

# An Intimate Memoir by PENNY CHRISTIAN KNIGHT

## Resilience: A Journey of Healing

*Penny Christian Knight shares her journey of resilience, navigating trauma, and finding hope through her memoir trilogy, offering insights into healing and the power of self-expression.*

**P**enny Christian Knight's life is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Having embarked on multiple careers, including modeling, acting, and working in various office roles, she eventually found her true calling as a social psychotherapist. However, it wasn't until her midlife return to academia at the age of 45 that she fully embraced her passion for psychology and English, earning degrees and accolades along the way.

Retiring from her private practice at the age of 89, Penny turned her attention to completing her autobiographical memoir trilogy, starting with "DEVELOPING RESILIENCE: Secrets, Sex Abuse, and the Quest for Love and Inner Peace." But what motivated her to share such deeply personal experiences with the world?

In an exclusive interview with Reader's House Magazine, Penny candidly discusses her journey of self-discovery and healing. Reflecting on the emotional challenges of revisiting traumatic experiences, she shares how her journey toward resilience shaped her perspective on life.

"As I developed resilience, I found it helped me face many challenges that confronted me," Penny remarks. "Early on, I learned how to repress unpleasant memories... But it is essential to get in touch with our feelings, to name and express them to a trustworthy and safe person."

Throughout the interview, Penny emphasizes the importance of resilience in overcoming adversity and finding hope. She hopes that her memoir will inspire others to find courage and strength in their own struggles.

"I hope readers will learn that they can survive almost anything and that it helps to develop friendships with compassionate friends," Penny explains. "We must find and develop ourselves to become whatever we are meant to be and not run and hide."

As a seasoned social psychotherapist, Penny's insights into the healing process are invaluable.

Drawing from her own experiences and professional expertise, she offers guidance on navigating trauma and finding catharsis through writing.

Her memoir not only serves as a testament to her own resilience but also as a source of inspiration for readers facing their own challenges. Through her candid storytelling and unwavering honesty, Penny Christian Knight reminds us that even in our darkest moments, there is always hope for healing and growth.

**What motivated you to share your deeply personal story in "Developing Resilience"?**

After writing an authentic personal essay during an Authentic Writing Workshop at Omega Institute of Holistic Studies in Rhinebeck, New York, I knew I had the beginning of a memoir, so I decided to return home and start one ten years ago at 80. I

knew from then on that whatever I wrote would have to be authentic. I am a saver, having saved many letters, diaries, and journals where I acknowledged what happened to me, my reactions to whatever, and later, my healing journey.

Many named people in my story had passed, so I felt safe from their disapproval, allowing me to share it. I concluded that I had a mission to share my story to help others find hope, courage, and a means of growth to move forward with their lives and out of toxic situations that were holding them prisoner. One book grew to three, and I am currently editing the others.

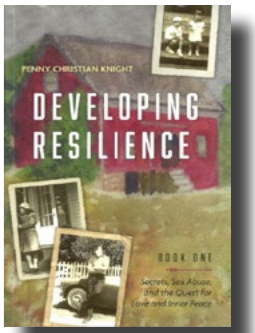
**How did you navigate the emotional challenges of revisiting traumatic experiences while writing your memoir?**

For the most part, it was not difficult. By the time I reached 80 and beyond, my repressed memories had already appeared. Throughout my adult life, I obtained counseling and therapy many times to deal with the repressed outer layers as I reached inward to the core (like an onion). Having become a psychotherapist myself also



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*Discover the transformative power of resilience in 'DEVELOPING RESILIENCE: Secrets, Sex Abuse, and the Quest for Love and Inner Peace,' Penny Christian Knight's compelling memoir trilogy.*



helped me process the traumas before the creation of the books. Spiritually, I have also worked on forgiveness of my perpetrators.

**Can you elaborate on the role of resilience in your journey, and how it has shaped your perspective on life?**

As I developed resilience, I found it helped me face many challenges that confronted me. Early on, I learned how to repress unpleasant memories by saying, "It doesn't really matter." That was effective. I also learned that I needed to keep busy and involved in activities that usually kept me safe and connected to others. I continued doing that later in life when the challenges were even more significant. I learned other things that kept me engaged with study or personal growth. The distractions worked to keep material repressed until I reached a point in my life where I began developing wisdom and understanding. I left out one crucial detail. It is essential to get in touch with our feelings, to name and express them to a trustworthy and safe person, such as a therapist who wasn't available to me when young.

**What message or lessons do you hope readers will take away from your book?**

I hope readers will learn that they can survive almost anything and that it helps to develop friendships with compassionate friends. We survivors go on despite what happens to us. We must find and develop ourselves to become whatever we are meant to be and not run and hide. There are many different agencies from which we can get help today or through the help of a therapist.

I found that writing about these things really helped me. We can write to the person who harmed us and tell them off but not send the letter. This is high-

ly therapeutic. The idea is to get the trauma outside of ourselves so it isn't harming us internally. I have chronic pain from holding on to my repressed material for too long.

**How did your experiences as a social psychotherapist influence the narrative and themes of your memoir?**

My experiences did not influence the recorded material from diaries and letters. However, my experiences did in many of my comments and asides throughout the books. I commented about my naivete or things I might have done differently. Readers with similar backgrounds of trauma or marital difficulty can benefit from those comments.

My experience as a therapist was immensely helpful in how I created the books. The knowledge I have gained from my training and experience has helped me look for things others might not be aware of.

**Were there any moments during the writing process that were particularly cathartic or healing for you?**

Particularly cathartic and healing moments included the entire section on my marriage and divorce from my husband. The more I edited, read, and reread that material, I found myself becoming angrier and angrier. I don't recall that I was close to feeling that angry at the time when I should have been. It might have given me the energy or strength to leave that situation earlier. However, I was engaged in counseling at the time, which dissipated the anger which I experienced as anxiety.

*PHOTO: Penny Christian Knight, retired social psychotherapist and author, shares her journey of resilience and healing through her autobiographical memoir trilogy*