

Finding Your Force

A Journey to Love



Alicia Anabel Santos

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*Courtniana, the reason I was born~
You're the reason I can fly~*



*Where there's the truth
You know I'll be there
Amongst the lies
You know I'll be there
I'll go anywhere
So I'll see you there
If you should fall
You know I'll be there
To catch the call
You know I'll be there
I'll go anywhere
So I'll see you there
I'll be there for you
~ Green Day*



WHAT READERS ARE SAYING~

"I have so much respect for your spirit, strength and sincerity. Many people aren't able to survive the kind of trauma that you are writing about."

"You really put your all into your writing, I feel you. I really do when you write, which is like speaking. You inspire and I'm not just saying that. You inspire me and I'm sure others to BE, to be them, to be the person they need to be, you inspire them to have no excuses, you inspire them to get where they need to be by bringing them to where you are. And once we see you doing and acting in your moments how could I/one/we not do us?"

"The manner in which you release and share your soul is both raw and pure. A vulnerability we all wish we had."

"I am so proud of you for standing up for your words, for realizing your worth, over and over again. I'm happy that you show your humanness and allow your readers to see where you hurt and to see you revive and gain strength again. People respond because you initiate -dialogue, thoughts, and words! You also show what you won't tolerate, the non-negotiable. Part of that involves the space that no one is allowed to enter unless you give him or her access, which shows you are still in control. How do you stay strong? By staying true to all that you are now and all that you are growing to become!"





POPROCKS AND COKE~

As your birthday approaches I can't think of a better gift to give you than all of my love! As I sit on a train, heading home from Plattsburgh, NY. I'm thinking about how we love train rides, "Road trip!" We've gone from Florida to Virginia, from Providence to NYC, and from New York to Washington. I am looking at a picture of you on my computer staring at the intensity and strength behind your beautiful brown eyes. There's a story that I see. There's a story that is about to unfold. Who you're becoming and who you already are. I'm sitting here looking at everything that we've been through.

You are my most sacred blessing. You are my greatest gift and accomplishment. I sit here and think to myself, "WOW!!! Did I have something to do with that? Did I play a part in the person she is today?" When I look into your eyes I see my own reflection. I never could have imagined or dreamed of a better life. It's just you and me baby.

Sunday morning, September 16, 2007, I woke up from lying next to you. I kissed you as you slept peacefully and you just smiled. I rose to do my morning practice and meditated on the word, "Gratitude." Then I started to think about death and started writing: *When you take me lord this how I would like to be remembered: I want to be remembered for how deeply I loved everyone. How my words touched maybe even hurt the ones I loved, but how deeply I love them. I want to be remembered for how I loved loving so many people so quickly. May the love I have shared with those met in this lifetime last them the rest of their days. But to the ONE I love most a love letter~*

Dear Courtney: When I leave you know that I am still here. I am the wind, the rain, the snow, the hurricane, the tornado, and the sun. Especially remember me and see me in the sun. Think of me as your most beautiful sunset. As much as I'd like to promise you that I will be here forever. I cannot! I am with you for THIS lifetime and it has been amazing. Every single moment with you has been a gift. Life with you has been magical. Everyday that I get to be with you is like unwrapping a new experience. You bring me joy. You are a song. You have been my life. I am so honored to know you. Courtniana, thank you for choosing me as your mother I have learned so much from you.



Finding Your Force is my journey towards self-love and healing. It's a journey into the deepest parts of my soul. This is a journey towards understanding me for the first time. Here is where I pull off the Band-Aids and really look at my wounds. My wish is that you look at the scars that remain and understand why I no longer blame the world for my injuries. That's what I want to do with this memoir. It's time to clear the air and share my story with you. I want to not only prevent you from repeating my mistakes but also leave you with something that would serve as a roadmap into my soul. I want you to always have something to connect to me. Something that would keep me alive and remind you of how much I love you. I am so amazed by you. You are my best friend. Courtney, I had no idea what our life was going to be like. I had no idea how you would turn out. You have been my partner, my life and my world. You have given me so many gifts so this is my gift to you... the story of us. Happy Birthday~



I affirm: My intention is to allow all that needs to be revealed to come out... to not question my thoughts... to release the anxiety and tension in my chest. My intention is to surrender to my process. What will happen if I surrender... my story will be authentic, the lies will be erased, the self-doubt will turn to confidence, the truth will bring clarity (which is what I want most). What will happen is that I will learn some new things about me. YOU will

learn many things about me and I will learn about ALL that I am made of. I will learn from my past, especially from the people in my life who have used words to paralyze me. What I want most is to allow it all to unfold. My intention is to look at where I have been with fresh eyes and see myself differently. Looking at all I've been through and have new direction. With fresh eyes I no longer have to live in the past. As I move forward I am confident, a little scared, but confident that I will complete the task at hand. I am excited about the possibilities of my potential to arrive and have all I desire and all that I deserve. I release fear. I release self-sabotage. I release toxic people. I release insecurities. I release other people's shit. Today will bring me one step closer to having everything I have ever desired. I am so grateful for all the people in my life who love me. I am grateful for this gift of writing. I am grateful for the love that surrounds me. I am ready to get this day started. Creator, thank you for your guidance, love and strength. I am ready to do this! And so it is.



So I'm home in our beautiful one bedroom apartment in Harlem. I was supposed to write you this love letter here in our house surrounded by everything we love. Staring at our paintings, red, orange and yellow walls, with music playing, photos that hang on every wall in a space that is filled with so much LOVE. I was supposed to write it here in our sacred space.

Today when I woke up to get ready to start my day I froze. I put on a movie and sat back down. I was fully dressed in my dressy black slacks, pretty black shoes, white button down blouse and favorite necklace. I was slowly putting on my hoop earrings, my rings and bracelets that are like my armor. My pen in hand serving as my sword but I am frozen. I am frozen in this moment. I was about to leave for work to do a job I really don't care about when I started thinking about all I've been through in my life. I know that right now isn't the time to really go there and write about all of it. But I am being called to GO THERE, to relive a moment, to really look at where I've been. How did I get to where I am today?

So much of my journey has already been documented in my blogs. But this time it feels different. I am not being called to write the same shit over and over again. I am being called to look at it with fresh perspective, new eyes and self-awareness. It's real easy for me to go back and read where I came from. It's harder to go back and relive it, open the wounds again, feel it all again, allow it to bleed again, revealing a different truth and this is what frightens me. The truth can be ugly!

It took me about a week to read all of my blog posts, over 1,068 pages and 66 journals of my writing over the past ten years. Who am I? What have I learned? What do I keep getting wrong? Who have I become in these 40 years? I'm thinking about my memoir and how people have told me that, *forty is way too young to write a memoir why would people read my story... I'm not famous*; none of that matters I understand that I have a beautiful story to share, a lifetime of stories.

I wanted to get to the source of what I've been feeling. I wrote this morning that I feel like I'm missing something like I'm searching for something. Is it meaning? Is it my purpose? Is it love? Is it money? Is it a sense of self? I was thinking this morning of the person I once was. I was thinking about the light that would just pour out of me. The light that complete strangers told me was like an aura around me when I walked into a room. The person I was then when I wasn't searching for anything yet *IT* found me. *IT* became LIFE through me. *IT* was in everything that I was doing, how I was dressing, how I was feeling. *IT* was all light, all through me and around me... all the time. Everything I read and wrote about was LOVE. I was light. I was weightless. There was nothing that the material world could give me that I didn't give myself. There wasn't a person that could give me all that I was getting in that moment. Rewind... there was nothing that the creator wasn't giving me. There was a time I just allowed God to live in me for God to work through me. And I was bathing in all of my blessings.

MEMOIR

"I was licking the wounds internally of the years of abuse at the hands of men in my life and some women. I was releasing ALL OF IT! I was completely empty. I lay back down and shortly after I went back into bathroom for round two. I thought I was dying, but what I later recognized was that was exactly what needed to happen. I needed to be completely broken down. I needed to be completely empty so that I could build back up and fill myself

Finding Your Force is a memoir written in the form of a love letter to a daughter. In this intimate conversation we journey into the darkest parts of Alicia's soul. We walk with her as she digs deep underneath the ruins where all her secrets are kept. Santos is being called on an excavation to stop running and face those moments that have transformed her from surviving rape, healing through loss and coming out as a lesbian. This is a journey about life, death and rebirth. Alicia tells her daughter a story that is raw and heart wrenching. It is not a love story but definitely a story of love.



ALICIA ANABEL SANTOS is a Latina Writer, Director, Producer and Playwright. She is a New York-born Dominican who is passionate about writing works that empower and inspire women to find their voices. Her one-woman show I WAS BORN was selected as part of the ONE Festival debuting in NYC. Alicia lives in Harlem, New York with her daughter Courtiana.

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