

PREFACE



*M*ental health issues have been with us since the beginning of time. We have witnessed a painfully slow, but nonetheless steady transformation in how we as individuals and a society have dealt with these issues. I would like to think that, in the 21st Century, we would have taken the spectre of mental health and mental illness out of the basement so to speak, and given the myriad of people who deal with mental health issues their rightful place in the world. The storytellers in this book continue their fight for that rightful place on an ongoing basis every day of their lives.

COURAGE, PERSEVERANCE,
HOPE, TENACITY, STRENGTH

These are some of the words you will say to yourself when you read each story in this book. You'll come away knowing that the storytellers, and their journeys, are also a very important work in progress. A work in progress that will remain strong no matter what adversities they face.

HEARTS LINKED BY COURAGE

This book has a purpose; to show you the reader that these storytellers' lives matter. I truly believe that when you read about their lives you will realize how incredible these people are. Their stories will move you, and make you think. They will take you on journeys you never thought possible. Their stories were not easy to write; they will introduce you to a world that is full of contradictions, deep pain, and triumph over that pain, and most importantly, full of life.

I have had the honour and the privilege of being in the company of my fellow storytellers. Their warmth, kindness, caring, and compassion have lifted me, and more significantly, provided me a safe place, and a community I can depend on. We all need to feel this. Welcome, dear reader, to our community.

— Randee Korman