

"This book is a life raft for discovering how to recover, heal, and move into the life of your dreams."
—**Arielle Ford**, bestselling author of *The Soulmate Secret*

SUPERHERO OF LOVE



HEAL YOUR BROKEN HEART
& THEN GO SAVE THE WORLD

We all have a Superhero of Love inside.

BRIDGET FONGER

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Introduction: Welcome, Superhero!

*What was said to the rose that made it open
Was said to me here in my chest.*

Rumi

Is your heart aching from a love you lost—recently or long ago? Do you wish you could stop sabotaging yourself when it comes to love? Do you sometimes think: “This is as good as it gets?” Do you avoid opportunities to give or receive love? Do you ever wish for more love in your life—of all kinds?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. The good news is that you are about to discover the Superhero of Love that has always been inside you, one who can help you to give and receive love with abandon.

That Superhero has been awaiting you with wild anticipation. She knows you better than anyone, has your highest good at heart, and is yearning to help you heal and be your most powerful, loving self. There is nothing conditional

about her love. It is divine love. And it is inside you right now.

I first learned of loss, and of the importance of healing from it, when I lost my father—first through divorce and then through death. Later, I discovered my own Superhero of Love while recovering from a painful romantic breakup that left me feeling like a burned up pile of ash. This book is intended as a resource, not only for those whose hearts have been broken by the loss of a romantic partner, but also for those who have suffered life-altering loss in other ways.

By the grace of God, a divine breeze blew into my own heart and stirred the ashes left behind by my loss. It cleared my heart and eyes just long enough to reveal a magnificent vision of the Superhero of Love inside me. She looked at me with gentle, knowing eyes; her gaze went straight to my heart and saw the pain I was feeling. Just as she could see inside my heart, I could see inside hers—powerful yet vulnerable, courageous, open, soft, and eager to give and receive love.

I took a good look at her. She was the vision of who I wanted to be. And I knew at that moment that I *could* be her. I didn't know exactly what I was recognizing in her, but I was inspired to begin my healing journey.

On my path, I discovered, one by one, the gifts of every Superhero of Love:

- The Mighty Flame burns inside her heart, the very source of her power. It lights her up and lights up

the world around her. It guides her through life and reminds her of her connection to her own divinity, the purest essence from which her love is born.

- The five superpowers—sight, hearing, humility, self-love, and alignment—fuel her Mighty Flame and help her to love and be loved with abandon.
- She is Love Strong. She leads with her heart. Her love is her strength and it reaches out and touches others. She makes a difference in the world.

In these pages, you will embark on a journey to heal your loving heart. It's a process. You won't go from a weakling who can barely lift her own heart to flying high overnight. There isn't a magic pill or an instant cure to facilitate the change. My intention is simply that you will actually like the process of this discovery. You will read about the steps I took on my own healing journey and try them for yourself, incorporating what works into your life. My one request is that you give everything a try, even if just once. Try to keep an open mind and heart. Sometimes the best solutions come from a place you least expect, and the things we pull away from are often the very things we need to explore.

First we will awaken the Superhero of Love inside you, so that together you can discover where you have both been all your life! We will look at two elements of fire that we all deal with when facing heartache: crazy firestorms and the Mighty Flame. You will see how learning to quell the storms and fan the flame will make you Love Strong. Then

we'll take a good look at two things that threaten to thwart you, both of which will end up being enormous sources of power: saboteurs and kryptonite.

You will set up your own superhero training camp with teachers and coaches, then you will assemble a support system—your Love League—made up of those who will walk alongside you on this journey. And you will work with the five superpowers of sight, hearing, humility, self-love, and alignment to bring that heart of yours into the world for boundless giving and receiving. You'll gain wisdom and learn strength-building practices that you can return to at any time.

Along the way, you will start to get some respite and, eventually, permanent relief from the pain you may be experiencing. There will be check-ins for this exact purpose, because sometimes we can't see our own transformation. This kind of reflection is both encouraging and motivating. It may even inspire you to dig a little deeper.

I give you many suggestions throughout the book that can help you on this path—like this one for entering into the world of your Superhero of Love ancestors:

Imagine you are standing amid rolling green hills; a majestic mountain range graces the distant skies, which are punctuated with fluffy clouds. Take in the beauty and grandeur of this vista. You wonder how it is that you are so blessed to be in such a wondrous place.

An ancient, holy temple rests atop one of the grassy hills, its elegant frame and pillars carved entirely of white marble.

It is luminous in the sun's light, warm and inviting. The temple is encircled by rows of smooth marble benches. You choose one and sit down; the seat is so soft it cradles you. Birds chirp softly. The sun shines on your face.

You are the only person here, yet you are not alone. You feel the comforting presence of the crowds of superheroes who have come to this place before you to gain wisdom. Centuries of holy work, divine teachings, and trainings have transpired here. You immediately feel yourself a part of this history, as if you have sat on these marble benches thousands of times.

This is the Temple of the Mighty Heart. You climb the stairs and notice the words *Ex Amor Fortitudo* etched into the arch above your head. It means “Strength through Love.” At the very center of the temple, a pedestal holds a marble sculpture of an open heart that has been gently worn by the hands of a multitude of seekers paying homage. At its center, a magnificent golden torch burns with an eternal flame. The Mighty Flame burning inside you responds in recognition. You place your hand on the heart and hear a gentle voice:

Welcome to this holy mission. You have taken the first step. You are here. Now. We know about that heart of yours. First, we need you to know that we see the Superhero of Love inside you. We know your capacity for love and pain. We know your capacity to heal. We'll help you mend that heart of yours; we'll help you learn to fly. We see you. We know your greatness. We are with you, helping you hold your mighty heart.

My prayer is that you hear this call of the heart, that you never feel alone again, and that you are inspired to begin your healing journey. My hope is that you find others who are on this path with you who will encourage you to step into your greatness—whose resounding voices will echo through you, and who will help make your Mighty Flame grow. My wish is that, by the end of this book, you will come to realize that we are all superheroes who are born to fly.

Note to You, Superhero

Superheroes come in all shapes, sizes, and sexes. After all, heartaches have no gender or weight bias. So whatever your gender or sexual orientation, please translate anything you consider a “heterosexual chick” reference in this book into whatever works for you. I didn’t attempt to accommodate everyone when I spoke about my ex-boyfriend by changing every “he” to “he/she/they,” or by changing the word “men” to “men/women/they.” Instead, I invite you to translate for yourself if “straight woman” is not your native language.

Also make your own adjustments to my references to God, Spirit, or the Divine. This book is meant to be accessible and meaningful for everyone: atheist, agnostic, Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic, or whatever faith or creed you may carry in your heart. Here you will find references to many different schools of thought, and I don’t want any of them to be a barrier that prevents you from getting all you can out of this book. Whatever you consider to be a guiding force in your life is perfect.

At one point in my life, the word “God” made me bristle. Now, I think of love as my access point to God. But please don’t let my references to God cause you to retreat from the basic tenets of this book. My hope and my intent are that the message is accessible and meaningful to everyone. If something I say bugs you, try to let it roll off your heart in a gentle way. I offer you the following word to say in response to anything you may find here that falls outside your own set of beliefs: *Swaha*, which is a Sanskrit word that means “so be it.”

When tending sacred fires in India, Brahmin priests sing mantras as they make offerings of rice, ghee, and flowers. At the end of each mantra, they intone “Swahaaaa!” as the offering is dramatically, lovingly thrown into the sacred fire. This moves me every time I hear it, because it feels as if they are saying: “Dear sacred fire, I release this to you with love!” So, please throw whatever doesn’t work for you in this book into the sacred fire.



Chapter 1

WAKE UP YOUR SUPERHERO

*A hero is someone who has given his or her life
to something bigger than oneself.*

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero's Journey*

It was my first betrayal. As soon as I discovered the intricate web of lies he had spun over the course of two years, I broke it off with the man I will refer to here as Mr. X. This breakup brought me to my knees. I thought I knew better. I thought I *was* better—better at being me, at relationships, at being aware. After many years of diligently working on myself—alone and in partnership, in and out of long-term relationships—this dramatic ending left me stunned. I thought I had done it all. I was a personal-growth ninja, for God's sake, starting in young adulthood with meditation,

then individual and group therapies, then off to an ever-burgeoning and juicy spiritual practice, followed by intense personal-growth workshops, more meditation, more spiritual work, more deep dives at every opportunity. What, oh what, had I missed that had left me in this state?

Most of us have been burned at some point in our lives, left in a pile of ash by some life-altering loss. Somehow, just as in a cartoon, the little bits of nearly weightless ash, helped by a gentle breeze, become more weighted and gather into a semblance of human form again. And we carry on.

Is my head on straight? Can I put weight on both legs? Do I look human from the back, too?

Several days after I broke it off with Mr. X, I ventured out of the house with my not-so-fully formed self, acting as if I were back to normal. But I wasn't. I was walking in Old Pasadena, a rather sparkly shopping area in Southern California, hoping that the tiniest bit of its shine would rub off on me. I felt dull, gray, hunched over physically and mentally. I looked across the street at a couple who caught my eye. At that moment, the man spontaneously grabbed the woman's face between his two hands and kissed her. Mr. X used to do this—kiss me with wild abandon in public—and I loved it. He once twirled me around and dipped me dramatically in a grand hallway in Vegas and asked me to marry him. I love grand romantic gestures and, normally, witnessing any couple's private moment of bliss from across a busy street would have made me smile.

But it didn't. Instead I thought: "I wonder what lies he's telling her."

That bit of inner dialogue was my wake-up call. I knew that if I didn't start working on the internal filters creating this jaded worldview, I would never be able to open my heart fully again.

But how could I heal? I felt as if my heart and mind were on fire with incessant negative chatter: "What about *that* time?" "How about *that* woman?" "Where was he *that* night, *that* day, *that* afternoon?" "Did he mean it when he said *that*?" My thoughts were consumed with the betrayal, the many lies, as if pointing my finger at any one detail would take away the pain. But something inside me remembered that wise old saying: "When you point a finger, there are three fingers pointing back at you."

That first step I took—recognizing my own role in this state of affairs—required an inner strength that came from the yet-unrecognized Superhero of Love inside me. I forced my pointing finger back so that it pointed in the right direction—toward me. I had work to do. Me. My work. It had nothing to do with him. So, I got to work. I reached out for support and I made a commitment to be open to whatever came my way that could help me on the path to healing.

You may not believe this, but there are people all around you right now who want to help you. People really do have a natural instinct to help one another. You may not have recognized it before, but I encourage you to look at those

around you with fresh eyes and to seek out people who can help you on this journey. It's simple. All you have to do is ask. Who wouldn't want to step into that beautiful Temple of the Mighty Heart with you?

Debbie Ford, who passed away in 2013, was the first coach to step into my temple. Debbie was an author and thought leader whose books continue to bring shadow work to the masses. Debbie brought all things "shadow" into the light and was as courageous and fierce as she was open-hearted. She inspired me to work with my own shadows in a way that still empowers me.

Soon my personal temple began to fill with other wise teachers. I discovered Mark Nepo's *The Book of Awakening*, which put a salve on my heart. Then came Marianne Williamson's *Enchanted Love Workshop*, which allowed me to soften and open my heart more than ever before.

Then, to conquer more of the subconscious debris inside and open myself even more to the Divine and to love, I started studying with Master John Douglas. Master John is a spiritual leader from Australia who is in the business of clearing away all that stops us from being our mightiest selves, lending divine intervention to help us remove our subconscious blocks.

These were the first superhero voices to echo in my Temple of the Mighty Heart, and they remain with me today.

You have been blessed with superheroes in your life as well. You may have just thought of some as I mentioned

mine. You will gather even more around you as you progress through this book. And now you have a place to keep their wisdom thriving, a place where other wise voices can join you on your journey, a place to practice and hone your powers—your very own Temple of the Mighty Heart.

From that temple, we will begin the work of uncovering what is creating the crazy firestorms of pain that can happen after a loss. We will look at what can block your powers—saboteurs and kryptonite. And you will become very savvy about what makes the all-important Mighty Flame burn bright within you. Once you start to see what you are looking for in yourself—both what is empowering and what is disempowering—you will jump into superhero training camp to get your heart into shape, set up your Love League, and find your superhero training coaches. You will then explore the five superpowers and learn how to sharpen, test, and refine them. Finally, you will complete your pre-flight prep so you can go out into the world and spread your love far and wide!

You will hear stories that show you what it takes to be a Superhero of Love. You will complete exercises to help you increase your awareness and hone your powers. And you will get three diagnostic checks—one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end of the book—that will help you chart the progress of your Mighty Flame's growth. It's important to acknowledge where you stand as you move along on your journey and, most especially, to witness your

own transformation. This allows you to acknowledge how far you have come and how close you may be to unleashing your love into the world.

The more conscious you are of the Superhero of Love who has been inside you all along, the more you can attend to nurturing the Mighty Flame that is the source of her powers. In case you feel that your flame could use some extra support as you go, I have given you additional exercises at the end of the book called Mighty Flame Boosters to help fan the flame.

First, let's get a glimpse of the five superpowers that you will develop throughout the book to methodically feed your Mighty Flame. Every one of us has all five, but some are more naturally developed in each of us. You will learn to recognize and appreciate these superpowers in yourself and others. I give them here in the order in which I discovered them, as they each dive a little deeper into the heart.

SUPER SIGHT

One of your main tasks in this book is to shed some light on the unhealed corners of your heart. Super Sight helps you to look bravely at the previously unseen wounds that are keeping you stuck in your pain and anger. It allows you to remove the blinders you have put on to shield you from the truth.

If you find yourself complaining that you are always blindsided in relationships or that you keep repeating the

same patterns even when you know they aren't in your best interest (or even go in the *opposite* direction of your goals), then strengthening this superpower will help you. I had to develop Super Sight to see why, even though I felt like a strong woman with high self-esteem, I found Mr. X's love far shinier and brighter than my love for myself. I had to root around in those dark corners of my heart to revisit losses I had previously experienced and shine some light on them as well. I had to have Super Sight to see what needed to be cleared away in order to uncover why I was drawn to Mr. X, and I had to rediscover the sparkle that he saw in me. I had to see it for myself to believe it and own it.

SUPER HEARING

Super Hearing allows you to hear your inner voice and follow its direction in spite of negative, disempowering chatter. You can regularly hear guidance from God, Spirit, your inner knowing, nature, or whatever higher power you acknowledge. This is the one voice that you can always trust—the one that will lead you to your highest heights. Being able to hear it clearly is a priceless gift worth pursuing.

If friends complain that you don't listen, if you have your own inner monologue that distracts you, or if you are always going nonstop, then honing this superpower will help you quiet the noise and recognize clear guidance. It helped me hear the call of love so I could move toward opportunities to love and be loved, and be of greater service to others.

SUPER HUMILITY

When you have Super Humility, you are more able to express gratitude for and acknowledge the perfect way that the Divine works through you in your life. You see as much perfection in the moments that look and feel challenging as you do in those that seem flawless. You can acknowledge the extraordinary forces that are greater than you and allow them to strengthen and open your heart even more.

If you find yourself complaining often or wallowing in self-pity, if you think that you have to do everything alone or are easily frustrated or angered by life, then cultivating humility will change your perspective. I developed my own mantra while working on this superpower: Everything is perfect just the way it is and just the way it is not. When I am swinging through the jungle of crazy emotions, I grab onto this mantra like a sturdy vine to bring me to safe, firm ground.

SUPER SELF-LOVE

Super Self-Love will help you prioritize your heart's recovery, strength, and vitality. Through it, you will be able to tap into feeling supremely loved no matter who is around you or what the circumstances may be.

If you have a pattern of saying disparaging things about yourself, if you bow out of the game of life or habitually deflect compliments, words of appreciation, or love, then you likely need to develop this superpower. And if you feel

incomplete without a partner, this power is especially important to develop.

Practicing self-love helped me feel more comfortable in my skin than ever before, to know that I am just as powerful when single as I am in relationship. It taught me that the source of all love is right inside me. It always has been and always will be.

SUPER ALIGNMENT

Super Alignment allows you to tap into your highest truth at lightning speed and transcend that which stands between you and your inner knowing. You become your own divining rod, aligned with your spirit's center at every juncture.

If you think of yourself as someone who is in control, always knowing what is right and wrong—if you can be thrown off your game easily or if you push away opportunities or requests to be vulnerable—this power will serve you well. This superpower allowed me to turn inward and ask the questions that can bring me most expediently to my highest purpose and my divinity—questions like “What is my truth right now?” or “How can I best serve my soul's purpose?” And I always receive a clear answer.

CULTIVATING YOUR SUPERPOWERS

The five superpowers work together to make the Mighty Flame grow. Focusing on one power at a time can be

effective, because each power reinforces the next, and each effort feeds the Superhero of Love. When you are feeling out of sorts, let yourself be guided gently toward the power that calls to you. As you do the work to develop all five powers, new traits and opportunities will reveal themselves along the way:

- An availability to love more deeply and vulnerably
- The desire to veer away from fear, anger, resignation, and apathy, and move toward love
- More time to give love to your friends, family, pets, or even strangers
- Far less negative chatter
- Courage to look at your shadows and dive deep for the gems
- The ability to dip into your inner knowing at a moment's notice
- An abundance of synchronicities and moments that make you say: "That just gave me goose bumps!"
- The absolute knowing that you are loved exactly as you are and exactly as you are not.

And in case you just went through this list with some level of impatience, cynicism, or distrust—believe me, I have *been* you—I'm going to repeat the last one: You are loved exactly as you are and exactly as you are not. Take a sip of that magic elixir. Let it seep into your heart. That superhero

dose of love is just one of many you will receive on this journey.

This book will give you many tools to unveil the Superhero of Love inside you. If you can muster up some courage, open your heart a wee bit, and do the exercises, by the end of the book you will be Love Strong—able to love and be loved more than ever before.

Your love has the potential to make a huge difference in your life and in the world. Every person whose heart we spark with our hearts has the ability to spark another. Imagine a world of superhero hearts. Imagine a world of hearts whose pain no longer informs their words and actions, where saboteurs are tamed and Mighty Flames burn bright. Imagine a world full of Superheroes of Love.

Your Love Strong mission starts now. All it takes is a willingness to tap into your very own superpowers. Trust me, if *I've* got them, *you've* got them! You will be shocked at how easy it is to uncover them.

Let's begin.