

THE PRETTY TRUTH

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INTRODUCTION

Dear New Bestie,

Have you ever had a goal for yourself that seemed so out of reach you didn't even tell anyone about it until it was done? This is what this book is for me. Surprise—I finally did it. I finally put my thoughts on paper, and it is exhilarating to say the least. If nothing else, this book served as some therapy for me and my hope is that it can be therapeutic for you too. You see, I believe women live a more meaningful life when they have other women to talk to. That is why I am here.

I have always wanted to write a book. Always. The problem was, I had every excuse as to why I couldn't. Mainly because I know I am not a certified professional who was qualified to give advice. With this said, I have had so many friends say I helped them with my sunshiny way of life and have always had a way with words. It was finally time to take my own advice and go for it giving this “write a book thing” a try.

Even though my college degree will not state that I am a literary genius, I am a self-proclaimed self-help addict from as far back as I can remember. That has to count for something. Am I right? I have spent countless hours during my unpredictable life in the Self-Help section

at Barnes & Noble looking for the answers to all of my problems. My current bookshelf is filled with amazing authors discussing life's deepest questions. Wait. Am I a closet book nerd? Perhaps, and I am quite ok with that.

Somehow even at a young age, I knew the best life for me would not just magically happen on its own. I had to work for it. Figure things out and create the life I wanted through research, trial, and lots of error. I have learned so much through all my reading, research, and life experiences. Although books are great, most of my personal growth has come from all the challenging but mostly beautiful plot twists my life has thrown at me.

At the time I am writing this book, I am a stay-at-home mom in my mid 40's who has a pretty cool life in my opinion. I am happily married and have two incredible boys. Shout out to all the boy moms out there. If you know, you know. I am actually retired -strange for my age-but after 19 years as a teacher I was ready to try something new and unknown. I think writing my own book was my way to continue my love for education and literacy while connecting with others through positivity.

Some of the subjects I write about took me decades to learn and then add another decade practicing to get it almost right. My sincere hope is this book lives on the coffee table of girls much younger than me. It will definitely look pretty sitting there, but will also save them some time figuring out these important truths.

As for the rest of us, it would rock my world if something in here helps you realize just how incredible you are as your original self. Not

someone who follows everything society says we should be doing. I gave that up a while ago and am so happy I did.

This isn't your typical self-help book. My book does not contain all the answers to your problems because I would be lying if I told you I know them. Look at this book more like having a coffee date with your new bestie. I am here to give you some important truths to think about while entertaining the thought that we are all meant to be happy and healthy.

One thing I will not do is tell you I have found the secret to life because everyone's secret is different. Everyone has their own dreams and I am not here to tell you what your dream should be. You are going to have to put in the work and contemplate some of the truths I have learned. Start envisioning your life as it could be. Even if you love the way your current life is, do not forget to keep improving. Never stop making the most of your talents and purpose in our world. Our world needs people like you.

Something I will tell you in this book is you are not alone in your journey. We are all in this together and we are better together, so find your people and get moving on making your life amazing. Believe it or not, I will bet you already know what to do before you even start to read. Consider this book your motivation to make a change. Your dream (as big or little as it may be) is very possible. I mean, look at me writing a book over here! We are forever changing and should be forever evolving. I think I also need to mention perfection is impossible, so don't you dare try being perfect through your personal evolution.

You will see the theme of honesty written time and time again. That is because I believe being honest with yourself is the start to your own freedom of sorts. Once you are honest and stop being your own worst enemy, your world is going to open up to so many opportunities. I bet you don't know what they are yet, but they are going to start to magically appear in your life, so I hope you are ready.

Gather all your grit, girl. It is GO TIME for you to start working for yourself, not for anyone else. The great news is, you can then give yourself all the credit and a huge raise while you are at it! You have the corner office with a view for this new and exciting adventure.

During it all, I will be your biggest cheerleader standing at the top of the pyramid holding a megaphone rooting for you because your own personal growth will be the greatest investment of your life. Sometimes you just need a friend to push you forward a bit and that is what I am here for. What is the BEST thing that could happen?

Xo, Maria