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AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

A Soul's Journey Home: Returning to Love
Angela Bushman
Shine Your Light
978-0-9884334-0-3
Four Stars (out of Five)

Angela Bushman was an upper-middle-class Arizona housewife saddled with an unhappy marriage and a growing ennui. She found pleasure in reading about ancient spiritual belief systems, but her husband constantly made negative comments about her interests. One morning, she woke up and told her husband, “Today’s the day,” and meant it. Divorce brought needed direction—Bushman believes the universe showed her the way “home” through various signs. As she poured her time, energy, and tears into learning to heal her own emotional wounds, she became certain that her calling was to heal others.

Bushman begins her midlife memoir by suggesting that readers need not believe in anything sacred to understand the book. For her, all traditions and belief systems are merely different ways of reaching an understanding of truth. Marriage is one such tradition.

Hawaii represented ultimate freedom for Bushman, and she moved there to create a life for herself as a spiritual adviser, much to the chagrin of her children and many onlookers. Living in Hawaii allowed Bushman to organize her life. Her three children eventually grew to understand and accept changes in their family situation. Bushman then embarked upon a lovely trip around the world, discovering her calling and learning to love again.

Jarring but authentic, this book will fuel the fire of readers in first marriages moving toward divorce. While it presents some challenging ideas, the text is generally well written, and Bushman offers a clear, cohesive story. Anyone living the common tale of spiritually outgrowing her or his spouse could benefit from observing how Bushman’s journey played out.

That said, a primary problem with the organization of this book is the way Bushman flits from one healing tradition to another, never explaining any philosophy in detail. She offers esoteric wanderings about the ancient Lemurian people along with discussions of chakras, astrology charts, and ways that alternative healing arts helped her accept that she was making the right choices. The butterfly on the cover may be intended to represent Bushman’s process of “finding herself” in as many ways as there are flowers for a butterfly to land on; it could also

symbolize the absolute freedom of choice she has found through her belief system. However, readers may have a difficult time understanding how Bushman found her way home through the brief descriptions of various new-age schools of thought she provides.

Bushman believes that her family benefitted from her own spiritual and emotional growth, and much of the book is devoted to the positive changes she observed in her children after the divorce. The way she urges readers to fulfill their own deepest wishes is an important takeaway from this memoir. Bushman claims to have found balance within her new life and clearly wants the same for everyone who is moved by her journey.

Carrie Wallace