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Author: Terri Luanna da Silva
With: Laurie O'Neil and
Marisa Alegria da Silva
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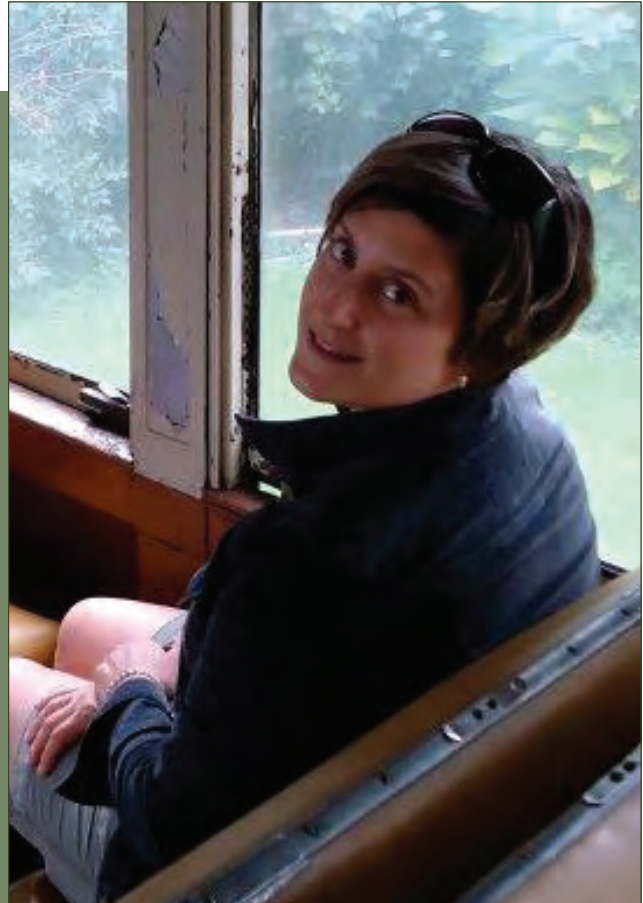
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Author Bio

Terri Luanna da Silva

Terri Luanna da Silva was born and raised on both coasts of Canada by two transcendent artists, Jeanne and Spider Robinson. A self-proclaimed NYC party girl, social worker, stay-at-home Mom and world traveler, Terri was determined not to become a starving artist like her parents. But a Stage 4 Breast Cancer diagnosis compelled Terri to blog about her journey, and her unique voice and indomitable spirit inspired people all over the world. Her posthumous memoir, *Graceful Woman Warrior: A Story Of Mindfully Living In The Face Of Dying*, is a culmination of a promise made to Terri when she whispered, "I think I'm dying. I want you to tell people." Taken directly from her blog, *Graceful Woman Warrior* offers a bold blueprint for navigating the sacred cycles of life and death. Through Terri's gutsy and openhearted exploration of the lessons contained in the suffering, Terri inspires readers to awaken to their own lives and to conjure and create the life they envision. Terri received her MSW from Hunter College and was featured on several TV and radio shows. Terri is survived by her husband, Heron, and daughter, the magical Miss M.



Author Bio

Laurie O'Neil

Laurie O'Neil is a lifelong writer who uses the written word as a voice for her life experiences. Laurie has devoted her 39-year social work career to empowering, enlightening and engaging others in the critical power of connection—to themselves, those they love, and their fellow human beings. Laurie received her MSW from Boston University and worked as an early intervention specialist, school social worker and psychotherapist. Trained by Maria Trozzi in the Good Grief Program, Laurie specializes in grief and loss. She co-developed The Caring Tree Family Grief Program, pioneered anti-bullying programming in the Dartmouth Public Schools and is a local activist and speaker. Laurie humbly embraces the titles, “Artist of Humanity” and “Love Hero,” bestowed upon her by her friend, Dr. Christa Johnson, and great-niece, Miss M.



photo by Tricia Verronneau

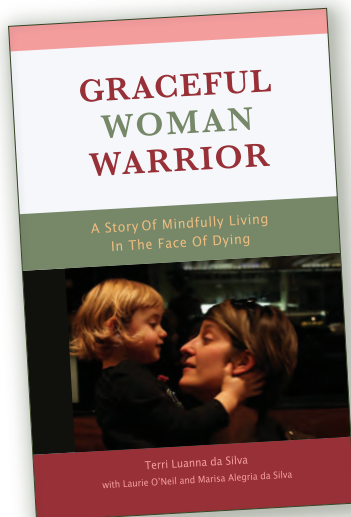
Author Bio

Marisa Alegria da Silva

Marisa Alegria da Silva is a nine-year-old girl writing songs, making art, having fun and most importantly, eating candy. A fourth-grade student at James M Quinn School, Marisa dreams of having her own horse and all the animals she dreams of. But for now she can play with her favorite dog, Aura. And to this day she will be happy, sad, excited, nervous and all those feelings. And her Mamãe will be doing all those things, too. In her memory, she can picture her and Mamãe baking a cake and licking the bowl together. And even though Mamãe is not alive right now, Marisa knows Mamãe has all those feelings too and is busy creating beautiful sunsets, putting Marisa's favorite songs on the radio, and visiting Marisa by sending a deer or two near her.



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Book Bio

Graceful Woman Warrior is a gutsy, thought-provoking and deeply moving posthumous memoir about mindfully living and dying with cancer. Forced to take an honest look at her own mortality after a Stage 4 metastatic breast cancer diagnosis, Terri Luanna da Silva started a blog about her journey. Reeling from the recent death of her mother to cancer, visionary Canadian artist, Jeanne Robinson, Terri asked the big questions— *Why in God's name, or Buddha's or the Universe did cancer strike me down at 37? How do I decide which treatment path to pursue? Who gets to choose? How do I parent my two-year-old through cancer? How do I find the strength to live my truth, go against the grain and chart my own holistic path? How and when do I decide it's time? Time to die....* Exploring motherhood, marriage, spirituality and self-discovery, Terri's transcendent story weaves the triumphant and the tragic together. *Graceful Woman Warrior* is a deeply affecting story that not only enlightens, it inspires readers to awaken to their own lives and live and love more vividly, more fully, more fearlessly and more intently. As Terri so powerfully said, "We all have our battles to face. Our demons. Our tragedies and difficult situations with which to contend. Whether it's cancer, homelessness, bankruptcy, divorce, unemployment, infertility... At some point, we all reach a crossroads in our life. These challenges shake us to our core. Humble us. Jolt us awake. Then we have the choice to either keep trying to return to what was, or to embrace the change and redefine ourselves and our realities. Why not seek to live a better life? What have you got to lose?"

Testimonials

“Diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer at 37, artist Terri Luanna da Silva’s example of living and dying with grace and integrity is an inspiration—not only for the dying, but for anyone aspiring to live with greater mindfulness and authenticity.”

—Lauren Mackler, author of *Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life*

“The prospect of death concentrates the mind wonderfully. We listen to the words of those who know themselves to be dying, because they have a sharpened perception we won’t have until it is our time. I listened very carefully to my wife Jeanne for all our 35 years—I found it profitable—but never so closely as after she was diagnosed with cancer. The same became true of our remarkable daughter Terri Luanna when her diagnosis arrived a year later. She was born with her mother’s extraordinary wisdom, and since it was the last helping I would ever be offered, I worked hard at not missing a bite. I believe you will find that her wisdom helps you as much as it helped me when I really needed it. I often summon up memories of her talking, so that I won’t forget the sound of her voice—and when I do, the sentence she always seems to be saying is the one she said to me so often in her last year: ‘It is what it is, Dad.’ I think she got that from her mother, who was, in addition to a dancer, author, and musician, a Soto Zen priest. If anyone can help you with mere words, Terri Luanna will.”

—Spider Robinson,
co-author with Jeanne Robinson of
The Stardance Trilogy

“*Graceful Woman Warrior* is an incredible and inspiring story about one amazing woman’s battle with cancer. As I read it, I was thinking, I would love to have met Terri Luanna and gotten to know her—until I realized that’s exactly what was happening. I was both honored and humbled to tag along on Terri’s courageous journey. And I am equally grateful for the wisdom she was generous enough to impart. I predict that *Graceful Woman Warrior* will impact countless souls. Be sure that you’re one of those fortunate folks who give it a read!”

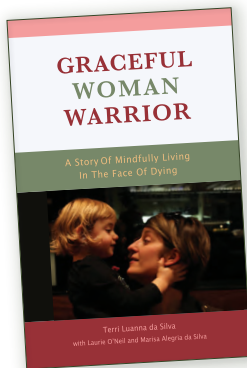
—Steve Manchester,
author of *The Rocking Chair and Twelve Months*

“Riding the cancer treatment roller coaster of hope to despair over and over again, the lessons Terri Luanna da Silva learned as she journeyed through cancer and ultimately death, are just what ‘the doctor ordered’—to live your best possible life. Give yourself the gift of *Graceful Woman Warrior*.”

—Christa Johnson, MD,
Hospice and Palliative Care/Mind
Body Medicine, author of
Lynn’s Legacy, Mind, Body and Spirit

“Terri Luanna da Silva’s book put into the hands of the medical community could be a true gift to the world.”

—Jean Baird, co-author of
The Heart Does Break; Canadian Writers on Grief and Mourning



Target Audience

Who Should Read

Cancer patients and their families
Seekers of strength, wisdom and inspiration to conquer life's challenges
People navigating grief journeys and end of life
Parents parenting through illness
Family caregivers
Healthcare professionals
Mental Health professionals
People with life threatening illness
Palliative care professionals
Hospice workers/volunteers
Alternative and Holistic Practitioners



Book Benefits

Testament to the resilience of the human spirit
Invitation to mindfully and fully embrace life in the face of adversity
Heightened awareness of self-discovery and inner transformation
Grace lessons contained in life's suffering
Insight into living with loss
Spiritual exploration of the meaning of life
Tools for parenting through illness
Profound and transformative blueprint for navigating a terminal illness



Book Excerpt

CHAPTER 16: FIGURE OUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT

When you're faced with your own mortality it causes you to reevaluate what's important. At the ripe old age of 37, death is not something I really contemplated before now. And then, wham—you're diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer and your whole perspective changes.

I know some people facing serious illness and terminal disease may be tempted to continue living their lives just as they had before—changing nothing. Although I continue with the day-to-day tasks of everyday living, I've also been overcome by this strong desire to prioritize—to decide what's truly deserving of my time.

I don't want to waste my time on bullshit.

I think questioning what's truly important is a good exercise for everyone to do. *Are you spending the time you have in a nourishing and fulfilling way? Do you enjoy your work? Do you enjoy your time outside of work? Do you make decisions in line with what you truly want out of life?* Immediately following my diagnosis these questions started to creep into my head.

So what sorts of things are important to me? Family and friends.

Having this ongoing rotation of all my favorite people coming out to Ohio to help us is such a gift. Just this morning Auntie L finally headed home. *Sniff! Sniff!* Miss M is still in a state of denial asking, “Where's Auntie L? I wanna play!” Thank god the family and friend brigade continues tomorrow with Auntie M. Having all these loved ones around is not only helping me, it's helping Miss M big time in terms of dealing with all of the changes cancer has thrust onto our family.

So what else is important? Spending time doing things that bring me joy—dancing, traveling the world, being in nature, watching sunsets, listening to music, getting engrossed in a really good book, learning new things, helping others, being in NYC, meeting new people...

But even though I've figured out what's important to me, the hardest step is incorporating these things into my life—making them a priority.

So let's all do it together. Let's make the effort to prioritize the things that bring us joy. Find a few moments each day to do something enriching and enjoyable—something that makes your day a bit better and makes this life worth living.

If not now—when?

Photographs

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-Thank you



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