

PHOENIX RISING



CHANTELLE BOTHA



Foreword

It is a rare gift to encounter someone who embodies authenticity so completely that they inspire others to live their truth. Chantelle Botha offers us exactly the gift of being that person and sharing it with others. I have had the privilege of knowing her as a colleague, a friend, and a fearless champion for transformation. Her unwavering commitment to living boldly and authentically is not just inspiring – it is life-changing for those fortunate enough to learn from her.

Phoenix Rising is a testament to Chantelle's extraordinary journey – a journey that is both deeply personal and universally relatable. It is a book that invites us to reflect on the parts of ourselves we've hidden, to shed the layers of shame and doubt, and to embrace the full being of who we are. Chantelle's story is not just one of awakening but of empowerment, offering practical insights and heartfelt encouragement to help readers reclaim their flame.

Chantelle's message is profoundly relevant in today's world. Societal and professional norms often ask women to compartmentalise their lives, to adapt to structures that undervalue authenticity, and to conform to definitions that deny the full expression of their identities. The result is an overwhelming pressure to diminish or deny the very qualities that make us unique. Chantelle's work is a refreshing

antidote to these pressures. She not only calls women to reclaim their authenticity but offers the guidance to support the reader on the next steps.

Phoenix Rising shines as a beacon of hope and empowerment. Chantelle's voice reminds us that authenticity is not a weakness; it is the foundation of true power. Her ability to transform her personal experiences into lessons that resonate universally is a testament to her courage, insight, and deep commitment to helping others.

Knowing Chantelle has shaped how I view authenticity, leadership, and self-discovery in new ways. Surrounded by conformity and hesitation, Chantelle teaches that true strength lies in vulnerability and the courage to embrace all facets of oneself. Her ability to navigate her journey with such raw honesty has given me permission to reflect on my own experiences, confront hidden doubts, and gain a clearer sense of who I am. This book will help the reader do the same. Her example has been a powerful reminder that the path to personal and professional growth begins with self-awareness and the willingness to step into our own light.

Reading her work has deepened this understanding. Chantelle has a way of speaking directly to the heart, addressing the unspoken fears and aspirations many of us carry. Her stories and lessons will inspire the reader to move beyond surface-level solutions and to embrace the sometimes messy but always rewarding work of self-discovery. Her message is both an invitation and a challenge – to reclaim the parts of ourselves we've tucked away and to lead with boldness, not just for ourselves but for those who look to us for guidance.

I have seen Chantelle's transformative magic first-hand. She has a unique ability to challenge and encourage, to create space for others to explore their potential, and to inspire them to take the lead with bold steps forward. This book is

just one part of the impact she has one-on-one and in groups with her coaching, facilitation, and presentations.

For those ready to embark on their own journey of self-discovery and liberation, *Phoenix Rising* will feel like both a mirror and a map. It will challenge you to confront what holds you back, encourage you to reimagine what's possible, and empower you to step boldly into the life you were meant to lead.

Chantelle has taught me, both through her words and her actions, that our greatest strength lies in our willingness to be vulnerable and authentic. It is my hope that as you read this book, you, too, will feel the spark of possibility that Chantelle so effortlessly ignites in others.

This is not just a book – it is an invitation. An invitation to rise, to embrace your full self, and to reclaim your flame. I am honoured to share these words as an introduction to Chantelle's work and her remarkable story. May you, like me, find inspiration in her courage, her wisdom, and her light.

– Dr. Celina Peerman, PhD

Organisational Psychologist & Professional Speaker

www.drcelinapeerman.com



Aroused to Awakened

It was a beautiful summer afternoon in November 2023, and I was coming to the end of a business lunch with a young man when the foreign feeling took my breath away. Time stopped as I found myself getting lost in his gaze. We were deep in philosophical conversation, and it felt like he was inside my head, probing, exploring. What was this? I squirmed. Then it hit me – I was attracted to him. The primal arousal grew inside me, spread through my body and my cheeks flushed. I wanted to take him to the nearest hotel and have my way with him.

God almighty! Where had that thought come from? I felt the adrenaline prick my skin as I wrestled for control and pushed the feeling away. “Ridiculous!” I told myself, “He’s younger than your son!” My head and heart engaged in a tumultuous battle as I wrestled my focus back to the present moment. Dual conversations were playing out in real-time, and the one in my head was deafening.

Logic prevailed for a heartbeat as I reminded myself that lunch was nearly over, and I was scheduled to give a talk in a few hours. There was no way I was giving in to the hedonistic ideas that had dictated so much of my past. I reminded

myself how much I had changed. I wasn't that person anymore. I no longer propositioned men over a business lunch.

I cannot remember how I held that conversation together for the rest of the lunch. My brain was pinballing all over the place. One moment I was listening to his words and formulating my responses very deliberately, and the next moment I was watching his lips and thinking wicked thoughts. I remember biting my lip at one point in an effort to stem the tide of desire, but I was fighting a losing battle. When we embraced to say goodbye, I'm sure I held on for longer than was normal.

As I drove away, I momentarily gave in to all the sinful thoughts that had plagued me, stymied by the rush of the fantasies that flooded in. I let the heat of desire spread through my body. My breath caught in my throat. It felt so good. But as those energetic waves crashed over me, I remembered the person I was the last time I gave in to those feelings.

"No!" I was not going to allow myself to go there. I pushed the feelings away and talked myself off the ledge.

"Get your head back in the game, Chantelle! You are delivering your first Pecha Kucha talk tonight – it has to go well."

That night I delivered what felt like the worst talk of my life. I froze on stage. I forgot my words. I even said the dreaded "sorry" to the audience. *Gasp. What was going on with me?* Having fumbled my way through my talk, feeling like a total imposter, I was counting down the minutes until I could put my tail between my legs and crawl away to lick my wounds.

I berated myself all the way home. *You can't do anything right. Everything you do ends in disaster. And what is with that stupid sensation that happened over lunch? What were you thinking? You see? You're Broken. Twisted. Deviant. Definitely not normal!*

That night I barely slept – vivid and explicit dreams assailed me. They were delicious, no question, but I woke up more confused than ever. I thought I had conquered this thing. I thought I had grown up and matured into a respectable businesswoman. I thought I had gotten to the bottom of my block and figured out how to make this work.

I was wrong. So wrong. But this was the spark that ignited the biggest transformation of my life: my sexual awakening. In hindsight, I am so grateful for it.

* * * *

That year, 2023, had been my toughest yet. My business had all but died, and I had looked suicide in the eye barely six months previously. The personal development work I'd thrown myself into for years told me that there was a self-limiting, self-sabotaging belief blocking me. I was desperate to fix it, and so two months before that confusing lunch, I had taken myself on a psychedelic journey to get to the root of it.

Being a twice-recovered addict, one can clearly see how desperate I was to be considering a drastic measure like this. Like most things in my life post-drugs, I researched it extensively. I knew exactly what to expect (of course it helped that I knew what MDMA would feel like), but I prepared for it as one would an intensive therapy session. I wrote down the questions I needed answers to. I prepared to keep myself focused and push through the waves. I knew how to dig deep into my subconscious.

After considering the merits of a solo journey versus a guided journey, I settled on a solo journey. Based on my research into psychedelic journeys, I learnt that the company you keep, and the environment you're in play a big role in swaying your experience. This was referred to as 'set and setting'.

I was cautious of having an outside perspective and wanted no influence. My desire was to journey to the depths of my soul and put what I found there to bed, once and for all.

The day of the journey arrived, and I felt fresh after a good night's sleep. Waking up at 5am, I went for my early walk, whilst repeating my question to my subconscious to ensure it was anchored: "What is holding me back from success?"

My preparations were calculated and curated. I took a decadent and loving shower and prepared two litres of fresh smoothie juice ready in the fridge. I posted notes on my bedroom mirror: 'I love you', 'I trust you', 'You can do this' and 'BREATHE'. All the resources I'd needed were neatly laid out: my coloured pens, my journal, my meditation session and the journey playlist loaded.

I took the first cap at 8:30am and pressed play on the hour-long guided meditation I had chosen. It was a love language session – I needed all the love for myself that I could muster. It was only love that was going to get me through this.

The first hour passed in a beautiful cocoon of love language, although I did peek at the clock every now and again, cognisant of the rush that would kick in any minute. The first wave built slowly, and I felt the familiar tightening in my jaw. I switched off the meditation, switched on the playlist, lay back on my pillows, reminded myself to breathe and wrote in my journal: "Here it comes."

Two hours later, I had accessed my subconscious and seen some things from my childhood that were disturbing, but I felt like I was hitting a wall. I took the second cap, and before the hour had passed, I was riding the waves of torment in my depths. Scribbling every image, every thought, every memory, it was both ecstasy and agony.

I met my seven-year-old child and dubbed her 'little one'. She had nothing but vitriol for me. Black gunk streamed from her mouth as she tried to explain her hatred for me. There were no words. I met my thirty-year-old self – 'the addict'. She didn't want to talk to me either. Sulky brat. I met my old self, was she sixty, seventy? She was beautiful, long silver hair, elegant and so wise. I called her 'wise one'. She kept telling me of the beautiful life I had created for us. It felt so real, so reassuring, like a lifeline in a deluge.

By late afternoon I had started coming down and took up some colouring, intermittently journalling more memories, more insights, more thoughts. I felt beautiful. Magical. Powerful. The tears flowed out of me, and they felt clean. The demon faced, I'd wrestled with her and put her to bed.

The day finally ended after sunset, and I felt like a victor. I had seen my soul, and she had shown me my blockage. It had something to do with sex.

When I was around seven, I hurt myself. Like most children, I played the typical childhood sex games, but one of them went wrong and I ended up in hospital. There were also some strange memories, or were they fabrications of a tormented mind? I did not yet understand the details, or how they were connected, but it was clear that my block came from a sexual game when I was very young.

* * * *

Some months before the psychedelic journey, I had discovered through my journalling that I didn't love myself. Having finally acknowledged how hard I was on myself, how I repeatedly beat myself up, I worked hard at trying to love myself. Affirmations of self-love became my daily mantra, but honestly, they never worked. All I had done

was acknowledge my need to love myself, but I was still not seeing the change in myself that I craved.

In the weeks following the MDMA journey, I set to work loving myself once again, forgiving myself, integrating the memories and trusting the words of the wise one. I held onto her words like a life raft and felt like I was making progress. Like the journey had been a success.

There was one thing I could not resolve though – the experience my seven-year-old self had had was definitely not normal. In a vain attempt to find someone who had done what I had done, I devoted hours to research, but I kept coming up empty. Returning to the same conclusion time and again: I am Broken. Twisted. Deviant.

The universe has a funny way of working, and I see my path to understanding so clearly now. 2023 was the year that I demanded answers to the questions that had plagued my life. Everything was conspiring to give me the answers I sought, and I was being guided into a confrontation with my sexuality.

The confrontation rose in my full awareness that day when I met the lad for lunch and experienced the foreign feeling of arousal. In the days after that lunch, I was climbing the walls with unsatiated sexual hunger. After discussing it with a friend, she suggested I proposition the lad, which I duly did. In hindsight, I am so relieved he turned me down. That confrontation was sent to start me on the path to my sexual healing, it wasn't sent so that I would act on it.

Some years back I experienced a tantric yoni massage, and I decided to start researching tantric masseuses here in Cape Town. I needed release. I felt like a caged animal with all these needs driving through me. Having been in perimenopause for about five years already, I had been enjoying

the absence of sexual desire from my life. It felt like it had uncomplicated a lot of things that I had previously complicated so very well. And now they were all rushing back in and creating massive confusion in my daily life.

Maybe this was a menopausal thing? I knew I was getting closer, as my periods were about six months apart by this time. Was it possible for menopause to cause a spike in desire? Through my research, I discovered it could happen, but still, I felt like I was adrift in a foreign ocean full of feelings I wanted to act on, but knew they'd hurt me as they had before.

I journalled. I integrated. I loved myself. I forgave myself. I took myself on long hikes deep into the mountains and processed my thoughts. I wrestled. And still the desire coursed through me. My whole life had been defined by misspent sexual desire, and I felt utterly defeated.

Was this my life? Sexual desire had only ever driven me to do things that made me feel empty afterwards. I did not want to go back to that place. I was tired of all the meaningless sex, but I knew I needed to do something to resolve this pent-up sexual energy. It didn't take me long to find my masseuse, but I was still hesitating. Did I want to open this can of worms?

I wavered – could I cure this horniness with yet another sexual encounter? Justifying it to myself, I told myself it's not full sex and if I am paying for this experience, surely it would be different. I was terrified of going there again. Of opening the lid on my sexuality once more. What if I hadn't changed and I turned back into the voracious beast that I had been some years ago? I didn't want that. I was done with that life.

For the first two decades of my adulthood, I had embraced my sexuality. With an inclusive and curious attitude to sex, I told myself that I was exercising my power. I have since journalled through these memories and seen how empty they left me, how they pushed me into ever more bizarre situations, and increasingly heavy drug use. Sex had only ever hurt me.

* * * *

After four months mired in fear and climbing the walls with repressed desire, I was nearing my end. To the outside world, I am sure I looked normal, but the internal war was raging and it felt like I was losing. I overdosed on porn. I became a champion masturbator. I hovered between relief at the orgasms I could give myself, and disgust at the porn-addict I was turning into. All of this overlaid with a thick layer of fear. What was I becoming?

Finally, I gave in and booked the massage at the end of March 2024.

As I climbed up onto the massage table stark naked in a stranger's house, I started shaking. What was I thinking? My breath was ragged as I heard him enter the room and felt his hands start spreading warm oil over my back. It didn't take me long to relax under his skilled fingers, and by the time he asked me to turn over, I was feeling very comfortable.

It was a beautiful experience. Professional, but intimate. Skilled fingers exploring every inch of my body. I felt like the most beautiful woman in the world as I lay there under his masterful hands. When I orgasmed, I thought it was over. That's how it had always been for me. I had always 'prided' myself on my ability to orgasm, especially after hearing so many stories of women who cannot orgasm. I knew I had no problem in that area.

Many years ago, long before I joined the swinging community, I had a tantric lover for a time. He taught me about sexual energy connection, and we connected on a different plane. He could almost think me to orgasm. He showed me that my body was capable of multiple orgasms, but he was the only one capable of coaxing that level of pleasure from me. I put it down to a mythical experience that I would likely never repeat. And like everything else sexual, I packed it away in a box and never thought of it again.

Yet here on this massage table in this stranger's house, I felt the second one building. It felt spiritual, and I could feel my mind shutting down and my body taking over. Pleasure built in every cell and rose through every fibre of my being. I felt like I was floating outside of my body, yet never more present in my body. I felt so connected. Divine almost.

As I sat up on my elbows after the massage I looked down on my body and for the first time in years, I thought how beautiful it was. This thought was almost as surprising as the desire I'd experienced at lunch. Having gained a lot of weight over the years I wasn't happy with how I looked and tried to avoid my naked reflection in mirrors. Yet here I was appreciating my naked beauty in my orgasmic afterglow.

* * * *

A few days later I was sharing this experience with a friend and told her it had created a desire in me to explore my sexuality. It occurred to me that I'd had a love-hate relationship with sex all my life, and it was time to dive into this thing, to understand myself. It was time to face the demon who'd shown her face six months ago. The demon I thought I'd slayed but now realised I had only woken.

My friend and her husband invited me to dinner a few days later, and I had a moment where I thought... hmmm... I

wonder if this is where they put the moves on me. When I had first met them, I had a feeling they were into something. When you come from a swinging community, it's easy to pick up on those vibes.

Over dinner, her husband told me about his kink – he was into spanking. I tried to be all mature about it, and have a reasonable conversation, but honestly – spanking?! Why do women degrade themselves by allowing themselves to be spanked? What is it with these men who need to spank women, who need to dominate women? I made it very clear that spanking is NOT my thing, and no one was putting me over their knee! All in a very mature and reasonable manner of course. No need to ostracise friends I was actually quite fond of. But I needed to draw the boundary lines.

He also told me about his profile on FetLife and suggested I sign up if I intend exploring my sexuality. I nodded thoughtfully, but my inner dialogue was going, “Oh hell no!” I did not have a fetish for goodness’ sake. BDSM and all that weird stuff was just not my bag. So degrading! I have punished myself enough over the years, and do not need to be punished or degraded by anyone else.

Over the next few days, this internal dialogue played itself out like a broken record. Eventually, I grudgingly admitted to myself that *50 Shades of Grey* was a bit of a turn-on. But still, I wrestled with the disgust I felt for that expression of sexuality.

For years I had felt like I was broken. Like a closet deviant. I professed my love for sex, but it had hurt me. I felt dirty and unworthy after most encounters. What is wrong with me, I wondered? I started researching that childhood incident again to find out if there was new research. Maybe I wasn't the only one. Maybe I was normal.

But nothing had changed. The conclusion I kept coming to was that I was Broken. Twisted. Deviant. As long as I could keep that memory locked away, everybody would think I was normal.

The newly kindled fires of desire raged on though, and my thoughts kept returning to my unresolved attitudes about sex. I knew I had to face it, but I was trapped in a fear so palpable that I would start shaking at the mere thought of going there. Never before had I experienced such dissonance, and it was suffocating me.

* * * *

They say that when the student is ready, the teacher appears. A friend had recently started his life coaching business and I offered to be his first client. Perhaps he could help me figure out what my block was. Because as much as I thought the psychedelic journey had done the trick, it hadn't. Once again, I skirted the fact that I needed to explore my sexuality and thought that some nice safe life coaching might do the trick.

He asked me to give him an overview of my life in our first session. Hearing me tell my story that way shocked me to the core. There was nothing but misery. I was a wreck. I wrote my coach a ridiculous email and confessed that I needed to explore my sexuality in our sessions. This embarrassed me acutely, and I gave him every 'get out of jail free' card I could think of. I told him I wanted to talk about it, but talking about it made me horny, and when I get horny, I get irresponsible. There were words I needed to say that had never been said, but I couldn't utter them. I begged for help and pushed him away in the same breath.

Bless him – he took it in stride and simply confirmed our next session.

The strength of my emotions confounded me. I cried for two days. When I thought about the words I would have to say to him, I started shaking uncontrollably. The fear in the back of my throat was palpable. It was like bile, thick and bitter. I had an insane desire to run to the edge of the world and launch myself off the side. I felt like I was in the grip of a fever – the madness was all-consuming.

* * * *

Four weeks later, I had confronted the demon and was a different person. I will always remember the day that I dropped the belief system that I am Broken. Twisted. Deviant. It was 2 May. When I woke up that morning, I had the strongest sense of intuition I'd had in years – I knew something good was going to happen that day, but I had no idea that I would change my life.

Sometimes I do not recognise this new me who has changed her belief systems so radically. I confronted the shame that had trapped me for forty years and released it. My sexual identity has resolved itself and in doing so, I have understood myself better than I have before. I have learnt who I am, and I am proud of who I am. I do not need to hide the depths of my darkness – I have learnt to embrace my shadow, and it has liberated me.

My confidence has been raised to new levels. I am walking differently, talking differently, making eye contact differently. When I walk into a room, I can feel the energy shift the way it used to, but it's different. It's not dripping with sexuality; it's rooted in power. I accessed my power as a woman. I am sexy, but not sexual. I never knew there was a difference, but I feel it now. It is the realest most powerful sensation I have experienced.

The weight has started falling off me, and I have lost fifteen kilograms so far. Diet and exercise no longer rule my life – everything I do has become intuitive. For the first time ever, I am eating whatever I want, and food doesn't control me. Intuitively, I felt like I needed to start fasting, and I do a twenty-four hour fast once a week. For the rest of the week, I ask my body what it wants to eat. Although I am eating differently, I'm loving my food more than ever. It's easy because I am making the decisions that feel right for me today and no longer fighting to make the decisions I need to make.

My porn-addiction disappeared. Because I have learnt to love myself and give myself the ultimate gift of a life brimming with pleasure, I no longer have a need to watch the things that make me feel disgusted. There are still desires that rise in me, but I have learnt to transmute that energy into the things I choose. The things that are good for me. I choose when to act on a desire and when to transmute it. It brings me an enormous sense of personal power because I no longer feel controlled.

My income tripled in that first month after dropping the belief systems. And it is happening the same way my weight is resolving itself. Intuitively. Not consciously. I am no longer chasing revenue, it's flowing. Naturally and easily.

My mindset around my business has changed radically. I am doing things in business I haven't done previously. Tackling the things that have always confounded me. For the first time, I feel like my business has a real strategy, and every day I am moving the needle on my vision for the future. It's not a hardship, it's flowing.

For years I have worked ON things, now things are working. I have entered flow state, and it feels permanent. Friends and colleagues keep asking me what has changed because I

am wearing my new identity on my face. I cannot hide the transformation I have experienced, and I am looking better than I have in the last decade. Finally, I see myself as beautiful, inside and out. I am whole.

Everything changes when belief systems change – I have known this theoretically, yet this is the first time I have experienced it on such a profound level. Things that I have wrestled with for years are resolving themselves. Naturally and easily. Sometimes I don't even notice them until months later when I start wondering how it happened or when it happened.

This is the life I have always wanted for myself, and for the first time, I see limitless possibilities up ahead. There have been so many changes in such a short space of time – it is hard to say which is the most profound. But I am going to say it's the joy. I have joy bubbling out of me like I have not experienced before, and it's the most incredible feeling I have experienced. Even better than those earth-shattering orgasms, because the joy lasts, it doesn't peak and dip like orgasms.

Sometimes I catch myself doing something silly, and the laughter bubbles out of me. No longer the recrimination, the familiar chant of being Broken. Twisted. Deviant. Now I treat myself the same way I would treat a lover: with indulgence, with humour, with love.

The music of my soul echoes through my house and my car and I dance my way through my days. I have never seen anyone dance in their car the way I do. I don't do it for the looks I get, I do it because the joy I am experiencing cannot be contained. I am more tolerant of both myself and others, and far less judgemental than I have ever been. Because the blanket of depression has lifted, I sleep less. I have more energy and vitality than I had before.

I feel like I have found a new drug, and I am addicted! I am in love with life in a way I never thought I'd get to experience. Life still has its challenges, but they do not shake me anymore. I know who I am, and I move through my days more purposefully than ever.

This is where my life begins!

* * * *

In my professional world, I coach in three areas: Vision, Identity and Purpose. If I had to choose, identity coaching is my favourite. My clients continually experience massive transformations in their lives because of the identity work I do with them. Yet as the years passed, I increasingly felt like a fraud. How could they achieve success at my hands, yet I could not?

Now I know the answer: I closed my sexuality off. I took a part of my identity, and I locked it away in a box. I had used my sexuality to quite literally burn the house down, and I was adamant that I would not open that door again, lest the flames consume me.

But I did. I opened the door, and I acknowledged my sexuality. I brought it into the light. I said the words I had never said. I experienced the things I never thought I would.

And the house didn't burn. Instead, I rose like a phoenix from the ashes. New. Old belief systems gone. Blocks washed away like the evening tide. A click. After wrestling with my shit for over a decade, all it took was the courage to go deep.

I have stepped into my power, and it feels like I have stepped into the light. Like I have opened a door of possibility that I always strove for yet felt out of reach. And it swung open, easily and effortlessly.

The profound importance of integrating ALL the parts of our identity.

And this is why I have chronicled this story. It is unusual, and somewhat explicit, but it is the most beautiful thing I have experienced, and the world needs to hear it.

This book catalogues the lessons I have learnt on this journey. How those lessons have freed me. How sexual identity frames our full identity. How sexual liberation can create holistic liberation. This book will always be a perpetual monument to the power of becoming a woman at forty-seven years old.

If you'd like to read the full book, order it here:
<https://chantellebotha.org/>