



# **Painting Life: My Creative Journey Through Trauma**

*Carol K. Walsh*

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When Carol Walsh pulled her fiance from the bottom of a diving well dead from a massive heart attack her life was turned upside down. Even though she was a psychotherapist working with clients suffering from trauma, this personal shock felt unbearable. Nonetheless, she had to heal herself while supporting clients and, as a single mother, her two children. Using the creative interests she'd developed during childhood in order to emotionally save herself from a difficult mother, she fully recovered from her grief and PTSD symptoms and as she recreated her personal, artistic, and professional life, she began to thrive."

## **Painting Life: My Creative Journey Through Trauma Details**

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Author : Carol K. Walsh

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## **From Reader Review Painting Life: My Creative Journey Through Trauma for online ebook**

### **Cherie Bradley says**

A very good read.

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### **Marcia Mabee says**

This unique book begins slowly and then gathers speed pulling you in as events in the author's life become increasingly dramatic. I found many parallels to my own life deeply marked with grief after the death of a beloved spouse in my case. The extreme emotions and challenges to survival that ensue can rocket the brain and body into realms that feel, and perhaps are, mystical. Walsh's ability, very early in life, to turn inward to find creative energy and release is foreign to me as a likely left-brained person, but I found it beautifully explained in short process descriptions heading each chapter and more fully explained as a therapeutic device throughout the book. This book is a fascinating look into the mind and spirit of a true, recognized artist, as she grapples with the challenges of life, some of them deeply traumatic. Blue Ridge Lover

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### **Amanda says**

I'm a clinician social worker, so I'm always looking for more resources for my clients. Often, though, I find stuff that helps me, too. I work with a lot of kids and parents who have suffered trauma, and sometimes it's hard because I have my own history of trauma. This book really spoke to me - a psychotherapist dealing with her own trauma. How do we help others while also helping ourselves? This is a lovely and heartfelt memoir - less of a "guide" and more of a personal narrative. I still found it useful, though, and inspiring. I truly believe in the healing power of creativity, and encourage this in my own life, in the lives of my clients, and in those around me. This book is a great example of that power. This book will be especially useful for those who have dealt with, or are dealing with, loss and death.

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### **Betty Hafner says**

Readers will watch Carol Walsh as a young girl, with a strong creative drive and ability, find solace in her art and turn to it throughout her life. Walsh is challenged by a difficult mother, a troubled early marriage and a significant career change while raising her daughters. But the horrific event in which she instantly loses her fiancé, a beloved soulmate, seems unbearable to her. It is reconnecting with her passion for self expression and her developing spirituality that bring comfort and ultimately, joy.

This is an uplifting, inspiring story that will strongly speak to those exploring their own creativity and its potential for enriching their lives and bringing comfort. The photos of her family and her work, which show an impressive talent, enrich the story.

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## **Michelle says**

*Painting Life: My Creative Journey Through Trauma* (2016) –is an absorbing recall of family life, love, and artistic pursuit written by Carol K. Walsh. Educated at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh; Walsh, a psychotherapist, recently retired from an established practice shared with her husband.

The book opened in 1989, with the tragic drowning death of Walsh’s fiancé Tom, who suffered a fatal heart attack as he and Walsh were swimming in a public diving pool. None of the lifeguards could administer CPR, which should have been a mandated state requirement for operation. Walsh was further traumatized to be held responsible by Tom’s family. After a 2 year grieving process, Walsh was able to move on guided by spirituality and great love she and Tom had once shared.

The next and large portion of the book focused on Walsh’s childhood (family photos included), narrated from her adult perspective. Walsh’s mother had a strong dominant personality and was presented to be clueless, demanding, disengaged, and seemed to favor her sister. The repetitious fault finding and blame continued throughout the book, and may have led to the break in Walsh’s relationship with her close friend/art mentor.

In the early years of her first marriage to Jay, an architect, the couple lived in Switzerland. On the French side of the Swiss Alps, their apartment overlooked picturesque Lake Geneva. After returning stateside, Walsh, a stay-at-home mom of their two daughters, crafted beautiful prize winning fabric sculptures woven on huge looms—and wrote/published an acclaimed art book. Meanwhile, Jay worked long hours and rose to be the Vice President of his firm. Eventually the couple mutually distanced themselves from one another, unable to work through their differences, they divorced.

Each chapter begins with creative expression through artistic engagement; many wonderful photos were included of art works highlighting Walsh’s tremendous skills. However, the storyline carried the weight of Walsh’s noticeable negativity towards significant others in her life, which was troubling for a mental health professional. After the story stopped abruptly, it resumed with Wash finding happiness and contentment within her 22 year marriage, she also included an impressive photo of her current art studio. ~3\* GOOD.

\*\*With thanks to She Writes Press for the e-copy value for the purpose of review.

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## **Selkie says**

\*\*\*This was a book I had gotten in a GoodReads giveaway (and it was a good read!) \*\*\*

I really like how the author expresses herself in this book and the metaphors at the beginning of each chapter. Art has often been used as a therapeutic tool in crisis centres, but the author writes how even at a young age she used art to deal with her loneliness and hurt emotions caused by unaffectionate parents. Different phases of her life brought inspiration for different creative outlets. I especially loved the chapters describing her weaving. Since I also weave(although mine is nothing compared to her work!)I can fully appreciate when she writes of the textures of the materials, and how it can be "magically meditative".

I only wish that the book's photos had been in colour!

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### **Belinda Witzenhausen says**

I recently read Painting Life: My Creative Journey Through Trauma by Author Carol K. Walsh. I have always been an avid believer in and advocate for the healing and transformative powers of living a creative life. Inspiring and powerful, Carol's memoir shares with the reader the healing and empowering potential of the creative process to not only overcome, but to thrive and recreate oneself through life's traumatic and challenging moments. Authentic and graceful, Carol shares her story in an honest, relatable and insightful prose, as she walks us along her journey of self-discovery through a challenging childhood to the trauma and heartbreak of the death of a fiancé. Each time she faced challenges she called upon her creativity to help her rebuild and redefine her life. Her words are like her paintings, they flow, carrying you along her journey interspersed with artistic antidotes that blend seamlessly with her story. I loved this book and know it will definitely be one I go back to time and again.

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### **Kathy says**

This is one of those books that you will pick up and continue reading until you reach the end. Her story is compelling and analytical at times, however, relatable for most women. Trying to find herself and live with the choices she makes as a wife, mother, artist, and therapist, she has expanded her career to include "Create-A-Vision" coaching and this outlook is clearly represented in her writing. Reviewed at <http://pennyformythoughts-nona.blogspot.com>...

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