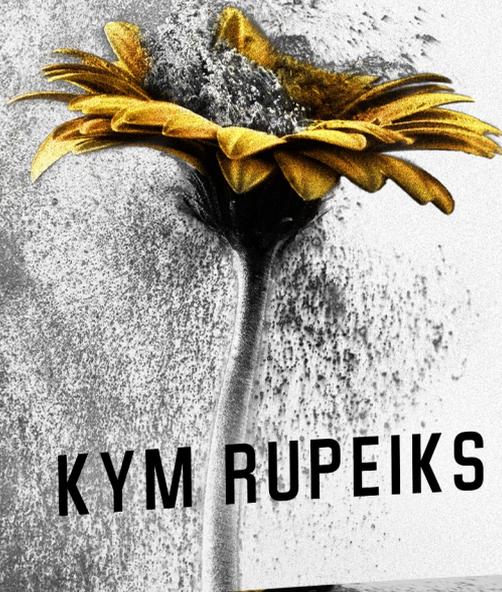


# Shifting Winds

*Life with an Addict  
Finding a PATH Forward*



**KYM RUPEIKS**

*My heart was tender...  
And broken wide open.*

*Life with an addict is an emotional roller coaster.*

I wrote this book to help readers understand the life cycle of living with an alcoholic and to understand the changes both the alcoholic and the family members experience. Through my personal story of being married to an alcoholic, I give the readers, if they live with an alcoholic (or someone challenged by another substance or addiction), the understanding that they can empower themselves to live with, or detach with love from, an alcoholic. Through my story, my goals are that readers understand the behaviors of the alcoholic and the family members and understand that knowing yourself and learning what you can change and what is out of your control is critical in living with an alcoholic.

You are not responsible for the addict. You are responsible for yourself and being all that you can be - the best that you can be. Take back your freedom. Take back your life.

*"Powerful! Kym shares her innermost thoughts and feelings, no holds barred!" - Judy Eddy, editor.*

*"Courageously raw and impactful. A healing vehicle for those living with addicts and addicts themselves."  
- Stephen Panebianco, MD*



## FOREWORD

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*Shifting Winds* is a deeply inspiring journey of courage and transparency that infuses realism, struggle, pain, and introspection while gifting hope, healing, and practical insight. When Kym asked me to write the foreword to *Shifting Winds*, without hesitation I enthusiastically agreed knowing that what she interweaves through these pages will significantly impact the lives of numerous family members and partners of alcoholics or those with other addictions, and those who themselves suffer with addictive behaviors.

Having over thirty years of privileged clinical work with various forms of human suffering, including alcoholism and other addictions, depression, anxiety, anger, and PTSD, it became apparent to me that human suffering can often fuel and drive an unhealthy addictive relationship with something outside of oneself. Often the less than conscious goal of transiently shifting one's undesirable internal state is operative on some level. Unfortunately, as a result, what emerges is an unhealthy alliance and dependence on that "external object" for a desired state that has been shifted away from pain.

In *Shifting Winds*, the courageous openness that Kym brings to her expression is truly inspiring. It is sometimes said that "nobody gets a free pass" regarding the necessity to integrate one's prior experiences, pain, and even traumas that have emerged along their journey in order to be free for the present moment. Without awareness, introspection, and integration of operative forces that often lurk behind the scenes, we are destined to attract experiences and relationships to re-create an unlearned principle through further pain or trauma until the principle is ultimately transcended. We become willing dance partners in the

co-creation of dysfunction. So what breaks the chain, what halts the dance? As Kym exemplifies in *Shifting Winds*, openness, intention, and courage are required to step back and more clearly see how we are approaching our life through subconscious forces that contribute to our undesired reality. Through further introspection, awareness, support, and healing, we can eventually embrace the realization that even when we may have been wronged along the way, we are NOT a victim. Otherwise, we exude victim consciousness and can be self-destined to attract and replicate the pattern of personal suffering while even contributing to the suffering of others.

In *Shifting Winds*, Kym reflectively and creatively immerses the reader into her thirty-nine years of life experience with her partner, Val. This includes moments that go back to eighth grade when they met, to when they eventually lived together as seniors in high school, through subsequent life chapters of marriage, professional expression, geographical relocations, entrepreneurship, and beyond. All of this unfolds through a gradual crescendo of progressive alcoholism decades in the making that was in part seeded from prior generations in both participants.

It takes great courage to openly explore the lens we consistently bring to our moments in order to more clearly glean what can be refracted from that lens in positive ways moving forward. And yet, Kym does not stop there. She also reflects deeply on how her formative pre-Val experiences played a role in her journey on a less conscious level that contributed to her ultimate “choice” of Val as her partner, and how such experiences punched her dance card of participation with Val for almost forty years. Kym also shares how she responded and at times reacted to certain shared moments, how she went into protective mode, how her engagement with other loved ones became restricted in some respects, how she at times closed down emotionally, and how she engaged in moments of pushback out of her own pent-up anger and survival pathways. And yet, as she went through her own PATH, she reached pinnacle moments of transcendence and timeless connection that she willfully shares as well.

Along the journey of *Shifting Winds*, the reader is also graced with practical understandings about alcoholism and addiction from both psychological and medical perspectives. Similarly, it was Edgar Allan

Poe who said in an 1848 letter the year before his tragic death at the age of forty: *“It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom”* (italics added). Such understandings are effortlessly interspersed throughout Kym’s shared life journey with Val, and provide those whose life has been touched by addiction with valuable information and perspective that can lead to healing insights and informed decisions.

Who of us has the courage to unabashedly investigate the at times distorted lens we bring to our journey to seek greater clarity to be freer in the present moment, free from prior conditionings that impact our perceptions, thinking, emotions, and behavior, let alone share that with the world? *Shifting Winds* truly gifts impactful breadcrumbs of insight that connect the reader to his or her own personal PATH while providing sustenance so forward movement can take place with awareness, courage, intention, healing, and ultimately transformation. This is the opportunity along one’s PATH of healing whether one chooses to stay in a certain relationship or move forward down other life trajectories. The choice is ours to make, provided we become aware of choice in the first place while understanding the power, ramifications, and opportunities of choice as we chart our life PATH forward.

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