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Author Biography

Short:

A management consultant for forty years, Joan Carol Lieberman lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Medium

Joan Carol Lieberman had a five-year-old son when she was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, trembling as her oncologist predicted she would be lucky to survive six months. Remarkably, she is alive twenty-eight years later. A management consultant for forty years, she was a finalist for the Bakeless Literary Prize and invited to attend the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in 1999. It was there that she began writing her autobiography, which she finished on her seventy-fifth birthday in June 2017. Married for forty-two years, the mother of two grown children, she is a resident of Boulder, Colorado.

Longer

Joan Carol Lieberman has been a management consultant and speech writer for forty years, working with lawyers, doctors, and women in professional leadership positions. At age seventy-five, she continues to consult and write for long-time clients.

Born a Gentile in Utah, she spent her childhood in two small Mormon towns, Delta and Logan. Her father was a federal research entomologist, distantly related to Simon Bamberger, Utah's only Jewish governor. Her mother, whose ancestors were among the first Mormon pioneers to arrive in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, tragically developed paranoid schizophrenia shortly after the author's birth. The title of *OPTIMAL DISTANCE* comes from the author's need to keep a safe distance away from her mother whose mental illness triggered episodic murderous impulses.

The roots of Lieberman's two-part autobiography can be found in a pink diary she received on her fifth birthday, a gift that turned her into a devout diarist after she found comfort in telling an imaginary listener her concerns and worries. She started high school in Bozeman, Montana and graduated in Bakersfield, California. After studies at the University of California in Berkeley, she traveled to Europe and worked as a medical volunteer in Africa. When the author returned to America, her mother made another attempt on the author's life, after which she committed her mother where she was finally treated with the first anti-psychotic drug, Thorazine.

Soon after returning to Berkeley to finish her studies, the author became pregnant with her first child. Her life for the next five years mirrored the social upheaval of the 1960's. After two-years in



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Northern Idaho, where she went to finish her thesis, she accepted her first professional managerial position in Boulder, Colorado as director of the county-wide Head Start program. In 1971 the Ford Foundation sought her assistance in establishing the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), where she met and fell in love with Bob Pelcyger, one of the founding NARF attorneys. Following their marriage in 1975, he adopted her daughter.

Her mother died on the morning of the author's fortieth birthday. The next year she and Bob had a son. The author was still nursing him when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. While facing death with a young child, she continued to work, started a school for her son, and supported other mothers with breast cancer. Her twenty-eight-year survival is both remarkable and inspiring.

As a finalist for the Bakeless Literary Prize, she was invited to attend the 1999 Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. It was at Bread Loaf that she began to write her autobiography, an effort that continued on and off for the next eighteen years. After forty years of marriage, Joan Carol Lieberman and Bob Pelcyger made a bucket list for what they each wanted from the other before their deaths. Bob wanted his wife to finish *OPTIMAL DISTANCE, A Divided Life*, which she did in his honor on her seventy-fifth birthday in June 2017.

Additional information: www.OptimalDistance.com