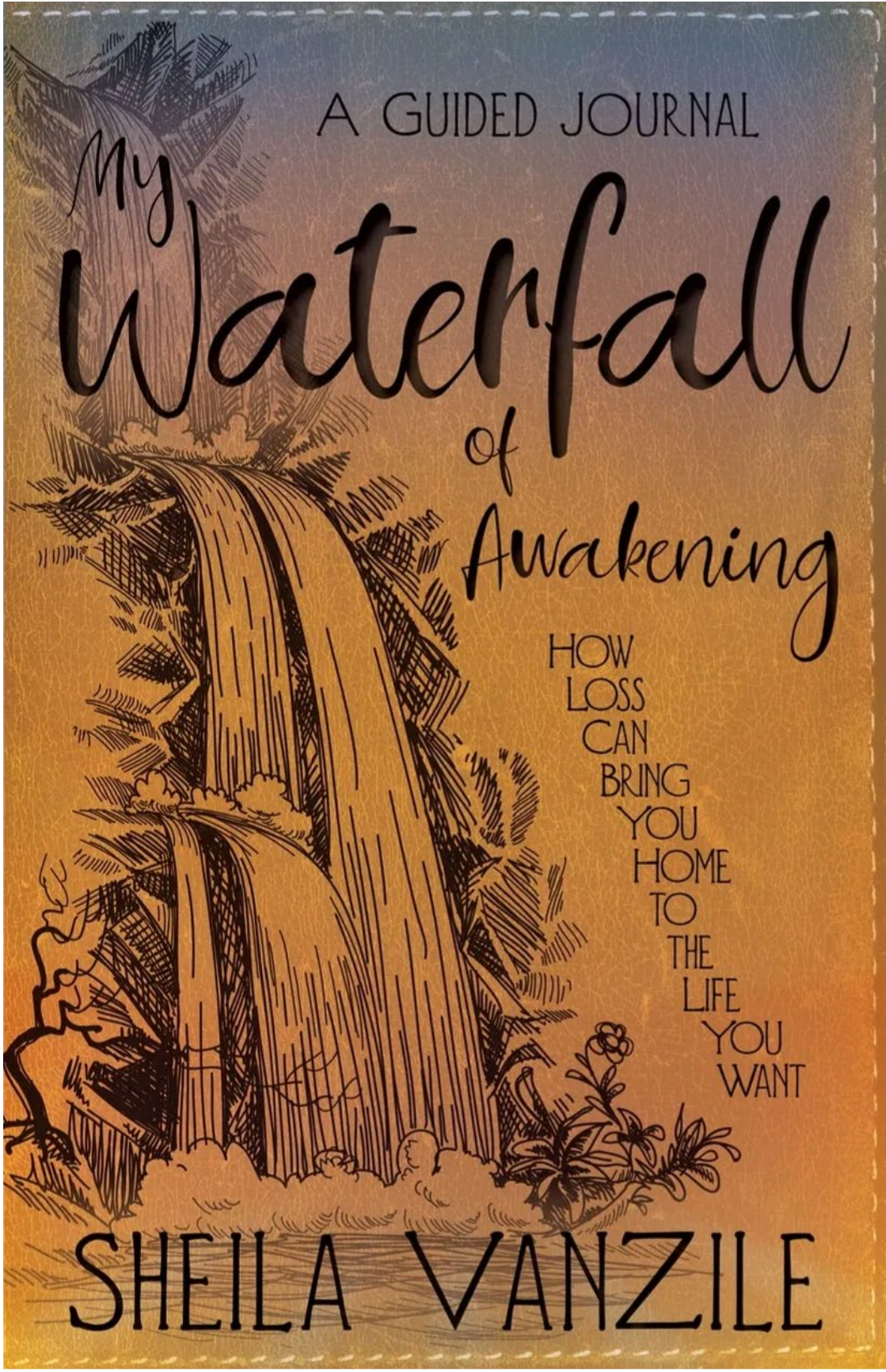




A GUIDED JOURNAL

My
Waterfall
of
Awakening

HOW
LOSS
CAN
BRING
YOU
HOME
TO
THE
LIFE
YOU
WANT

SHEILA VANZILE

A Lesson from
My Waterfall of Awakening

WHO IS YOUR RINGMASTER?

There is a circus. Isn't there always a circus? It is your in-laws, your outlaw brother, your drunken uncle, your judging grandmother, that pedophile cousin who everyone keeps insisting be invited to events.

I allowed it. Maybe you allow it, too. Why? When did we lose control of our environment? When did we start letting the world of the others around us define what was acceptable in our day-to-day living?

In my case, I allowed the opinions of others to be more important than my own. I neglected to "defect check" how I felt about myself and those around me and how they impacted me every day. I let the jealousy, priorities, and pettiness of others seep into my daily routine and judged myself accordingly. I viewed myself entirely through the eyes of the audience. The ringmaster varied. I was the puppet on demand.

Do you need a lion tamer? Read: You need a badass corporate executive to make an office profitable. I can do that. I didn't even consider the fact that

I had to gird my loins every morning to enter a battlefield or the resultant toll it took on me.

Do you need a clown posse? Read: You need to be entertained. I will be the entertainment for your cocktail hours and late-night debauchery. Never mind the toll on my liver and the fact I was not rested for years.

Do you need an aerial flying act? Well, I can't do that one because I am terribly afraid of heights.

Do you need the beautiful girl who does tricks on a pony? Read: You need a beautiful distraction. I can do that. I will play the piano for you, cook a beautiful meal for you, listen to you for hours.

Who is the ringmaster in your world? Is he or she administering the circus in a loving and ordered way? Or are you also a puppet, responding to the man in the high hat with a whip who is standing at the center of the universe?

Why aren't you your own ringmaster? When will you be your ringmaster? How will you become your ringmaster?

What will you lose if you decide to allow your current ringmaster to continue to rule your life?

When I finally staked out for myself and became my own ringmaster – and quit kowtowing to everyone – my life changed almost immediately. The people who needed to leave did, and those who nourished my soul remained and flourished. And more people like that entered my life.

I am now the center of my universe. I get to say “yes,” and I get to say “no” without apology – and sometimes even without explanation. I have learned that “no” can be a complete sentence.

I resist the urge to be the ringmaster of other people’s circuses. Because, as a friend of mine often says, “Those aren’t my monkeys, and they aren’t my circus.”

My Waterfall of Awakening:

How Loss Can Bring You Home to the Life You Want

A Guided Journal

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The death of a distant, love-withholding mother sets the stage for a woman's transformation. In the place of grief, there is guilty relief. Unsettled and unhappy, the author turns 60, and a retreat on the Oregon coast inspires her to take stock and start living a life of her design. Decades of her life had been motivated by what she "should" do. After a childhood largely devoid of any opportunity to get or have what she wanted, a lifetime of decisions and their unintended consequences followed. Self-neglect resulted in bad marriages, toxic friendships, childhood trauma, and a dry, unfulfilling career. As the veneer of a seemingly perfect life cracks, her awareness expands. Exploration turns to wonder, with opportunities presenting themselves like a waterfall. She begins to see spiritual breadcrumbs, croutons, and the occasional slice of bread. The distance between the early days of her journey and triumphant awakening begins to narrow. The spontaneous purchase of an ancient house in France delights and brightens her outlook. Things really start to percolate when she relegates her career to the backseat. Joy and awakening take over the story, and you are invited to join in. We explore forgiveness, trust, faith, self-love, grief, hope, and much more. You know you are not alone. And we celebrate our stepping into the light. Together. The author offers this guided journey filled with lessons, meditations, glorious stories of the French countryside, and more. Her story is quite possibly your story.