



## *Crazy Love* by Leslie Morgan Steiner

### **How has your past shaped you into the person you are today?**

I wouldn't wish a violent relationship on anyone, and I don't recommend it as a way to learn about yourself or life. But I am grateful for what I went through because the experience changed me for the better and made me wiser about relationships.

I learned that you make yourself dangerously vulnerable if you love a romantic partner unconditionally. I learned you cannot heal someone through love – the fundamental mistake I made when I fell in love with my first husband. Most importantly, I learned to never, ever feel ashamed of falling in love with the wrong person. And I learned that if you don't put yourself first, no one will. For me, these are lessons I needed to learn.

### **You've found so much success in the speaking world by addressing the topic of your first book, *Mommy Wars*. How do you see *Crazy Love* and the topic of domestic violence engaging audiences?**

I worked on *Crazy Love*, in various forms, off and on for about 10 years. I imagine I could have kept writing for another 50 years, because with an experience as complicated as domestic violence, you are always gaining new insights into what made you vulnerable to abuse.

But like my first book, this is about being honest about the realities of your situation.

*Mommy Wars* was all about being honest about the realities – joyful, horrible, frustrating – about motherhood. Those readers and audiences encouraged me to tackle my story of domestic violence, which I had mentioned briefly in the introduction, with the same candor.

I believe the message of being honest with yourself and feeling empowered to change your situation is something everyone can relate to – especially when you know that you're not alone.

### **Would you go through all that pain and anguish all over again to come out of it the person you've become?**

Well – I have to say yes, but only because I'm lucky I wasn't seriously hurt or killed during my four years with my ex-husband. Every year, thousands of women and children are killed by family violence. I easily could have been one of them.

I'm also fortunate I did not have children with my abuser. Often people who abuse their partners also physically abuse their children – it's the same intimacy-and-violence paradigm. Even if the children aren't physically hurt, children who witness their mother being beaten are irreparably damaged, and many of them grow up to repeat the cycle of family violence.

### **If you had a chance to say one thing about abusive relationships such as yours, what would you say?**

Love is ALWAYS about respect, joy and kindness. Violence and abuse NEVER should play a role in an intimate relationship – with a lover, a parent, or even a supposed friend. You are not showing your love by letting someone take out their anger on you. Over time, rage always trumps love. So no matter how much you love someone troubled, get out now. You can start over, no matter how long you have been abused.