

introduction (excerpt)

I'm a man who got lost. This is the story of finding and reclaiming that man, of looking straight into all the pain and confusion in my life that got me lost in the first place and actively making the decision to stay on the path of truth and healing, even if I can't pretend anymore that I know where it's taking me, where I'm going to wind up, or how long it's going to take me to get there.

Twenty years ago, I wrote a book called *Iron Man Family Outing*, which was largely focused on the experience and consequences of growing up with an angry, abusive, emotionally unavailable father and a mother I saw as his victim and my protector. I told my story as best I knew and understood it at that point in my life, and I told it as completely as I could. But there were many things I didn't understand yet about myself, my history, and my family.

In the years following *Iron Man Family Outing*, I continued my efforts to understand and resolve the outstanding issues resulting from my father's mistreatment of me, with the hope of establishing some sort of functional relationship with him. I also began to see, for the first time, the role my mother had played with him in co-creating the family environment that had been so damaging to me as a child, and how she had continued to establish and enforce the family "rules of reality" that were still so suffocating for me as an adult. As I gradually came to recognize, acknowledge, and understand the effects of my mother's behavior, I also began to see how I'd repeatedly and unconsciously played out the dynamics of my relationship with her with the women in my life.

And yet my life still wasn't working. My relationships with women continued to be broken, if I had them at all. Every job felt like a death trap that left me gutted and hopeless at the end of the day. I wanted more, and I knew I was capable of more, but something seemed to be blocking me and I didn't know what it was. Once again, I found that life was calling me to look more deeply into myself, and when I did, I discovered that I was still carrying a big secret from my childhood, a secret I didn't even know I had ...