

Wholehearted
LIVING 

Declutter

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH
YOURSELF AND YOUR PAST

Learn to LIKE Yourself!



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INTRODUCTION

Working through this book is like taking a soul-searching trip that can bring about lasting change. Like many women, your suitcases may be packed with beliefs about yourself that simply aren't true. This decluttering process will give you the ability to leave a lot of baggage behind, so it'll no longer contaminate your present or your future.

Rather than racing toward a final destination, we'll focus on a new way to "travel" through your daily life. Along the way, you'll discover your authentic self and finally become an ally to the person in the mirror.

To get the most out of this trip, you'll need to pack three essentials:

- Willingness to step outside your comfort zone.
- An open mind toward the discoveries you'll make.
- The courage to believe that investing in yourself is not selfish.

Many of us numb the pain of our past through overworking, overeating, or overscheduling. This journey invites you to do the opposite: to slow down and focus.

A significant part of this process is often referred to as "story work." To get the best results and truly declutter your past, I highly recommend working with a reputable therapist, counselor, or certified life coach. While it isn't impossible to go it alone, this kind of deep work is far more effective when you have a trusted professional by your side.

In addition, many have found tremendous benefit in going through this process within a small group. There is a unique healing that happens in community; you may find that you learn just as much from hearing the stories of others as you do from sharing your own.

At each stop, you'll unpack and leave behind heavy baggage like shame, guilt, and critical self-talk. You'll finally have the tools to identify and discard those "heart-bashing" behaviors for good. Ultimately, this journey is about connecting with the right person at the right time. That person is you, and the time is now.

- *Alicia Economos*





chapter 1

BECOMING AN ALLY

“If you’re searching for that one person that will change your life, take a look in the mirror.”

— ROMAN PRICE



THE FOUNDATION OF WHOLEHEARTED LIVING

In the simplest of terms, wholehearted living means living your best life. However, it's up to each of us to define what that actually looks like. As a life coach for the past 26 years, I've developed several ways to describe this concept:

- **Living with an inner sense** of peace, confidence, and joy — regardless of your circumstances.
- **Discovering and celebrating** your true self, and fulfilling your purpose by using your unique talents and gifts to impact others.
- **If you are a person of faith**, loving God, yourself, and others with all your heart.

Wholehearted living isn't a destination you reach someday in the future. Instead, it is a way of navigating your daily life. And the first step toward this life is developing a healthy, supportive foundation.

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL RELATIONSHIP

If you were asked to name the most influential relationship in your life, would you confidently say it's the one you have with yourself? It is the truth. This relationship is the foundation for every other relationship. It is the root issue that impacts how you relate to others, to food, your body and every other part of your life.

Most New Year's resolutions fail, but not because of a lack of willpower. Instead, it's because they focus on changing symptoms like weight, spending, or work-life balance.

These goals often completely ignore the root cause: the relationship you have with yourself. In reality, your behaviors are simply a reflection of the health—or lack thereof—of that core relationship.

THE POWER OF SELF TALK

In her book *Self-Talk, Soul-Talk*, Jennifer Rothschild shares that the average person has well over 35,000 thoughts every single day. We're constantly in an internal conversation with ourselves — usually without even thinking about it.

Because **over 75% of those thoughts are negative and self-defeating**, we end up feeling exhausted and discouraged; that's like carrying a 2x4 board and hitting yourself over the head three-fourths of the day — every day!

Fortunately, you can choose to become an ally for yourself. You can learn to treat yourself with the same kindness you would give a dear friend. To do this, you must first “declutter” your past; you can sort through your upbringing to determine what to keep and what to leave behind.

A CRITIC VS. AN ALLY

We all have an inner critic. The word “critic” comes from the Greek word *kritikos*, which means to judge. Most of us are so habitually hyper-critical that we've become numb to it.



THE FOUNDATION OF WHOLEHEARTED LIVING

The most influential relationship you have is the one you have with yourself. It is the foundation for everything else — your health, your career, and even your spiritual life. It dictates whether you can accept a compliment, ask for what you need or maintain healthy boundaries.

Every day, you choose whether the relationship with yourself is exhausting or exhilarating. Though difficult to accept, how you treat yourself is often the source of your greatest anguish. The good news is that you don't have to wait for others to change to start healing; the bad news is that you alone are responsible for the state of that relationship.

We often point fingers, but as the saying goes, when you point one finger at another, three point back at you. In other words, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in another’s eye and ignore the plank in your own?”

THE RESULTS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

Having an unhealthy relationship with yourself produces many unwanted and damaging results. Some common symptoms include:

- **Destroyed Confidence:** Your self-esteem and belief in yourself wither.
- **Emotional Abandonment:** You bury your feelings rather than addressing them.
- **Loss of Voice:** You fail to speak up for what you honestly think, feel, want, or need.
- **Stagnation:** It makes you feel stuck, lonely, and overwhelmed.
- **Decreased Motivation:** You lose the energy to do the things you truly want to do.
- **Numbing Behaviors:** You soothe wounds and unmet needs with unhealthy habits like overeating, overworking, excessive shopping, alcohol, drugs, or people-pleasing.
- **“Busy” Addiction:** You stay addicted to a frantic lifestyle, leading to chronic exhaustion.
- **Hyper-Sensitivity:** You take things personally that aren't personal, which creates friction in your relationships.
- **Lack of Boundaries:** You become a doormat, allowing others to walk all over you because you lack the confidence to maintain limits.
- **False Peace:** By trying to make others happy you settle for a form of dishonesty that leaves your stomach in knots and damages your health.
- **Stagnant Environments:** You put up with toxic relationships and unfulfilling jobs.
- **Physical Toll:** You open the door to stress-related sickness and disease.

When you spend $\frac{3}{4}$ of your day — every day, beating yourself up with toxic thoughts, you make life much harder than it should be. Conversely, when you develop and maintain a healthy relationship with yourself, you make life easier and more enjoyable; it's the way to experience living wholeheartedly.

WRITING EXERCISE



Part I: Your Life on Screen

If you could choose one or two movies or TV series that closely resemble your life, what would they be and why? (e.g., *The Brady Bunch* — a blended family with hidden drama behind a “perfect” exterior). Briefly note your choices.

Part II: Mapping Your Journey

On a piece of paper (graph paper is ideal), draw a horizontal timeline for each 10-year segment of your life. Plot the most significant events that impacted you at a “heart level” using the following guide:

Plot ABOVE the Line (positive memories and experiences) For example:

- **The “First Real Friend”:** That summer you finally felt like you belonged.
- **The “I Can Do It” Moment:** Learning a skill (riding a bike, playing an instrument) that gave you your first taste of mastery.
- **The Unconditional Gift:** A time a teacher or relative saw the “real you” and spoke life into your potential.
- **The Spiritual Awakening:** A moment where you felt a deep sense of peace or connection to something bigger than yourself.

Plot below the Line (Painful or negative experiences) For example:

- **The “Quiet” Rejection:** Not being picked for a team or being left out of a social circle, leading to a belief that you are “unwanted.”
- **The Moved Goalpost:** Achieving something big, only to have a parent ignore it or ask, “Why wasn’t it better?”
- **The Sudden Shift:** A divorce, a move, or a loss that felt like the rug was pulled out from under your feet.
- **The Silence:** A time you were hurting and realized no one was coming to help, leading to the role of “The Manager” or “The Protector.”

