

I LOVE YOU EVEN WHEN . . .

*While I was writing **Becoming Visible to Myself: An Unexpected Memoir**, I kept hearing messages from the little voice inside my head. And I kept answering them. This list is for women like me who are addicted to searching for answers outside of themselves to make their pain and anxiety go away. It is based on the illustrated little book that my partner, Patrick Knowlton, and I wrote for couples who—like us—are not perfect: **I Love You Even Though**. Both can be easily customized with individual patterns and quirks. They are reminders to laugh at the absurdity of our long-standing beliefs that are responsible for holding us back—as well as making you the delicious person you already are. Beliefs such as: I've been shut down for so long, I'll never get unstuck; I will always want what I can't have and remain confused and unclear; I'm too self-focused and needy; It's too late for me; Everyone else can heal, but not me.*

In the statements below, the "I" is your Deepest Wisest Self. The "You" is the voice you have internalized to judge and punish yourself. The comments to the right are intended to nudge the "little one inside" to remember things she seems to forget, such as holding life more lightly. The goal is to have the adult parts take care of the child within who is delightful, messy, stubborn, and will never go away. She needs you to listen to her and take care of her. Yet, the world needs your adult self, enlivened by her spirit, but not her skills. So, take the journey to know who she really is at your core and let her guide you to fulfill your soul's longing and heart's desire. No, not perfectly or forever, but doing the best you can for as long as you live. How's that for a commitment ceremony for integrating the parts of the self?! What follows are issues that have been true for me and may be for you.

*May you allow the joy of self-discovery and may your evolving wisdom lead to an enduring sense of peace, wholeness, and self-love, **EVEN WHEN . . .***

I love you even when . . .

You think you are fat ugly and stupid.

Stop fussing, this is untrue and not helpful.

You also think you are old, poor, and unsatisfied.

Oh poo, don't hypnotize yourself like this.

You keep raising the bar on your expectations.

And then you wonder why you can't meet them.

You devalue your contributions, always comparing yourself to others.

Unfairly.

You forget your special gifts, like capturing the essence of complexity.

With simple elegance.

You keep looking to the past to recreate what you had.

Instead of staying open to now, being present.

You put the brakes on, even though you know how to take them off.

Not realizing you're a Mercedes.

You say you don't have access to yourself, but you don't listen to what you hear.

Start now.

You realize you don't trust your instincts and perceptions.

Because you might be impulsive with them.

You blame your parents for your feeling unworthy and defective.

Get the anger out and move on.

You always think you can't, but then you prove you can.

Just keep going, you are perfectly imperfect.

You won't accept or enjoy the interesting, complex, determined woman you are.

Read your journals.

You hate yourself for gaining weight, making messes, spending too much.

Limits can be your friend.

You really want to be done with your issues once and for all.

Remember the spiral of change.