

I knew from an early age (about 10 years old) that I really, *really* wanted children although I didn't want them until later on because there was a lot of things I wanted to do first. Years later I met the man who I knew was the one I wanted to have them with. After a few years together we became open to having children but it didn't happen, we didn't conceive and we ended up having IVF treatment, such was my desire to have a child. I came through three unsuccessful rounds of IVF feeling that it was not the way – it was brutal and I didn't want to treat my body and especially my womb like that. It was IVF and all that intervention in my womb that put me so much in touch with her that I was able to finally hear her and she guided me in a way that told me that having IVF wasn't right for me, so I stopped. From then on she totally guided me and I began a deeper relationship with the Feminine through reading books and joining women's circles which helped me so much to create the life that I now have which gets stronger and stronger all the time. I was able to let go of having children in a way that was gentle and natural as the rest of my life unfolded allowing me to just accept what life was for me. My life has *huge* meaning, full of creativity. My life is not about creating children, it's about creating *me* in many ways, about fulfilling my own potential and revelling in my freedom. I am happy without children, really, really happy! I feel like I've birthed myself and it feels really good.

Cheryl

From an early age I thought that one day I would get married and have children. I thought that I would be a good mum and wouldn't do all those things that I couldn't stand that my mother did. Of course I would know better and would do a better job and would have the perfect family. I had it all planned. At the time it never crossed my mind that these thoughts might be the result of some conscious or unconscious conditioning from my family upbringing, society, schooling or media. I didn't succeed in having children or a happy marriage. The years flew by and before I knew it I found myself in the so called 'middle age' and my perspectives and plans changed; the idea of having children was not so appealing any more. I started looking at life a little closer and asked myself questions like "What am I here to do?"; "Is there more to life than this?"; "I want more, but what exactly?" Having lived in a different country has broadened my horizons and views about life and happiness. Having had more than one relationship also gave me a chance to stretch myself beyond my little 'garden' and look further afield. Having done different jobs with varied roles and using different languages also added to my knowledge as a woman and as a citizen of the world. It all helped me to realise that we are all conditioned by so many things in life that actually to know who we are is not that easy, in fact it can be quite tricky. My life became an adventure that wasn't simply an external and geographical journey, but a deeper and intimate voyage into myself. I started understanding that there is more to life than having a family and doing the things that the majority of people do. The most important thing of all was realising that for a woman having children is optional, but giving birth to herself is a must!

Gabriella Guglielminotti Trivel
Flying Inspiration

I was 13 when my cycle began. I was so excited! I felt so grown up. I was becoming a woman. I now had the power to create human life. But that excitement quickly changed as my periods were accompanied by severe pain. At 24, I was diagnosed with endometriosis, which was a causal factor of sexual abuse in my earlier life. Around the same time, I started waking up with panic attacks. This began a horrific journey of medication, rehab centers and surgeries. My eighth surgery was a complete hysterectomy which threw me into immediate menopause. I was devastated that I would never bear my own children. At the time, I just buried the grief and went on with my life. I was caught up in the world of working two jobs and going to school full-time.

In the midst of the chaos, my husband decided to move us to Nebraska. I felt powerless to change his mind or leave him. At 36, I was diagnosed with Severe Delayed Onset Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from the sexual abuse and my mother's attempted suicide when I was a small child. I was having nightly flashbacks and was no longer able to work. But, I did finally have the courage to leave my marriage. For the next 15 years, I visited several therapists and rehab centers to deal with the PTSD and the grief of not having my own family. I would do ok for a while and then my body would try to release the trauma through nightmares and adrenal exhaustion. What I was not aware of, until I began working with a trauma specialist, was that my body remembered the trauma but my mind was too afraid to accept it.

Now, at 51, I AM healing. Due to good therapy, my puppy Arabella, friends, and the hard work of SELF ACCEPTANCE and FORGIVENESS, I know that I will heal completely. Chakra Yoga Therapy, aromatherapy and art have also helped me release the trauma. I no longer doubt my ability to be a good mother because the unconditional love that I have for Arabella shows my capacity to love and trust myself and others. Namaste.

Bella Gina Luciana

Let's Talk About... is a regular feature in this magazine. In each issue we invite your reflections on a different topic relevant to our lives as women. In the Winter edition we will be talking about Pornography and we are inviting both women and men to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences on the topic. To add your voice please send your short contribution to contactus@shewhoknowsmagazine.com