

**Hello,
My Name is...
Warrior Princess**

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Reno, Nevada

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Dedication

To my kids: Foster, biological, step or adopted, however you are counted, you are all the same to me. You were each the greatest gift and so much more amazing than I ever could have dreamed. Being a Mommy is the most difficult thing I've ever done. There is no owner's manual, no hotline, and no one right way. I grew up with you, learned, made mistakes, yelled too much, and loved you so fiercely I have no words. Yes, I know. No words. Unbelievable. My hope for each of you is that you:

- find yourself far earlier than I found myself.
- love yourself.
- take what I taught you, good and bad, and make it better.

- know what makes you happy and embrace it, whatever that looks like to you.

I'll love you no matter what.

To the love of my life, D: I know it's hard to be with me sometimes. I'm sorry, and you're welcome. Thank you for:

- sifting through the rubble (and bullshit).

- finding me and supporting me in every way.
- loving my strength equally with my weaknesses.
- being OK with my demons.
- Supporting me staying home while I wrote this.

I love you. More. You are my kind of crazy.

To my sister, Kim: Thank you for jogging my memory since yours is far better and for talking to me about this when you didn't want to. I couldn't have done any of this without you. You are my everything. Really and truly. My sister and my friend, my Roni-Maroni. Have a lovely day, moist towelette. I love you with all I am.

To my friend Diana: You listened, texted, listened, gave insight, listened, reined me in and let me loose, and (did I mention?) listened. Thank God for beautiful, strong women that support each other. I love you, my sister from another mister. You are the jelly in my PB & J and the cheese in my macaroni. "Thank you" doesn't feel like enough, but it's all I've got. You're my person. You will always be my person.

To my editor, Corrine: Jesus, this would have never gotten done without you! I had NO idea the volume of work and emotion it would take to get this written. I am so grateful for you pushing me, pointing things out, pushing me some more, and making me be the best version of my writing self. Thank you!

To Kevin: My friend, my first real love and my copy editor and proofreader. You are so completely overqualified for this task, but I couldn't imagine anyone better at it or better suited.

I am so thankful you were the second person to read this and that you also pushed me to be the best writer I can be. I appreciate and value you as my friend of 30 years.



Preface



Don't be ashamed of your story; it will inspire others.

-Anonymous



My past. I don't face it in a straightforward way. I typically skim over it, but I don't share details with others.

I use it as a peripheral example, only sharing vague hints of the whole story, of a child who has seen some tough stuff,

but I don't want people to know the whole truth. I moved
a lot as a kid, and I never felt like I put roots anywhere. I

am extremely disconnected about places I've lived growing up. I am ambivalent about people. I have
tremendous conflict about really letting people in. I want to, but I'm afraid. I was

taught growing up that people have an outstanding propensity to cause an
inordinate amount of pain both physically and emotionally. What got me
through growing up and probably saved me was my innate ability to
disconnect from everything - which is also what I struggle with now.

I started a blog in October, 2011 as a voice about my life as an athlete and as a working mom of a huge family. I wanted to write about finding balance, dealing with struggles, being a runner and minimalist. I started writing in the hopes that something I had to say would make a difference in someone

else's life. We can have an enormous impact when sharing our daily lives with others. I haven't written this book until now because I didn't want to hurt my mother, since she's still alive. I guess saying that is not a lie—I don't want to hurt her—but I'm protecting myself more than I'm protecting her. I'm protecting

my kids as well. The thought of them looking at me differently

after knowing what I've been through terrifies me. I've grown to believe that protection lie, though. It's become quite a shield of righteousness in my life, and it's hard to let it go. It's a much

prettier package than the truth. The truth is I am afraid. I share

my story because even if I don't get to know you personally, I

can be raw and vulnerable and share myself.

I share it all. From the young frightened child, the confused adolescent, the young adult to now, I have gotten better at connecting with people. I guard myself closely. I

don't let people in easily, but those that I truly love, I love with everything I am. I'm outgoing and happy and people

often think they know me better than they really do. I am

warm and genuine, but I've always only allowed people to see what I'm comfortable with them seeing. I feel regret in failed

relationships, but I know my piece of that is my distance, and the rest lies with the emotionally unavailable people I chose to

be in a relationship with. It's easy to be hurt less if you don't allow yourself to feel vulnerable. I knew

I couldn't have a

healthy relationship without completely letting my walls down,

so finally I did. And it's scary as hell pretty often. It's also the best thing I've ever done.

In *Daring Greatly*, author Brené Brown shares, “We either own our stories (even the messy ones), or we stand outside of them—denying our vulnerabilities and imperfections, orphaning the parts of us that don't fit in with who/what we think we're supposed to be, and hustling for other people's approval of our worthiness. Let's use our stories (even the messy ones) to help each other. Think about the defining moments (big and small) in your life, and share them. The stories you share will

inspire others, give them hope, and help people connect with you in ways you can't imagine.”

And so here I am baring it all. My hope is that my story – not better than anyone else's, but one that now has a voice – will help whoever you are, wherever you are. I hope that we can bond together through our trials, support and love each other, and become better. Full, more complete. Let's put together this puzzle we call life, heal, and become the best versions of ourselves possible.

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