

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Nonfiction

Author: Cristina Carballo-Perelman, M.D.

I identify as a mother, wife, physician and author. I am also a woman, which in 2017, is not mutually exclusive to being a wife or mother. After all, we have evolved, to a certain extent, haven't we? I grew up in a family that valued everyone's potential, exclusive of their sex. I married a man who respected me for my strengths and we raised our daughter to believe that she also could do and be anything she wanted. It was no longer a man's world. Or so I thought.

Unfortunately, I found that was not the reality. As a woman physician, I was emotionally and verbally abused. I learned that lip service is often paid to the concept of gender equality. However, when it came time to practice what was preached, there was a chiasm. Action to that value was not only lacking but in fact, reversed.

As an author, I enjoy writing about the things I am most passionate about. That is how I also live my life. I have been called passionate about certain things and I embrace that. The funny thing about the word "passionate" is that it has come to represent a distorted sense of what a person cares about. When people say a someone is "passionate", they are usually implying that person is reacting, or even over-reacting, with anger. I believe that could not be further from the truth. To me, being passionate means to care so deeply about something, one would go out on a limb to make others understand that point of view. This can be achieved in a positive way with compassion.

So what are my "passions" that I write about?

I write to help others become empowered. I write about my experiences and thoughts on female empowerment, employee rights and to assist those who are grieving to feel comfort, rather than fear.

"Calling All Women, From Glass Slipper to Glass Ceiling", was written after reflecting on the frustrations I felt at work as a woman physician, where I was often disrespected and scoffed at when I brought forth new ideas for our practice. The environment had become so toxic, I had to

wear a necklace with brass “balls” to represent male testicles to make a point. Every time a male colleague would disrespect me, I would show them the necklace and state,

“I have “balls” too, so please respect me like you respect your male colleagues.” I did get that respect, but it came with a price. The book also incorporated my thoughts and frustrations with pop culture which had resurrected the concept that women could be submissive in the bedroom and that was ok. I have since had many discussions with other women who have told me that if it’s the woman’s choice, that’s ok. But is it really? Couldn’t that submissive behavior spill over to areas outside the bedroom, such as the boardroom? I happen to believe so. Female empowerment is critical in creating an environment of gender equality. As gender equality takes hold and becomes the norm rather than the exception, we will see equality for all races, cultures, religions and socioeconomic groups begin to be embraced and celebrated.

Throughout this book, I use both personal stories and famous fairytales to teach women the skills to strengthen the eleven attributes that are necessary to become more empowered at work and at home.

“Fired: Challenging the Status Quo and the Aftermath” was written after I experienced first-hand what it was like to be fired. Losing my job was the price I paid for the respect I had attempted to garner by wearing my special necklace. After practicing medicine for thirty years and developing state-of-the-art programs, I discovered that there were other factors required to create buy-in by others. Building blocks such as team recruitment, acknowledgement and humility are among some of the critical components necessary to empower oneself as a valuable employee. I also learned the importance of identifying a company’s internal corporate responsibility, which is as important, if not more, than their external corporate social responsibility. The internal corporate social responsibility is more difficult for an employee to identify and is found within the internal structure of a company, allowing employees to express new ideas and grow as an individual and part of a team. The external social responsibility is more easily identified by a company’s social footprint in the community. Both of these aspects are critically important to create a balance that an individual employee needs to truly thrive,

connect, and grow within their community. I aim to teach those reading this book, these concepts as well as how to navigate and succeed within this workforce.

Finally, “The Caretaker of All Souls, An Intimate Interview with Death” was written to help others see Death as a comforting messenger for the Divine. Death should be seen as a Being made of Light and Warmth ready to bring those who have passed to the Divine, without fear and trepidation. My intent was to dissipate the fear that the concept of Death embodies, with the dark and foreboding imagery, and instead, replace it with comforting thoughts of a loved one being taken to a better place, where we will all be reunited. As a physician, many of my experiences with death involve both assistance with comfort care measures, as well as a presence for the grieving family members. This book is both a reflection on my personal struggles with Death early in my career as well as my continuing journey with Death, which evolved into one of mutual respect. Now, I see Death as my assistant, helping me help another human being who is suffering, be released from their pain.

Through my writing, I have found a creative outlet to express difficult ideas and also teach others. As a physician, I bring credibility to these experiences and hope others can find value in the messages these books carry.

Our societies are changing. Modern medicine, research and technology are starting to blur the lines of race, gender, culture and religions. Prior to our ever expanding knowledge, we based our value systems on misperceptions. We now have the ability to bring the collective us together by empowering and practicing equality on all fronts.