



HOW TO UNFOLD  
AND FIND YOUR OWN FORM



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## PROLOGUE

### The Crane

I was ten years old the night I decided I wasn't going to sleep until I figured it out.

We had been learning about Hiroshima in school through a book that shared the story of a young girl named Sadako. She was athletic, vibrant, the same age as me — but she was dying of leukemia from the radiation of the atomic bomb. To endure the hardship of her illness, she held on to a Japanese legend: fold one thousand paper cranes and you will be granted a wish. She began folding. Not because she was sure it would work, but because the folding itself was the point. Because making something beautiful amidst devastation was how she chose to live.

I needed to learn how to make a paper crane.

There was one book shared amongst our class with instructions for folding the origami crane. I had it for one night. I followed the steps carefully and got most of the way there.

And then I hit the wing.

One step showed a fold that opens the wing: the moment that turns flat paper into something that looks like it might actually fly. And I couldn't make sense of it. The diagram showed dotted

lines on an impossible fold. I tried it one way. Wrong. I tried another. Wrong. I unfolded and started again. And again. And again. I cried in frustration, but I knew I was close.

It was past midnight (well beyond my bedtime) when it finally happened. I turned the book and viewed the diagram from a different angle, and suddenly the picture made sense.

*The wing opened.*

I didn't have a word for it then. I do now: *auragami*.

I felt it the first time I launched a web page I had coded by hand. I felt it when my art popped up above my head in an augmented reality filter I had created for Instagram. Every time I made something invisible become visible in the world, my soul filled with it.

I felt it the night I decided to take back my power to protect myself and my children and agree to a divorce, without a clue how I would survive on my own.

I felt it when I got the call from the recruiter that I got the job at Facebook.

I felt it as I listened to the orchestra play under the night sky full of dancing drones, to a musical score and story I had co-written.

My whole life is *auragami*. Not the paper crane, but the glow that happens in the making. The luminance that accumulates every time you stay in it long enough to see it from a different angle. Through every fold that didn't work. Every restart, every

moment of refusing to put the paper down. None of it was wasted. It evolved into the version of me that only exists because I kept going.

The wing opens. And when it does, you are not the same person who picked up the paper.

That's what this book is for. It's the glow after the grit.

This book is not about age. It's not about a single turning point or a tidy transformation. It's about resilience as a practice. It's about returning, again and again, to the one thing that has always been true: You are capable of anything if you commit to it.

Not with someone else's money. Not with a corporation's permission. Not waiting for the right moment or the right relationship or the right circumstances to align. With your combination of gifts, your willingness to learn, and a decision you make once and then remake every single morning, you are not waiting to be rescued.

You can save yourself at any time.

I'm writing this from that place — where I stopped outsourcing my sovereignty and started building again on my own terms, with my own hands, accountable only to my own vision, from a place of joy. It's the best I've ever felt. And I want that for you.

For anyone who has spent too long letting someone else hold the pen to their own story, it's time to pick up the paper and begin to fold.

