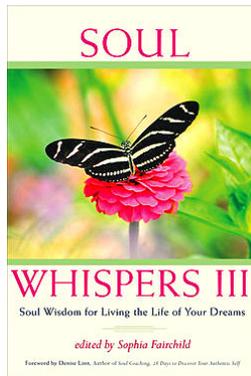




Getting to know the Authors of

Soul Whispers III

Soul Wisdom for Living the Life of Your Dreams



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SWP: What is your favorite quote, by whom, and why?

I love quotes, little manageable bites of wisdom we can chew on and digest in one sitting. But they can be deceiving. They are also powerful, juicy and provocative in their succinct eloquence. When reading *A New Earth* by Eckhart Tolle, I came across this pearl of wisdom: "Life will give you whatever experiences you need for the evolution of your consciousness." Wow! What an all-encompassing statement of truth. By embracing this quote, I am further committing to my belief that there are no accidents. Everything I experience is an opportunity to deepen and expand the fullest expression of myself by learning from and extracting the benevolent gifts in all encounters, *especially* the ones where no silver lining is immediately evident. Those indeed are the ones which often hold the richest lessons and, provided we learn them, can offer us the greatest growth in our consciousness.

SWP: Do you recall how your interest in writing originated?

As early as I can remember, I began making my own greeting cards for my family's birthdays, writing a personal poem in each one. In grade school, when assigned to write a "short" story, I usually exceeded the space limit on the wide-lined pages because I loved to write. From then on, words poured onto pages in diaries, journals, letters to pen pals, friends and family, and eventually in published poetry anthologies. And now professionally, I've written newspaper and magazine articles on the topics of Psychology, Spirituality and Feng Shui. My intuition or the Universe, (or both), have made me aware that I could have five books incubating in my head which are (im)patiently waiting to be birthed. Writing this chapter for *Soul Whispers III* is the catalyst for giving these unwritten books an opportunity to become reality, for which I am immensely grateful.

SWP: Who or what has influenced your writing over the years?

My early interest in reading biographies and autobiographies has fostered my fascination with people and how they live, learn and perceive their experiences. Hence, when I began to write poems and stories in school, I chose to focus on my own and others' lives for my primary subject matter. Fortunately, I was strongly encouraged by many of my favorite teachers, all of whom mentored the voice within me to find written expression. As an adult writer, a host of predominantly female authors including Maya Angelou, Pema Chodron, Iyanla Van Zant, Martha Beck, Mary Oliver, Denise Linn, Marianne Williamson, Brene Brown, Judith Orloff and Anne Lamott have influenced my writing style and substance immeasurably. Their courage, compassion and sheer determination to speak their truth has been a continual source of inspiration and motivation on my writing path.

SWP: Why did you choose to write this particular chapter?

With the deadline looming within hours to select the topic and title of my chapter, I decided the most efficient way to accomplish this was to meditate. After only a few minutes, two favorite topics arose, HOPE and GRATITUDE. Staying in meditation, my next awareness was the title "The Courage

to Choose Gratitude - No Matter What". I questioned this title... Was it too long? Why does it take *courage* to choose gratitude? How do we choose gratitude *during* times of adversity? And how to intertwine this topic with my Soul Coaching® experience became evident when I recalled my first Soul Journey at Denise Linn's Soul Coaching® training. The magic and the meaning that resulted from it amazingly unfolded in the two years that followed and are described in my chapter on gratitude. I fell in love with the topic of gratitude because every cell of my being perks up - mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually - when I consciously practice it. Yours can too!

SWP: Who is your favorite author and why?

From the time I read my first book by her in 1970, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, I was mesmerized by my favorite author, Maya Angelou. And with each subsequent novel or book of poetry I read, I was more in awe of her courage to tell the utmost truth, raw and unapologetic. She reveals her life through a lens of overcoming trauma and heartbreak, building her strength of character, layer by layer, triumphantly achieving her independence, dignity and self-identity. Maya's powerful voice, soulful wisdom, impeccable honesty and resilient spirit are qualities she embodies with such elegance and grace. After all she has endured in her life, when I heard Maya say "A joyful spirit is evidence of a grateful heart", my respect and admiration for her soared even higher. I believe she deserves our reverence as a beloved national treasure.

SWP: What dreams have been realized as a result of your writing?

One of my favorite quotes by Anais Nin comes to mind here: "There came a time when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." How could I achieve one of my personal dreams of becoming a published author if I didn't take the risk to open up and write? Being a co-author in this book gave me the opportunity to share my story about a series of profound experiences which resulted not only in my dream of buying a house, but more importantly buying my freedom. Freedom from *what*? My self-imposed, fiercely independent, can't-ask-for-help mentality. Now, I'm realizing the paradoxical power in being vulnerable, and trusting in the deepening connections that come with sharing my world more intimately with others. What new and exciting relationships will come from this? That dream is yet to be realized, but I'm sure it is nearer on the horizon thanks to writing my chapter for this fascinating book.

SWP: Where can we purchase the book?

If you wish to read my story on "The Courage to Choose Gratitude - No Matter What" and the amazing stories of my 15 fellow co-authors in *Soul Whispers III*, you may purchase this book from me via my website at www.victoriacoen.com Be prepared to feel inspired, uplifted and thoroughly entertained!