

*The Unfinished Woman:
Still Becoming*
Erika Entz



THE UNFINISHED WOMAN
Still Becoming

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Still Becoming

www.erikaentz.com

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To everyone who is still becoming. And to those who helped me find my way back to myself:

To David, my husband, my steady ground. Thank you for standing beside me through every reinvention, every stumble, every becoming. You never tried to shape me into something I wasn't. You just believed in me while I figured it out.

*To Jessica Ritchie, who drew out *The Firefly Effect* and helped me find words for what was true.*

To Tebeth Shukura Hamon, who I recognised before I could explain why, and who helped me remember who I already was.

To my family - for bad and good, your journeys and your teachings, and my journey alongside you, shaped who we are and helped us learn about ourselves and each other. For that, I am forever grateful.

To Monika, my soul sister across the distance.

And to every firefly out there, still glowing, still becoming. This book is for you.

One

I'm Done Waiting



I'm done waiting. Are you?

I spent decades waiting. Waiting for permission. Waiting until I was ready. Waiting for someone to tell me I was enough, that my ideas were good enough, that I had earned the right to be myself.

I followed the script. The one my family handed me. The one society handed me. Study this, not that. Be practical. Don't bring suffering home. Focus on the sensible path.

So I never picked up the flute. I stepped away from the dancing. I stopped asking what I actually wanted and started asking what I should want.

And I climbed. I worked hard. I collected titles and achievements and proved myself over and over again. I moved countries. I started from zero - twice. I built a career that looked like success from the outside.

Until one day I couldn't answer a simple question: Who am I?

That's when I realised I had been waiting my whole life. Waiting to become the person I already was.

So I stopped waiting.

This book isn't about having it all figured out. I'm fifty-nine and still becoming. Still learning. Still unfinished.

But I'm not waiting anymore.

And I'm inviting you to stop waiting too.

Two

The Script I Was Handed



I was eighteen when I learned that what I wanted didn't fit the plan.

Not cruelly. Not dramatically. Just quietly, practically, in the way families who love you tell you to be sensible. My family in Hungary had survived hard lives. They wanted to protect me from suffering. I un-

derstand that now. But back then, all I knew was that the things that lit me up - the flute I wanted to learn, the dancing, the dream of working with disabled children - were being set aside, one by one, for something more practical.

I wanted to study conducting. To work with children who struggled to move, to speak, to be seen. I didn't see suffering in that work. I saw possibility. If I could help a child move their fingers a little better, that was success. That was enough.

My family saw it differently. "You'll bring suffering home every day," they said. "Focus on your studies. Get good scores. That other path won't make you a living."

They weren't villains. They were parents and grandparents doing what they thought was right. But somewhere in those conversations, I learned something that would take decades to unlearn: what I wanted wasn't as important as what was practical.

So I never picked up the flute. I stepped away from the dancing. I followed the script.

At eighteen, my mother was sent to Moscow to represent her company. I was supposed to go with the family.

I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay in Hungary, to study, to find my own path. But the script had other plans. So I packed my things and moved to Russia - Moscow - where I would live and work and study for the next three years.

It wasn't what I had chosen. But it was what I did. Because that's what you do when you're following someone else's plan for your life. You show up. You adapt. You make the best of it.

When my mother was transferred to Kiev, I stayed behind in Moscow a little longer. But without family there, and being well over eighteen, I eventually had to return to Hungary. I wasn't going to follow to Kiev. Something in me was already starting to pull in a different direction - even if I didn't have words for it yet.

Back in Hungary, I built a life. Good jobs. Amazing experiences. I climbed. I achieved. I did what I was supposed to do.

But by the time I was approaching thirty, something was stirring. A restlessness. A question I couldn't quite name.

I had studied English for four years in school, and I wanted more. I wanted to learn it properly - in a country where English was the heart-beat, not just a subject. So I researched. Where could I go, work to sustain myself, and study at the same time?

The answer came back: Australia.

I was twenty-nine years old. I had built a career. I had followed the script faithfully for over a decade.

And I was about to tear it up.

Three

Two Suitcases



I arrived in Australia at thirty years old with two suitcases and six thousand five hundred dollars.

Six months later, the money was gone.

In Hungary, I had been a general manager. I had status, respect, a career I had built from the ground up. In Australia, I was nobody. My accent marked me as foreign. My qualifications meant nothing. My experience? Invisible.

My first job was cleaning a bakery and washing dishes.

I remember my hands. They were so damaged from the work that I couldn't open them in the morning. Every day I would wake up with my fingers curled tight, and I would have to slowly, painfully stretch them open before I could start again.

For over a year, this was my reality.

I worked in a nursing home. I took whatever shifts I could find. I survived.

This wasn't the script I had been handed in Hungary. But it wasn't the script I had written for myself either. It was something else - a blank page, terrifying and free.

Some people would have gone home. Some people would have called it a mistake, cut their losses, returned to the life they knew.

I stayed.

Not because I was brave. Because I was stubborn. Because something in me refused to believe that this was the end of the story.

And somewhere in the rebuilding, I found David. My husband. My steady ground. He has been beside me through every reinvention, every stumble, every becoming. I am grateful for him - for his quiet

support, his belief in me, even when I wasn't sure what I was becoming. He never tried to shape me into something I wasn't. He just stood beside me while I figured it out.

Four

Surviving and Climbing



Once I survived, I started to climb. From the bakery floors and nursing home shifts, I clawed my way forward. I got my first job at a dentist in Bondi. Then another opportunity. Then another. Each step a little higher than the last.

I learned how to succeed in this new country. I learned the rules - the spoken ones and the unspoken ones. I worked harder than anyone expected. I proved myself over and over again, because when you arrive with an accent and a foreign name, you learn quickly that you have to be twice as good to be seen as equal.

And I was good.

Over the years, I collected titles. Chief Learning and Development Officer. Head of Implementations. Director of Customer Success. I worked for global business. I won awards. I became a multi-award winning learning professional - the kind of person who gets invited to lead, to shape how others work.

From the outside, it looked like success. And in many ways, it was. I had built something from nothing. I had proven that the woman who arrived with two suitcases could become someone.

But there was a cost.

To survive, I had become tough. To climb, I had put on armour. Somewhere along the way, I had left my heart behind - and I didn't even notice it was missing.

I was so busy achieving that I forgot to ask if this was what I actually wanted.

Five

The Breaking



I had never had an anxiety attack in my life. Not once. Not through moving countries. Not through washing dishes with hands that wouldn't open. Not through any of it.

And then one day, it came.

I had been pushing too hard for too long. Working hours that weren't sustainable. Carrying more than one person should carry. I thought I could keep going - I had always kept going.

Until I couldn't.

I remember the terror. The feeling that everything I had built was made of paper. And worse - the question that rose up from somewhere deep:

Who am I?

I couldn't answer.

That was my breaking point. The only one I've ever had. And it changed everything.

Six

Unlearning Success



Here's what nobody tells you about reaching the top: the view isn't always what you expected.

I had done everything right. Worked hard. Climbed high. Collected the titles and the awards. By every measure I had been taught, I was successful.

But standing in the wreckage of that anxiety attack, asking myself “Who am I?” and hearing only silence - I realised something had gone terribly wrong.

Not with my career. With my definition of success.

I had spent decades chasing a version of success that was handed to me - by my family, by society, by the corporate world. Work hard. Get promoted. Earn more. Achieve more. Prove your worth through titles and awards.

And I had done it. I had won that game.

So why did I feel so empty?

Unlearning success is harder than learning it. It means questioning everything you thought you knew. It means admitting that the thing you sacrificed so much for might not be the thing that matters most. It means starting again - not from zero, but from somewhere even more disorienting: from the realisation that you don't actually know what you want.

That's where I found myself. Successful on paper. Lost in my soul.

Seven

The Distance I Needed



We moved to rural Queensland, and everything changed. Not overnight. Not dramatically. But slowly, quietly, in the space that distance creates.

Fifty minutes to the nearest grocery store. Hours to the city. No Uber. No takeaway. No popping out for anything. At first, it felt like loss - all the convenience I had taken for granted, gone.

But then something shifted.

Without the noise, I could hear myself think. Without the rush, I could feel my own rhythm. Without the constant doing, I had to face simply being.

I started cooking every meal. I knew what I was eating, where it came from. The cravings for junk food disappeared - not through discipline, but because my body didn't want it anymore. I was nourishing myself for the first time in years.

Skills I had learned from my grandmother in Hungary - skills I thought I would never use - suddenly mattered again. Gardening. Cooking from scratch. Making do. The old wisdom wasn't old-fashioned after all. It was just waiting for me to have the space to remember it.

I thought I was moving to rural Queensland to live differently.

I was actually moving to become myself.

The distance wasn't a barrier. It was a gift. The distance I needed - from the city, from the noise, from who I thought I had to be - to finally see who I actually was.

Eight

Becoming Me



Becoming me didn't happen in a single moment. It's still happening now.

That's the thing nobody tells you about self-discovery - it's not a destination. It's not a finish line you cross and then you're done. It's a practice. A daily choice. A constant unfolding.

In the quiet of rural Queensland, I started to meet myself again. Not the achiever. Not the climber. Not the woman with the titles and the armour. Just me.

In my first years in Australia - when I was still surviving, still washing dishes with hands that wouldn't open - I had tried to pick up the flute. I had tried flamenco dancing. Even then, something in me was reaching for joy, for expression, for the girl I had left behind in Hungary.

But I wasn't ready. I was in survival mode. And I couldn't go home - that would have been failure. I wasn't ready for the "I told you so." So I kept surviving. Then climbing. Then proving.

I dropped those things before they could take root. There was no space for becoming. Not yet.

But rural life gave me the space I didn't know I needed. Without the noise, without the rush, I could finally hear what had been whispering all along.

I discovered that I hadn't lost myself in the surviving and climbing years. I had just buried her - the girl who saw success in small things, who wanted to help children move their fingers, who believed that possibility was everywhere if you looked for it.

She was still there. Waiting.

The teachers appeared when I was ready.

I met Jessica Ritchie at a content writing workshop. A connection grew, and eventually I worked with her on my business branding. What I didn't expect was what would emerge. Jessica has a gift — she draws out the best in people. Through that work, The Firefly Effect was born. Not as a marketing concept, but as something true finally finding its words. And from that same space, the direction toward Sekhem opened up - one door leading to another.

When I found Tebeth Shukura Hamon, I didn't need convincing. I saw her picture and something in me recognised her before my mind caught up. I did my research - I always do - but the decision was already made.

That was new. Trusting myself like that. Letting my heart lead.

These women didn't fix me. They helped me see what was already there.

I started listening to my heart instead of just my head. I trained in Sekhem. I let myself be guided instead of always driving.

I am fifty-nine years old. I have lived in three countries. I have started from zero twice. I have survived and climbed and fallen and climbed again.

And I am still becoming.

Not finished. Not figured out. Not waiting for permission anymore.

Just becoming. Whatever that might be.

Nine

The Firefly Effect



A firefly doesn't light up to impress anyone. It just glows because that's what it is.

Somewhere in my work with Jessica, this idea emerged - The Firefly Effect. It wasn't a marketing strategy or a brand concept. It was something true, finally finding its words.

Light yourself up. Light others up. Leave people better than you found them.

That's it. That's the whole thing.

For so many years, I had been dimming my own light to fit in. Playing smaller so others wouldn't feel threatened. Waiting for permission to shine. Worried about what people would think if I was too much, too driven, too different.

But fireflies don't ask permission. They don't wait for the right moment. They just glow - and in glowing, they help others find their way in the dark.

That's what I want to be. That's what I want for you.

Not a spotlight. Not a performance. Just a steady glow that says: I see you. You matter. You have light in you too.

Here's a fun fact: science has proven that you are already glowing.

In 2009, Japanese researchers used ultra-sensitive cameras to capture something extraordinary - visible light emanating from the human body. It's about 1,000 times too faint for our eyes to see, but it's real. We glow brightest around our faces, and the light follows our circadian rhythm - brighter when we're awake, dimmer when we sleep.

The Firefly Effect isn't just a metaphor. You were born with your own light. The only question is whether you'll let it be seen.

The world doesn't need more people competing to be the brightest. It needs more people willing to glow - and to celebrate when others glow too.

This isn't about success. It's about presence. It's about showing up, not to prove anything, but to contribute. To lift. To leave every person, every room, every community a little brighter than you found it.

You don't have to be finished to be a firefly. You don't have to have it all figured out. You just have to stop waiting and start glowing.

The light is already in you. It always has been.

Ten

Your Turn



This book isn't a map. It's not a set of instructions. Your path won't look like mine - and it shouldn't.

Maybe your becoming happens in a city apartment. Maybe it happens on a farm. Maybe it happens in a corner office, or leaving one, or build-

ing something entirely new. Maybe it happens at twenty-five or fifty-five or seventy-five.

The where doesn't matter. The when doesn't matter.

What matters is that you stop waiting.

I spent decades following a script I didn't write. Climbing ladders that were leaning against the wrong walls. Collecting titles that couldn't answer the simplest question: Who am I?

I'm not here to tell you that my way is the right way. I'm here to tell you that YOUR way is the right way - whatever that is, wherever it leads, however long it takes to find it.

If corporate life lights you up, stay. If the city feeds your soul, stay. If the script you were handed actually fits, keep wearing it.

But if something in you is whispering that there's more - if you're tired of waiting for permission, tired of dimming your light, tired of becoming what everyone else expects instead of who you actually are...

Then stop waiting.

You don't need to have it all figured out. I'm fifty-nine and I'm still becoming. Still learning. Still unfinished. And I've finally made peace with that.

Unfinished doesn't mean broken. It means alive. It means still growing. It means there's more to discover, more to become, more light to let out.

So here's my invitation:

Stop waiting for the right moment. It doesn't exist.

Stop waiting for permission. No one else can give it to you.

Stop waiting to be ready. You'll never feel ready. Do it anyway.

Light yourself up. Light others up. Leave people better than you found them.

Become the firefly you already are.

I'm done waiting. Are you?

Your Own Becoming

The hardest part of my journey wasn't leaving corporate success or moving to rural Queensland. It was learning to ask myself what I actually wanted - and then believing my own answer mattered more than everyone else's expectations.

For years, I lived someone else's version of success. I followed scripts written by family, culture, and the belief that there was a "right" way to live. It took distance, silence, and the courage to stay unfinished before I could hear my own voice.

This memoir isn't just my story - it's an invitation to explore your own.

A Practice:

Find a quiet space. Place your hand on your heart. Ask yourself: "What do I actually want?" Listen without judgment. Don't rush to answer. Just listen.

A Reminder:

This book isn't a map. It's not a set of instructions. Your path won't look like mine - and it shouldn't.

Maybe your becoming happens in a city apartment. Maybe it happens on a farm. Maybe it happens in a corporate job, or leaving one, or building something entirely new.

The where doesn't matter. The what doesn't matter.

What matters is that you stop waiting. That you give yourself permission to become who you actually are - not who you were told to be.

And when that path changes - because it will - you give yourself permission again.

You Are Already Glowing:

Here's something remarkable: science has proven that you are already glowing.

In 2009, Japanese researchers used ultra-sensitive cameras to capture visible light emanating from the human body. It's about 1,000 times too faint for our eyes to see, but it's real. We glow brightest around our faces, and the light follows our circadian rhythm - brighter when we're awake, dimmer when we sleep.

You are a firefly. You always have been.

The only question is: will you let yourself shine?

Journal Pages

Your Unfinished Story

The pages that follow are yours.

Use them however you need - write, draw, doodle, dream, scribble, sketch. Answer the prompts or ignore them completely. Capture moments when you feel yourself becoming, or simply give your thoughts space to breathe.

There are no rules here. No right answers. No judgment.

Just you, the page, and permission to remain unfinished as you reflect, dream, change, and glow.

The Scripts I'm Ready to Release

What expectations, beliefs, or "shoulds" are you carrying that don't belong to you?

I Am Still Becoming

Complete this sentence as many times as you need to.

I am still becoming..

I am still becoming..

I am still becoming..

I am still becoming..

The Gap Between

The life I'm living... The life I'm longing for...

When I Feel Most Myself

Describe a moment when you felt completely, authentically you. What were you doing? Who were you with (or alone)? What did it feel like in your body?

Permission Granted

What would you do if you gave yourself full permission? What are you waiting for? What becomes possible when you stop waiting?

My Firefly Moments

When have you lit someone else up? When has someone lit you up? What does your glow look like?

What I'm Learning to Listen To

What is your heart trying to tell you? Your body? Your intuition? What whispers have you been ignoring?

Small Steps, Big Shifts

One small step I can take toward my actual life (not the one I think I should want):

Free Space

No prompt. No direction. Just space for whatever wants to emerge.

Free Space

Still here. Still yours. Still unfinished.

What I Want to Remember

Key insights, aha moments, or truths from this journey that I don't want to forget:

My Becoming Continues...

This isn't the end. It's just another beginning. What's next?

About the Author



THE UNFINISHED WOMAN - *Still Becoming*

What happens when you follow everyone else's script for success, only to discover it was never yours to begin with?

Born in Hungary and shaped by the immigrant experience across multiple countries, Erika Entz built what looked like an impressive life - two decades of international consulting, corporate achievement, the markers of "making it." But beneath the polished exterior, a question grew louder: *Is this really who I'm meant to be?*

This is a memoir about the courage it takes to step away from family expectations and familiar paths. About leaving the corporate world for rural Queensland, where wide open spaces finally gave room to question, to breathe, to begin discovering an authentic self.

Through practices like Sekhem and concepts like The Firefly Effect, Erika explores what it means to remain unfinished - to resist the pressure for tidy transformation stories and instead embrace the messy, ongoing journey of becoming.

For anyone who has ever felt the gap between who they are and who they're supposed to be, this memoir offers permission to stay unfinished, to keep questioning, and to trust that your truest life might look nothing like the one you planned.

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