



Swimming with Elephants: My Unexpected Pilgrimage from Physician to Healer

Sarah Bamford Seidelmann

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After two decades in the study and practice of medicine, Sarah Seidelmann took a three month sabbatical to search for a way to feel good again. Having witnessed human suffering early in her career and within her own family, she longed for a way to address more than just the physical needs of her patients and to live in a lighter, more conscious way.

Swimming with Elephants tells the eccentric, sometimes poignant, and occasionally hilarious experience of a working mother undergoing a bewildering vocational shift from physician to shamanic healer. During that tumultuous period of answering her call, Sarah met an elephant who would become an important spirit companion on her journey, had bones thrown for her by a shaman in South Africa, and traveled to India for an ancient Hindu pilgrimage, where she received the blessing she had been longing for. Ultimately, she discovered an entirely different way of healing, one that she had always aspired to, and that enabled her to help those who are suffering.

Editorial Reviews

Review

"This is an exceedingly vulnerable, beautifully written book and the most genuine spiritual memoir I have ever read. It is also--in many hilarious moments--laugh out loud funny." --Maria Bamford, Comedian and star of Netflix Original Series Lady Dynamite

"I LOVED THIS BOOK. Sarah takes us on an intimate tour of the hero's journey. She's a brilliant storyteller...making sense of the baffling journey from the ordinary world into the mystical and back again. I didn't want it to end." --MeiMei Fox, New York Times bestselling author

"A fascinating, amusing, and wise account of how someone born with a shaman's predilections, raised in a rationalist culture, finds her way back to her true self." --Martha Beck, New York Times bestselling author of Expecting Adam

"Sarah Bamford Seidelmann has amassed heaps of wisdom in her courageous leap from the safe realm of medical science into the unknown -- the world of spirit. In this incredibly honest and compassionate memoir, you feel as though you're soaking in her courage and wisdom on every page. Even better, you do so laughing." --Jaimal Yogis, author of Saltwater Buddha and The Fear Project

"From the lakes of Minnesota to the Ganges River in India, Sarah Seidelmann's transformative journey from MD to shamanic healer is a refreshingly honest and very funny tale of spiritual growth." --Matt Adrian, author of The Guide to Troubled Birds

About the Author

Sarah Bamford Seidelmann is a fourth-generation physician turned shamanic healer and life coach, who deeply enjoys shenanigans. She's a frequent guest blogger at Maria Shriver's site for Architects of Change and has led sold-out retreats combining surfing and shamanism in Hawaii and a sacred pachydermal pilgrimage to Thailand. She loves to help others find their own "feel good" so they can live courageously and enthusiastically. Visit Sarah at followyourfeelgood.com.

Swimming with Elephants: My Unexpected Pilgrimage from Physician to Healer Details

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From Reader Review Swimming with Elephants: My Unexpected Pilgrimage from Physician to Healer for online ebook

Heidi Barr says

A lovely read that inspired me to remember what's truly important, and to continue to work toward it. Refreshing and funny.

Sydney says

Not really what I expected, but still a nice read. The author was very descriptive and I was able to picture the smallest details in her writing.

Carefree Toni says

Hard for the book to live up to the presentation of her journey - complete with the incredible kitchen

Great to hear someone followed their true calling even if it wasn't mainstream and as lucrative as a doctor.

Lois says

it's about a physician who takes a whole new direction in healing. learned about holy places in India , customs and the work of a shaman.

Quinn Horvath says

Interesting book. Sarah really hit her stride when we made it to India.

Christie says

I'll start with what I liked. I loved the part near the end of the book about the author's time in India. It was descriptive, it was compelling, and it made me want to pack right up and head to India immediately, or even better, next time Kumbh Mela is held. Also, the author seems like a kind person, who really cares. But I just couldn't connect with her story on some fundamental level. Maybe I just don't believe, or maybe her ability to take time off and pay thousands of dollars to travel and attend conferences or pilgrimages is too far from my reality.

Heidi says

I read about her relationship with her father, her medical training, her marriage, her kids, her husband, her wealth, her indecision about being a pathologist, working part-time, her ADD, her trip to Africa, and then I just didn't care about her life anymore. I wish the book started where I abandoned it because I may have enjoyed it more.

Jessica says

I loved this book! I have been on my spiritual path for some time now but have never really fully explored the world of shamanism. I loved Sarah's story about fearlessly following her heart and intuition into a new path, and I learned so much about animal totems and spiritual journeying along the way. I had always kind of looked up animal symbolism for a while now but I had no idea how in depth this practice really was or how connected these instincts were to a true, magical way of living.

I'd really recommend this book to anyone else looking to radically shift their lives towards their true path and curious about taking their spiritual practice to new, deeper levels.

Brenda says

lines from the book that I liked:

p.98: when worried: "just get your own feel good on and have fun!"

p.99: when too serious: "Heyoka is the sacred clown contrarian of the Lakota people of the Great Plains of North America who know how to restore balance by creating mayhem, violating taboos, and acting out or saying things considered unthinkable by society."

p. 109: "if you complain to a shaman or medicine person of being disheartened, dispirited, or depressed, they would ask one of four questions:When did you stop being enchanted by stories? When did you stop finding comfort in the sweet territory of silence?"

I enjoyed the quotations at the beginning of each chapter...and found it interesting and delightful that the author used so many from children's literature! This one on p. 123:

"Surely it is cruel to cut down a very fine tree! Each dull, dead thud of the axe hurts the little green fairy that lives in its heart. Beatrix Potter, The Fairy Caravan"

...and another on the next page, by Madeline L'Engle in "A Wrinkle in Time": "I don't understand it any more than you do, but one thing I've learned is that you don't have to understand things for them to be."

p. 261: on mothers leaving their children for a while: " I want to broadcast this on a megaphone to every mother or person who feels tied down by their circumstances or otherwise reluctant to leave their post for an adventure: Go! Seize your adventures! Everyone will benefit!"

p. 267: "Toward calm and shady places I am walking on the earth." Anishinabe/Ojibway song

Kristina Schwartz says

Fascinating. Enjoyed learning through Sarah and was encouraged to look at things with new perspective.

christa says

Where to begin. Where. To. Begin. This memoir chronicles Seidelmann's growing discontent as a pathologist, and the route she takes to become a shamanic healer -- while following words of wisdom from an otherworldly cast of animals like Mama Bear and Alice, a festively dressed elephant. She meets them while she's in a trance-like state that she achieves by listening to shamanic drumming on her headphones, but she can find rocks to talk to her in the woods, too.

I love this book. It's full of great ideas about reinvention, bravery, and chasing happiness and fulfillment. It's also quirky, earnest, honest. Plus, if you ever meet Seidelmann, you'll swear the sun shines directly onto her face at all times.

Amy Doeun says

I had the privilege of hearing Sarah read and couldn't wait to start reading her book. Her funny, quirky personality shines in this book where she shares some very intimate questions and moments as she works to heal herself first and the world.

Tanya says

Unfortunately, this book reads like a first draft. Run-on sentences, spelling errors, punctuation problems galore. I love books on this subject matter, but found this one impossible to read, because it seems to have not been proofread or edited for structure, focus and basic grammar.

Karen Stubenvoll says

Amazing book! I was captivated by Sarah's story — couldn't put it down! A brave & honest memoir.
