to reflect upon and see from a different perspective.

9. How do you want to make an impact on our world?

I really feel called to make a big impact on our world particularly right now as the world is in a never ending swirl of chaos. As I was unpacking my relationship with Chaos and felt like I was finally getting to a place of stability in reconciling and recovering from my addiction to chaos, I saw how I could be of service to others as we went into lockdown two years ago, and all the events that followed for us collectively. While others have been feeling as if they are in a snow globe, I have been steady and ready to be here, as if my life experiences prepared me for this moment in time.

10. What are you most curious about right now?



I am curious about creating new experiences and co-creating with other artists to share our collective stories. It feels necessary to create more art right now and I want to find a new way of doing it to make the biggest impact. I have really loved creating multi-dimensional experiences around my book that involve dance and poetry performances and interweaving my own embodiment movement practice, Mvt109™ to get participants to embody their own story too. It has been a lot of fun and has been making a huge impact so far.

11. What was the biggest challenge in your emotional recovery?

My biggest challenge is simply to trust the process. I have made huge leaps and bounds from when life cracked me wide open in 2013 when I was called to an emotional recovery journey. There are still days when I question the recovery and ask if anything has changed. It doesn't take long to shake that off when I look back at old journals or reflect on past relationships that no longer engage with. A consistent practice that is full of emotional recovery resources along with a healthy dose of gratitude goes a long way.

12. What are you most proud of?

I am most proud of this book in what it represents as my own personal healing and where it is about to take me to help others. I have done a lot of reflecting recently on how far I have come (and in a lot of ways how I am have come full circle) to being the person I am now. It has been a celebration of myself in a lot of ways and I feel that is a gift not many people get to fully experience in their lifetime. My hope is that I will have the opportunity to provide that space for others through this book and the experiences that unfold from it. If I am successful in that way, then I will know it all wasn't in vain and that will make me most proud of my accomplishments.