

swear on lily

wendy liebman



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Keep in a cool place.

Words don't mean anything alone. They only mean what the person reading them
thinks they mean.
You have all the power.

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CHAPTER 1: HELLO

I spend a lot of time in airplanes looking out of windows. So now, even when I'm on the ground, I imagine what everything looks like from above. I realize my place amidst gazillions of people, trees, stars, cars, mountains, dogs, houses, horses, shards of glass, grains of sand, blades of grass.

I realize I am nothing but a miniscule fleck in this massive scheme.

So how come I always feel fat?

Unless I am asleep.

*

My doctor said I need 8 hours of sleep. I said, "I get 4, but I have a mirror on the ceiling above my bed." He said I was crazy. But he wanted to come over.

My husband thinks I'm crazy, but, hey, I didn't marry me.

*

I recently saw my life flash before me, so I thought I was dying, because they say you see your life flash before you right before you die.

But it turned out my life was just going by too quickly.

It was a wake up call to start using my time. Even if I wanted to waste it I had to become aware that it was my time to waste.

*

I was in a hotel once and I woke up and I didn't know where I was but I knew that I wasn't at home though because I heard a vacuum.

*

I need to use myself more.

My stepchildren need to use me more. Not in the kitchen though.

I have two stepsons. They make it so I can't help but believe in God. Or in that divinely inspired perfection that is not easy to otherwise explain.

*

My life is made up of a series of perfect coincidences.

*

I knew this couple that said if they ever had a baby they would name her **Lily**. Whenever they wanted to make sure the other person was telling the absolute truth about something, they would say, "**Do you swear on Lily?**" Since their unborn child was the most sacred thing they could think of, just the idea of swearing on her made them want to only tell the truth.

So, if you swore on Lily you couldn't be lying.

Swearing on Lily = Telling the truth.

(I cross my heart. I swear on Lily.)

After a while they didn't need to ask anymore. They just assumed they might have to swear on Lily at some point, so they just told the truth right away.

*

Telling the truth is tricky sometimes. The trick is to tell it gently.

*

I've done stand-up comedy for more than 38 years.

One of the first jokes I wrote was: "I'm a writer. I write checks. They're mostly fiction."

Then I read a similar joke in a book called Metropolitan.

And more recently I was reading notes of funny things that my stepson had said when he was six, collected by his mother, and one of them was, "I want to be a writer, and write checks."

I guess there are just so many thoughts in the world.

I guess how you express your thoughts is what makes you you.

You nique.

Use everything. Make it your own.

*

You are your thoughts and how you express them.

*You're a hip-hop dancer.
You're a travel agent,
An operator at AT&T.
You just want to sing.*

My father sells insurance. He's the smartest nice person I know. He sings in a choir for fun with his friends old and new.

I sing in the shower.
But only if there's a piano.
And it can't be electric.

I sing in the shower.
I think I sound okay.

The other people in there beg to differ.

In high school I joined the choir and they taught me to sign.

*

My brother is studying philosophy. He doesn't know why.

He's in gradual school.
He's getting straight zzzzzzzz's.

He says that: "Everything in the universe is just one thing separated by time."

(He should stop smoking pot.)

He also says: "The future is really only this moment, but later."

They've shown that THC has been show to slow down the proliferation of cancer cells. Probably because the cancer cells are thinking, "Now what was I doing again?"

You might have heard the saying that "Timing is everything."

But really TIME is.

Timing is Something.

*

I love that they call a play (like a Broadway play) a play.

WORK = PLAY! YAY!

*

I went to see the rock opera TOMMY. I had terrible seats. I couldn't see him. I couldn't hear him.

During intermission we went out for a breath of fresh air and a smoke.

We had terrible seats when we saw Hamilton. We weren't even in the room where the play happened.

It costs \$2200 to smoke on a plane...I found out.

*

I don't smoke cigarettes anymore.

Someone tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me Miss - your cigarette is bothering me." I thought to myself, "Isn't it obvious I don't care about ME - why would I care about YOU?"

Now I do.

It's like I was burning myself down to collect the insurance.

I tried the patch but it didn't work. I put six of them. Over my mouth.

I finally just stopped. Well, I gave myself two weeks notice.

*

I saw a woman wearing a stoplight red t-shirt that said, **"It's Hard to Be Humble."**

*

Leonardo da Vinci wrote: "Everything comes from everything, and everything is made out of everything, and everything returns into everything."

He also invented scissors.

He also painted the Mona Lisa.

(He was a triple threat.)

I love the Mona Lisa. Anything by Modigliani. Van Gogh, oh my God.

Natalie Goldberg, Chiho Tokita, Sean Colgin, Joni Mitchell, Teresa Roberts Logan.

Michael Gelb wrote, "Mona Lisa. . . is the Western equivalent of the Chinese symbol of yin and yang."

*

Can you imagine if someone gave you the Mona Lisa? It wouldn't matter where you put it - she'd always be watching you.

When one of my stepsons was 11 he was in a band called "The Moaning Lisas."

*

I think it's odd that we all pay different amounts to fly to the same place. I understand why it costs more to fly First Class (leg room, warm nuts, free drinks), but I don't understand why I

could be sitting next to someone who paid half or twice as much as I did to travel to the same spot? We both went from point A to point B.

Basically, we're all on one big plane.

CHAPTER 2: REALTY

I'm scared of water, because I almost drowned once on a canoe trip.

Now I can't even shower without wearing one of those orange life vests.

*

I don't like sleeping alone – in my 20s I got a waterbed and I hired a lifeguard.

I knew a guy who bought a waterbed for his houseboat, to cancel out the rocking.

*

I like it when they paint HELLO on top of a building near an airport. I like it when someone decorates the front of their lawn with old milk containers, in a holiday motif, say. I like traffic cops who dance in the street when they work.

I need a hobby.

*

I used to have a landlady named Madeline. She was 82 and so sweet. She died of old age soon after her husband Joey died. She missed him like a phantom limb. For three months I didn't know where to send my rent check.

I've never owned a house. I'm saving **up** for a **down** payment. (My husband and I bought a house in the 2000's in West Hills, California.)

*

I grew up in East Hills, New York, Long Island, Roslyn Heights, 110 Crescent Lane. My husband, Jeffrey grew up on Crescent Drive in Los Angeles.

Now we're a full circle.

*

Growing up we lived next door to the Perlman's. Aunt Norma and Uncle Eli. They weren't really our relatives. Uncle Eli was an allergy doctor. My sister, Debbie, our friend Emily and I had a lemonade stand. Debbie and Emily were much older than I was. I was three and they were five and six. I was two feet tall with naturally perfect hair. Every child has naturally perfect hair. My sister and Emily would not let me talk to the customers (which we had a lot of because Dr. Perlman had a lot of patients, so we had a lot of customers, as long as they weren't allergic to lemons). But I wasn't allowed to make any lemonade transactions because I was three. Instead, I worked the phone - a large red rotary phone - that wasn't attached to anything. I chatted away to no one. I was just as happy pretending. I just loved being part of the stand.

*

My mother said I was always funny - my lemonade stand had a two-drink minimum.

I let you keep the cup.

I never got Barbie - I got Midge. Her car was in the shop. And she lived with her mother.

*

I was getting a great massage once and I realized that part of the experience was anticipating what she was going to do next because she seemed to know exactly what to do. I trusted her instincts.

It feels great to be able to trust someone else for anything.

I dated a doctor once - he was one of those doctors without boundaries.

He was really nice but he wasn't my type and I didn't know how to break up with him nicely, so I just ate an apple a day.

I think they tell you to retire in your sixties so you have time to go to the doctor.

*

I just started eating healthier. I have to say when I eat healthier I feel so much **hungrier**.

They say the healthiest food is blueberries.

They're so cute and sweet.

The original little blue pill.

*

I'm 62. It's downhill from here. I hope it's a fun ride! And I hope it goes really slowly because I am scared of heights!!!!

*

James Taylor said, "The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time."

I spent many years messing myself up and now it's time to take care.

Even though it feels like it's too late, I'm going to believe that everything happens right on time.

*

Time is endless until it isn't.

So you have an unlimited amount of time, until you don't.

In that sense, it's never too late for anything.

Unless you want to be a professional ballerina....

*

You know how they say you have an inner child? For years I tried to shut mine down, shut her up, ignore, frighten and starve her. At this point, I've extinguished the fire of my inner child.

I guess I am an adult now.

CHAPTER 3: FIRST CLASS

I am past my sexual peak and my credit limit. And the hands on my biological clock gave me the finger.

*

I would rather get a massage than have sex. Cause you can't give yourself a massage.

*

I fly all the time. I have a zillion frequent flyer points.

Great: Now I can fly even more!

I wish flying were 100% safe. But even rides at carnivals break.

On my last flight the pilot looked like Tom Brokaw. I felt so secure, even though we were 39 thousand feet in the air. But his voice sounded sure. Like Harrison Ford's. Stone Phillips'. James Earl Jones'. Deep and soothing. Harmonizing with the sweet flight attendants.

I love the song **Fly Away** by Lenny Kravitz.

You know how when you're on a plane and the person in front of you puts their seat back so then you have less room? You probably then put your seat back, messing it up for the person behind you.

I wish every person could fly First Class all the time. Everyone would be nicer. But who would fly the plane? Bring you champagne?

Clean out the seat pockets?

I can't believe airlines charge you for having luggage. Who doesn't need a suitcase of stuff after flying across the country? It's like a restaurant charging you for silverware.

*

When I was little we used to go to the baseball games in New York. I thought all of the players on the team were from New York. Because they were the team from New York! This made sense to a four year old. I thought the team from New York was made up of the guys from New York who were the best at baseball in New York. I bet that was how it was in the olden days.

*

Phil is one of my best friends. Since I've known him, he's moved five or six times. He's always moving! Once he lived in a house on the side of a cliff up a treacherous road in Laurel Canyon near Hollywood. I was scared to drive over there but I got over it because I wanted to see him.

BUT THEN HE MOVED AGAIN! And guess where: He moved FURTHER UP THE SAME ROAD.

Life is like driving to Phil's house.

*

Four things they should teach you in school:

- 1) How to type
- 2) How to read
- 3) How to be kind and
- 4) How to put together furniture that you buy in a box.

And they should teach math using money.

And they should teach cooking.

I've heard that cooking is an art. For me it's Krafts macaroni and cheese.

I watch all the cooking shows. My husband asks why? I might learn something. I also watch a lot of the true crime shows honey.

In order to really learn something, you need to **do** it.

*

Oh, and they should also teach you that **what you do** in life is **permanent**. What you do is your permanent record. You can never take back an action. **Once** you do something, *anything*, you can't undo having done it. You just did it.

*

Michael Gelb says, "What makes a teacher great...more than anything else, is the ability to help the student learn for himself. The finest teachers know that experience is the source of wisdom."

*

I wasn't a good student. I had to cheat on all the teachers that I dated.

(I wanted an A. They wanted an F.)

The truth is, I was always the teacher's pet.

I've been thinking about going back to school. Fourth grade.

My favorite teacher was my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Weinstein. She smelled like cigarettes and Wrigley's. She had a great laugh and was jolly. She was so kind.

I found Mrs. Weinstein on Facebook. I wished her a happy birthday on her birthday and her granddaughter wrote to me and said that she had passed away the year before. I got to tell her granddaughter that her grandmother was my favorite teacher.

My eighth grade typing teacher was Miss Wheeler. She was the closest thing to a nun I had going to public school. She forbade us to chew gum. She would walk around the classroom holding a wooden ruler, hitting her other hand with it, saying, "I smell Gummy Wummy." She would sniff out the culprit like a drug dog at an international airport.

But she drilled and drummed typing it into me. And now I love to type. Now I even type when I'm dreaming.

(She's probably rolling over in her grave when she sees me texting with one finger.)

*

After college I was a secretary. I practically ran that company...into the ground.

It was a non-profit company. Well, not on purpose.

I typed 25 words a day. I didn't have a computer. I had a typewriter. And it wasn't an electric typewriter. I guess it was an acoustic.

I actually type quickly, thanks to Mrs. Wheeler. So fast, I should wear a seatbelt.

My boss was a woman. She wasn't very nice. Women should be nicer to other women. I think that's what feminism is: Women being nice to other women. Anyway, I would call in sick a lot—I'd say "I have 'female problems'." My boss didn't know I meant HER!

*

I was a secretary before there were computers. Can you imagine your job without. . . . SOLITAIRE?

*

When I decided to quit my day job and move to L.A. I thought I should get representation. Who would I want to manage me, if I could have my pick of all the managers out there? I think big. I decided I wanted Tim Sarkes to manage me — he was managing the genius comedian Steven Wright. Now this was pre-internet, so it wasn't that easy, but I found a way to reach him, and I was planning on calling after work. Well, I get home, and before I do, I listen to the message on my answering machine. It was from Tim Sarkes — **he** wanted to meet **me**.

*

I live in Los Angeles. I like the weather here and the sun and the sexiness of Hollywood in the dark and in my dreams still. The fantasy. The mystery. The hope the lights the energy. The cool-ness of it all.

*

I love movies.

Magic.

When I was 5, I told my grandmother I wanted to be a Go-Go dancer in boots in a cage on a stage. She told me that Go-Go dancers were sad girls. And I thought to myself, "Perfect!"

My grandmother was always ahead of her time. She used to put the phone in her purse. (It was a rotary phone and it was attached to the wall, but she was on the right track. . .and lithium.)

SHE was off the wall.

She thought outside of the box.

She played a lot of bridge and golf.

My grandmother wanted to be cremated, because she never knew what to wear.

My other grandmother wrote a book of poetry called "For Solo Voice." She had it self-published before that was even a thing. She introduced me to A.A. Milne and took me to the movies.

I've played golf twice. I was a natural...disaster.

Sane people don't lie about getting a hole in one.

*

I am more like my grandmothers than I am like my mother.

One of my grandmothers was left-handed but her teacher made her write with her right hand.

*

If phones and phone calls were free, the world would be totally different.

A boyfriend once called me "Queen of the Obvious," because I would say the most obvious things. Except when I didn't.

Sometimes I'm a dumb brunette.

*

I hate being cold. When I'm cold I get even colder. I like being hot. I like sweating without having to exercise. (I like a sauna, or a really long audit.)

*

I was the youngest of two. I always got hand me downs and second hand smoke.

Growing up I wanted to be cool. But my sister was the cool one. She put the 'cool' in 'school.' She WAS the peer pressure. Now she's a therapist and she's the coolest AND warmest person I know.

(I say I have a brother in my act, but that's just part of the act.)

*

I was born three weeks early. I feel like I'm still catching up. I've always had FOMO.

I was a colicky baby. I was not a happy camper. My parents had been planning on having a third kid, but decided not to after I cried for six months. Without knowing it, I prevented myself from being a middle child.

*

My parents gave me "roots and wings,"
and articles about calcium and real estate.

I would do anything for my parents. Except clean out their attic and/or basement.

There are no basements in Los Angeles. Even our houses are shallow.

I heard about a man and a woman who lusted for each other but they were married to other people so they wrote a romantic movie and starred in it.

*

I thought someone was going to steal my husband, so I made him wear the club.

We've been married to each other for 20 years. We're co-dependent. We play solitaire together. All my selfies are of him.

For our anniversary he wanted one of those big screen TVs but I just pushed his chair closer to the set we already have.

He's the funniest person I know. He sexted me once - he sent me a picture of him emptying the dishwasher.

I met him on line - at the supermarket. He was checking me out.

He was so romantic when he proposed: He turned off the TV. Well, he muted it. During half-time.

Then he got on his knee - cause he dropped the ring under the couch. Then he asked for my hand - he couldn't get up. He has sciatica.

My last boyfriend had given me a piece of coal and he told me that he would marry me when it turned into a diamond from all the pressure I was putting on him.

*

William Blake said, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is - INFINITE."

*

When things are simpler it's easier to see them for what they really are.

*

When I'm on a plane all of my senses are heightened. (No pun intended.) Hearing the loud lady. Smelling whatever that is. Tasting the food. Touching elbows with the guy in the next seat. Seeing clouds.

I was on a plane one New Year's Eve and they handed out noisemakers to those of us who didn't have a screaming baby.

*

I once sat next to a HUGE man on a short flight. He told me he played minor league football. Anyway, he was in the middle seat and he was kind of nervous and sweating the whole time. He confided in me that he was petrified. I gave him a Lifesaver and kept patting him on the back like he was a little baby until we touched down.

CHAPTER 4: REMEMBERING

Whenever I'm lighting a match, I usually get it on the third try.

*

When you pray, you hold your own hand. When you hold someone else's hand it's like you're praying together.

I love the part of a 12-step meeting where we all hold hands.

*

My travel agent always used to say "Not a problem" after everything. I'd say, "Denise, I need to go to South Dakota for less than a hundred dollars," and she'd say, "Not a problem." "I'd like to sit in seat 23B." "Not a problem." "I need to be there two days ago." "Not a problem."

When Denise retired it really was a problem.

Denise's company was called Gepetto's Travel, as in Gepetto the toymaker and Pinocchio's father, Pinocchio - the boy made of wood whose nose grew whenever he told a lie.

*

I try only to lie on stage. It's hard not to lie sometimes though, like when I feel embarrassed or inferior, or I might hurt someone's feelings. I lie if I don't want to make someone feel bad, and that includes me.

*

I heard that your ears and your nose continue to grow throughout your life until you die. And that your eyes are always the same size.

*

Politics is too...political.

*

What is morality?

You can't point to it. It's more like electricity. We figured it out and it helps us.

But who figured it out?

We can only agree on morality metaphorically.

We learn morality like dancers learn to dance: Sometimes the choreography is on paper. We watch others do it. Then we do it ourselves, using what we know or making it up as we go along.

Morality is our interpretation of what we think it is okay to do.

Morality is like interpretive dance.

Camus said "Freedom of speech is the freedom not to have to lie."

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember what you said. You just need to remember what you did.

Okay, this is what I tell my loved ones: So if you have to lie to me, as you are lying to me, can you please make a commitment to yourself to eventually tell me the truth? Or you can just tell me the truth right away and cut out the middle man. (But be kind.)

The truth hurts when it's too soon to hear it.

Truth is a stage of growth in man.

*

When it comes to politics, a lie is considered poetic license. Lying is an unspoken part of a politician's job description. Basically, we elect the best liars.

*

Cherry trees, I am not a crook, I cannot tell a lie, I did not sell arms to Iran, Read my lips, I did not have sexual relations with that woman.

*

When Bill Clinton said he did not have sexual relations with that woman, maybe he wasn't referring to Monica Lewinsky.

Because I saw Bill Clinton on TV saying that he did not have sexual relations with that woman, now I know what ONE lie looks and sounds like. Now I have a better sense of what people look like and sound like when they are lying.

I started writing this BT (Before Trump) and he has taken lying to the stratosphere.

In **art** you are free to run the gamut. Tell the truth. Make something up. Tell the truth by making something up. And keep what is what to yourself if you want.

*

I once wrote patter and jokes for a singer to tell between the songs. I swear on Lily this person asked me to "Make up a true story."

*

If your printer is broken and then it gets fixed, was it just on a break?!

*

I've performed stand-up comedy in comedy clubs, in country clubs, bowling alleys, at birthday parties, corporate events, and trade shows, on TV shows in a frat house, and on cruise ships. At my parents' 50th college reunions....

I once performed on a party boat that was decorated like an acid trip. The boat was called the **SS Blotter**. There were shag rugs and lava lamps. Dan Fogelberg performed as well. After dinner Steven Stills got up and sang "Love the One You're With."

A frat boy once asked me to marry him. I thought he was rushing me.

*

My biggest live audience to date was 5,000 people. I was opening for Bob Hope in Indiana. It was amazing opening for Bob Hope. I wanted to have grandchildren, just so I could tell them about it.

*

Someone bought my dog a birthday card. He can't read. He's two. Though I guess he's 14 in dog years.

There should be a clothing store for dogs called Forever 3.

We have two rescue dogs - they're Jindos - from South Korea - they're very loyal. Self-cleaning. They once ate a recliner.

They fight like cats and dogs.

One time I gave them cat treats by mistake so now they ignore me.

I usually walk my dogs after I pitch them four balls.

One dog we had was JJ, a Bichon Poodle, he looked like a slipper. We got him from a rescue in Beverly Hills. He was wearing Crest White Strips. He would only fetch a pickle ball.

He was very polite. He marked his territory with orange traffic cones.

When we got him the people told us he was four but the vet said that based on his teeth and his bones, he was at least eight. I thought WOW! They even lie about their dog's age in Beverly Hills.

When I started writing this I had never had a dog. Now I've had five.

The only good thing about losing a dog is: You know they were loved by you until the end.

*

I didn't have an imaginary friend growing up. I had an imaginary audience.

*

I don't want the audience to laugh at all tonight. Not tonight. I have a headache.

After college I worked in a because it was the only place quiet enough for my hangovers.

*

When I was five I starred in our basement production of Rumpelstiltskin. My sister was the princess. Our friend Emily played the king. My role was to turn straw into gold. I used a cymbal with a foot pedal as a spinning wheel.

*

Emily got married in our hometown, at the George Washington Manor near the clock tower and the duck pond and the William Cullen Bryant Library, where the parades started and ended.

And we all held hands so we wouldn't lose each other.

Now Emily owns a film distribution company called Zeitgeist.

*

When I was young I thought about everything and cared about the tiniest things. My hair was so shiny then and the sun was just right. I wanted to understand how, why, when, who, what, and where.

Is waiting key?

Don't answer that yet.

CHAPTER 5: IRONY

The poet Yeats wrote: "How can we know the dancer from the dance?"

Well, by the tutu. And how you feel when she's done.

Or by her name.

*

I was in the play HAIR in college. It was 1982. I sang FRANK MILLS. There was no nudity.

In The Pajama Game I sang STEAM HEAT and HERNANDO'S HIDEAWAY. OVER THE RAINBOW in the Wizard of Oz at camp in Poughkeepsie, NY.

I was Dorothy. My best friend played the part of Toto. My heartthrob was the Tin Man. (That was ironic.) The production was a little campy.

"Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain."

I loved camp. I never wanted to go home. "There's no place like camp."

The word ME is in the word HOME.

I saw a meme that said "HOME is where you can take off your pants."

I started writing this book before there were memes. Before meme was even a word.

*

One day at camp we were going on a canoe trip on the Housatonic River. Well, the river was overflowing because it had rained a lot that summer, so instead of taking us a day, it took us an hour, and actually my canoe did not even make it to the end because it capsized in the first five minutes. I held onto a branch for dear life with the water gushing by me, and when I was rescued by a guy named Jason, I wouldn't get back into the

boat so I ended up walking on the trail the rest of the way to the bus.

Prior to the trip I asked the counselor in charge if I could be in a certain boat because I liked the kid Eric Y. who was assigned to it, more than I liked the boy assigned to the other canoe, who was Jason, who ended up saving me when Eric lost control of the boat that tipped over with me in it.

The story goes deeper.

Cut to twenty-five years later: A friend tells me I should know the work of a philosopher named Wittgenstein. I tried to buy "The Idiot's Guide to Wittgenstein," but they did not have it at the bookstore Borders. (Now they don't even have Borders.)

So I do what I always do when I want to find something out, I Google it. I Googled "Wittgenstein California Philosophy Professors," and I get a list of about 30 people who devote their lives to this guy and his teachings.

The name that pops out at me is "Eric Y." Couldn't be the same one from The Canoe-Tipping Incident, but I decide to write to him for an overview of Wittgenstein, and, by the way, Did you go to Camp Trywoodie in 1974?

He writes back and tells me something about the philosopher which I still don't understand (talk about lofty), and, yes, he did go to Camp Trywoodie in 1974. But, get this, sit down: he doesn't remember me.

Drowning all over again....

Swear on Lily, two days later I was working at a club called Charlie Goodnights in North Carolina, and I get a message backstage from Jason who lives there with his wife and kids - he couldn't make the show but wanted to say hi.

*

At the end of the Rock Opera TOMMY the backdrop becomes a mirror. The audience can see itself.

Are we all just mirrors for each other?

*

I'm always surprised when someone recognizes me. (Especially my parents.)

*

This is not a joke: I've been recognized by three homeless people. Here's a story about one of them: I was walking to my show one night in San Jose, and I saw this homeless guy sitting in a cardboard box. We looked at each other, and then he said, "You're that comedian!" So I invited him to come with me to the club and he did. He left before I got off stage.

*

In high school my friend Beth's parents (Ralph and Marion) took us to Yugoslavia. The hotel we were going to stay at was still being built. We got there, and there was no roof on the hotel. It was a billion star hotel *because there was no roof.*

The grass was so green in Yugoslavia. I was sixteen. Trying to take in the world.

Beth is one of the funniest people I know. She would never perform on stage, though, because she doesn't need the attention from a group of strangers.

*

My mother told me never to talk to strangers. She didn't say anything about writing to them though.

Actually, my mother is very outgoing. She played the drums at my wedding.

Thankfully not during the ceremony.

Ba-dum-dum.

*

The more serious I am, the funnier I get. Maybe because I realize there's no way out except to laugh.

Sometimes SERIOUS = FUNNY.

*

I bet there's a robber in every cop. And vice versa. Just a uniform away from its opposite.

Last night on **Unsolved Mysteries** there was a cop who was dating a cat-burglar he had once arrested.

Yin-yang.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

*

Truth will make you money.

*

Is **art** the opposite of waste?

*

I studied psychology in college and then I went right into therapy.

My therapist said I was sarcastic and in denial. I was like, "Yeah, right, whatever, Dr. Fraud."

He couldn't even validate my parking.

One time my therapist and I got into a fight. He wanted us to go to couple's counseling.

He was a very expensive friend whom I knew nothing about.

But he did have good magazines in his waiting room: WIRED and MAD.

He wore cologne by Calvin Klein called: OBSESSION.

The only thing that shrunk was my savings.

But he did help me with my problem because I used to be an insomniac, and now I can fall asleep on any couch.

I've tried everything to help me fall asleep – counting sheep, drinking warm milk in my coffee. Nothing works.

I just lie there and wonder things like, Did I buy too many Forever Stamps?

Why does it say Dry Clean Only on my raincoat?

Who builds the Ikea stores?

Why am I so uncomfortable after I eat comfort food?

I think about the things I cut but didn't paste.

I think how blood **is** thicker than water but harder to get out.

I wonder What do oysters think the world is?

How do you know if you're going to be good at The Luge?

And isn't a peach cobbler just a pie that someone dropped?

Why is the show Hoarders sponsored by Best Buy?

Do they ever recall phones?

Isn't buying a pair of already ripped jeans kind of like buying a pre-dented car?

And do cat burglars have nine lives?

*

I've learned through therapy that people really can change... medications.

I once went to this therapist who specialized in addictions and the whole time he talked about his own.

I've learned from therapy that it's not really cool to talk about your problems at work.

*

I once went to a palm reader. She freaked me out 'cause she knew everything about me. Turns out she was reading my Palm Pilot! (Google it.)

My psychic called me gullible. But she let me pay her in Bitcoin.

Actually, I only pretended to buy Bitcoin.

A psychic once told me I was psychic – that I had a sixth sense – which is great because I'm missing numbers two and three.

I'm the opposite of psychic: I don't even know what I'm thinking.

Maybe everything already happened in the world, and psychics are just people who remember faster.

*

I was at the bakery, waiting my turn, eating all the free samples, and this really cute guy was flirting with me and finally he came up and asked for my number, so I gave it to him. And then I had to take a new one.

I'm very immature, according to my pediatrician.

But he's a double stupid head.

*

I still want to be a child star when I grow up.

You know how some people are child actors? Maybe I'll be an actress in her 70s.

I told my stepson that when I am older I want to be an actress like Frances McDormand in the movie Laurel Canyon. And he said, "When you get older?" LOLLOLOL

*

You know how couples have a SONG? Like, "My Funny Valentine?" Mine and my husband's is: "HELP!"

"100 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL."

"Love the One You're With."

*

Actually, my husband's music is my favorite music.

*

I ate dinner at a Family Restaurant. Apparently not a family known for its cooking!

I don't know how to cook. Even my dog's like, "I'm eating out tonight." My food has a before taste. My most-used kitchen appliance is the fire extinguisher.

Everyone who knows me loses weight because I am a terrible cook.

If I ever had a child I would have to breastfeed it, because I don't know how to cook.

Last time I cooked I burnt the recipe.

Recently my husband has been asking me to bring another woman home. Not for sex. For **cooking**. (Probably for sex too - but I don't even like three-way calling.)

I don't want another woman in the room when I'm having sex. I don't even want to be in the room!

*

I cook once a year - on Thanksgiving. Everyone is very thankful it's just once a year.

Last year I made a 26-pound turkey. Pot pie. It was impossible to stuff. Into my George Foreman Grill.

I would have used my E-Z Bake, but I had run out of light bulbs.

*

When meetings are held on Zoom, it doesn't matter what you smell like.

Offices won't ever become completely obsolete because some people like to work around other people.

*

When people come together in groups do they take on the properties of mercury?

*

I once performed in Alaska. I was there for three days. And six nights. It was so cold: I saw a dog wearing a cat.

I met a man there who wanted to have a long distance relationship with me. Well, he told me to go to hell.

*

Doing stand up I literally learned how to stand up. My mother told me I slouched on stage, and she told me about this thing called **ALEXANDER**. It's a technique for the body and it's like YOGA but not exactly because if it was exactly like yoga then it would just be yoga.

It kind of teaches you that your spine is like those collapsable drinking cups, and you pull yourself up by the top of your head and simultaneously feel your feet going down into the ground or your ass being pulled through the chair – so because I do stand-up I literally learned how to stand up, but not in a rigid, militaristic way.

The Alexander Technique: You learn how to breathe and stand up. It's easy enough.

A lot of actors and musicians do Alexander. I've heard that Kevin Kline does it, Sir Ben Kingsley, Sting. Hilary Swank.

And my mother.

My mother was an actress, so I was raised by her understudy.

(That's a joke – she is an Early Childhood Educator.)

*

I dated royalty once. He was Prince of Darkness. He was a royal pain in the ass.

*

I once dated a musician. He used to play his songs for me over the phone, but then I found out he was just putting me on hold.

I dated a control freak. He insisted that **he** take the birth control pills.

Men who take care of sex (birth control, lights, the towel) are sexy.

The last time I had sex I cried, because I knew it would be the last time.

Afterwards I couldn't walk for two days, cause I was still tied to that hammock.

I've never been tied up. I've been stood up. By a guy who was tied up.

My husband once asked me to dress up for him as a nurse – cause that was his fantasy – that we had health coverage.

*

My doctor said I might need hormones for my sex drive. At that point I'll just take acting.

I finally love myself. Well I like myself – I can stand myself at 62.

I still have two problems – A.D.D. – you know, attention something something.

*

It's the middle of the night and birds are singing outside my window.

They are out there every night no matter where I am.

The stars are always out, but in order for us to see them the lighting has to be just right.

It's true for rainbows too.

CHAPTER 6: THE GRAVITY OF STRANGERS

My friends Phil and Beth were born on the same exact day.

What are the odds of that?

And I was born four days after.

And my mother-in-law exactly in between, different year.

My step sons a few weeks later, again, different years.

We are all Pisces.

My husband and I eat a lot of fish. My favorite are goldfish cheddar. Swedish Fish. Salmon.

We get it at Costco, where you have to buy everything in bulk. So with fish you have to buy a school.

I was once buying some Peanut M&Ms at Costco, and I was with this guy that I was dating and he said, get this, "Do you really think your thighs need those?"

He didn't see them after that.

Too da loo! (Toute a l'heure!)

I dated a lot before I met my husband and I HATED it. Now I LOVE it.

My friend Bobby says that he went to Costco and bought a keg of nose drops.

I believe in horoscopes...when they apply.

I know a man who was born on Leap Year Day. He's 44 and 11.

*

I hate surprise parties. I like being surprised, but in the same way I like being criticized: Very gently.

Please break everything to me with kid gloves.

*

Friends are your team in the pick-up game of life.

I think friends are people that you're psychic with. Whenever I call my best friend she says, "I was just talking about you!"

We're connected at the dreams.

Friends are external consciousness incarnated.

Friends are keys and they unlock different parts of your personality. My friend Ron just had that same thought.

*

I wonder how singing "You've Got a Friend" for so many years has changed James Taylor.

We need to hear our friends' voices so we can fine-tune our own.

I like the things my friends remember.

I like my friends' memories.

I choose my friends based on how I think they would be in an earthquake.

*

I have the greatest friends. My friends don't even let me drive sober. (Cause they know I'm a bad driver.)

I'm a bad driver and I'm also bad at math – forget it if I have to drive and do math at the same time – I perpendicular park.

I have to get a new car soon – either a Volkswagen, an Uber, or maybe a UPS truck – I could park it anywhere.

*

After living through an earthquake I am convinced that there **is** a power greater than myself: **State Farm.**

*

I was in the 1994 earthquake in Los Angeles. It was 4:32 in the morning. I felt the bed shaking. I knew it was The Big One, because I was in the kitchen.

In case of an earthquake, they say you're supposed to get under your desk. I didn't think that was a good idea because I had bought my desk at IKEA. (And I hadn't put it together yet.)

I got one of those Hide-A-Key rocks - you know those fake rocks that look real? And they're hollow. So you put a spare key in the rock and then you leave it outside so that that way you're never locked out? Well, some guy found my rock - under my mat. And smashed my window with it!

*

I got married late in life. I thought I was going to be an Old Maid, but now I'm married, so now I'm a maid!

Ever since I got married, younger guys have been approaching me, and asking me to buy them alcohol.

*

I've been on so many blind dates; I should get a free dog.

I hated dating. I was never myself on a date. I never ate as much as I wanted. I had to speak in that British accent. And maybe I'm old fashioned but on a date I liked it when the man paid. . .for sex.

I went out with this one guy and we had nothing to say to each other. I figured those awkward silences would be filled with discussions about the children once we had them.

I used to be scared of commitment. I couldn't even walk down the aisle at a supermarket.

*

There's a chain of supermarkets in California called Ralph's. Doesn't "to Ralph" mean, you know.... Ironic.

I'm scared of intimacy, so I can't tell you about it.

Intimacy is when there are no witnesses. Intimacy is when we only want each other to know.

*

When I'm doing stand-up comedy I am intimate with the audience. It's a *distant* intimacy. Compassion without touching. Because of words, ideas, motion and emotions, there is transference of energy. I hope I make you feel better. At least temporarily.

Being on stage is like being in therapy: 45 minutes. It's very emotional. I inevitably embarrass myself.

*

I would have been a shy stripper.

I would have had a tip jar.

*

I got into an accident at the car wash. It was a head on. Don't ask. My car was totaled, but spotless!

I was also in an accident with one of those houses on a truck. You've seen those houses that they move. It was a house. It was coming at me. I was flashing my brights, beeping my horn. Nobody was home. So I pulled into the garage. Called Triple A. And Remax.

*

I am not a good driver. Everything outside of my car is in my blind spot.

I am always driving in the breakdown lane because I'm usually having one.

I can't get any younger, but maybe I can get funnier.

*

I tried to get a personal loan and the guy at the bank asked me what it was for. I whispered, "It's personal."

I'm addicted to money. I get withdrawal symptoms.

Rimshot!

*

I was dating this guy but we were incompatible. For example, I'm a night person and he didn't like me.

He reminded me of my father: He looked like my father. He had a wife. No, he wasn't married but he cheated on me - with his secretary. I knew because I found lipstick on his collar...covered with White Out.

For Valentine's Day he bought me flour. And a Whitman Sample.

*

They say that a diamond is the hardest stone. Yeah, **to get!**

This thought dawns on me constantly: There are billions of people in the world. We all sleep, eat, love something, have bellybuttons.

*

When I communicate, I'm communicating feelings. Words are just one part of the way to do that. What you say matters, but also how you say it. And when you breathe.

*

Don't you love getting a massage...from the bellhop?

*

I made new friends in my 40s, 50s, and 60s. I love the way they write and speak and what they have to say and how we play.

*

I took an acting class once and the teacher taught us to be aware of our motivation. What was the thing that **compelled** us? What did we **want to get** by our words or actions?

I wanted to learn how to act.

My acting teacher couldn't even act interested in me.

*

My acting teacher in high school was a guy named Bert. He was one of the Jets in the movie **West Side Story**. He was also a grape in a commercial for Fruit of the Loom. My friend Amy said **her** high school acting teacher was also a grape in the Fruit of the Loom commercial. But I guess there was a bunch of them.

Amy said in order to be a good actor you have to love yourself.

Colin Quinn told me that actors are comfortable with their bodies.

*

Does my body dysmorphia make me look fat?

I ate so much comfort food and now I'm really uncomfortable.

*

Actors are praiseworthy because they are sacrificing their identities in order to communicate a story so that we can understand human nature a little better.

Actors take themselves very seriously. Even if it's a comedy.

A movie is fun to watch because every character is in the moment. It feels up to the minute. Right out of the can. Hot off the press.

Some actresses prefer to be called "actors." But if she wins an Oscar it will be for best "actress."

People ask if I prefer to be called "comedian," "comedienne," or "comic." All three work for me.

*

RuPaul is from Atlanta.

Well, he's from Atlanta. She's from New York.

RuPaul is gorgeous.

I met a drag queen named Hedda Lettuce. (I wonder if Hedda knows Carrot Top?)

I think Victoria's secret is that **She** is a **He!** Victor/Victoria.

*

I didn't have an imaginary friend. I had an imaginary acquaintance named Libby. She was very aloof.

Now I have the best friends in the world.

They are all **crazy** about their hair.

Every single one of my friends tells me that I generalize and exaggerate more than everybody else in the entire universe combined.

*

The older I am the more I feel like my life has a life of its own.

CHAPTER 7: FLIP SIDE

My friend Andra said that tears caused by cutting onions aren't the same as tears caused by emotions.

Joni Mitchell said, "Laughing and crying, you know it's the same release."

Laughing and crying: The storm before the calm?

I think my brain is able to change in a certain way only after I cry.

Maybe the more we laugh and cry, the freer our offspring will be.

My friend Myra said she heard that when you cry you are melting the ice around your heart.

If I cry enough, maybe my tears will unseal a sorry fate.

*

Joni Mitchell has angel hair. She is a poet and a flower. She is Queen of Music and Lovers.

I did yoga because my friend Carl said if I did yoga I could reach an altered state of consciousness. It's so much easier just to drink.

*

The older I get the less flexible my body gets so I try to stretch my mind.

I'm open-minded, but sometimes I'm closed for re-modeling.

I know a contortionist who ran away from home when she was a kid. They found her in a fanny pack!

*

I never ran away from home but when I was six I once asked everybody else in the house to move out.

I studied French for seven years in college.

*

I bought that videotape BUNS OF STEEL. I've watched it 40 times. It doesn't work.

In addition to feeding your body, you also have to feed your ego. Ego feeds on praise and recognition. Feeling special. Standing out.

I'm saddest when I don't know how to feed my ego.

*

I'm addicted to ice cream. I go to a 31-step program. (I'm doing okay, but last week I had some shakes.)

Today I read in USA Today that 1 out of 5 people have a relative who is addicted to drugs or alcohol.

One of my uncles goes to "AA," Alcoholics Anonymous. He's been going for 20 years and he knows everybody there. So I guess it's just "A."

Scientists discovered the gene for alcoholism. It was the one wearing a lampshade.

*

I quit smoking pot when it became legalized. Not great timing. But I quit one other time, for a few years, when my stepsons were little. I went to A.A. I didn't want to go to Marijuana Anonymous because I didn't want to be around people like me, you know, napping and snacking, all lethargic and eating Cheez-Its, so I went to A.A., Alcoholics Anonymous, and I liked it, having a little community, sharing our fucked up stories and drinking coffee with that powdered whitener fake shit which I *hate*, but I realized that if I wanted it to be real cream or milk I would have to bring it myself. You know, **be** the change goddamnit.

That's what I learned from A.A. But my *biggest* takeaway – one day I was waiting for the meeting to start, and a man Charlie on the bench right in front of me, said to the woman sitting to his right, Lisa, she was a photographer, Charlie says to Lisa: \ "Did you know that Wendy Liebman comes to this meeting?" And she said, "I know!" And I was like "Um, HELLO? WHAT, DID YOU GUYS JUST SAY?" I hate saying **guys** when I'm talking to men *and* women. "WHAT DID YOU SAY? I thought this was supposed to be 'ANONYMOUS?!' HELLO!" They felt really badly and they told me **their** last names. I still see Charlie at Ralph's sometimes and he **still** apologizes. But when I thought about it, when I was honest with myself, I realized *I wasn't even pissed!* I was REALLY **HAPPY** that they knew, that someone knew who I was. I realized that **I** didn't want to be anonymous – just the weed part. I wanted my *affliction* to be the anonymous part. **I** wanted to be known. I mean, I'm not an attention whore. I don't order flaming dishes at restaurants just so people will look over. I just want people to know me.

Maybe so they can remind you who I am when you forget.

His And Hers Anonymous (HAHA): Strangers gathering in a beautiful sunny comfortable room to eat cake, share stories, connect. Tears and flowers. A candle, laughter. Hope. Light. Collective grief and then relief.

Easier sleep.

*

I'm addicted to the remote control. "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change – like the channel."

*

I love coffee. I'm not awake until I've had at least two cups of coffee. And a nap.

Coffee is my cup of tea.

I will never get tired of coffee.

Remember the first time you went to Starbucks? You ordered a latte and the guy went, That'll be \$4.60. I remember thinking \$4.60, keep the coffee - cause that just woke me up!

*

One summer I was chamber maid in a hotel in Montauk, New York. Montauk is at the tip of Long Island, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, a fishing town, a tourist trap (catching tuna and vacationers). The workers at the hotel all lived in these cabins adjacent to the hotel, behind the tennis courts, near the dock. One of the guys on the cleaning crew was a guy named Fred. He worked the graveyard shift, and during the day he would sleep on the beach. By the end of the summer his skin was tanned and his hair bleached blonde. His teeth were as white as they came.

In addition to being a janitor, Fred was also a pyromaniac. One day he almost burned down my cabin.

Fred said he wanted to be a meteorologist on ABC after college. I wonder where he is now.

I'm So Hot For You was on the radio then. **Born to Run.** "Come on Wendy...we can live with the sadness...."

We danced at a disco that summer. "Won't you take me down, to Funkytown?" One night the boy who played Peter Brady was there with a bunch of friends, I kid you not.

One of the other maids was a girl named Stephanie Trotta. We decide to meet up again in Montauk the next summer and share a cabin which we did. Then we lost touch. The next summer I had an internship at a magazine called Art In America, in Manhattan. The office was on a high floor of a skyscraper on Lexington Avenue in the middle of New York City and WHO was the receptionist when you got off the elevator? Stephanie Trotta.

*

I've had so many hangovers - my brain must have stretch marks. The thirst and the headache the next day.

Is that to shrink the head from the brain? Twist the ego out through shame? Defiance, pain, deflation. The change of breath? Self-recrimination?

My soul surrenders. Brake pads all worn down now. Grinding metal to the asphalt.

That was the last straw. The last drop. I give up. I give in. I am done.

Now's another chance

to begin

again.

CHAPTER 8: WEL

When you put your initials next to a mistake, it's to authorize it and make it right.

*

Swimmers shave their heads to improve their speed. So shaving hair equals saving time. But if you're going bald, then time is controlling you.

If you're bald, you never have a bad hair day.

People judge you unfairly because of your hair.

*

Knowing yourself = figuring out your hair.

Hair is the only body part somebody wrote a musical about.

*

Some days my hair has a life of its own.

I saw a totally bald guy with a tattoo on his head that said "TOUPEE."

*

Music is like kisses for the soul.

*

When I was 11 I heard Phyllis Diller being interviewed and she said, "You have to make people laugh, and then when they think they're done laughing you have to HIT THEM AGAIN!" And I remember thinking to myself, "I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN PHYLLIS!"

I used to imitate Lily Tomlin's characters Edith Ann and Ernestine because this made my father laugh. And that's the truth.

I met Lily Tomlin last night at a benefit. She was everything you want one of your idols to be and more!

Phil thinks I'm funnier one-on-one. But who has that kind of time?

*

As scientists continue to break down the elements of life, they are also going out farther into space. The world is getting smaller and larger simultaneously.

*

My father-in-law and his brother wrote that song, "It's a Small World After All." And Supercalifragilistic. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. You're Sixteen.

*

I was in Italy once when I was 10, in a little restaurant, and I recognized someone at the next table. A kid from my elementary school.

What are the odds? In the whole world?

*

I wonder if astronauts feel that the farther they go out into space, the further they go into themselves?

I met Buzz Aldrin at Phyllis Diller's house once.

Some astronauts claim to have seen unidentified flying objects.

*

During my first week of college they split the freshmen class into groups of about 10 people and we had to talk about our

expectations and our goals. The girl sitting next to me said she wanted to be an astronaut. I remember thinking to myself, "Yeah, yeah, sure sure. Whatever." Well, sure enough, she became an astronaut: **Pamela Melroy**. Swear on Lily.

*

I can't believe they haven't developed foolproof birth control yet! They can do everything else! I mean, they put men on the moon! Oh, that would be a good method.

We've sent astronauts to the moon. Who's to say that aliens don't pick OUR space to invade?

I know three people who saw UFOs. I believe two of them.

After you call something a UFO, doesn't it become identified?

*

One time I was flying home on Southwest, where you just sit down somewhere randomly, and I sit next to this cowboy looking guy. We talked the entire flight nonstop, and towards the end I tell him I have to run when I get off the plane because I'm going to my friend **Paul's** mother's memorial service and I'm already late. Cowboy says it's nice to meet me and that he was on Facebook. When I friend him later that night I see that we have **one** mutual friend, and that friend is **Paul**.

*

Goethe said, "Plunge boldly into the thick of life."

*

I went to a health club in Beverly Hills. It was too fancy. They had a spiral Stairmaster.

*

I had 20/20 eyesight until I was 20.

When I weigh myself I take everything off including my glasses. That way I can't read the numbers.

I swear on Lily, I was reading the nutrition label on a package of Gummy Bears and it said, "Serving size: 21 Bears."

My father has a sweet tooth. And it's the only one he has left.

*

I read that sugar cane is a wonderful alternative source of fuel. This is great news! We can cure our energy shortage and diabetes at the same time: Sugar our cars, not our food.

CHAPTER 9: WHO KNEW?

In the book INFINITE SELF by Stuart Wilde, he says, "Reach for the impossible, and have the courage to express yourself in a totally different way."

He also advised: pick up every penny, no matter how rich you are. This tiny gesture indicates to the universe that you are open to the abundance it offers.

*

Names for my autobiography: **May I Have Your Attention Please? As Long as I'm Up Here. Between the Cracks. Standing Myself. Pink Socks.**

*

I drove a taxi for two months in Boston. I never picked anyone up. I just really needed a car.

(And a place to live.)

I've been getting back to nature lately. Well, I was evicted. From my parents house.

They say you can't go home again. Cause your parents changed all the locks.

*

I am a neat freak. My husband won't let me get help for it.

My husband hates when I put myself down. He wants to do it.

My aunt was a neat freak too. She put vinyl slipcovers on the children.

We didn't have vinyl slipcovers. We just had vinyl couches.

*

When I first moved to L.A. I got my navel pierced by a really bad orthodontist.

*

I just had six inches cut off of my hair by a really bad sushi chef.

Orthodontists are catalysts of evolution.

I keep my orthodontist on a retainer.

I always think better after I floss.

I knew a dentist who had a tiny round mirror on his ceiling over his bed.

*

My dentist said if I floss every day I'll live six years longer than if I don't floss and I'm not good at math, but isn't that six more years I'll have to floss?

*

At my hotel in Vegas there was a mirror on the ceiling. Turned out to be a two-way.

I slept in a round bed once. I didn't like it at first, but in the middle of the night I did a 180.

*

One night after a show I trashed my hotel room. In the morning I remembered I was at my in-laws.

*

I saw an ATM machine company called TYME, which stood for: **T**ake **Y**our **M**oney **E**verywhere.

TYME = MONEY.

*

When my nephew Jake was 5 he found the back of an earring and he told my sister that he found some "mouse binoculars."

When he was 6 he said, "Life is like a circle. Everything is round."

When he was 8, my sister told him he couldn't watch a movie that was on TV because it was for grown ups. And he said, "Oh, is it about facing your fears?"

*

The day before I took my new boyfriend/now husband on the road with me (to a club in Hasbrouck Heights New Jersey), he was buying me a fake diamond ring at a funky bookstore, and the woman ringing us up said, "Do you want this new book? It just came in," pointing to a book called The Pop-Up Book of Phobias. Things like a dentist's drill or a spider or a tall building would pop up at you as you turned the pages. No thanks. The next day (no exaggeration) we're at the comedy club Bananas, and I ask the other comedian how long he'd been doing stand up, and he said "Eight years, but I'm a writer. I just wrote a book called The Pop Up Book of Phobias."

I've been facing my fears - the mirror.

*

When I'm having a good show it feels like I'm a puck on an air-hockey board.

Flow. Time is not a factor. Fun. Work feels like play.

They say that when your soul is doing the right thing it is naturally energized.

*

My grandmother always said, "Do what you love and the money will follow." She loved rich men.

She also said, "Don't marry for money. Divorce for money."

She also said that the secret to a successful marriage is don't go to sleep angry. She was awake for 56 years.

I think every relationship spouse, friend, colleague – is about sense of humor.

And no one makes me laugh more than my husband does, in bed.

He was looking for my G-Spot and he asked if he could buy a vowel.

I married my husband to get my green card. Well, my American Express.

*

Art is PLAY that you get paid for.

*

Maybe you've heard the saying, "You're only as good as your last show." I like to think that I'm only as good as my next show. No sense living in the past.

In stand-up comedy there is no such thing as a dress-rehearsal. It's always the show.

*

Willa Cather said, "Miracles surround us at every turn if we sharpen our perceptions of them."

CHAPTER 10: FULL CIRCLE

My grandmother quit smoking when she was 86. She said she was done.

She died at 94.

**Ashes to ashes.
Light to light.**

*

The message I got from the movie **Groundhog Day** is that if you want to, you can change. It's really never too late. It really is always about the process.

*

Time = potential.

*

Phil and I met at the Vincent Chase Acting Studio in Hollywood, above a dry cleaner, across the street from a supermarket on Sunset Boulevard in October of 1991. When we met we knew that we would be fast friends.

Vincent Chase is the name of a character on the show **Entourage**.

I auditioned for a commercial once but they said my body language was all wrong: "All the food we have at Burger Buddy (SHAKING MY HEAD NO) is very fresh. We do not use Kangaroo Meat (SHAKING MY HEAD YES)."

*

I want to be rich, but it's so expensive.

Money is no object. Because I don't have any.

My friend lost a lot of money in one of those pyramid schemes. Hello! They told you it was a **SCHEME!!!!**

*

Inevitably, something great or interesting happened whenever I went into this one video store on La Brea Avenue. So I started looking forward to going there. Sometimes nothing happened. But I was still in a good mood.

A little kid once asked me if god had all the movies.

I wanted to be a mother. (I've been called one.)

My friend Myra wrote this joke for me: "I can't have kids. According to my lease."

Myra does a great impression of Diane Keaton.

Myra was a waitress once and Diane Keaton came into the restaurant for dinner.

I once saw Diane Keaton come out of a restaurant on the set of her movie, **The Good Mother**.

I'm not a good photographer - I could never be a waitress.

I never gave birth, but I helped raise my husband two sons and we're close now but when they were little they used to say things like, "I don't have to listen to you - you're not my mother!" Cause they heard my husband saying that to me.

My youngest is a techie. I was at his friends' house who works for Apple and I fell into her pool, and she put me in rice.

*

Reasons to communicate: Educate, explain, enlighten, entertain, ask for something to eat.

*

My husband hates lipstick.

They say there is lead in lipstick.

Are there calories in lipstick?

I wear lipstick for one reason: So I can identify my drink at a party.

*

I have separation anxiety.

I won't even separate my laundry.

All my socks are pink.

I have separation anxiety. Maybe I was supposed to be a twin?

Sometimes I wish I were a twin, just so I could see what was "GENE" and what was "ME."

The Levin twins were the twins in my neighborhood. They lived around the corner. They are the twins I think of first when I hear something about twins.

I have separation AND fear of commitment. So please don't leave me. But I gotta go.

Before I was married (20 years now) my relationships only lasted a toothbrush.

My cousin asked if twins were the result of a multiple orgasm?

*

The first time I thought about the concept of NOTHING was in 1973. I was lying on the carpet, staring at the ceiling. My cat Mimi was sitting there with me. (Mimi was MY cat, more than anyone else's in the family. You know what I mean.)

We got Mimi when I was 3. I was playing at this kid Jeffrey's house. I wanted to marry Jeffrey, I mean, we were only 3. But a 5 year old told me that blacks and whites didn't mix, and Jeffrey was black. Anyway, I was at Jeffrey's house, on a play-date, and Jeffrey's cousin came over and gave me a big raspberry gum ball, practically the size of my head. Yum. Really, it was huge.

When I got home from Jeffrey's house, my mother took me next door to our neighbor's to pick out a kitten. Well, I was

standing in their basement, leaning over a box of kittens, and this huge wad of raspberry gum fell out of my mouth and onto the head of one of them. And that kitten was Mimi. She had eyes like a person's. (And gum on her head.)

Mimi ran away once and came home, I swear on You Know Who, seven months later: on Halloween.

Spooky....

Mimi died of old age. She shut her eyes and never opened them again.

Where does life go?

Does it disappear into thin air? Is it disseminated into everything? Is it strewn in our minds, spread throughout imaginations? Memories stewing in the consciousness of those who knew the living? Does life go to the sum of separate thoughts, patched together forever and ever?

You lived, therefore you are.

CHAPTER 11: SENSITIVITY

Jeffrey, my nursery school crush, moved away in first grade. I saw him six years later at a basketball game. He didn't remember me at all. *Foul!*

Now I'm married to a man named Jeffrey.

And the old Jeffrey and I are friends on Facebook. Swish.

*

I heard a basketball player once say that he knew as the ball left his hands if it was going to go through the hoop.

I feel the same way when I tell a joke sometimes.

*

Last Halloween I went as a gal who bought her clothes at the GAP.

One year I went as my friend Beth.
No one guessed.

I love wind chimes. The bigger the better.

The deeper the wind chime, the more expensive it is.

*

The past is always in its present form.

*

Someday I would like to do an outdoor exhibition, like Cristo (he is the artist who set up hundreds of yellow umbrellas on a countryside, and orange banners in Central Park).

My vision is to have huge panels/billboards and freestanding white canopies spread around a plush beautiful field or golf course. There will be lemonade stands everywhere and the lemonade will be free.

There will be words or phrases on each panel/billboard, including: Compassion. Animals. Einstein was here. Riding a bicycle in the dark. Sharing time. The moon is out somewhere right now. I am a work in progress. Thank you. Coincidences are clues. Find your place in line. Lines are also circles. Words are like children. It's time to wake up. Fame/Family. We are metaphors for each other. Work-Sleep-Play. Karma=Gravity? Treat everyone like a baby-puppy, including yourself. Stand up. Breathe. It's about time. Take your time. You are here. You are. Here. You. Are. Here. You.

There will be a lot of big wind chimes.

*

A trial lawyer once told me that when he was in court he had to "get out of the way of the story."

My ex-brother-in-law was a lawyer. I guess he's my ex-brother-in-law in law.

*

I was babysitting for this kid and I told him to settle down. So he got married.

*

I'd been seeing a therapist on and off for **20 years**, and I'd probably mentioned ten times that I had gone to a summer camp called Trywoodie. One day I ask my therapist if *she* ever went to camp? At first she asks me her obligatory shrinky question, "Do you want to know if I ever went to camp or do you want to talk about why you want to know?" And I'm like, "No, I really just want to know if you ever went to camp?" And she looks down, and then she looks up, and she says, "I went to Camp Trywoodie."

*

I was a secretary at a publishing company once. We published dictionaries. The editors decided the fate of words.

One day we had a temp and she put a flower on her desk. She didn't care that it was just for one day - she just wanted her desk to look pretty.

*

One of my college English professors, Frank Bidart taught me the precision of words. He said words are each special and need specific attention.

Like children.

*

Words mean different things at different times. A certain combination of words can solve mysteries. Unlock doors. Open hearts. Make you fly.

*

I was a temp once. Not on purpose--I was hired permanently. It's hard to give two weeks notice when you're not there for that long.

I got fired because I thought that "Casual Friday" meant I could come in on Monday.

You know you hate your job when you pray for jury duty.

*

He was so sensitive--he could detect an earthquake while in an airplane.

The older I get the more I look at things with new eyes.

*

Sometimes my dreams are so boring they keep me asleep.

*

Doctors in training are sleep deprived. I don't really want my surgeon to be tired.

I read that you're not supposed to wake a person who is sleepwalking. Then I read the exact opposite.

*

I have to go to the doctor tomorrow because I've been feeling really attracted to him.

62 and now when I go to the doctor they all look like Doogie Howser.

My doctor won't give me a drug that I see in a commercial unless I sing the jingle.

*

I have great dreams when I'm in Cape Cod, Big Sur, and Asheville, North Carolina. Denver, Colorado. Kuauai, Hawaii. Old Montreal. Canada in general.

You can bring someone to court or meet on a basketball court.

There are GOOD tickets (like a ticket to a concert) and BAD tickets (parking tickets).

A strike in bowling is better than a strike in baseball.

*

I like Colorado because the mountains make my butt look small.

*

I once walked by a health food store and there was a sign on the door that said, "Closed. The employees are meditating for World Peace." I thought this was ridiculous. They probably just wanted the afternoon off. I am less skeptical now. Maybe there is strength in numbers. Maybe when you share the same idea of something with others the energy that is produced is greater than if you're thinking alone.

*

Someone told me I should play pickle ball. You'll have so much fun. I'm thinking, "You assume I like to have fun."

I've gotten very spiritual, cause the material thing didn't work out like I had planned.

My friend Monica is very spiritual. She said I was doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing at all times - I'm like worrying?

*

I love that commercial where they show people blowing bubbles instead of smoking cigarettes.

In the third Matrix movie a woman is smoking a cigarette but nothing comes out when she exhales. There is no smoke!

I once heard someone say, "I can always count on my cigarettes."

*

On my last flight were two people in the restroom joining the mile high club which I thought was ironic because we were on Virgin.

*

I once read about a breathing practice called TONGLLEN.

What it is: You extract someone's negativity, darkness, pain, suffering, and evil, basically all that is BAD when you breathe (without taking it into yourself). And then you breathe out happiness, light, health, comfort, and beauty - basically all that is GOOD.

When I first read about TONGLLEN I thought it sounded backwards. Shouldn't you breathe in all that is GOOD and breathe out whatever is BAD to get it out of you? It seemed **counterintuitive**.

But I was willing to try it the other way. I would turn myself into a human filter for suffering. I would use myself as a sieve as I breathed in to capture whatever was troublesome, and I would exhale trouble-free delight.

So I'm at Mailboxes, Etc. to have them pack a package and send it overnight, and the counter guy says, "You just missed the FedEx truck," and he'd have to charge me ten bucks to drive it over to FedEx himself. So for five minutes I'm just nodding my head, breathing IN his stress, breathing OUT calmness while he's

wrapping and filling out forms, and when he's done he says, "You know what? I'll just drive it over. Forget about the money."

Um, okay.

So I don't know if or how TONGLIN works, but it saved me ten dollars.

CHAPTER 12: CRAZY HAIR

A little bit about me:

I'm lactose tolerant.

I have a black belt in my closet.

I'm usually wearing wire – bra.

And I have two superpowers. I try to see the potential in everything, and I can always tell, well I can *usually* always tell when a man is undressing me with his hands.

*

Babies and actors teach us that the MOMENT is the THING.

Being around children makes me realize that a person is not his or her AGE.

I heard someone say that his life changed forever when he saw how a single drop of blood traveled through the body.

*

Life is like getting into Equity. Equity is the stage actors union. In order to get into Equity you have to have acted before like in a play.

But in order to be in a play, you have to be in Equity. HUH?
Catch 22.

You have to figure out the loopholes in order to get ahead in life. You need to be creative to get around the obstacles that keep you from your goals.

*

My friend Janet and I used to ride bikes together around my neighborhood until I fell off mine and fractured my pelvis at 45.

(I didn't walk for a month and a half. During that time I felt like I un-wound from 45 years of winding.)

This is a true, SOL story. Before I broke my pelvis, I had had a weird back problem that bothered me 90% of the time. Ever since my pelvis healed, my back bothers me 4% of the time.

Nothing is all bad.

*

I hope your back never hurts.

*

At 57 I was hit by a car while walking on my treadmill. Seriously, while crossing the street to meet a friend for lunch.

One leg was broken, both feet. It should have been an easy recovery, but there were complications and a second surgery.

I want to say it was a terrible experience, but I felt so loved.

The doctor explained that my bones needed to knit themselves together. I felt the same was happening with my friendships while I sat in bed for over a year.

And I became more and more grateful day by day.

And I wrote a play!

My words were my legs.

*

I needed to be more specific when I asked the universe for a break.

I wasn't angry at all. (It was better than if I had hit someone.) It was just so ironic! I couldn't do my job: Stand-up.

It was dramatic and traumatic but not tragic.

I healed at the speed of love.

I took what happened in stride.

I was hit by a car – I'll do anything to get out of having sex with my husband.

My healing was two steps forward one step back.

Everyone is so nice when they know you're in pain.

Isn't everyone in pain?

I once heard a woman say that she treats everyone like they're a baby-puppy. Including herself.

*

When Michelle Kwan skates, she looks like an angel on ice. She is inspired. She inspires. She takes my breath away.

When you watch an Olympic athlete you know subconsciously what the athlete has done with their time.

Practicepracticeinfinitelypracticepractice

The athlete is a work-in-progress. Hopefully her work-in-progress will be better than everyone else's on the day they meet.

*

The body needs to be trained. Practice makes perfect. Expert = talent plus experience. You can't cram experience into your body. If you want to learn something, you just have to do it.

When comedians ask for advice I say, "Get on stage as much as humanly possible. If there isn't a place to perform, create one. There is no substitute for experience."

The older I get the more I realize that doing stand-up comedy is not about me. It's about the audience.

*

I saw a bumper sticker on a Rolls Royce that said, "Just do it!" So I hit him :)

My license plate says, "PMS." Nobody cuts me off.

People throw Advil and chocolate....

*

I think it was Truman Capote who said he could see the pain of someone's whole life just by looking at their face.

*

Einstein said, "Only a life lived for others is worth living."

Picasso said, "What one DOES is what counts and not what one had the intention of doing."

And Shirley Lord said, "What really matters is what you do with what you have." But I don't know who she is.

*

Someone once pointed out that women still earn less money than men do for doing the same job. But if you think about it, some of these women are single and raising their children alone, and some of these children are **male**. So, in the end **we all lose out if we don't get paid equally**.

Equality is the ticket!

There should be an 82 cent store just for women since that's what we make on the dollar. Even less for women of color.

I read that black women are charged more than everyone else for a new car. That's totally fucked up.

*

The word "dual" is in the word "individual."

*

In movies about future civilizations, humans are usually depicted as physically fit and standing tall. No one is slouching in an idealized world.

*

When life imitates art = the future is created.

When art imitates life = the past is re-created.

Any way you look at it, art is always in the present.

*

Artists help create the future. Their visions, communicated through their art trickle down into the culture and are executed through science and technology. For example, someone thought of the VIDEOPHONE. They wrote about it in a book and then someone put the image in the movie. Now they sell Videophones at RADIOSHACK. Now there's FACETIME. Now there's ZOOM.

*

I try only to give presents that I would like to get.

I prefer giving presents than getting presents. When you give a present you don't have to write a thank you note.

I am a minimalist in my head.

To paraphrase Einstein, one reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen all at once.

I'm going to celebrate on my birthday, even though I'll probably have post-party depression.

I was once invited to a Bring Your Own Tupperware party.

*

Phil and I celebrated my grandmother's 85th birthday with her and two of her friends. One of her friends put sugar on her spaghetti, thinking it was parmesan cheese. The other one thought Roosevelt was President. Phil and I laughed when my grandmother told her story about the sweet potato AGAIN.

Phil died a few years ago.

CHAPTER 13: I'M LUCKY

Sometimes the truth ripples through a family and they start to breathe together.

*

It's important that we make more money than our parents. We need to feel progressive.

*

I was talking to my stockbroker one day. It turned out that we were in a college writing class together. There were only 12 students in the class. What are the odds of that?

*

Smaller classes are usually better. Larger audiences are usually better.

The more people in the audience the skinnier I feel.

New Diet: FAME.

The larger the audience, the tinier I am physically. But the bigger the collective unconscious.

It's easier to perform for 5,000 people than for 7 people because the more people there are in the audience, the more they become less like themselves and more like an audience. The more anonymous a person feels, the more he is apt to laugh. And laughter can be contagious.

*

Children grow inches overnight.

Do adults grow psychologically in their sleep?

*

I lost two pounds recently. Mostly bone loss.

I've always been messed up about my weight. When I was a teenager a doctor told me I had to gain ten pounds, so I tried to get on TV.

My weight fluctuates so much because I'm the type of person who gains weight just by **looking** at a cake. That I'm finishing.

I don't have a lot of clothes, but I have two of everything – in different sizes. So for example, I have a little black dress with spaghetti straps, and a larger black dress with lasagna straps.

I have a bikini and a drop cloth.

A woman once asked if I was pregnant. I said No, but I'm expecting an apology.

Never ask a woman if she's pregnant, even if the baby's head is crowning.

A friend suggested that I go on a diet – and I immediately lost one friend.

I have found that the best diet is fear and anxiety.

I've been eating healthier and by that I mean I don't cook.

*

I asked a high school student what he thought the downfall of civilization was and he said: GREED.

Then he asked me for twenty dollars... (SWEAR ON LILY)

I try to take NOTHING for granted.

I am SO LUCKY. (Except in Vegas.) (Except once when I won ten thousand dollars on a slot machine. That's how they get you.)

*

I got a need-based scholarship to driving school.

*

When we laugh we're on the same wavelength.

When you laugh I know you were listening.

But if you don't laugh, it doesn't mean you weren't listening.

*

Lisa, my 7th grade art teacher's assistant who looked like Cher, had two earrings in one ear lobe. It was the first time I had ever seen anything like that.

It was freaky. But she was an artist.

I remember the first time I saw someone's jagged part.

I remember the first time I saw someone's fashionable chipped nail polish.

I remember when I heard chord progressions that weren't what I expected (The Doors, Bowie).

*

Ever play that game "Telephone" where you whisper something to someone and they pass it around and the last person in the circle repeats it? The sentence at the beginning could be like, "What is happiness without freedom?" But by the time the last person in the circle hears it, it sounds like, "Whatever happened to Aunt Freda?"

Somewhere there was a breakdown in the message.

It's hard to communicate even when you're right next to someone whispering something into their ear.

*

Teachers should get paid more - like athletes. And we should be able to trade some of them.

*

When I was in 3rd grade I took bus #23 to school. A man named GUY was our driver. James Woods would play him in the movie.

My lucky number is 23.

What's yours?

Talk about **timing**: I was merging onto the highway, and out of nowhere came a HUGE MACK truck. It almost hit me, but it sped by. On the side of the truck it said: **LUCKY**.

I'll say.

*

Art = Freedom to create and recreate. Sing, dance, dream out loud.

Life is about sharing consciousness, passing down information so the species can evolve.

*

My stereo seems louder at night. My iPod seems softer on a plane.

What you hear is what you can hear.

*

I listen to my hecklers and critics. I listen to the laughter and the silence. Thunder and crickets. Snickers. Pins dropping. Applause. Pauses. One hand clapping.

Sometimes I feel like I fell between the cracks.

CHAPTER 14: DANCING

I have one nemesis. It's not symbiotic. They don't need me.

*

When you dance with someone, it's a win-win situation. Unless they step on your toes.

*

I wrote my college thesis on *Shyness and Body-Image*.

*

Even though I'm a performer, I am shy.

Ironically, the more attention I get, the less I need.

I'm not vain, I'm just really insecure.

The better I think that I look, the less shy I feel. And the more I want to be seen.

He was so shy he sent me wallflowers.

*

On average, women live longer than their spouses. Well, someone has to clean up after them.

*

The other day my husband said, "I knew we were going to grow old together. I just didn't know it would be so soon."

My husband is the definition of a mensch.

My husband is so funny. I came back from acupuncture and he asked "How was needlepoint?"

*

Sometimes I dream in color. Sometimes I live in black and white.

*

The man who had invented ant farms was just on T.V.

Sometimes I picture that that's what we all are - little ants just doing our own thing on our little hill with our own little friend ants and family ants.

I am an ant, trying to figure out my little place in time and space.

*

I am very close with my family...genetically.

I love being an aunt. I love seeing my niece and nephew grow up.

My niece just got married and she asked me to be in the wedding.
. . cake.

Actually, I officiated my niece's wedding. I told the couple to have inside jokes - to have their own path to laughter with each other.

They got married at a vineyard. I read that vines need something to hold onto in order to climb. It was a fitting metaphor for marriage.

They're millennials, so nobody caught the bouquet because everyone was looking at their phone. But everyone got a participation carnation.

(My husband and I laugh whenever we hear someone say "hunker down." I can't tell you why because then it wouldn't be an inside joke.)

*

Life is short, and so am I.

I'm 5'2". People say I look taller on T.V. That's cause I'm standing on a T.V.!

*

Rites of passage: Getting stung by a bee. Finding out about the tooth fairy. Helping. Telling the truth gently.

I was an R.A. (Resident Advisor) in college. I dealt with problems like suicide and homesickness. And that was just me.

I learned that if you think someone is suicidal, you're supposed to ask them point blank: "Are you suicidal?"

If they're not they will say no. And you'll apologize.

If they are, you might be saving their life.

*

For years I've requested a window seat on a plane, but on one flight recently I sat on the aisle. I felt a new sense of freedom. Change can be great.

On a recent flight back from Canada the other day I watched the movie ONCE. (I actually watched it twice.) I watched and wept and bought the soundtrack when I got home.

*

If life never ends (until it does and then I won't know it) I need to make the best of every situation.

I just read The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz. My summary:

Don't lie or exaggerate and do what you say you will do.

Don't take anything personally - it's not about you.

Don't make assumptions - you have no idea - that's presumptuous of you.

Do your best at all times.

*

It took me 88 years to learn how to spell the word exaggerate.

My mother-in-law was a beautiful woman who gave me great advice: If you want something done, you have to do it yourself.

*

Ghandi said, "You must be the change you want to see in the world."

*

They say babies look like their fathers so that the father will be more certain that the baby is his.

*

My childhood was a big blur, because I needed better glasses.

After college I wanted to go to Europe, but I couldn't afford that. So I went backpacking through Epcot. We drank our way around the world.

Now I could just go The Paris or The Bellagio in Vegas! Or the International House of Pancakes.

*

If you don't like me, I won't take it personally. I won't even take it professionally.

Did cavemen have personal and professional lives?

*

The Mall of America is like a big cave. There's a Ferris wheel at the Mall of America. And a wedding chapel. You can get married and then go on a rollercoaster at the Mall of America. Then return your tuxedo and exchange your gifts. Good luck finding your car. The Mall of America is possibly larger than Rhode Island.

*

I know someone who bought an electric car. And a thousand extension cords.

*

I've been agreeing with myself a lot these days.

There's nothing like thrilling yourself.

I like when someone else surprises me (gently). It means they had me in mind.

*

During my prom I stepped on a piece of broken glass in my stocking-feet. It was like the opposite of Cinderella.

*

In high school my love life was like a fairytale. It was Grimm.

Rimshot.

I was a cheerleader in high school and my boyfriend was on the faculty! **GO MR. JAMIESON!!! Before the cops catch you....**

You never know who your victims are going to grow up to be.

Victim victorious.

The scoundrels, in the movie **Dirty Rotten Scoundrels** are named Benson and Jamieson.

*

I fell in love when I least expected it: In my lifetime.

*

On a first date I always went dancing. That way, when we danced to the song **YMCA**, I could see if my date knew how to dance AND spell!

I was going to go to UCLA because they have a great dance program and I'm excellent at The Macarena.

In the movie **Shall We Dance** a guy takes dancing lessons because he is in love with the instructor. In the end he learns how to dance and what he loves is dancing.

CHAPTER 15: DREAMY

Follow your dreams. But also guide them.

*

It must be especially hard to be a kid now. There's too much to think about.

information distraction decisions bombardments the worldwide web

When I was a kid, television shows came on exactly on the hour or the half hour. Now it's a crapshoot. Kids can't even count on TV.

Now you can rewind a show as you're watching it, if you miss something or have to leave the room for a minute. I am so used to this function, that when I'm watching TV without it I still have the impulse to rewind.

I was in a public restroom the other day and I forgot to turn off the water because in a lot of public restrooms, it turns off automatically.

I was brushing my teeth with a regular toothbrush and I found myself waiting for it to stop automatically, like my electric toothbrush does after three minutes.

*

Growing up I was only allowed to watch ½ hour of TV every night. I remember begging my mother to let me watch The Partridge Family, even if it was over my TV allotment. I was in love with Danny Partridge. I was mad for the redheaded mischievous little sneak. He was so fucking funny. He drove Reuben Kincaid CRAZY! He made me happy.

The actor that played Danny, Danny Bonaduce, interviewed me on his radio show.

*

I still can't believe I have to pump my own gas and buy water!!!

*

Women's clothing sizes are not standardized except for maybe hats and gloves. If a man buys a 15 ½ 32 shirt, he gets the same size every time. But if a woman says, "Size 10 please," well, LET THE GAMES BEGIN! Standardized sizes would help women see where we fit in, literally.

Standardized clothing sizes will have to become reality because buying clothes on line will be the new norm.

*

8 X 6 is always equal to 48. ALWAYS! You can count on numbers.

*

Love can change the rhythm of life.

There is a certain rhythm to traffic. Your cats. Fights. Prayers answered.

*

Birds travel in formation to maximize energy. Birds use each other's force when they fly in a V. What about the bird in the front?

*

I loved fourth grade. One day in fourth grade we went to Philadelphia. We saw The Liberty Bell. We walked on cobblestones. Bought trinkets, sang songs. Ate warm doughy-on-the-inside/crispy-on-the-outside pretzels with mustard. Laughed on the bus ride home with my best friend Dina. It started to rain and we listened to Light My Fire by The Doors.

*

Last night I dreamt that life was about finding your place in line, but then finding out that every line was a circle, and you were standing in it.

But I can't remember if that meant you were standing in line or standing in the circle. Maybe it was both?

*

When we make each other laugh and cry. When we sweat. When we're scared to death. Holidays. Good meals. Tragedies. When we lose sleep. When we win something. When sex is involved. When we learn something astounding. When our emotions are full. When we're content. That's when we remember. And then the random times.

They say that memory is linked to adrenaline.

Do we have more adrenaline when we're children? Or is it less diluted? Less diverted? Is it purer? Does it get polluted?

*

A woman named Margaret Ann Burnham told me that the Shuttle Challenger exploded. * I was on a cruise ship when I heard that Nicole Simpson was murdered. * My friend Lisa told me that John Lennon was shot.

Flashbulb memories.

Memories are like breath - you can hold them for a while.

*

I remember watching President Kennedy's funeral. I was almost three. Sitting in the small den on the tan couch next to the door that opened to the porch where the milk box was, the porch that overlooked the garden of tomatoes and flowers. My mother was ironing a few feet away. My feet didn't touch the floor.

CHAPTER 16: BOTH

Running and dancing can both be for fun or competition.

I asked a five year old if he had brothers or sisters and he said, "No, I'm single."

*

I believe in: *What Is*. And also: *You Never Know*.

*

Children take things literally. They don't think out of the box yet.

Mimes can't get out of the box yet.

I'm very literal. I know if I just work out, things will work out.

My exercise plan is this: Walk for 45 minutes five times a week. I haven't done it yet, but that's my plan.

I just bought a ballet bar for stretching out.

And I've been lifting weights. Okay paper weights. . . . Okay, paper. (I am ripped.)

I try to work out every day. This morning I wrestled with a fitted sheet.

My mother is 88 and she still does Pilates. I did Pilates once. And just one. I did Pila-tee.

*

Seen on a wall in a restroom: "Love yourself and see what that attracts."

*

I'm liberal but conservative about some things.

I'm skinny and fat. Both selfish and concerned. Awake and asleep. A cheerleader, a nerd.

I'm both young at heart and a very old soul. Brutal but nice. Set in my ways but open to change. Happy. Sad.

I'm lenient and strict. Boring and entertaining. Smart and as dumb as a rock.

*

I read a book once that was dedicated to "My husband and my wife."

*

I'm sure there's a good explanation why I keep batteries in the refrigerator when I know that my car battery dies in the cold.

*

In a sense, every marriage is arranged by something.

*

You get what you need to learn what you need to know.

My stepsons teach me everything I need to know. Except calculus.

Patience, courage, stamina, cooking, trustworthiness, truth, consistency, culture. Words. How to describe things. How to feel something that has no words. How to say goodbye.

*

I grew up watching Lily Tomlin. Woody Allen. Carol Burnett. Flip Wilson. Barbra Streisand. Sonny and Cher. Joan Rivers. Laugh-In. Garry Shandling. David Letterman. Eddie Murphy. Johnny Carson. I Love Lucy.

*

I've never been skiing. I don't like getting up early. I hate being cold. I don't want to break bones. I don't like paying to get up early, be cold, break bones.

My family went cross-country skiing. We got as far as The Bronx.

Phil was from the Bronx.

Phil loved Barbra.

One time I was going to perform on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and no one in my family could come with me so I called Phil and I asked him to be my plus one but he said he couldn't. Then I told him that the other guest on the show was Barry Manilow and he said, "I'll be there in five minutes."

I dated a magician once. He was very tricky. He put me in a box, sawed my heart in half and stole my wallet. Then he disappeared.

*

L.A. is all smoke and mirrors: Marijuana (is the smoke), and coke (is the mirrors).

*

Sandra Bernhard said, "Be true to your muses."

Fanny Brice said, "Let the world know you as you are, not as you think you should be.

And Dolly Parton said, "Find out who you are and do it on purpose."

*

I used to be blond but I was having too much fun.

*

I am addicted to a game on the computer called SCRABBLE Blast.

SCRABBLE is like chess with words.

I bet people who are good at solving The Rubik's Cube are also good at Sudoku.

The word LIVE is EVIL backwards.

Jeffrey pointed out that SADDAM is MADASS backwards.

A shrink pointed out that SPINE and PENIS have the same letters. (And **I'm** the crazy one.)

Being. Begin.

*

In 1974 I had my appendix taken out and the anesthesiologist was smoking a cigarette. S O L!

*

Forbes Magazine voted Canada the best country to live in. When I've been in Canada I've had the sense that people feel safe there because health care is free.

*

The first four letters of HEALTH are HEAL.

The word ATOM is in the word ANATOMY.

*

My HMO is so expensive; they charge **me** for a self-breast exam. (It's a flat fee.)

I stuff my bra. So if you got to second base with me, you'd find that the bases were LOADED!

Then you'd be out. Sliding home....

*

At 62, now when a guy is staring at my chest I'm like oh, honey, they're down there.

*

A fan once gave me a box of **Little Debbie Cakes**, because he knew I liked chocolate. At the time, they used to ask at the airport if you were carrying anything that a stranger had given you. I said, "A box of **Little Debbie Cakes**." So the box was confiscated. And the **Little Debbie Cakes** were either eaten or detonated.

*

Growing up I had heartache and self-hate, sadness, confusion. I had so many questions and no idea what they were.

*

Title for a play: **What to Wear to Therapy: A Play in One Session.** (Since writing this I've written the play - while I was recovering from being hit by a car.)

*

I never know what to wear. That would be the topic of my Ted Talk.

I got an obscene phone call once and the guy was whispering, "What are you wearing? What are you wearing?" So I whispered back, "I can't decide."

(My cousin Beth Holland Queener wrote that joke.)

*

I wear a lot of black. My niece asked why I dress like a mime.
SHRUGS.

Cause I'm from New York?
I look better in the dark.
It hides EVERYstain.
It's dark but it makes me feel light.

I didn't even know if I should wear white to my wedding, because it was after Labor Day.

Plus you're not supposed to wear white to your wedding if you've always been a sloppy eater.

*

I asked Carmen, the woman who cut my hair to make me look better, so she gave me a bicycle.

Helmet....

Since Carmen there's been Kory, Jon, Ken, and Angela.

*

My friend Debra and I love the documentary **28 Up**, which follows the lives of a bunch of people every seven years. I just watched the latest installment: **49 Up**. At age 49 most of the participants seemed content.

I've been writing this book for 25 years. I was 37 when I started. It was before there was Facebook.

*

When I was a secretary one of my co-workers was late one day. Her excuse was that she had overslept.

*

Does blood have memory? And are emotions passed down through the skin and bones?

*

I used to have buck teeth and pigeon toes. I still feel it in my heart.

*

A psychologist once told me that the first thing children look at in order to tell if a stranger is male or female is the length of the person's hair.

*

I was on a plane a few years ago, and I swear on Lily that this man lit a cigarette. He said he didn't know the rules.

Basically we're all on one big plane.

Light is made up of waves, but itself can also be regarded as both a wave and a particle.

Are we all just waves and particles of light?

And passing ships in the night?

*

When you're changing gears while riding a bicycle, you're supposed to keep pedaling the whole time.

*

This one guy said he loved me in a tennis way where love equaled zero.

I was dating a guy and we're talking six figures - yeah, me and five other women!

*

I was born into this body. Please don't hold my body against me.

*

My 10th grade ceramics teacher Mr. McElroy said my pots wobbled because I wasn't centered emotionally.

My 8th grade English teacher, Mr. Schneider, recently sent me a play that he had written.

Full Circle
Teacher Student Teacher

*

Everyone was once inside their mother.

We are all like Russian nesting dolls.

I collect nesting dolls. So far I have the littlest, tiniest, teensiest one. She's the size of a peanut.

Inside of her is a doll the size of a grain of rice.

*

A friend said it was hard for her to go to the parent-teacher conference for her daughter. She said her daughter's flaws were also her flaws and it was hard for her to hear them.

I saw a news piece about beauty pageants for five year olds. One of the mothers said that when she was watching her daughter perform she was so nervous she wet her pants.

*

Women are born with all of their eggs.

I wonder how much life we're all born with?

*

The word "commencement" means both the beginning and the end.

CHAPTER 17: WHO?

The word "commencement" means both the end and the beginning.

*

There are two directions to life. Past, future. Feet on the ground, head in the clouds. We board the plane from the back and front and then fill in the middle. We put flowers on a grave.

What happens when the direction is undeterminable?

Right now is magical.

*

The guy who started MacDonald's started it in his 40s.

*

I'm a late bloomer. I hope.

*

For years I used to hit myself over the head with the microphone during a certain joke. The audience usually likes it if you hurt yourself for the sake of a laugh.

*

I saw a story on **60 Minutes** about a 12 year old, who helped save other children from 3rd World slavery. When they asked him why he did what he did he said, "If not me, who?"

His name is Craig Kielburger.

*

John Candy was out of this world!

*

Actions speak louder than words. Especially if you're a mime.

I used to do mime. I was really bad at it. I used props. And words.

*

You are always with yourself. Thank God for sleep.

The comedian Geechy Guy tells this joke: "Andy Warhol said everyone has fifteen minutes of fame. Who is Andy Warhol?"

*

If you're on a plane and they ask for a doctor and the doctor helps the sick passenger, does the doctor get paid?

Can you ask if there's a lawyer on the plane for an emergency divorce?

I hope there's a pilot on the plane.

*

During Covid I developed something called Amazonesia. That's when you get a box delivered and you're like, I have no idea what this is! A skirt? A kayak? What did I order?

I wanted to buy one of those weighted blankets but I couldn't afford the shipping.

One night I bought six coffee table books, about minimalism.

Someone gave me a book called The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up. My housekeeper gave it to me. Before she quit.

Basically it says get rid of things in your home that you don't love or need. So I threw away the book.

But then it made sense and I got rid of so much stuff. . . of my husband's.

It was life changing!

*

When I was about 4, my babysitter Lola told me that my parents were at a party where there were 100 people. *Somehow* I thought there were only 100 people in the world, so I thought that Lola, my sister and I were the only three people in the world who weren't at the party.

Whenever I read a **Harry Potter** book, I like knowing that a lot of other people are reading the same book at the same time, or at least saw the movie.

*

Middle Age: Taking your body more seriously, cause you really realize your mortality, but then also letting yourself laugh more at the absurdity of it all.

*

What is the point of being a person? To dance and eat good food? Surround yourself with people you love? Express yourself in the best possible way? Go to parties?

Partying is the only thing AI can't really do. (And **I** wrote that.)

*

It's hard to be a person. Probably harder to be a rock.

*

Role of person: Do everything. Work and play by the rules.

I have many roles. It's up to me how I want to play them: Sister, friend, wife, step mom, secretary, comedian, amateur bowler.

If you know what your role is, your motivation is clearer.

You have been cast in the role of person. It's a role of a lifetime. Good luck! There's no script, but you can see what's been going on and if you listen you can hear where you fit in and what to say. Play nice! Create. Produce. The details are up to you. First figure out what you want and then how to get

it. It's easy if you mean it. Hint: The challenges change over time.

*

I want to inspire laughter. Connect with people. Connect people. Apologize to the people I've hurt. Forget about those scoundrels who've hurt me. Live in a beautiful house near an ocean. Celebrate holidays with my family and make them proud. I want everyone to have good health. I want to like looking in the mirror. I want to sleep peacefully. I want to figure out my voice, both literally and figuratively. And I want to leave a lot of money for hotel maids.

*

Einstein said if **A** equals success, then the formula for success is:

$$A = X + Y + Z.$$

Where **X** is work, **Y** is play, and **Z** is keep your mouth shut.

So, the formula for **success** is:

Work and play and keep your mouth shut.

Open your eyes though.

*

My husband made me sign a **pre-nag** agreement. I said I wouldn't have to nag if you listened the first fucking time. He said, "What?"

He said I talked in my sleep. I said it was the only time he listened.

I talk in my sleep, according to my phone bill.

My stomach has been talking a lot lately. It's usually ordering a pizza.

*

You're always supposed to go with the flow when you're doing improvisational comedy. You're always supposed to keep the ball rolling, the conversation afloat. You're never supposed to say: NO! ("Why yes, I do break into song whenever I hear the word kayak!")

*

I don't like when people call me a nickname too soon.

My nicknames have been Wen, Wendela, and Pete.

*

The difference between drugs and medication is the prescription pad.

*

Between hot flashes and global warming, I need a Coke!

My sister Debbie and I came up with **Oreo Cookie Ice Cream** when we were 4 and 6 years old. We would get those little cups of half chocolate/half vanilla ice cream and we would hold them up to a light bulb until the ice cream was soft. Then we would crumble up some Oreos and blend them into the ice cream.

In high school I practically lived on vanilla Carvel Ice Cream, which isn't even ice cream at all.

I was anorexic. Or as I like call it: Competitive non-eating.

Now I could live on ice cream and sushi, pizza and chicken parmesan and juice that I made in my Jack LaLanne juicer. (That fad faded fast.)

But I'm kind of a health food nut. As my stepson says, "You are are what you eat."

I am nuts and bananas and popcorn!

A muffin top.

A little chicken.

The thought of eating chicken (or any animal) grosses me out. I'm vegan from time to time.

I'm vegan between meals. No meat snacks.

I do intermittent fasting when I run out of food.

*

Years ago I was meeting a friend at a restaurant. When she got out of her car she slipped and fell. SHE SLIPPED ON A BANANA PEEL. We laughed about it for months. We're not even friends anymore.

Friends call YOU sometimes.

*

I watch a lot of TV on mute. This is not a great idea when you're watching **Jeopardy!**

(My friends Susie, Bob, Jonathan, Wes, and Lisa have won on **Jeopardy!**)

*

I saw a commercial for a cell phone. Someone was calling for a guy named "Bill." But there was no one named "Bill" at the house. The words on the TV screen read: "No Bills." So, if you're watching the ad on MUTE, like I was, you see the name of the company and the words: NO BILLS.

*

Slot machines are like children's toys for adults.

You know how beach glass is shards of glass softened over time by the elements? I have a beach ego.

CHAPTER 18: CHEERS

I am in Big Sur right now, overlooking the ocean. This is heaven to me.

*

I think you are what you think you are.

*

Being physically close with my family helps me separate from them.

*

I'm getting age spots but it's okay I can't see them because my eyes are going.

Forgetting to take the money out of your pockets is the best part of getting old.

And having friends.

*

The older I get the more antique shopping I do.

*

Oprah had these twins on her show who were antique scavengers. They said, "**You never know what treasures lurk where you live.**"

*

Now that we have the internet, life is like an open book test.

*

Because of the internet, where you are physically becomes less important in terms of your opportunities.

Language and currency differ around the world. Clocks are consistent although time differs depending on your location.

*

A clock has a face. Time is watching you.

This year on Daylight Saving Time most of my clocks changed themselves. They grow up so fast.

*

I wonder how different the world would be if there was only one system of money, and if we all spoke the same language. And if all food was free. And health care too.

*

I heard a film critic say that a classic movie is one that can be seen at different times throughout your life and make sense in a new way each time.

I sat next to Roger Ebert on a plane once. They didn't show a movie.

One day I'll have a party and only invite people whom I sat next to on planes: Doctors. Lawyers. A person who made fake leather. Moms. Teachers. Military men, old and new. James Edward Almos. A gourmet chef. Richard Roundtree (aka Shaft). Advertising executives. A former player for the NFL. A hip hop artist. Students. Fathers. Scary people. Michelle at TLC. A judge. Ndididi.

One of my favorite movies: **Planes, Trains & Automobiles.**

*

Symbiosis means two dissimilar organisms in a mutually beneficial relationship.

I think relationship with life is symbiotic.

*

When my uncle checks into a hotel he asks them to give him the room that they will give him after he complains about the first two rooms they give him.

Remembering numbers saves time.

Haste really does make waste!

*

I swear: I was about 19, at Jones Beach, and I see a group of four adults, very chic, wearing striped bathing suits and cool glasses. They could have been a British band. A few weeks later I'm at another beach, in Amagansett, EIGHTY-SEVEN MILES AWAY, and I see the same four people, almost in the same spot relative to where I was sitting (as if someone had just changed the scenery).

I meditated for a while. My mantra was: "I M PRO CRASS TIN ATING."

*

Time flies when you're asleep on a plane.

CHAPTER 19: I DO

I just ate a \$14 club sandwich. Apparently it is an exclusive club.

*

This is one of my favorite stories: A few times I got to open for big acts at Caesar's Palace on The Las Vegas Strip. Julio Iglesias, Ann-Margret, Ray Charles. I was all by myself in this big dressing room backstage, nervous, out of my league, but I befriended the waiter, Cleto, who was really nice and made me feel less anxious. Fifteen years later I'm in my dressing room at The Jimmy Kimmel Show, about to make an appearance, and who walks in to wish me luck? Cleto. HIS SON IS JIMMY'S BANDLEADER, and HE, CLETO, IS IN THE BAND.

*

I travel so much. When I come home, after a weekend or a week, things are different (the grass might be greener, the leaves might be fallen, a house might be built), but some things are always the same: The ice cream truck will drive by blasting HAPPY BIRTHDAY later today.

Trust is learned through action. "Do as I say," no longer cuts it. Children watch you as if you're on mute.

*

When my stepson was 8 he saw me do stand-up. Six months later we were eating breakfast and he did five minutes of my routine *verbatim*.

*

We used to bring our teacher apples and make her bob for them.

*

The sound of car alarms is being woven into the symphony of society. And the beep of microwaves. Ringtones. "You've Got

Mail." Video game music. Netflix and YouTube chimes. Etc.
Etc.

*

I got my first bikini. It's a 3 piece: A top, a bottom, and a blindfold for you.

*

When you get right down to it, the atom of feminism is women respecting themselves.

(Loving themselves even.)

*

Hope, laughing and yawning are contagious. Did you just yawn? Laugh or smile? Have faith?

*

Life is about reorganizing energy and the evolution of emotions.

In a documentary about hummingbirds they said that bees used to do the work but the world was evolving and so hummingbirds came along to better deliver the message. Maybe we're all just messengers.

Love = protection. Amour = Armor.

*

Love makes me think about time.

*

We had a substitute flight attendant. Everyone was throwing paper airplanes behind her back.

*

I recently went to my class reunion from kindergarten. I didn't want to go because I hadn't seen these people since kindergarten, and since then I'd put on like 100 pounds.

*

In Kindergarten someone read me that book "All I Know I Learned in Kindergarten." So I dropped out of school.

*

Like digesting food, consciousness is absorbed and processed and comes out as art.

*

The best art is probably created when the artist changes because of the process of creating the art.

Art is the opposite of a vicious circle, a downward spiral.

Art is an upward spiral. Art is a gracious circle.

*

When I do stand-up it's like having two bats (like baseball players in the on-deck circle). Everything offstage is like using only one bat.

*

My parents have been married for more than 67 years!

*

Edith Wharton said, "The real marriage of true minds is for any two people to possess a sense of humor or irony pitched in exactly the same key."

Is there melody? Harmony?

Do you love what they laugh at? Do you love how they sound? Do they sing a duet with their eyes?

CHAPTER 20: MOON

I woke up this morning without an alarm.

I never notice when the hiccups end.

Lynda Barry wrote, "Sometimes it doesn't matter that your dream finally comes true, does it?"

*

Life should come with a starter kit: One loving adult. Clean water. Good food. Shelter. Comfortable clothes and shoes. A library card and a computer. A musical instrument. A mirror. Sunlight. A great bed. A little chocolate. A pet.

*

I once taught a class at an adult education center. They told all the teachers at orientation that 90% of the students take an adult Ed class to meet members of the opposite sex. (A friend said that was because the other 10% were gay.)

*

When I was 10 years old I wrote a letter to the poet Maya Angelou and she wrote back to me! To ME! This changed my life for good, forever.

*

I had this thought after seeing the movie **The Truman Show**: Everything you do affects everything else.

*

I was watching the Miss America pageant and the finalists were asked what they would do if they could do anything in the world and one of them said, "I would eat." (And she won!)

*

After college I shared a house with five people. One day we were all fighting about the phone bill. My housemate Sue said, "How can we expect peace in the Middle East if we can't settle the fucking phone bill?"

*

Being able to trust someone's word becomes more and more important as it becomes easier to change reality through technology (doctoring videotapes, photo shopping).

How can I trust you? Look at my face. Take me at face value. If I can make you laugh, we must speak a similar language. If we laugh together, maybe we trust each other.

Maybe laughing together means that we understand each other's concept of conflict and resolution. Truce. Peace. Perhaps a first down.

*

At fifty, Phil decided he wanted to become a flight attendant. Only he was afraid to fly. SOL. So during the last few years of his life he worked the baggage counter at Southwest.

He's flying now.

*

I've been told I have a sixth sense. This is great because I'm missing numbers two and three.

Rimshot....

If the sixth sense is ESP, maybe the seventh sense is the sense of TIME.

The older I get the more I lose my senses. But not my sense of humor. And that's my favorite one.

*

In the movie **The Sixth Sense** the little boy sees dead people. It's also a parable. He sees people who can't face death.

I hope dying is like falling into a sandbox.

I hope I die in my sleep, because I love to sleep!

*

Art captures both time and timelessness.

It freezes time. The longer it survives, the rarer it is. And the more it will be appreciated.

Art can change the way you breathe.

Art can be relief. For the artist and for the other person. The other person can feel the artist's relief and live it too.

*

There's the past and the future but right now is the truth of truth. (An ant is walking on my hand.)

*

My eyes are going but now I can see what's important.

Being hit by a car made me realize that there is no time like the present. Why hold back? Don't hold back! Be nice. Be bold. Do your art.

Love hard, and don't forget to party – that's the only thing AI can't do!

*

I spent the night at the beach once in Two Lights, Maine with two friends. They fell asleep on the sand but I couldn't, so I watched the moon move across the sky, which was dense with galaxies and miles and years of stars. A virtual tableau, vibrant and blinking, but also very still. I heard the waves and I could count on them. They reminded me of the water and then of everything else. My friends were both breathing as they slept – harmonizing with each others' hums and the wind's – and covered in a sublime blanket of light. And then, at some point, I drifted off.