

Growing Wilder

Awaken Your Wild Spirit



SAMANTHA WILSON

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The names and identifying details of certain individuals have been changed to protect their privacy.

The events, places, and conversations in this memoir have been recreated from memory. The chronology of some events has been compressed. When necessary, the names and identifying characteristics of individuals and places have been changed to maintain anonymity.

This memoir is a truthful recollection of actual events in the author's life. Some conversations have been recreated and/or supplemented. The names and details of some individuals have been changed to respect their privacy.

This book is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. The reader should regularly consult a physician in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

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Chapter 1

My Story

“Where there is ruin, there is hope for treasure.” - Rumi

In 2011, I was a 33-year-old practising litigation lawyer in the United Kingdom. I had it all, apparently. That’s what society told me. The power job with all the “trappings” that went with it. The beautiful home and sports car on the drive. A wardrobe of designer clothes and a disposable income that would turn some a pale shade of green.

I’d turn up to work every day in my power suits and heels, my face painted and hair tamed into place.

I presented myself to the world as if I was living the dream.

It was all a lie. A lie that was destroying me from the inside out.

The reality was very different. I was a workaholic who continually played burnout like it was a game. I had been for years. I lived on the edge as far as my health and well-being were concerned. I was miserable as sin, constantly buying and consuming to make up for the fact that I was a corporate whore who was selling her soul to the highest bidder. I spent a fortune on beauty treatments and products to try to hide the effects of burnout.

I didn’t have time for a relationship. After watching female colleagues being torn in two, as their work and family life constantly competed with each other, I knew that I would never bring a child into the world while I remained a workaholic lawyer. Instead, I told the world that I was dedicated to my work.

One day, enough was finally enough. On the return journey home from work, exhausted and at the end of my tether, I knocked a cyclist off a bicycle.

That's right. I knocked a man off his bike.

I know. It's shocking. I still cringe at the thought of it.

I was sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. I was in a severe state of burnout and I had no idea how to stop. No energy to change. Just before the accident, I remember thinking, if one more thing happens, that's it. I'm done.

That day, sat there in my car with a cyclist on my bonnet, staring right back at me through the windshield, cuss words flying from his mouth, I had the biggest wake-up call of my life.

In my defence, I was travelling at no more than five miles per hour, after turning a tight corner on a country road with a blind spot. The cyclist was fine, if not a little cross. I could not apologise enough.

Yet, at that moment, it became clear to me that I was not fine. That my lack of care for my own well-being had actually made me a danger to someone else. I could never stand for that.

That's when I knew I had to stop. You could say that I had asked for a sign and got one. A sign that would change my life forever. So, I stopped. I left a career that was slowly killing me and embraced a whole new life that included taking care of me.

The scariest part of the whole saga is just how long I took to admit to myself that I wasn't okay. I'd been a danger to myself for years. My burnout meant that I'd become a danger to others.

The day that I finally admitted I wasn't okay was the day that I took back control of my life.

Why didn't I act before?

I was afraid of what people would think if I didn't keep the "I'm okay" mask on.

We live in a world that expects us to keep a mask on, to pretend we are fine with the status quo in our lives, yet we all deserve to be the best we can be and live a life we are more than okay with.

Looking back, I can see it's all about self-love and honesty. If I couldn't be honest, help, and love myself, then how could I be honest with others, seek the help that I needed, and make the changes to my life that I wanted to make?

The truth is, I faced ruin because I didn't change sooner.

Ruin. I let ruin be the making of me. Overnight, I walked away from my 15-year career as a lawyer and all the security that came with it. I left behind my homeland of England to begin again in Andalucia, Southern Spain.

Once I acknowledged to myself that I couldn't carry on, that my life was in ruin, there was only one thing left to do. Go after a life that I wanted to live which supported my health and well-being.

At that stage, I knew what I didn't want from life. I didn't want a life that was fake and destroying my soul. Where I constantly had to buy or consume things to make up for the fact that I was living a soulless life. I intended to set myself free so that I could figure out exactly what I did want. A life that felt real and authentic to me. Where my health and well-being became a priority.

Ruin. I let ruin be the making of me. Once I hit rock bottom, the only way was up. Starting from zero, I had nothing to lose.

Why Spain? Spain had worked its magic on me as a nine-year-old girl, and starting my life there felt like coming home.

I moved to a small town called Orgiva in the Alpujarras, the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in Andalucia, Spain.

A collection of villages dot the vast, lush lands of the Alpujarras. It is a paradise for those looking to return to a simple way of living. With a perfect climate, the fertile lands are abundant, and many people choose to settle in this remote little corner of the earth which provides an abundant supply of fruit and vegetables all year round.

I lived in a pretty little whitewashed casita by the Rio Chico in what I can only describe as a small Garden of Eden, surrounded by mountains with a constant deep, blue sky. The fertile lands of Andalucia are abundant and my garden was filled with fruit and nut trees, giving me a supply of lemons, avocados, oranges, kiwis, figs, walnuts, almonds, and the most amazing grapevines.

Life was very different from the chaotic legal career that I had left behind, to say the least.

Tiptoeing over the dewy grass every morning, I would pluck my breakfast right from the tree. I spent so many lazy days enjoying the sweetness of oranges

under the Spanish sun. My evenings were dedicated to cracking walnuts to enjoy with grapes and cheese under the stars of the Andalucian skies.

It was a time when I found myself turning inward in contemplation. The peaceful garden, filled with birdsong by day and the gentle croak of tree frogs and crickets by night, felt like a sanctuary, a place where I could delve into my soul to see what I could find.

For the first time in my life, I had time. Time for myself and the activities that I once enjoyed, one of which is reading.

I consumed so many books over the summer. It was during this time that I came across the book, *Women Who Run With The Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estes.

Women Who Run With The Wolves is a self-help book of tales of a Wild Woman archetype that every woman holds within her.

Like many women over thirty, the book spoke to me on such a deep level and affected me so profoundly that it changed the course of my life forever.

One of the first lines in the book, "*A healthy woman is much like a wolf; robust, chock-full, strong life force, life-giving, territorially aware, inventive, loyal, roving,*" spoke straight to my soul and sent shivers down my spine. This was the type of woman I wanted to be.

The amount of time I had on my hands also gave me plenty of time to think and feel. Without work to distract me, I felt the rumblings of past wounds and hurts that hadn't healed within me. I could no longer avoid the pain that I was carrying from the past.

I came to realise that the root cause of my workaholic ways lay in my childhood. I was a victim of childhood sexual abuse, you see. Sexual abuse has a terrible effect on a child on every level; mind, body and soul. My experiences prevented me from laying a healthy foundation in childhood for my future adult life. I developed ways of dealing with the effects to survive that were counter-productive to living a healthy life.

I grew up into an adult with wounds that festered away, carried deep-seated fears that related to every aspect of my life, a distorted view of the world, and the people around me. I was left with feelings of shame and guilt that did not belong to me.

For this reason, I like to say that I was always going to become an “aholic.” Yes, I have drunk a little too much alcohol at times over the years. I’m English and we do like to drink. I’m incredibly grateful that drugs never called my name. Work was to become my poison of choice to avoid dealing with the trauma of my childhood. I consumed and bought things to make myself feel better.

So, it was Clarissa’s words on the choice every woman must make at some point from their thirties onwards that guided me forward to begin on my healing journey. To get better or grow bitter. The following quote made me realise the work that I had to do to grow wilder and bloom.

*“There is a time in our lives, usually in mid-life when a woman has to make a decision – possibly the most important psychic decision of her future life – and that is, whether to be bitter or not. Women often come to this in their late thirties or early forties. They are at the point where they are full up to their ears with everything and they’ve “had it” and “the last straw has broken the camel’s back” and they’re “p*ssed off and pooped out.” The dreams of their twenties may be lying in a crumple. There may be broken hearts, broken marriages, broken promises.”*

I was 33-years-old at the time. The dreams of my twenties were in tatters, as I had already made the tough choice to leave behind my legal career to search for a more authentic and healthy life. Yet, with the awareness that I was carrying emotional wounds from my childhood, that would fester and become bitter if I left them for much longer, I needed to heal from the past. These wounds seriously weakened me on every level.

I made a choice in my little Garden of Eden to do everything I could to get better for my future self. To heal daily. To wash away all the emotional crap that I’d accumulated over the years. To grow wilder so that I could manifest a life of happiness, health, and abundance in alignment with my true needs.

Since then, over the last eight years, I have refused to become bitter no matter what life has thrown at me.

I chose life instead of soul death. Light instead of darkness. Love instead of hate. I said no to sinking into an abyss of apathy daily. I chose to get better instead of becoming bitter so that I could grow wilder and bloom.

I’m now in my early forties and I count my blessing that I made the right choice to get better. I no longer carry the past with me nor consume or resort to

“aholic” behaviours to make myself feel better. I feel as if I have been given, or earned, a brand new beginning which isn't tarred by the past. A new life to create whatever I choose.

I have chosen to live a very different life. A simple life that is in alignment with values that support my health and well-being.

And it all came from making the right choice. A choice every woman will face. To get better instead of becoming bitter so they can grow wilder and bloom.

**[DOWNLOAD THE FULL VERSION OF GROWING
WILDER: AWAKEN YOUR WILD SPIRIT](#)**

Come Follow Me

Firstly, I really hope that you have enjoyed my journey to grow wilder.

If you have any feedback, feel free to share to my email at info@samantha-wilson.com

If you would like to follow my blog and sign-up for my newsletter, come visit me at my website at [Samantha Wilson](#).

I'm active on my social media soapbox most days where you can follow my musings on life, the Camino de Santiago and activism for Mother Earth and her animals. Click the links below to come to follow me.

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