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# ALIGNED

*An invitation  
to never  
forget the  
pleasure  
of the  
journey*



Written by Harriet McEntire Lanka  
*Introduction by Scott Moore*

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Never Forget The Pleasure  
Of The Journey...

Cheers,

*Harriet*

# Aligned

An Invitation To Never Forget The Pleasure  
Of The Journey

By Harriet McEntire Lanka

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## *Dedications and Acknowledgements*

**To the Universe**, Thank you for being my faithful companion in this life.

**To my husband Adam**, Thank you for patiently and lovingly reading every story I've ever written and for being an incredible partner in life, love and parenting. You have been a container of unconditional love and support for me since the day we met, and your belief in us and me is one of the reasons this book finally came to life. I love you boundlessly.

**To my two daughters, Aurora and Ariel**, Thank you for ushering me into a new experience of myself as a mother. I hope reading this story someday helps you both see who I was before we met and somehow inspires you along your own journeys. I love you both boundlessly.

**To my Mom and Dad**, I love you both so much and I know this wasn't easy to read. So thank you for your trust, love and support along this wild and unpredictable "Hbomb" journey I've been on. I can't guarantee a smooth and easy journey from here on out, but I can guarantee one that's interesting and full of love.

**To my Sister Katherine**, Thank you for being Align Spa's best client since the beginning and a source of wisdom, support and love for me. I love you so much.

**To my brother Jay**, I love you. If you read this I hope you enjoy it.

**To Calli and Amy at The Align Spa**, Thank you for being my friends and companions along this Aligned journey. I'm so proud to be celebrating 20 years of the Align Spa with you both and I'm excited for where we are headed because it keeps getting better. I hope you enjoy the story and I'm excited for you to add yours.

**To Erin at the Spa**, Thank you for helping us bring "Align in Costa Rica" to life."

**To the front office team and therapists at The Align Spa**, Thank you for your trust, hard work, loyalty and dedication to the Align vision. I hope you enjoy this story and that it helps you get to know me and the spa a little better.

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**To Anyone and Everyone mentioned by name or description in this book**, Thank you for your contribution and presence in my life even if it was in a messy or confusing way. I learned a lot. *Peace be the journey for us all.*

**To Anyone and Everyone NOT mentioned in this book**, Your story time will come, I promise. I'm just getting warmed up. Over the next year, I'll release more on the book's website and then print a full copy of everything in a year.

**To all my friends near and far who have read my stories over the last 11 years**, Thank you for encouraging me to continue writing with your helpful and positive feedback.

**To everyone on Facebook who kept saying, "You should write a book,"** Thank you for your encouragement ... I finally did it!

**To Scott Moore**, Thank you for saying yes to this ALIGNED journey with me, it has been such a pleasure knowing and working with you. Cheers!

*Harriet*

## *Introduction*

By Scott Moore

“So, I have an idea ....”

In the nearly 2 decades that I’ve known Harriet, I’ve learned to expect this as her opener to many of our conversations.

I met Harriet in yoga class almost 15 years ago. As a career yoga teacher and author, I meet a lot of students. I’ve become friends with many but few are like Harriet. There’s something about Harriet’s infectious exuberance, her zest for life, and most of all her willingness to say “Yes!” to the opportunities, adventures, and challenges that life offers.

What I’ve come to understand about Harriet in the many years that I’ve known her is that she’s so good at so many things and feels no compulsion to stay in one lane. She’s not afraid to think big and move in whatever direction or idea her muse is whispering to her at the moment.

I’ve been privileged to observe from a distance as well as experience close and firsthand some of Harriet’s mad skills, such as the opening of and success of Align, both her and Align’s expansion into Costa Rica, and the time she gave me a stone massage, aligning my body and energy so perfectly that I emerged feeling (forgive me) completely stoned. If a good massage therapist is like Luke Skywalker, wielding The Force for good to bring harmony and balance to one’s inner universe, then unquestionably Harriet is Yoda.

But one of Harriet’s greatest skills, one that is actually less of a skill and more of a superpower, is not only her ability to conjure up big, exciting, and daring ideas—ideas that most would pass off as too difficult or too improbable—but also her ability to rally the enthusiasm and resources of other good people around her so that the big idea not only involves many people, but more importantly *benefits* many people. Plus, she’s not afraid to tackle the invariable speed bumps that come along with big ideas and can follow an idea all the way through to its completion.

So, when she approached me with her latest, “So, I have an idea . . .,” and asked if I could help her to organize the stories that would commemorate Align’s 20th anniversary, I’ve learned enough about who she is and have seen enough of the fruits of previous ideas to give it an enthusiastic, “Yes! I’m your wingman.” Yes, she said that she had some stories. Yes, she said they were wild. Yes, she said they were about Align. But what I didn’t realize until I dove into this project is that Harriet doesn’t just have *some* stories. She doesn’t have *several* stories. She has an *entire library* of stories that somehow, magically, all point to the miracle and beauty of revealing life’s mysterious and mesmerizing pathway. Our decidedly difficult task was to somehow parse out those stories that could stand on their own and connect the dots to illustrate the growth of Harriet that led to the creation and evolution of Align.

What touched me as I read these stories, selecting those that belonged in this book and those that would be better served in a different, more expanded work, was that I thought I knew Harriet. I thought I kind of understood her. But pouring over these volumes of stories gave me an extraordinary, clear, and bravely intimate look into her world and showed me the astounding levels of interconnection and kismet that transpired for all the details in her life, both big and small, to form the incredible person that she is and by extension, to form Align to be the force of nature that it has become.

My lingering sentiment after reading these stories is awe. These stories remind me of the sheer perfection of the Universe which maps out and connects a dizzying array of details and people, all whose stories and lives weave together into the perfect tapestry of life. These stories remind me that life is a journey and adventure, one that is impossible to plan, perhaps all planned for us, a plan to which we must bravely stare in the face and simply say, “Yes!”

I believe that the primary message of this book, to never forget the pleasure of the journey, is a truth that we must *all* tattoo onto some part of our being so that we never forget. I’m grateful for people like Harriet and places like Align because both exist as messengers to remind us of this truth.

May we all move through this journey and adventure of life, continually adding to one another's story, and may we always remember that the pleasure is in the journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a horizontal line extending to the right.



## *Welcome*

This “Aligned” story has been waiting patiently to be told for a long time. So what better time to share it than the 20th anniversary of one of the main characters in the story, [The Align Spa](#), in Park City, Utah. And if we’ve never met before, my name is Harriet McEntire Lanka and I am the owner and founder of the Align Spa and it’s a pleasure to be writing to you.

The Align Spa has brought such immense joy, healing, learning, growth and support to my life over the years, as well as to so many others’ lives. And though Align may be just a brick-and-mortar business, it is also a business built on a firm foundation of love, dreams, risk, trust, perseverance and commitment from many people. I am so deeply grateful for the journey it has taken me on because it sure has been a wild one.

So in honor of our 20 years together, I’ve written this memoir/love letter to show how some of the twists, turns and curve balls I’ve experienced in life both led to and contributed to the opening, running and thriving of the spa so far. These stories are heart-warming, mind-blowing and redemptive. But most of all, they’re ready to be seen.

And by you reading this, I believe it makes you an essential part in the story because when we witness each other’s journeys, it helps everyone heal, see more clearly and have more compassion and understanding for each other’s life experiences. Sharing also helps to remind us that we’re all in this life together and we need each other.

My hope is that some piece of this story awakens something untold and wild inside of you as well.

But first, what is the Align Spa and why does it exist?

It's true that Align is the oldest day spa in Park City which I'm proud of, but what I really want to share is the deeper, more existential WHY behind it all that's taken me several years to uncover.

When I first moved to Costa Rica in the summer of 2013, I began to write my life's stories for the first time and I began piecing together a bigger picture of both my life and Align's mission. Poco a poco, I began to see that everything (yes, even the tragedies and heartbreaks) had a purpose, which brought me great peace.

For a long time I've kept these stories mostly to myself or my inner circle, because the idea of putting myself "out there" with this type of personal AND business story has been scary. However, I feel ready now because I believe this story is important and that you can't see, understand, or fully appreciate the full picture of me or the Align Spa without it.

So away I go...

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harriet". The letters are fluid and connected, with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the word.

*“The events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order, a timetable not necessarily — perhaps not possibly — chronological ... it is the continuous thread of revelation.”*

~Eudora Welty

## *The Pact*

What if I told you that creating the Align Spa in 2003 was part of me making good on a promise I made with the Universe a long time ago? And what if I told you this promise happened when I was in between life and death, in a divine “waiting room” so to speak? During that time, I was awaiting re-entry into my life after I had been in a nearly fatal car accident on April 2, 1994. And while “waiting,” I learned that in order for me to be able to return to my life and live out the rest of it, I would need to fulfill a divine to-do list which included, but was not limited to, going through a lot of difficulties which involved healing myself and helping others heal. I also learned that the journey was going to be very difficult at times but there would also be a lot of joyful times as well. In the end, it would all be worth it. So when asked if I really wanted to go back to my life knowing how challenging it was going to be, my answer was, “YES!”

I told you this was going to be a wild story ...

Many years later, it became clear to me that the Align Spa has been a flagship of that pact I made with the Universe. It has been like a friend who has been right by my side as I’ve embraced the joys and challenges along my healing journey.

*“Never forget the pleasure of the journey.”*

These words are written on the outside of the building of Align, they are part of The Align Spa logo and they are tattooed on my back. They are both a motto and a reminder that life is precious and everything is happening exactly as it should (even when it doesn’t make sense). So, we need to do our best to lean

in and find the good or light in everything ... especially when things feel upside down.

Of course, it's not only me and my stories that have made Align possible. Align is a constellation of stories. The characters of these stories are people both directly and indirectly associated with the spa. They are the talented and dedicated staff, the loyal clients, the friends, lovers, family members, strangers, healers, partners, unicorns, sons-of-bitches, benefactors and even charlatans. Every character has been essential to the story of Align because they all helped push me and the spa toward growth and served to inspire me and the Align team to lean into the bigger vision of what the spa could be. Each character and each story in one way or another taught us ultimately how we could be of service to ourselves and each other and create a safe and reliable space for healing.

I know that no one story can illuminate either my story or the entire Align story. Each one is like a unique glimmer of a star. Yet when connected, these stars all begin to form a unique constellation, making a shape we can point to in the darkness which lights up our imagination and gives us direction and hope. It's my goal that these stories shine light on some previously unknown or untold part of the overall journey, helping us all to connect and understand where we fit in with all of the other events of this beautiful and ever-changing Universe.

So onward we go.

## *The Power of My Middle Finger*

It was the Summer of 1993 and I'd just moved from Dallas, Texas to Park City, Utah, a move that was equal parts exciting and terrifying.

I was unclear why my parents chose to uproot our family from Texas to Park City, but I was along for the ride with my parents, brother and sister to make this small town that used to be just our destination for ski vacations, into our new home.

I was 16 and a sophomore in high school when we moved, which felt like a tricky time to enter a new school. The move seemed easier and more seamless for my siblings since my sister was already in college and my younger brother in middle school. My parents quickly integrated into a small spiritual community at St. Luke's Episcopalian Church so they seemed to feel immediately at home in Park City in that group.

Though I did believe in a higher power that I couldn't name or describe, church wasn't my thing so I rarely attended church in Utah. Growing up in Texas, I had to go to church 6 days a week, because I attended an Episcopalian school from Kindergarten through 6th grade. That meant we had a chapel service 5 days a week. Then, on Sundays I sang in the choir and attended Sunday school. *It was a lot of church.* So when we moved to Park City and my parents didn't require me to attend, I felt like I had just been dealt a get-out-of-jail-free card. And since I was free to choose, I mostly opted out. *Sorry God ... it wasn't you, it was me.*

In Texas, from 7th–9th grade, I attended a conservative, all-girls prep school where we had to wear a uniform so the idea of transferring to a co-ed, public high school with no uniform was a welcomed change. I'd also unintentionally burned a few friendship bridges at my last school so I was open and curious about having a fresh start in Utah.

But even with all those positives, I had a hard time finding where I fit into this new ski town. From my perspective, social groups at the high school were firmly in place as most kids had either grown up together in Park City or at least started high school together. Plus I didn't have a clear "in" to help me enter any of the existing groups. I wasn't Mormon, I wasn't particularly athletic, I wasn't good looking enough that it set me apart in any way, and I wasn't an overachiever at school. Therefore, I felt like I blended in, but not in a helpful way when trying to meet new friends. I was often on the outside looking in, trying to find my people and where I fit in.

More than anything, I just wanted to be wanted, noticed, or even just acknowledged by someone. And this need made me perk up for just about anything and just about anyone. For instance, during my first week at school, someone left a note tucked in my locker that said, "You are hot." It didn't come with an invitation to sit together at lunch or to hang out on the weekend, but the quiet anonymous nod my way did give me an increase in confidence. My dad told me he remembers me coming home one day from school saying how much I loved my new high school, and then he and my mom got it out of me that it was because I got a love note in my locker.

Everyone loves a good unexpected love note.

Then along came a guy who I'll call "Mr. Ski Town" and when HE showed mild interest in 16-year-old me, I was all in. We were friends at first, and he was popular, handsome, fun and witty. So why he wanted to spend time with me of all people, when he was already surrounded by others more popular than me, was both confusing and intriguing. Perhaps he saw something in me that I didn't yet.

Mr. Ski Town would invite me skiing, he'd invite me to his house for dinner with his family and he'd invite me to small social gatherings on the weekend. However, the biggest invite of all time came when Mr. Ski Town asked me to prom, which was a big deal for me. I felt like I'd finally broken through the seemingly impenetrable walls of Park City High School's small, confusing and somewhat complex gauntlet of social circles. Spending time with Mr. Ski Town made me feel like I fit in, like I'd found my people and like I was finally settling into life in this small ski town and making it feel like home.

Mr. Ski Town for the win.

However, just as I began daydreaming of a "happily ever after" with Mr. Ski Town, he invited me to lunch at the nearby Pizza Hut on a normal school day and dumped me with no warning. It was awful. He said he needed to focus on other things and didn't have time for a girlfriend. Ugh ok ... and I felt the air deflating from my "life is so great" balloon I'd accidentally created in my head. I felt furious, confused and a little embarrassed, especially when I learned that shortly after breaking up with me, Mr. Ski Town had turned around and asked a gorgeous cheerleader to prom. Perhaps that was who he wanted to focus on. In a matter of hours, I went from loving Park City to hating it and I wanted to exit this new life that I was just beginning to enjoy and feel at home in.



Is anyone listening? Help! Please!

The Universe heard my call and quickly sent me a plot twist in my story. Enter Ski Bum Carl and his timing couldn't have been better. He was older, way cooler than me and he worked at Park City Mountain Ski Resort. He was over 21 and I met him in the parking lot of the ski resort one afternoon as I was on my way to pick up my paycheck from my first ever job at "The Shirt Off my Back." And seeing as how I was still shaken up from being unceremoniously dumped at Pizza Hut by Mr. Ski Town, I felt it would be new and interesting to experiment with being someone different. So, when Ski Bum Carl asked me my name I told him it was Katie. It felt so invigorating and daring. In addition to lying about my name, I also didn't *exactly* reveal to him how old I was, nor did I mention I was only a sophomore in high school. But he also didn't ask so I figured it wasn't exactly a lie.

In my mind he was a great match for this moment in time when I wanted to disappear from my existing high school life and be someone new. We hung out a few times and I began to forget all about Mr. Ski Town, his cheerleader and getting dumped and uninvited to prom. Finally, a win for me!

I soon learned that Ski Bum Carl and his friend were going on a rock climbing trip to Moab, Utah and the dates of their trip corresponded perfectly with my high school's Spring Break, so "Katie" invited herself along. I was excited to go to Moab with Ski Bum Carl and his friend, but this decision was also way out of my comfort zone so I wanted a single female friend to come along for the ride. I hadn't connected with a ton of girls at that point, especially ones that didn't have boyfriends and would go on a crazy adventure such as this, but I did have one in mind whom I'll refer to as "Spring Break Friend." I told

her the plan was to go on a multi-day rock climbing trip with Ski Bum Carl and his friend and she was all in. Except we knew both our parents would never go for this, so we created a plan.

Together Spring Break Friend and I concocted an elaborate story about how we were going on a trip to Moab with a church group called *Young Life*. I even went so far as to ask a guy friend to call my parents and tell them that he was one of the chaperones. The whole thing sounded so legit which is probably why my parents believed this story, though I had never mentioned this *Young Life* group before. Regardless, it worked and we laughed at our good fortune and figured that there was no way our parents would find out we'd told a lie, unless of course we ended up in the hospital ... but what were the odds of that happening? Slim to none. So we were so excited to go on this exciting adventure to Moab.

Almost 30 years later I still feel terrible about lying to my parents about this trip. I also still don't know if they ever learned the full truth. And if they did, they never mentioned it to me which I can also understand. The timing just never seemed right for me to bring up this HUGE awkward detail so it has remained unsaid. *Until now.*

Mom, Dad, if you're reading this and learning about this part of the story for the first time, I'm so sorry. I was clearly in a dark space. Please know I love you both so much.

Back to April 2, 1994 ...

I was 16 years old, Spring Break Friend was 15, and we were thrilled to be rolling down the highway in my soft top Jeep Wrangler, just outside of Price, Utah, about 115 miles from Moab. We were rocking out and singing at the top of our lungs to a new Counting Crows CD I'd just purchased the day before with the song, "Mr. Jones" set on repeat. Ski Bum Carl and his friend were driving slower behind us because their Land Cruiser was older and slower than my new Jeep. Life couldn't have been better and I was grinning ear to ear.

But apparently the Universe had different plans for us than our epic Spring Break rocking climbing trip in Moab. Shortly after leaving Price, something happened that caused my Jeep to spin around, skid off the road and roll 5 times down a hill. Spring Break Friend wasn't wearing her seat belt so she was thrown from the car, suffering a minor head injury and a broken leg. I was wearing my seat belt, so each time the Jeep rolled I hit my head—hard. The repeated impacts resulted in me having a significant Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), a seizure and ending up in a coma.

But amid this chaos, divine luck was immediately on our side.

A car full of medical school students happened to be traveling in the opposite direction towards us and they came around the bend just as my Jeep rolled the last time. They immediately called 911 and jumped into action to stabilize me and Spring Break Friend until the ambulance arrived.

Ski Bum Carl and his friend arrived at the accident scene after the medical school students and just before the ambulance and they too had to immediately jump into action to help. When I saw Carl a year later, he told me

that when he pulled up to the scene of the accident, he remembered hearing the song, "Mr. Jones " still playing on my stereo, so he walked over to my wrecked Jeep and turned the music off and removed my keys. To this day I still feel eerie and reminiscent when I hear that song. I wonder if he does, too.

After the ambulance arrived and loaded us up, the EMT's told Ski Bum Carl and his friend to meet us at the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City and that we'd be arriving by way of a Life Flight helicopter. They agreed and immediately turned around and drove back to where they'd started. No rock climbing trip to Moab for them anymore. Whoops.

The ambulance rushed me and Spring Break Friend to Price Hospital where a nurse used my very large, very 1994, plug-in car phone to call my parents, because that's where she found a number labeled, "Home." The nurse soberly informed them that I had been in a serious car accident, that I'd sustained a brain injury, and that my chances of survival were slim. She instructed my parents to get to the helicopter landing pad of University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City as soon as they could because that's where the Life Flight helicopter was taking us.

I can only imagine how shocking it would have been to receive that phone call. Especially since only about an hour before getting this call from the nurse, I'd called my parents to give them a status update that all was good, I was almost to Moab, and that I'd call them when I got there. So when they saw the car phone number pop on their caller ID, they answered thinking I was calling to say I'd arrived safely to Moab.

After receiving the shocking news about my status from the nurse, my parents immediately rallied their faithful friends from St. Luke's Church telling them what had happened and asking them to meet my parents at the hospital's helicopter pad. My parents then drove down the canyon between Park City and Salt Lake City to the hospital in an anxiety-induced daze, agreeing to accept whatever outcome was to be but also praying that somehow I'd be ok.

As the helicopter landed at the hospital, my vitals were slipping and the paramedics feared the worst. As they hoisted me off the helicopter and started to transport me into the hospital, my parents and their friends rushed towards my gurney and staged what can only be described as a spiritual intervention. According to my mom, their group all laid their hands on my body and earnestly prayed, therein witnessing my vitals instantly respond and improve. Seeing this, the paramedics were both surprised and pleased and gave a nod to the group that communicated, "Thank you, now please get the f— out of our way so we can get this girl into brain surgery and hopefully save her life."

I had severe fluid buildup in my left frontal lobe and an injury to an area called the hippocampus. The nurses immediately shaved most of the left side of my head, cut into the front left side of my skull and attached what looked like a unicorn horn, according to my mom's account. They were hoping to release the pressure on my brain and prevent an aneurysm.

Ski Bum Carl and his buddy eventually arrived at the hospital and awkwardly waited and worried with my parents for many hours while Spring Break Friend and I were in our separate surgeries. Many years later, my mom told me that two nice guys appeared to also be waiting for us in the hospital lobby, but she didn't understand who they were or why they kept calling me Katie. *Ugh.* I

didn't have the heart to tell her the real story, but it was also equally hard to keep her from the truth. So I changed the subject and did my best to avoid the topic altogether which I thought was the easier way out of such an impossible conversation at the time. I lost a lot of my short term memory after the accident due to Post Traumatic Amnesia, and some of my long term memory as well, but I did not forget about lying to my parents. Perhaps that was God punishing me for lying ... and not going to church (*wink*).

## *The List*

A big side note ...

In January 2014, almost 20 years after the accident, something huge and unforgettable happened. While at a business conference in Florida, I took on the energetic experience of a presenter on stage after seeing him in a neck brace and wanting to help him. I remember trying to do some Reiki and distance healing on him and I instantly became sick. I spiked a high fever, got dizzy, began shaking and I needed help, fast.

My husband Adam was with me and saw this whole exchange go down and staged his own energetic intervention and quickly removed me from the auditorium full of people, took me back to our nearby hotel and did a spontaneous healing session on me in our room.

While in session with Adam, I traveled back in time to April 10th, 1994, a little over a week after the accident, to that “waiting room” between life and death. There I saw my human body on the operating table, a team of surgeons surrounding me and a dizzying array of life-support machines attached to my motionless body. Also in the room was a figure who I can only describe as “Soul Harriet.” She was sitting on a shelf above my human body, legs dangling off the edge in a carefree way. She was both smiling and seemingly unconcerned that Human Harriet was on death’s doorstep. Soul Harriet was me, but different. She seemed to sparkle, and had long auburn hair tied up in a bun, she wore gray knee-length loose pants, her feet were bare and she had on a flowy loose purple tank top.

I watched as Soul Harriet floated off the shelf and over to a priest who was standing by the operating table, and she seemed to be negotiating the terms about how to re enter her human body. I watched as the priest gave her a piece of paper and I gathered it was a detailed list of things she was going to have to go through, grow through, accomplish, and teach, should she want to go back to her human life.

As I witnessed Soul Harriet reading over the list, I wanted more than anything to look over her shoulder and see what she was seeing. Because as her eyes scanned the list, they widened on account of what she was reading. I watched as she turned to the priest and pointed at different items on the list and said,

*“You mean I have to go through THAT to teach me about trust?”*

*“I have to endure HIM to learn how to value myself?”*

*“I have to get hurt THAT many times to find unconditional love?”*

*“Holy shit, THAT is what is going to make me start following my truth? Uhhh, that’s going to be rough.”*

The seemingly random trials, tests, twists and turns of my entire life were all clearly spelled out on that list. And though Soul Harriet seemed a little disgruntled at what lay ahead for Human Harriet, I sensed a little “Game on, Mission Accepted” in her as well. The priest was stoic and simply shrugged his shoulders saying he was just the messenger. He also reminded Soul Harriet that it wasn’t a list she got to choose from, as if she could opt in for some things and out of others based on her preference. This list was the life ahead of her, and it was this or nothing. Eventually, I watched Soul Harriet nod her head to the priest, and shake his hand indicating the deal was done—she’d agreed to the terms of my life, which was to say yes to



everything on the list. And with that, the priest left the room, but I swear, as he was leaving, he looked my way with a subtle, knowing grin.

As Witness Harriet, I wanted to both laugh and cry at the sheer perfection of the Universe. Though I couldn't physically see that list of challenges that Soul Harriet was reading from, I intuitively knew what it said. It was every difficulty I'd ever had, every relationship I'd ever learned from and every other seemingly random learning experience I'd grown through. This also confirmed to me that everything in my life HAD happened exactly as it was meant to and that I was on track, and moving in line with my purpose, which was to say "Yes" to life and help others heal.

I watched as Soul Harriet tucked the list in a pocket of her pants and then casually waltzed over to Human Harriet's body. I swear she also looked over at me, The Witness, and winked before stepping back into Human Harriet's body. Then, the two became one and Human Harriet arose from her coma and came back to her life.

With that, the vision was complete and I emerged from my healing session with Adam both laughing and crying. My fever had vanished and Adam hugged me tightly.

## *Back to April 10th, 1994 ...*

After a little more than a week in a coma, I gave the first signs to the hospital team that I was emerging from my coma. There was a doctor on rotation with a team of residents all standing by Human Harriet's bedside and the doctor repeatedly said, "Harriet, can you hear me? Harriet, can you give me a sign that you hear me?" Apparently I could hear him because I clenched my fist and raised my middle finger. *Ugh*, sorry Doc. I was done sleeping and I was ready to begin my healing journey. Game on!

## *Life 2.0: After The Accident And Discovering My Purpose*

After I emerged from my coma, Dr. Speed told my parents that my level of brain injury was excessive and that healing from it would take a lot of grit, determination and luck because there were no guarantees or clear maps of how to proceed after a brain injury.

I was annoyed and confused about why I was in a hospital, why half my head was shaved and why I couldn't walk. Due to my short term memory loss, my parents and the nurses had to repeatedly tell me where I was and what had happened. "Harriet, you've been in a car accident, you were in a coma and now you're in the hospital while you recover." And a few hours later, they'd need to tell me the same information all over again.

Many students from Park City High School came to visit me in the hospital which was so kind and also helpful for my recovery. However, my parents realized that soon after my friends left, I would have no recollection of their visit, which was disheartening. For example, my friend Vanessa came almost everyday to the hospital. However, my parents had to remind me everyday that she and others had come because I didn't remember. So to help me with my memory, my parents began to record the voices of people who came to visit, a strategy that helped both to document the visits and track my memory (or lack thereof).

Coming out of a coma and pressing restart on my life in Park City was incredibly challenging but also hard to describe. I had to learn to do so many things all over again like walking, writing and retrieving the words from my brain for what I wanted to say. When I went back to high school, the

reintegration was awful. Instead of going back to school and being met with congratulations for living, condolences for what happened, and/or well-wishes, it felt as though half the school gave me the evil eye. I quickly realized that I'd become a villain in the story of our accident since I was the one driving. There was little I could do to defend myself because all memory of the accident was wiped from my mind. Talk of what had happened was quiet and behind my back and only one or two friends from school had the courage to let me in on the rumors (*Thank you*). Spring Break Friend and my friendship was never the same after the accident. We didn't talk much after we got out of the hospital or at all when school began again. I had no idea what she was going through and the awkward separation between us prevented us from sharing our experiences with each other and healing together.

What I did know about Spring Break Friend, was that she had a cool new scar on her leg. It was long, big and in plain sight. She'd often wear short skirts to school that drew attention to it, and to me, it looked like she enjoyed showing it off to people. I probably would have felt the same with a scar like that. It showed that she'd gone through something big and invited her to share her side of the story about it. But my scars were not visible or noticeable, unless you count my unfortunate haircut as a scar. My scars were inside my skull or under my hairline, so people soon forgot that anything memorable had happened to me because I looked normal. But I felt anything but normal.

In addition to all the physical parts of my life I had to relearn, I also struggled to piece together some of the stories of my life up to that point, including people's names, how I knew them or what their roles were in my life. I'd see someone in school and couldn't remember whether we were friends or not and why. I'd be mortified with embarrassment when I'd be talking with

someone, enjoying our conversation, and when I would ask what I thought was a new question, they'd respond with, "Ummm...we already talked about that." My face would turn red and I'd want to run away. It was humiliating. This happened often and turned into a massive internal struggle of which most people were completely unaware. It made me want to stop socializing altogether.

Everyone thought of me as the lucky girl who got a second chance at life but I didn't feel lucky. In truth, I felt that this "second chance" was a massive burden. "You're here for a reason since you survived that," my mom would say, attempting to be inspiring. But these words felt like a heavy obligation to be or do something fabulous, miraculous, or noteworthy when most days it was a feat to simply remember my own locker combination.

After the coma, I had no recollection of what had transpired in the waiting room between life and death, between Soul Harriet, the Priest, and Human Harriet. I didn't know about my purpose to help people. I was simply overwhelmed with my own healing, trying to remember the most basic details of my life, while also trying to uncover AND discover who I was now.

Everything felt new, different and harsher.

My brain injury changed me both quickly and slowly in many ways. I became hyper-sensitive to everyone and everything, insanely intuitive, very introverted and a little psychic. Suddenly there was no filter to the world, like someone had left the volume turned up way too loud on everything. I never felt like I could relax or rest because I was on sensory overload. I also had a constant

pressure behind my left eye and soreness on the left side of my head, pain that still comes and goes if the weather is changing.

I began to slip into deep bouts of loneliness, depression and self-reliance. But I also didn't tell anyone because it was hard to understand and articulate what I was experiencing, let alone to explain it to someone else.

I needed a buffer from the world so my parents and I made an agreement that if I got A's in school, didn't drink alcohol and stayed off the radar of law enforcement, then I could do what I needed to do to heal. So I spent a lot of time alone at "The Red House," a duplex that belonged to our family and served as a rental property on one side for family and friends and my dad's office downstairs on the other side. This house turned into my safe and quiet refuge where I could turn down the dial of my constant state of mild to severe anxiety, overwhelm and hyperstimulation. It was a place where I could scream and cry without anyone looking at me like I was crazy.

Looking back, I also see that one of my greatest avenues for healing was Oprah. Being the 90's, her show was very popular, and I watched it before my accident, so returning to it felt comforting. It came on at the same time during the week and therefore gave me a routine to lean on. I had just enough time after getting out of school to go home, make a snack and settle onto the couch to turn on the TV and get my Oprah fix. This was my Harriet therapy time, a place to go when I felt lost or confused, which was often.

What I loved about Oprah was her genuine, vulnerable and nurturing nature. I also loved that she didn't have any expectations of me while I sat soaking in all the goodness she had to offer. Watching Oprah inspired me to reflect on

how my accident could be a good thing in my life and not just a tragedy I had to live with. It also made me more interested in other people and what sort of events had happened to them to create their life beliefs and story. I also think it was watching Oprah that helped lead me towards studying sociology in college.

For several months after the accident I had weekly Occupational Therapy sessions in Salt Lake City with a therapist named Laurie who helped me normalize some of the confusion, disorientation and anger I was feeling. I'd sometimes cry in her office or even yell and she'd just nod telling me to get it all out and that it was okay to feel this way. These sessions were very healing for me and surely planted a seed inside my heart to pay forward this powerful act of acknowledging others' experiences as a way to help them heal.

My parents wanted to help me but were lovingly unaware about how to help a teenager with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). There were no support groups for them so not knowing how to help me was not their fault. They did their absolute best and were just grateful I was alive. They felt that giving me freedom would help me find what I needed to heal. I was grateful for this strategy because though difficult, finding my own way was an important part of my experience.

In 1994, there was no easy access to information on brain injuries. The internet wasn't really a thing yet so sharing and getting information about TBIs was difficult. Still, my mom was extraordinary and worked very hard to research and understand what was happening to me in order to both connect with me and grasp what sort of life I could expect. She gathered as much information as she could on TBIs and made copies of the hospital journal I

wrote in as a way to show my high school teachers the enormity of my injury, but also show my healing and progression. She collected all the information into a large folder and then gave it to my teachers at school in exchange for giving me credit for the classes I missed.

After the accident I didn't feel like I could relate to anyone my own age anymore. I felt like I was 16 going on 30 and so I began hanging out with guys 10+ years older than me. I also turned to music and dancing as a way to help me process my complicated and lonely healing journey. Many nights I'd use my fake ID to go in the back door of local bars, then I'd keep to myself and dance the night away to my favorite bands, hoping no one would recognize me as being under age.

During this time, my parents were on their own healing journey and I was grateful that they gave me time, trust, space and distance to ride the wave of seeking and healing myself after my brain injury. My mom decided to go to graduate school for Divinity in California so she got on a plane every other weekend to go to class. My dad decided to start seeing a local Shaman, perhaps to access some deeper meaning to his life or this experience, I'm not sure. But despite all of the obvious changes happening to each of us personally, I don't remember us talking about it much or at all.

When I graduated high school I wanted to get as far away from Utah as possible as if Utah was the problem in my life. So, after touring colleges the summer before my senior year, I chose to attend a small liberal arts college in upstate New York called Hamilton. After a bit of a rough first year of college for a number of reasons, I decided to transfer to the University of Colorado at Boulder. There, the class sizes were blissfully big and I didn't have to live in a



small dorm room with 3 roommates. This allowed me to disappear, be anonymous and have my own experience, which I loved.

## *A Series Of Un(fortunate) Events*

When I moved to Boulder, Colorado in the Fall of 1997 for my Sophomore year of college, I also returned to whitewater kayaking, a hobby I remembered loving before my accident. I already had the gear and muscle memory for it, so having access to it again in Boulder made me instantly feel more at home in this new town. I had discovered whitewater kayaking while I was a kid at camp in North Carolina, and I loved it because it helped me feel unique because not many kayakers were girls, and if you were a left-handed kayaker, you required a special paddle, so that set me apart. Kayaking became a staple for me and also a way for me to socialize without needing to talk much or remember anything.

However, a problem soon arose in that I kayaked so much I would often dislocate my right shoulder, which was incredibly painful and resulted in me needing two different shoulder surgeries. My injuries and surgeries left my shoulders looking and feeling quite out of alignment and I had a very limited range of motion on my right side. It was challenging just to reach both arms up at the same time, or lift anything heavy off a shelf above eye level so my injuries made life challenging.

Though it created a lot of discomfort, kayaking truly was a blessing in my life. On account of my chronic shoulder pain, I met massage therapy, which would end up changing my life forever. I clearly remember one afternoon at the *Trident Cafe*, an adorable coffee shop on Pearl Street in downtown Boulder, when I was in line about to order my favorite drink, a peppermint hot chocolate, I heard a voice behind me say, "Are you aware of how

uneven your shoulders are?” I grinned and turned around to see a tall, blond, friendly-looking guy. It was true, my shoulders were uneven and I was aware of it so I just laughed and nodded in agreement. He went on to say that his name was Peter and he could help me, and that he was a recent graduate from the “The Rolf Institute” for bodywork. He said that Rolfing could help me get more aligned and eliminate or lessen some of the tension that he guessed my fascia was holding onto due to my injuries. He was right, I WAS in a lot of discomfort but I’d just learned to live with it. Fascinated by the prospect of what he said he could do, I said yes to Peter and he invited me across the street to his office. He offered me a steep discount since his business was new, and I signed up for my first 10 session series of Rolfing, and we began the next day.

I was new to bodywork and these sessions were as excruciating as they were effective and there was absolutely nothing relaxing about them. But after my first 10 sessions, my shoulders had evened out dramatically, my pain decreased significantly and my posture from my head down to my toes had noticeably improved. I was hooked.

A few weeks later, I visited The Rolf Institute in downtown Boulder and signed up to be a body demo for a group of Rolfing students learning to take their clients through a 10 session Rolf series. As a demo, I’d stand in front of a room full of students, wearing only my bra and underwear, as they evaluated me, took notes, and discussed different ways to manipulate my soft tissue for better alignment. Then one by one the students would take turns working on me while the teacher watched them and gave feedback. They took pictures of me before and after each session, something Peter didn’t do, and at the end of the series, I could flip through the pictures and see how much my body

changed into proper alignment. Seeing these shifts that bodywork could do made me feel in awe of the human body and the hands that could manipulate it.

It would be several more years before I found my way to this line of work for myself, but a deep seed had been planted and was beginning to grow. At that time, I was majoring in Sociology and Women's-Studies, thinking I'd just go to grad school for that and become a social worker or perhaps a teacher. But then life sent me on a detour and I got an undeniable message from the Universe about what direction I should go next.

I was a senior in college and Spring Break was coming up so I was trying to decide what to do with my time off from school. That's when I saw an ad in the school paper for a trip to Southwest Colorado with a group called "Outward Bound." Immediately I heard a voice say, "Yes, go!" So I called the number, signed up, and went.

As part of the peak experience of the trip, I participated in a "solo," which meant the leader gave me a physical location to stay in alone. I had a short pathway to a body of water and then I was by myself in the wilderness for three days, with the leader checking in on me quietly twice a day. We didn't speak unless we needed to and I'd just be aware of her brief presence. During this time I had a tarp for sun and rain protection, a ground cover, a ski pole to hold up the tarp, my sleeping bag, a camping pillow, some trail mix, some iodine to clean the water I'd harvest from the river, my journal and a pen. Being all by myself and quiet for three days put me into a very meditative and introspective state. So much that one night, I had a very vivid dream/vision and I saw myself clearly as a massage therapist! But not just that, I saw my

business, I saw myself helping people and I saw myself beaming with fulfillment that I was successful in my mission to be in service and love my job. I was so happy and relieved to see that massage therapy was what I was meant to do with my life, YES! So I quickly wrote down everything I remembered from my vision in my journal, which I still have to this day.

Little did I know that the seed that was planted in my heart and mind while I was in my coma, and took root during my Rolfing sessions was continuing to grow and now felt unstoppable.

After my Outward Bound trip, I returned to Boulder feeling like a different woman. It was like I'd left for the trip feeling lost and came home having found a new life purpose that I was so confident about. I called my parents when I got home to tell them the exciting news about my vision and my new plan to go to massage school.

They were not as thrilled as I was about this new life path ... *more like the opposite.*

My dad responded to my exuberance about this new idea with, "Harriet, I'd be embarrassed to tell people that my daughter was a massage therapist." And though I could understand his point of view, I was officially crushed, heartbroken, and felt like I was back to not knowing what to do with my life, and college was almost over. Shit! Everyone around me in college made it look so easy to find something they were interested in and figure out their life from there ... but I was feeling like a mess and a failure. Though I made good grades in college, it felt like I had failed at a bigger purpose to college which

was to find a career path or a life direction to take, and then begin moving in that direction ... even if you travel slowly.

But I didn't know what to do with my college degree or where to go next. I didn't want to disappoint my father, but I also had literally just dreamed of being a massage therapist and really wanted to pursue it. The message was so strong and clear but I decided to let that seed quietly and patiently sit in the fertile soil of my heart because I didn't want to make anyone mad (or embarrassed). I didn't know how or when this seed of possibility would grow, but I believed that what was meant to be for me would always eventually find its way. Tick-tock, tick-tock ....

I graduated college with a degree in Sociology and Women's Studies from The University of Colorado at Boulder, but without any clear plan or idea of what to do with my life from there. I wasn't ready for grad school and all the guys I was living with in Boulder were moving out and dispersing, so I decided to move to a cute ski town, Steamboat Springs. A man who I'll call Buddha Tom lived there, and we were casually dating, though he had not invited me to move to his ski town. I kind of invited myself after spending a few long weekends with him there and I loved it. Buddha Tom was best friends with one of my six guy roommates at the time in Boulder, and when we met he spoke of his travels to Nepal which seemed so enchanting to me. Buddha Tom exposed me to meditation, sweat lodges, Peyote ceremonies and gardening. He also was the one who inspired me to go and study in Nepal in 1999 and I loved that he kept the book, "Conversations With God," on his bedside table like it was his bible. I'm forever grateful for the cultural and mystical doors Buddha Tom opened for me.

While living in Steamboat, my dog Sadie and I rented a room with a gentleman named Ben, who plowed roads at night so he slept most of the day. Therefore it felt like I lived alone, which was great. I was busy working three jobs: I worked five days a week at the sales and marketing office at the Sheraton Hotel, three nights a week at a home for disabled adults (I'd sleep there with my dog, who they permitted to join me), and I waited tables two nights a week at a restaurant called "The Cabin." When I wasn't working, I skied a lot because a ski pass came with my hotel job.

I also made friends with a lot of local kayakers and would hang out with them on and off the river. One of the guys had a girlfriend named Melissa who would often come to hang out with our kayaking group after working her shift as a massage therapist at the Sheraton, the same hotel where I worked in sales. As she strode in wearing her all black massage uniform and gold name tag, I found myself fascinated by her and all I wanted to do was hear her talk about her job as a massage therapist. She told me that she had graduated from a massage school in Steamboat just the year before. Here we were, both working at the same hotel, on the same floor, but I hated my job in the sales office while Melissa was around the corner loving hers in the day spa. Plus, she was making more money and working way less. It just didn't make sense anymore to be working my tail off at three different jobs.

The more I spoke to and got to know Melissa, the more the wheels started turning in my head. I had not forgotten the vision that I'd had during my Outward Bound solo two years before. It just took speaking with Melissa to respark my passion and curiosity for becoming a massage therapist. I'd had enough of the waiting game and I was fed up with my current jobs which made me less afraid of disappointing my dad.

It was time to sign up for massage school so that I could be true to the me of my dreams. So away I went to sign up for “Full Circle Massage School” in Steamboat Springs. Despite my three jobs, I still didn’t have much extra money, so I found the courage to reach out to my grandparents on both sides of my family to ask for their help with the tuition expense. They graciously and enthusiastically agreed to help me. It was official! I was enrolled in massage school and thrilled to start this new chapter of my life.

But a few days after I registered for school at Full Circle Massage School, life took another unexpected and unfortunate turn.

One night, I went out to a local bar to connect with a group of new girlfriends. While there, someone drugged my drink and I woke up the next morning in my own bed realizing I’d been assaulted. I also realized this man must have known me because he knew where I lived and had taken me home from the bar. Knowing that it must have been someone in my social circle was creepy, terrifying and humiliating. I had no emotional support system in Steamboat Springs anymore, because I didn’t know who to trust. All I wanted was to be in a home where I felt safe, and that desire was **STRONG**. So life moved **FAST** after that and within a few days, I moved out of my room in the house with Ron the Bartender and I packed up my black Toyota Tacoma truck with all my belongings stuffed somewhere in the back under the camper shell. I was on the road back to Park City, Utah and I called my parents while on the road, begging them to let me and Sadie dog stay in their adjacent apartment until I got back on my feet. They said yes.

My life felt like a total mess but I was not going to let this detour get in the way of my dream of becoming a massage therapist. So I applied to the “Utah



College of Massage Therapy” in Salt Lake City on the same day that I canceled my enrollment at Full Circle Massage School. I was accepted the day after I applied, and I took my immediate acceptance as a green light from the Universe that I was on the right track and as further proof that things have a way of working out for me, even when my life feels like a bit of a mess.

But getting into massage school in Salt Lake City also meant I had to tell my parents that I was going to massage school. They were initially upset but had to accept it in the end, because I wasn't asking for permission, changing my mind or asking for financial help. I just needed some temporary help with lodging for my dog and I. To this day, I appreciate my parents so much for being a safe place for me to land during that time in my life where everything felt uprooted and all over the place. I'm also thankful to them for having my back even when my life didn't make any sense and they didn't agree with or understand my decisions. *Mom and dad for the win.*

## *Salt Lake City*

It was October 2001 when I attended my first day of massage school at The Utah College of Massage Therapy and when I sat down in class it was like every cell in my body stood up for a standing ovation. I quickly realized how natural and intuitive massage was for me. It was as though I was putting my sensitivity, intuition and unexplainable psychic abilities I'd developed after my accident all to good use, through massage. I felt elated and relieved to have finally put my hands on my purpose—literally.

When giving a massage, it feels like something bigger than me enters the room and takes over and I'm just the messenger. I plug in and get directions about where to go and what to do with my hands and every session is so different. Sometimes words or even smells will pop into my consciousness.

For instance, I remember working on a female client and doing some reflexology on her feet. When I came to the area for her reproductive organs on the inside of her heels, I felt an intense emotion of sadness, like I wanted to cry. I choked up a little in our session (awkward), and eventually ventured to mention what I was feeling. She lifted her head with wide eyes and told me that she had just had a miscarriage the day before and then *she* began to cry. Her entire body then let go and she was finally able to relax and breathe. I was fascinated that somehow through my hands, her body had sent me a message about how to help her feel and heal her pain.

On another occasion, I was working on a friend and doing deep work on his back. Suddenly, I sensed the very distinct smell of cigarettes. Knowing him well, I asked "Hey, did you start smoking?" And he just laughed saying,

“Harriet, I can’t get anything past you! I’ve been THINKING about starting smoking, but haven’t yet. Wow, just wow.”

That’s only two of *thousands* of similar scenarios I experience while in bodywork sessions with people. To be this messenger of truth, release and healing through massage is a huge gift but also a huge responsibility that I respect and take very seriously. Learning how to relax, tune into and channel the instructions I get during massages is a delicate dance that I’m privileged to still do, over 22 years after massage school.

Soon after graduating from massage school in the spring of 2002, I began working at 2 chiropractic offices, a fancy day spa in Park City, and I also opened a private massage office in a clubhouse my dad’s company managed at The Canyons ski resort. I called my company “Align Bodywork and Massage” and my office looked exactly like it did in the vision I’d had while on my solo during my Outward Bound trip in college.

I loved my work and was busy every day, giving several massages per day. I’d also go to client’s homes to do massages and sometimes I’d see my clients in the paper or on TV, which was very exciting for me. I remember on one occasion, while making dinner with my fiancé at the time, and watching “60 Minutes,” when all of a sudden, one of my regular clients popped up on the TV screen and he was being interviewed because of his company. My eyes widened and I screamed, “That’s my client and he’s on TV!” To me, he was just a nice guy who loved my massages and he always tipped me very generously which I always appreciated. I knew he lived in a fancy house and owned a well-known company, but we never talked about that. He’d offer me water or a snack, and he’d ask how my life was. My cousin was also their

family's personal chef when they were in town, so when I'd enter their house and see my cousin cooking it felt like family, so my interaction with Mr. "60 Minutes" felt very welcoming, easy and friendly. And then there he was on the TV in our living room. Wow! It was then that I realized how many doors of connection massage could open for me. *And I was determined to walk through them all.*

When I wasn't giving massages, I was still looking for more work. I'd send out bulk mailers, I'd put my business card into the check-in folders of my dad's property management company and I'd even put flyers on people's cars at the ski resort. I later learned that was illegal. *Oops.* It was easier to ask for forgiveness than permission, and I was on a mission to get people on my massage table, whatever it took.

Pretty soon, I was so busy that I needed to hire a few people to help out both at my private office and making house calls. This was turning into a real, successful business and I was thrilled to be doing what I loved! Life felt great.

But as is bound to happen, I got a clear message from the Universe about where I was not supposed to be and I experienced a dark side of the massage world.

In the Spring of 2003 I was working at a fancy boutique hotel spa in Park City and I loved it. I was nearing the end of a massage when the man I was working on casually requested a "happy ending" as though he were ordering it from a menu at a restaurant. I was both shocked and disgusted and when I declined his request and chose to end the massage, he was mad and

threatened to speak to the owner, which made the experience even more weird and awkward.

I left the massage room and happened to find the owner of the spa in the office, and I shared what happened, glad that I got the first word. The spa owner then told me quite matter-of-factly that several women were making a lot of extra money offering that service and that I shouldn't take it so seriously. I stood looking at him, quivering in revulsion and disbelief. I loved that job but I knew I could not work in an environment like that because it felt unsafe, unprofessional and creepy. So I grabbed my coat and bag and walked out the door into the chilly night air. I was both heartbroken AND out of a job I mostly enjoyed. What now? Were all spas like this behind closed massage room doors? Had I unwittingly put myself into a situation where I'd be asked regularly to perform sexual favors for men? My dream was to heal people and this felt like it drastically missed the mark.

Dear Universe, HELP PLEASE! WTF!

I sat in the parking lot outside the fancy spa, my eyes filled with tears and for some reason, I decided to call my dad. He had noticed my hard work and determination which led to my success and had begun to be supportive of me by helping me find my first office and by sending me clients from his property management company. So when I told him about what happened at the hotel's spa, he said quite simply, "Harriet, why don't you just open your own place?" Ummm, excuse me, what? It felt like my dad and the Universe were giving me both a permission slip and a dare at the same time. Wait, could I do that? Open my own spa?

Yes. *I could*. I was determined to create my own happy ending from this situation.

And so I did ... despite it not making any sense or me having any experience. Life certainly moved fast after that, which was the Universe once again giving me a green light.

## *Align Spa 1.0*

A few days after the idea of me opening my own spa was put out into the world, my dad let me know about an empty first floor unit in a hotel he managed. The owner was willing to sign a four-year lease with me and give me some tenant improvement money to remodel the space. The dream to have my own spa was officially in motion and within two weeks of seeing the space, we were signing paperwork and I got the keys to my first location at *The Shadow Ridge Hotel*, at the base of Park City Mountain Resort. Sure, it wasn't the most glamorous hotel, but the location was awesome and I had to start somewhere. Plus, the big circular fish tank visible through the double glass doors as you approached the spa from the hall was everything. I wish I had a picture of that fish tank, stone wall and double-glass entry doors but that was before phones and cameras became one. So I just have the pictures in my mind.

Welcome to the Align Spa.

Opening a spa was very different from being a massage therapist, but the decision to say yes felt just as clear and natural. My first problem was how to find the cash to support this vision. I had little to no business experience but I was incredibly resourceful, creative, and savvy enough to make a little money go a long way. Though my dad offered me the idea and the connection to my first location, he made it clear that figuring out how to pull off this new endeavor financially was all on me. I figured this was a chance to pull out my cosmic middle finger and defy any doubt or obstacle in my way. This spa was going to happen, no matter what.

I went seeking money and I met a lot of no's at first from various financial institutions which was discouraging. They didn't want to give a 24-year-old with no experience and a big dream a chance. So, I set up a meeting with the president of a small local bank and I shared my vision and begged him to back my dream, telling him how great it would be that he'd be supporting a Park City High School graduate. I told him I'd thank him in a letter to the Park Record newspaper if he said yes, and he finally agreed (and I did publicly thank him after we opened). I also juggled several interest-free credit cards for my start-up costs which was both risky and a lot to manage. I had a "whatever it takes," attitude about bringing the Align Spa to life and my relentless effort enabled the first Align Spa to open. I was officially creating what I wanted to see in the world of spas ... and no, happy endings were not on the menu.

I posted ads on Craigslist and at massage and aesthetic schools a few weeks before I opened, looking for therapists and front desk staff. I somehow attracted enough talented people to officially have a team large enough to open, and the Align Spa opened its doors the first week of November, 2003.

One small detail was that I had no idea how to run a spa. So what do you do when you have no idea how to run a business but your heart is still telling you it's the right thing to do? You commit to being the best version of yourself, you take life one day at a time, you stay grateful for every big and small win and you stay humble.

I also stayed open to any and every opportunity that came my way. I knew how to walk through the right doors when they presented themselves to me, and one such door came right before I opened the spa. One afternoon, while I was installing tile on the floor of the spa's lobby, I answered a phone call from



a dear high school friend named Pablo. He told me that he had a friend who was taking a year off before going to business school and he was living in Park City. Pablo was calling to see if I needed any help at my new spa because his buddy was looking for something to do other than just skiing. Ummm HELL YES!!! And in came Lucas, who wasn't just a GAME CHANGER for the spa, he was a GAME CREATOR. Lucas trained us how to use our new salon software, he helped me navigate Quickbooks, and he showed me how to reconcile my bank accounts. He also helped set up helpful spa protocols with guests and staff. So thank you, Lucas. You were a Godsend.

With Align Spa in full force, it grew quickly and I continued to work very hard every day and off time didn't exist. I would forward the spa phone to my cell phone after hours so that I would never miss a client's call, and Align Spa became a magnet for many loyal and wonderful therapists and clients. Our client list was anyone and everyone and included locals, skiers, cyclists, pro-athletes, single parents, couples, ski bums, students, movie stars, teachers, friends, family and apparently, those who appear on "60 Minutes." These clients were all equal in our eyes at the spa and they all became valuable clients who we loved seeing and serving.

The Align Spa was working!

And this is around the time when members of the Align team such as Amy, Tiffany, Thomas and Calli all came on board so they can account for what a wild time that was at the spa. To experience it coming to life one day at a time was so special. We were all experiencing a dream coming true.

## *Align Spa 2.0*

Just as Align Spa was starting to soar, my life hit some huge speed bumps. In January of 2004, a few months after I opened, my dad closed his property management company which had been struggling, so he would no longer be the property manager of my small massage office or the hotel where my new spa was located. My parents also filed for divorce after 32 years of marriage around the same time so having that many huge changes on top of operating my new business was a lot for me to manage emotionally. I had also just left my fiancé and moved out of his house as well, which meant I was living out of the small massage office I was about to lose. It was a rocky and confusing time for me and our whole family, but I continued to trust the process, greet guests with a smile and pour my heart and time into my massage work. In a way, having the spa as my focus kept me from thinking about my personal life and how it was falling apart.

Then my landlord at the hotel threw me a curveball and decided he wanted to sell the space. I was just beginning to find a groove at the spa and I didn't have the money to either buy the space or move to a new location. So what should I do? Do I give up and close? No way! But then what? These were tough and confusing questions, and I asked them out loud to the Universe as well as to anyone who would listen.

One evening, I got an unexpected solution and it came while I was giving a massage to a client at his home. I'd been working with this client for over a year and I always enjoyed our conversations and he would often offer me a glass of wine before we began which always felt like a nice gesture. During this particular evening's massage, he asked me how the spa was going and

asked me to be honest as though he knew I was struggling. Sure, I could have told him it was going great and left it at that but I didn't. Instead, I told him I was about to lose my location and that I was scared. He said he was sorry and stayed quiet for a while as we continued our massage. As the massage ended, he had a knowing grin on his face and he told me to meet him in the back of the clock tower complex on Bonanza Drive the next day. I agreed.

I showed up the next day to Bonanza Drive with an open mind and I saw a space that I instantly knew could be Align's new home but I didn't know how it would unfold. The space was huge and was currently being used by a florist and event planner. The plan was to cut the large space in half and give me the right side. I'd be sharing the bathroom in the back with the other business. It was smaller than I needed but it was the best option I had so I said "Yes," then and there.

I signed a 10-year lease because I knew intuitively that I would grow quickly and would soon take over the entire space. I also received a generous amount of tenant improvement money for the renovation. I was so confident about eventually taking over the entire space that during the renovation I asked that a doorway be cut joining the two spaces in the front from the inside which was initially met with a closed door from our neighbor. But slowly, she softened and saw the benefit of having us next door. She literally opened the door between us and allowed us to use her lobby as a waiting room.

Poco a poco, a few square feet at a time, I took over her entire space over three years. With both sides under our control, I felt an opportunity to truly allow Align to grow into what it could be because we had twice the number of rooms than before and we also had a big team of talented therapists, many of

whom had been with me for several years. We operated out of both the Shadow Ridge Hotel and the new Bonanza Drive location for a year while I closed out my lease with the hotel, which taught me that I didn't want two locations even though I was grateful for the hustle and creativity it brought out in me.

Just as if not more important than my vision and hard work was the love and commitment from the incredible staff and our amazing clients that proved to be the driving force of Align Spa. There was an unspoken bond and feeling of loyalty because everyone saw each other's hard work and dedication and rewarded that with their loyalty, hard work and referrals.

As Align was growing, we learned many important lessons about the intricacies of how to run a successful business—it was truly learning on the job. And so we approached this Align adventure with humility, creativity and vision.

For example, one of the things we learned early on is that the Park City economy is very seasonal. Business would be booming during the winter months but as the snow melted, so did much of our business. We responded to this pattern by learning to save money to ride out those slower months. I also began to give out free and deeply discounted massages to local teachers to keep the staff busy, a ritual we still enjoy doing every spring.

Once again, everything was flowing—that is until our new neighbor, a Crossfit gym moved in. Initially, I was excited for our new neighbor. I imagined we would have similarly-minded, health-conscious clients. I told myself we'd help each other out and share clients so it would be a win win. Plus, my landlord

was soundproofing the walls in hopes we'd be compatible neighbors so all would be well, right? But that vision quickly came crashing down ... literally.

One day, while giving a massage, out of nowhere, a loud crash caused the entire room to shake, startling my client and shocking me. I excused myself to see what was going on. Did we just have an earthquake? Was everyone okay? When I got to the hallway it happened again and I realized that it was coming from next door. Oh. My. God. No!!!! I returned to my massage room, politely told my client we had to end our massage early, and I ran next door just in time to see a shirtless man dropping a huge barbell onto the ground once again shaking the entire building. Sure, we couldn't hear Crossfit's loud music from inside the spa, but we could certainly feel their weights crashing to the floor. This new tenant relationship wasn't going to work.

But what could I do? I was locked into a 10-year lease! More than that, I had put too much blood, sweat and tears into my business for it to be dismantled by people next door who didn't care that the weights they were dropping were literally shaking my business.

My landlord sympathized with my concern and tried to add more padding to the floor but it didn't work. The gym owner apologized, but kept allowing clients to drop weights. I was supposed to simply return to business as usual but I started witnessing clients canceling appointments and not rebooking, going elsewhere to a spa that didn't have their tranquility interrupted by their massage room shaking throughout their session.

So what did I do? I turned to my 30-page lease and read it word for word. As I was going through the contract, I found a gem of a clause that said: "The

tenant (me) is entitled to a peaceful enjoyment of their space.” Wow. Bullseye. I was not peacefully enjoying my space that’s for sure. So with that small but huge find in my contract, we soon said goodbye to Crossfit, and hello again to serene spa-like peacefulness. Thank you again, Universe, for helping us find a way through yet another tricky situation. I was certainly not popular with my landlord after that. And so to my landlord and his team, if you ever read this, I want you to know I’m so grateful for all your help preserving the peaceful Align experience—(*wink*).

I wanted to help solve the problem I’d created by requiring a tenant to vacate, so I went seeking a new neighbor. I invited one of my favorite clients to lunch who owned several hotels and his own spa. I had a crazy idea for him to take over Crossfit’s old space and open a community center because he wanted to connect with more locals. He was intrigued by my idea, but said it wasn’t right for him. But he came back with an even bigger idea.

He loved what Align was up to and loved how our clientele had such a strong local following so he offered to buy Align and move it into one of his hotels and merge it with his spa. He followed his offer up by saying that he’d talk with my landlord about releasing me from my lease. He’d remodel his spa to look however I wanted it to look and he’d also increase my salary and keep me on for at least a year to help with the transition. Then, I’d be free to go with the money he’d pay me for my company.

“*I’d be free to go?*” His words were supposed to excite me, but instead they scared me a little. What would I do if I didn’t work at Align? Would I work somewhere else? Would I try a new profession? These were big questions to wrestle with. Align was such a huge part of my everyday life routines and

thoughts so it was hard to imagine myself without it. I'd been content to work for almost a decade with only one or two vacations, sacrificing my personal needs and love life. I loved Align, but could it now be time to find some work/life balance and love for myself? This idea was alluring. And so, I began to daydream that perhaps selling my spa WAS the way for me to go seeking myself outside of my spa-Harriet-identity. Who knows, maybe I'd write the book I kept saying I wanted to write. In other words, I let myself be wooed which meant we had several planning meetings, and I and my staff got excited about this "random" new opportunity of moving my spa to Main Street and merging it with another.

But when the time came for us to sit down and discuss my client's offer, he gave me his number and I thought he was joking. It was a fraction of what I was expecting for 10 years of work, and it felt like an insult given all the time, effort and love he knew I'd put into Align. So I declined without a second thought and gave him the middle finger on my way out (which I don't think he saw).

Declining this offer didn't change the fact that I realized I wanted and needed a break. I'd been in business for 10 years, working almost every day and I was tired. I wanted to write my stories. These stories, which are just a handful of hundreds. It was time for something different.

So, with the blessing from our epic spa management team, I decided to take a five-month sabbatical to go seeking me. I wanted to rediscover who I was outside of showing up for Align every day. *Turns out that hell no I felt in the spa sale meeting was my inspiration to begin saying yes to me.*

## *Finding My Unicorn*

At the time of my sabbatical, I was 35 years old and married to my job. I was a total workaholic and proud of it, and the longest relationship I'd ever had was with my spa and my dog Zona. I wanted to find lasting love, but I'd just never made the time for it. I'd learned to say yes to opportunities for my business, but I wanted to learn how to say yes to love that lasted more than a few months.

I began this journey for love by attending a yoga retreat hosted by the Toltec shaman, Don Miguel Ruiz, the author of the classic book, *The Four Agreements*. The theme of the retreat was "How To Say Yes To Love" in Potrero, Costa Rica in December 2012. I couldn't wait!

By the time December arrived, the spa was running so smoothly in the care of trustworthy managers and staff that I felt comfortable stepping away for my long overdue solo Harriet time. I was ready for a new chapter in my life's book and kicking off my five-month sabbatical in Costa Rica was perfect. So I boarded the plane to see what new experiences and stories might be waiting for me in Potrero.

On the 4th day of the retreat, I sat alone with Don Miguel Ruiz himself at a table at "Hotel Sugar Beach" overlooking the Pacific Ocean. I told him I was 35 and that I'd just broken up with a 90% awesome guy for no clear reason, so I clearly didn't know "how to say yes to love." He told me that I had said yes to so many other things in this world, but now it was time to say yes to myself, first.



He instructed me to make a list of everything I loved about myself and my ideal life and then told me to imagine the kind of man who would love the girl from that list. Looking down at the list of everything I loved about myself and my ideal life, I realized how eccentric (and confusing) I was. It felt like the only man who could ever love a girl such as myself would have to be a unicorn, meaning a mythical and probably imaginary creature. I laughed because it felt impossible to find someone like this and I wondered if I was going to be a member of Match.com for the rest of my life. I should have an entire book of stories devoted to just my Match.com adventures (those stories will come later).

I later shared my desire list with my retreat roommate Lisa, and we laughed as I read it, imagining my unicorn of a man. Afterwards, I went for a walk and meandered up to the hotel's lobby where I saw the sign up lists for our free day the following day. I saw options of ziplining, river rafting, hiking or a chakra balancing session with a friendly-looking guy named Adam. I decided to go with the chakra session and have a quiet day at the resort while everyone was away so I signed up for Adam's 11am time slot and returned to my room.

The next day, I had a relaxing morning with a late breakfast, a swim in the ocean and a nice long shower. I put on my favorite pair of yoga pants and my "I love you" shirt that was in my retreat gift bag and by 10:50am I was ready and awaiting Adam's arrival to my room. But 11am came and went. As did 11:10am. By 11:15am, I was wondering if I'd gotten the time wrong or if I wrote down the wrong room number.

Just as I was preparing to go back up to the lobby and check, I saw him—Adam, this guy with long, curly, brown hair, wearing board shorts, a

button-down shirt and no shoes, casually making his way towards my room with apparently no awareness that he was 16 minutes late. That or he just didn't care which was both crazy and intriguing to me, coming from such a heavily-scheduled world of spa appointments where every minute is counted and important.

When Adam finally reached my front door I stepped out onto the porch to greet him thinking he would apologize for being late. *Nope*. Instead, he just smiled warmly and said hello. I was startled both by his detachment to being late as well by how handsome he was. We talked for a few minutes about what brought him to Costa Rica and I found myself annoyed, wanting to dismiss him because of how young and nonchalant he was. Could this guy who seemed so laid-back really help me? *I doubted it*.

As we kept talking, Adam told me about how he chose to go to Costa Rica after college and for some reason I found myself surprised that he'd gone to college. He went on to say he'd grown up in North Carolina and had attended Duke University. I could feel my confusion bubbling up inside of me. He went to Duke? That's a very good school. What was he doing here in the jungle wandering around without shoes? It was perplexing to me. He could tell I was trying to make sense of his story and whether I wanted to let him help me or not. But I could also sense that my confusion and doubt didn't bother him in the slightest. Instead, he invited me to take a seat in one of the lounge chairs on the porch as he sat in another chair opposite, looking right at me, as though he were seeing into me. Had we begun? Was this part of it? I had no idea and was busying myself trying to figure out what was happening.

I was incredibly uncomfortable so I asked Adam for a description or instructions for what I could expect from this chakra balancing session. He just grinned and told me to relax, do nothing, and close my eyes. “Ummm, ok. Easier said than done,” said my busy mind. “Do nothing? What does that even mean?” I closed my eyes and pretended to follow his instructions, but my mind got louder. “Uh oh, I don’t know how much he charges for this?” I felt myself panicking because I’d forgotten to ask how much this would be and I didn’t know if I had enough cash. I worried about how embarrassing it would be to finish the session and not be able to pay him.

I felt myself arguing with myself about whether to interrupt this "do nothing" experience, when I felt Adam’s hand on my shoulder, and he said, “Harriet, you’re doing too much.” And I froze. Shit. Could he read my mind? I was so busted! So I nodded in agreement with him, and without saying a word, I decided that I would offer him a massage trade for this session which allowed me to relax somewhat and gain access into this world of “doing nothing,” which was so foreign to me.

I could feel Adam’s presence behind me and it felt like a warm hug. Then something bizarre and mystical happened. It was like I began to watch a movie in my mind’s eye and I began to see different scenes. Suddenly, I saw a beach, the ocean, and then there I was walking on the beach. But wait a second ... ummm, was I pregnant? Yes! And then I saw Adam coming towards me, arms opened, welcoming me into an embrace. Wait, what? Why is he there? And then we began to walk hand in hand, along the beach, both barefoot. I somehow understood that we were married and I was pregnant with his baby. This was the weirdest healing session I’d ever had. I’d literally just met this guy and here I was roping him into my vision and forecasting a

future which seemed so incredibly unrealistic that it was almost funny. But there we were, together, and I didn't know what to do.

It was as though Adam felt my confusion because his hand came back to my shoulder once again, instructing me to take a deep breath and telling me that our session was over. When I opened my eyes he was in front of me again. I didn't know what to say. Do I tell him what I saw? Did he see it too? If so, how embarrassing. But he just smiled and asked how I was and my only answer was, "I'm fine ...". I decided to say nothing more because there was something so pristine about this moment and I felt a lot of peace, so something had indeed shifted inside of me.

I did break the silence by saying, "I don't know what you charge so can I just give you a massage later tonight to trade for this?" He beamed in excitement and said yes. With that, Adam got up, I gave him an awkward hug and we agreed he'd return at 8pm for his session. That was that. Our chakra balancing session was complete.

I had lunch with a few other retreat participants later who also stayed onsite for the day and when they asked how my chakra balancing session was, I tried to find words to describe it, and said something about how he'd shown me a different version of myself—more in love with life. I figured it could have gotten awkward fast if I told them I was going to marry the young healer I'd just met and have his baby.

That night, Adam was one minute early for our session and I felt butterflies in my stomach as I heard the knock on the door. He still wasn't wearing shoes when he entered but I could tell he'd showered because he looked clean and

smelled good. I still felt a little awkward but I showed him where we were going to have our massage.

He then took off his shirt revealing his tan and hairless chest, and I could feel a strange pull towards him, which I tried to ignore. We began our session and as always, something different took over except this time, it was as though I had a new skill set. I could read Adam's energy very easily and I knew exactly where to place my hands on his body, and how much pressure to apply to invite him to release any tension he was holding. I was in my element.

I'd expected our session to be no more than an hour, at least that's what I'd told my roommate, Lisa. But time disappeared and we continued on well beyond an hour. I barely heard the door to our room open and Lisa coming in to get something out of the bathroom and then leaving again. Later, she told me that the energy in the room felt absolutely electric. The description was perfect because that's how I felt, too.

Our session lasted almost 3 hours and by the end I wanted so badly to kiss him. Instead, I just laid my head down over him when we were done, taking everything in. It was over, whatever this was together that we'd just done.

But was it? What now? When Adam got up, he looked dazed and confused. He smiled and asked me what I was doing the next day and if he could come pick me up and take me out on an adventure, off campus. My answer, "Yes." And with that, we said good night.

The next day it felt a little illegal to leave the retreat, but I let the group leaders know I was leaving. Adam arrived when he said he would, and I climbed into

his old gray Hyundai Galloper, with only three of four working doors, and he brushed sand off the seat and moved things out of the way to make room for my legs. We picked up his brother, Alex, who was in town and they took me to a surf site in Playa Grande where we went to dinner at a gorgeous ocean-view restaurant called Mar y Sol. There, he revealed that it was his birthday and we enjoyed a cake together with a few more friends. When I asked how old he was he said 27. And I sighed because I was 8 years older than he was. He looked at me and asked what I was making his age mean? I laughed. I was making it mean a lot more than he was that's for sure, but to him it was just a number.

The best way I could describe my time with Adam is that we just clicked. So I extended my trip a few more days in Costa Rica to see what was possible.

And we accidentally fell in love.

*I'd found my unicorn.*

Was this my opportunity to practice saying yes to love? Yup, and an opportunity to heal what I'd put in the way between me and love, which I soon discovered was a lot.

Things moved fast between Adam and I, and two months later he asked me to marry him while we were in a trailer park in Golden, Colorado (another story for another time). Saying yes to Adam's proposal made absolutely no sense, but I did anyway because this was the closest experience to true love I'd ever felt.

How would we do this? He lived in Costa Rica with three dogs and I lived in Utah with one dog. I still had three months of my sabbatical left from the spa so off I went to figure out a way to have it all.

Over the remainder of my sabbatical, I didn't write my book of stories like I thought I would. Instead, I lived an unexpected story in my own life and spent a lot of time in Costa Rica and Adam spent time in Utah. I introduced him to the spa team at Align and everyone agreed that Adam and I were great together. They'd seen all the different men I'd dated over the last 10 years and they liked who I was with Adam. And so did I. He brought out someone new in me, someone willing to put love first and go exploring a new story.

The spa was doing better than ever and had proven that thanks to Align's incredible team and clientele, Align could thrive without me physically being there. The Align staff loved Adam and several of the team received chakra balancing sessions when he was in town which ignited them along their own healing journeys. They were curious about and open to this new YES to love Journey I was on and even told me that if I needed to move to Costa Rica to be with Adam, to go for it and we would figure it out along the way.

Wow, I'd just been told to leave my home town and keep following this yes to love. It was exciting, but I also had no idea where this new plan was going.

So with my new moldavite engagement ring on my finger, I sold my car, I found a month-to-month tenant for my apartment in Salt Lake City and I put a lot of my life in storage. We'd scheduled our wedding ceremony for six months later in Park City at the ski resort and invited a ton of friends and family. One month after my five-month sabbatical to find love was over, my dog Zona and I

boarded a plane to Costa Rica to create a new life and home with Adam. I'd done it!

Suddenly I'd become a business owner who traveled back and forth between Utah and Costa Rica, still following and growing her dream. Only now the dream had gotten bigger and included a second person and a second country. Thinking back to the list that Don Miguel Ruiz had me make, of the kinds of things that I loved about my ideal life, I was beginning to see that this list could be coming true, unicorn and all.

This new life made simultaneously perfect sense and no sense at all, which was incredibly difficult for someone who thrived on having a plan and a long to-do list. Now the plan was to do nothing more often, say yes to love and practice taking life one day at a time. All things that were not in my wheelhouse of skills. Could I do this? I was about to find out and it wasn't going to be easy.

But somehow I knew that already. And I also somehow knew that this new life being confusing and challenging WAS my journey and how I chose to navigate it was up to me. I could find the pleasure in the journey or focus on the difficulty of it. It was so annoying to see that it was all dependent on me and my energy and attitude. I was beginning to see how the Universe was working with me and how clever it was by setting me up to lean in and play the game of my own life.



## *Align in Costa Rica*

Sure enough, Align Spa continued to thrive and I returned every few months to check in, keeping my responsibilities I could do remotely. Soon, my vision for the spa grew and changed to become international and we took steps to expand our operations in Costa Rica. I worked hard to unite my Costa Rica world and Utah worlds by learning new and different services related to self-care such as teaching yoga and hosting guests for vacations. We took on additional lodging options at “La Paz del Cielos,” the small gated complex where we lived that had six total units and a shared pool and rancho. We made small changes to spruce all the units up and make them feel loving and inviting. And just like that we were officially hosts of some sort of Align healing experience in Costa Rica.

We invited friends, family and volunteers to come and have individual and group retreats with us in this gorgeous country, and we helped guests visualize, plan and organize their whole experience from start to finish. We were somewhat of a healing concierge service for the area. It was a new vision I called *Align Costa Rica*. But what was even wilder was that on the second night I ever spent with Adam, his birthday, we talked about how cool it would be to someday have a healing center together here in Costa Rica. It made no sense at the time, especially since I’d just met Adam the day before. But not making sense seemed to be our theme, so I rolled with it. Yes he was younger, yes he didn’t even have a credit card and yes he didn’t even wear shoes. But for some reason, all of it felt right, so I leaned in.

If you were one of the friends who accepted our offer to come and visit in those first few years of Align Costa Rica, thank you for coming and trusting

the journey with us. I hope you still remember your time with us and that it was special.

Meanwhile back in Utah, Align was growing in staff, services, and clients and we were beginning to outgrow our location because we were busier than ever. We had the best team imaginable and we were at the 10-year mark in our Bonanza Drive location. Again, what do we do? Do we stay or move?

Leaving our location didn't make sense. So instead we got creative, innovative and a bit daring. I chose to sign another 10-year lease, but this time I took out a loan from my family in order to do a two-part renovation to our current space while we were still open. The goal was to make better use of the space by activating unused or poorly used sections of both sides of the space. That meant the sauna became a treatment room, a closet joined with another tiny room to make a staff room, another closet got bigger to become a laundry room and we changed the orientation of the lobby. That change gave us a nice spacious front desk, a retail area and a back office with extra workstations and storage space.

This task of remodeling while still open took great planning, patience, trust, organization and teamwork from EVERYONE at every level. Looking back, I am a little shocked that we pulled it off, but also, of course we did. We had a great team of leaders and it was all part of this bigger plan that was beginning to reveal itself. And if you were one of the guests or therapists during our two-year renovation project, thank you, we know it was a lot. We appreciate your trust, patience and loyalty; it means the world to us.

Once the renovation and expansion of Align in Park City was done, we didn't have time to rest. Not only did I get pregnant with that baby I saw in my healing session with Adam six years before, but at six months pregnant and while managing our six unit "Align Costa Rica" project, we were told we had six months to vacate. We eventually ended up negotiating for a little over a year, but that put us in fast forward to find and create somewhere new to go.

So we dreamscaped and discussed ways we could improve what we'd been doing at our first space and we reached out to our local friend and realtor. We told him we were looking for a new space to build a home. We also wanted a space for guests to visit and a space for hosting yoga classes. He had just the place in mind and the next day we found our new land.

With the myriad of help and support from so many friends, family, coworkers, skeptics and random strangers, the Lanktuary and Heart & Flow yoga came to life on our new land. After we signed the paperwork we gathered with dear friends on the land and held an intention circle. And during the build we wrote intentions on the walls and scattered shungite crystals in the foundation of every building at each level. We wanted the Lanktuary to be a space and place for us, guests and staff from the spa to come and relax, retreat, heal and feel renewed. We filled this project with love and hard work, just as I had done with both locations of the spa.

Finally, with the Lanktuary finished, it was time for our yoga and retreat center and Align Spa to grow and operate hand in hand. It was everything I'd dreamed of finally coming to life and existing in two countries. I had a meeting with Calli and Amy, my two talented spa directors in December of 2019 and we picked the dates for our first two Align yoga retreats. My assignment from

them was to keep making the Lanktuary the best it could be and to enjoy my life. Ok ladies, I'll do my best.

Screech...and then things came to an immediate halt.

## *The Pandemic*

When the pandemic hit hard and fast in March of 2020, Align went from having 70-80 appointments per day to zero in a matter of hours. The spa had been open for 17 years and we'd only ever closed for major holidays. This terrifying global phenomenon that forced us to close for two whole months was unheard of. But we joined the unpredictable rollercoaster of COVID along with so many other people and businesses around the world. If we wanted Align to survive, we needed to adjust our expectations and be open to everything being different. We had to learn new protocols for services and business practices in order to roll with the ever changing laws and regulations and the spa team exceeded all expectations. As always, we learned how to ride the wave of uncertainty and create opportunities and positive attitudes where there were none.

We never imagined an event like a pandemic would hit the business forcing us to go from high season to no season. We were nonetheless grateful for our business savings and membership program which kept us afloat. We treated the pandemic like any other problem that came along: as something we'd figure out day-by-day and as a team.

As the pandemic raged, it was heartbreaking to see so many people affected in so many ways, including us. I saw businesses of all kinds from all industries closing right and left and healthy people were quickly bedridden. I witnessed greatness and adaptability from the Align team as well as patience and generosity from our loyal clientele. That's what kept us alive during this very challenging time.

We all took pay cuts and leaned into team building strategies that helped our energetic health and well-being. I even hired a personal transformation coach as well as a human design coach to work with our management team individually, so that we could all be responsible for what energy we were bringing to the table and learn how to communicate with each other as clearly as we could. I counted every blessing that came our way and did everything I could to encourage our team to grow together. These were uncommon business strategies, but it was an uncommon time so why not try new stuff? It worked because we made it to the other side of COVID. I even had another baby during the process to add more unpredictability to the flow.

The pandemic reminded me that Align is bigger than any one person and that the main reason it thrives is because of the collective heart and soul upon which this business is built.

## *A Renewed and Aligned Vision*

The Align Spa has learned so much in its 20+ years of serving the Park City community and we're happy to say that it is back on its feet, better and stronger than ever. It is still being fearlessly led by Calli and Amy, two incredible women who have witnessed many of these stories as they happened and many others yet to be told. The ENTIRE Align team continues to inspire me with their hard work, dedication and commitment to preserving the mission of the spa. It is my hope that this *Aligned* story inspires them and helps them and our clients come together in a new way.

The spa has hosted several unforgettable Align “Getaways” and retreats in Costa Rica for Align Spa guests, with the help of Align’s incredible retreat coordinator, Erin. The Align vision in two countries has successfully come together, and we’ve learned a ton and keep getting better at hosting an Aligned experience at the Lanktuary. The journey was long to get here, but it was worth it and keeps getting better.



## *Conclusion*

Thanks for getting this far if you're still here. You can see what a wild ride it's been and I just skimmed the surface of stories and experiences that have unfolded for me and the spa.

I believe how I've lived my life, and how Align Spa sort of created and expanded itself has been an extraordinary journey thus far AND a testament to my life's mission to be of service to people in as many ways as I can. The seed that got planted in 1994 with my second chance at life and began to take root when I learned about massage and started massage school has now grown into a thriving garden with many caretakers. Yes, I live in another country, but my love for the Align Spa, its team, what it has become and where it's going runs far and deep.

Over the last 20 years Align has been a family and safe space for me to grow and heal and I think it has been the same for many therapists and clients, which is such a blessing. I'm incredibly grateful and honored to have been the owner of the spa for this long, and if you've been on this journey with me for a while, thank you. I love that you're still here and I imagine you've got some stories of your own to share too.

Was it easy? Of course not, as you've seen. But I've learned that a business is a journey of love, sacrifice, patience, trust and a dance to learn **what to say both yes and no to and where to ask for forgiveness rather than permission**. And were mistakes made? Of course, but we recovered from them and learned along the way. I've said repeatedly that I believe what's meant to be will find its way, but I also know it took a village to hold this dream together. And the village and love of Align can be felt in so many ways through

so many big and small actions and choices of team members and clients alike.

Align is an example of love in motion and I'm excited to see where we go from here. I hope you'll stay along for the ride. Know that I appreciate your presence, however long you've been a part of our story.

Never forget the pleasure of the journey; and cheers to second chances at life to make a difference in this world, to finding the gifts and opportunities in hardships and saying yes to life and love. And there's so much more to both my story and the Align story than what I've written here, so know I'm just getting started with storytelling.

I know I'm making Soul Harriet proud by sharing this story. She's grinning at me and is excited to keep sending me seemingly random but extraordinary events, opportunities and people because it's ALL connected and adding to the bigger story of life.

If you'd like to come and Align in Costa Rica, consider this trip down memory lane your invitation to [the Lanktuary](#). We're excited to see you when you get here and it's a pleasure and a privilege to be on the journey of life with you.

Cheers and much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harriet". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

P.S.

There are SO many untold stories that still want to come out, so know this story is just the beginning. Plus YOUR stories about either me or Align are so important, so I invite you to help grow and add depth to the overall story by adding your own Harriet or Align Spa story if you feel inspired. We'll be collecting and sharing your stories and adding more supporting backstories poco a poco on the book's website, "[www.beingaligned.life](http://www.beingaligned.life)."

*"It is not about being fully healed and then starting your life. It is about embracing healing as a lifelong journey while allowing genuine connections to organically emerge along the way. ~ Yung Pueblo*