



The New Woman

Stories of Kintsugi Experiences

Compiled by

Ritu Sharma

This book is a must-read if...

- You like reading real-life inspirational stories
- You like to read short stories that you can dip in and out of as you choose
- You are searching for hope
- You are looking to change your life
- You are on a healing journey
- You are searching for something that is missing
- You are looking to connect with other like-minded women who have experienced what you have
- You are considering writing your own inspirational story
- You have a story to tell
- You want to inspire others

Words of Love

“The New Woman: Stories of Kintsugi Experiences is a truly inspiring and empowering book. The 33 women who share their stories are survivors in the fullest sense of the word. It is a privilege to read about their lives and, in particular, how they effected change and transformed themselves into ‘the new woman’. No reader can fail to be moved, for the contributors speak to us from the heart.

Their stories are told with a compelling honesty and directness. In the forge of suffering and challenging experiences, each woman has grown in wisdom, and we are invited to grow alongside them. By collecting the diverse stories in this book, Ritu Sharma presents a nurturing network of voices, voices that reach out to us as readers to empathise, and in doing so join them in an ever-growing band of sisterhood.”

Dr Debjani Chatterjee MBE FRSL
Writer and Creative Arts Psychotherapist



“This is a great book of some wonderful and amazing stories of powerful women.

The stories in the book make you think deeper and bring you an understanding that kindness is such an important aspect of human nature. We can never know what people are going through. It just makes sense to be kind whenever possible. I am so pleased that these women have spoken about their journeys, paving way for generations to come.”

Christine Morlet, CSP
Speech Coach, Positive Influence Specialist

"It's a privilege to endorse Ritu Sharma's new book The New Woman.

What a great book full of inspirational short stories! We can learn so much from other's experiences and lives, as we come through the global pandemic; The New Woman gives us hope.

We all have been in the same storm but we are in different boats, inequalities have come to the surface like never before, yet with grit and determination we can still mend with our golden threads just like the Kintsugi bowls.

Reading about other women's stories has shown me that I'm not alone. We all are fighting battles that no one knows about."

Mandy Sanghera
Advisor at UNESCO MGIEP
Gender equality advocate and human rights activist



"The book is a reflection of this world's 'New Woman'. It is mandatory that men start to acknowledge and support women's journeys and struggles to create a healthy and harmonious world. These stories have depth of resilience, courage and love of authors for themselves and a lesson for others."

Sam Dossa
Emotional Intelligence Business and Personal Coach,
Founder of MenTell Health

“For society to function for the benefit of all, it needs to ensure that every individual irrespective of creed, colour or race has an equal opportunity to shine. This book shows that despite many obstacles and hindrances, it is possible to achieve - I applaud that through these collections of works, stories are being to inspire the next generation and remind them to treat all with respect and dignity and that good will prevail in the end.”

Ninder Johal

Chair of The Wolverhampton Towns Fund
NED at West Midlands India Partnership, NED at WM5G
Governor at Wolverhampton University



“Editing The New Woman has been an absolute honour. It has been such a moving and thought-provoking experience to read extraordinary stories from woman all over the world, from so many different backgrounds and cultures. All these women have been broken and then, in true Kintsugi style, have put themselves back together again, piece by piece, in order to become the strong, unbowed, resilient women they are today.

These highly personal and immersive accounts of hope, courage, determination, drive, and sheer grit will stay with you long after you have finished reading. These unflinching tales of fortitude are all stories that need to be heard and told.

The New Woman is a timely reminder of the power of the human spirit.”

Olivia Eisinger
Editor

The New Woman

Stories of Kintsugi Experiences

Sample

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Ritu Sharma



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I dedicate this to all the women who found their power within themselves and to those who are looking to claim that power.

Also, to my most beloved grandmother, Kaushalya Devi, whose life story became a guiding light for me during my transformation.



About Kaushalya UK

Kaushalya UK is a registered, not for profit, community organisation working to empower and uplift women. It is growing organically in leaps and bounds under the dynamic leadership of its founder and CEO Ms. Ritu Sharma, who has dedicated her life to bringing women of this world to rediscover their own power and true worth.

At Kaushalya UK, it is a core belief that all women are naturally empowered and at times need a gentle reminder and a little support to get back up and be who they are meant to be. Kaushalya UK is an inclusive organisation and embraces everyone. All women are important, no matter their race, language, faith, culture, nationality or anything else.

All projects run by the organisation fall under one of the categories of:

- Personal and professional development
- Health and well-being
- Financial education and entrepreneurship
- Social events

www.Kaushalyauk.com

Instagram: KaushalyaUK

<https://www.facebook.com/calltowomanpower/>



Kintsugi

Kintsugi, also known as Kintsukuroi, is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum, a method similar to the maki-e technique.

The stories within this book illustrate how the women became broken and in their journey of repair, they have found golden threads that have made them whole again. As they transform, they are even more beautiful and have learned to know their value, just like the increased beauty and value of the Kintsugi bowls.

Trigger Warning

Readers may find some stories trigger an emotional and/or psychological response, with topics including rape, abuse, and domestic violence.

If you are affected by any of these, see the links below and get in touch:

Samaritans
www.samaritans.org

Refuge
www.refuge.org.uk

Rape Crisis England & Wales
<https://rapecrisis.org.uk>

NSPCC
www.nspcc.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK
www.childbereavementuk.org

Mind
www.mind.org.uk

Cancer Research UK
www.cancerresearchuk.org

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Foreword

It takes a courageous woman to find, use and share her story. Too many women around the world are still silenced and when they speak out, it feels as if they are climbing Mount Everest. Marianne Williamson reminds women that it is not the fear of failure that frightens them, but the fear of being great, just like we are born to be.

When a woman reveals her soul to you through her story, it is clear to see the strength, capacity and resilience it took her to rise above her challenge. All women experience varying levels of adversity in their lives, and the stories within *The New Woman* exemplify not only this but her power within.

When women come together to share their stories, you can see the similarities that bind them. Whether you have experienced abuse, loss or mental health issues, or not, you will be moved by the tremendous honesty of each woman's words. Whilst many situations appear startling, the reader will marvel at how each woman found the strength to take action that would change her life forever. This is what makes *The New Woman* so inspirational.

The beauty that Ritu Sharma brings to this book is through the concept of Kintsugi – a Japanese art form. When a bowl is broken or damaged, they simply mend

it with gold. Not only does this complete the bowl once more, but it is also found to be more valuable and beautiful.

As you sip your coffee and read each chapter, do not be surprised if a tear rolls down your cheek. For you will be moved to connect with these woman, thank them for their bravery and know that despite their plights, they have found that self-love is the key to change and moving forward.

Now that these women have dared to share their stories, they are also ready to rise, take their place and follow a purpose that makes a difference in the lives of others. Without the trials of their journey, they would not be able to stand in their power as The New Woman, ready to claim her crown and walk her path with decisiveness, dignity and determination to create a better world.

Lady Waynett Peters
Founder of The Extraordinary Achievers

Introduction

The New Woman: Stories of Kintsugi Experiences is a dream project.

Stories are essential building blocks of empathy and human connection. Sharing our stories become of utmost importance if and when these reflect lived experiences and are capable of both bringing healing and changing lives.

All stories collected in this book are those of transformation. These are stories of adversity and women warriors beating these challenges and coming out as winners. Many of these wonder women have now turned back to extend a helping hand to those still stuck in the black hole. This is the power of a woman – to have experienced the highest degree of pain, and yet still be capable of sharing unconditional love.

The New Woman materialised as a result of a strong calling to facilitate the sharing of these valuable stories. There is a need for a book like this to be read by many women, for various reasons. The main reason is that this book has the potential to become a survival guide for someone living a similar experience, giving them hope and power.

The sole understood purpose of the book is to create a wave of empowerment globally for women, helping

them see that they are not their struggles; they are more, way more than that. It is possible to emerge from the storm as whole. Women must accept that their scars make them even more beautiful and valuable. There are undoubtedly other reasons for this book to be created, which I am not aware of unconsciously and are yet to be revealed.

I am truly thankful to Sam Dossa for his consistent support on this project.

I am blessed to have been joined by all the co-authors on this journey who have shared their very personal and extremely powerful stories in this book. Each one of you is a beacon of light for many. Your decision and courage to share your story is immeasurably valuable. You are going to be the reason for someone, somewhere, to believe in themselves and say,

'You are the reason I did not give up.'

Respect!

Ritu Sharma

New Woman 1

Illa Khagram

I Am Every Woman



*"My love for you is a journey;
Starting at forever, and ending at never."
Anonymous*

In 2009, when I was going through the most difficult period of my life, I met a beautiful soul called Michael. What occurred over the next few years was so significant, so deep and so profound, that I have to share this with you, dear reader. How I died the deaths that I did and more, to finally come home to my heart. Not to the I, the name, the titles, not to the me, the self-centred one that feels the world revolves around, but to "that", the one that truly comes alive! I discovered the Radiant Lotus.

I discovered myself, I let go of the inhabitant character of who I thought was me; brief and limited, to discovering the true habitant who lived in my body.

This story is a part of my life, my legacy of conversations with Michael, who challenged the assumptions that I was making; what happened – I woke up! The one who woke up is the one who is sharing her heart in this book with you all.

This book is not only about my love and respect but this is my gratitude to the one I refer to as "Michael, my father", for he saw me, not the shy, timid, unconfident one, but the one he called the "Radiant Lotus". I share this journey with you with my open heart so that you too can awaken within you what is yearning and crying to be heard.

To start this conversation, Michael asked me one question:

"Who is Illa?"

I couldn't answer, I didn't know. My heart shook like a chandelier on the ceiling that had just been rattled by a fast-paced train! I did not know why it shook, it just did! The shaking in my heart kept me awake for days and nights pondering on this question, for Michael did not ask me, "Who are you?" but "Who is Illa?"

If he had asked me, "Who are you?", rather than "Who is Illa?" perhaps there was something that could have surfaced, perhaps I would have known that there was more to me than who I think that I am, but I couldn't think what I could answer to "Who is Illa?"!

It was truly in that moment I didn't know who I was anymore!

I am every woman, and you are every woman and together we build a world; a world of love, peace and harmony. Yet, it was not always like this – not for me and perhaps not for anyone of you.

This is my story but I am NOT the story, and as I share a little piece of my story with you, dear reader, I hope that it can awaken you to understand your story and know that we are the shining diamonds that have had to go through fire to shine our light. I shine my light with you, and know that you will shine your light too.

Nothing happens without a reason for anyone of us. The reasons can sometimes be so unbeknown to us until later in life. These are the stories and the learning from them that have created my power of three:

The New Woman

- In an abusive marriage
- My five-year-old son taken away – I have not seen him for 23 years
- Left without hope

But it didn't just start that way; it started years ago when I was sexually abused as a child, but could not speak out. It hit me hard; I started to hide, and I lost my spark, for it was in those years I lost the identity of who I am!

I guess like many of us, I learnt to hide behind a veil, I learnt to only show the side of me that would in my heart be acceptable to the rest of the world; can you relate to this, dear reader? I hope that my words can touch your heart so that you can shed the exterior façade and shine your light to be you, the one that is so unique and pure, your true you!

So years passed after that incident of abuse, I guess somewhere I had hidden the feeling of inadequacy, of being not worthy, but I soon discovered that I had never forgiven the abuser or myself! Can you imagine how people hold pain from the past, and bring it into the present, that is destroying to the soul? I went through my teen years quite a happy youngster. I had beautiful parents who have loved me all my life and supported me in whatever path I chose. This was the greatest gift, for I had no idea how much I would need the love of my parents in the future. Look around you, for we are always gifted with those that will love us, even when we feel the world has crumpled around us. Know that we are given strength through them, so that you can awaken to your true self.