

Leading interventionist pens dual memoir with her mother...
A riveting journey from addiction...to recovery...to helping the world

It was a difficult, at times horrific, journey for **Kristina Wandzilak**, now an acclaimed and charismatic intervention expert. She spent most of her teen and early adult years addicted to drugs and alcohol. It was also a heart-gripping journey for her mother, **Constance Curry** who made many desperate attempts to get her daughter into recovery. Together Kristina and Constance have written the dual memoir, ***The Lost Years: Surviving a Mother and Daughter's Worst Nightmare***. The book describes the brutality and depravity of addiction and Kristina's subsequent return to a flourishing life. Her mother's incredibly moving parallel story allows a new understanding of the desperation of the family when a child is addicted and the direction the family must take. Kristina says about the book, "With my experiences and with my mom's perception and courage, we bring a light and a sense of understanding to a very dark and misunderstood disease."

Kristina's story is truly inspirational. Beginning her journey into addiction at the early age of 13 and nearly dying as a homeless woman on the streets of San Francisco when she was 21, she has now made it her life's mission to help families with addicted adolescents and young adults. She knows, in a very personal way, the challenges and issues of being in recovery at a young age. She understands that when their peers are going to college, making career and marriage choices, as well as drinking and partying, young people in recovery can feel painfully isolated. As Kristina describes in ***The Lost Years***, acclimating herself to normal living was one of the hardest parts of recovery. Kristina helps the young addict to see recovery in a way that is exciting and welcoming, rather than as a life sentence to an existence of boredom.

Kristina has now become a "tour de force" (as one family labeled her) in the treatment field. An internationally recognized expert in addiction, intervention and recovery, she has helped hundreds of families and has been invited to speak on the subject around the world. Kristina, who specializes in helping addicted youth, endeavors to treat the family as a whole, not just the addicted family member, in a process she calls "*family intervention*". "I believe in treating families and mending the rift that addiction leaves in family systems," she emphasizes. She understands, in a way many counselors cannot, that the dynamics within the family play a crucial role in the onset of addiction, but, even more importantly, in the recovery process. It is her youth, vibrant presence and unique experience that have caused her intervention efforts to flourish.

Much of Kristina's own successful story of recovery stems from her mother's "tough love" treatment of her during her worst years. Kristina reports that it was her mother's unwavering stance that ultimately led to her entry into a recovery program after many failed attempts. It's a lesson every parent of addicted children has to learn. Her mother, Constance, says, "It was devastating for me to watch Kristina throwing her life away, turning her back on those she loved and choosing such a destructive way of being. I finally accepted that I was powerless to save her and needed to protect myself and my other children." Ultimately, she made the heart-breaking decision to literally shut the door and not to allow Kristina into their lives as long as she chose to be an addict.

The Lost Years is as much about the recovery of Constance as it is about the recovery of Kristina. Kristina's descent into alcohol and methamphetamine addiction revealed to Constance her own

co-dependency and how her own husband's alcohol abuse was contributing to the dysfunction of the family. She describes how, with help, she ultimately found the inner strength to leave her unhappy marriage and forge a new life for herself and her other three children.

Both Kristina and Constance are hoping that with ***The Lost Years***, they are able to shed light on many of the problems and solutions for families struggling with addiction. Beyond that, Kristina, through her intervention practice and speaking engagements, is building new bridges between families and their addicted loved ones. Constance also contributes to the treatment of addiction and family recovery as an educational spokesperson and fundraiser.

About the Authors:

Kristina Wandzilak has worked in the chemical dependency field since 1994. She created Full Circle Intervention (www.fullcirclei.com) and, with her team, she creates an individualized treatment plan for each client and their family. She is an international speaker, a well-known expert on drug addiction, and a leading systemic interventionist. She lives in the San Francisco bay area with her husband and two children.

Constance Curry is a businesswoman and an educational speaker on the subject of addiction and family recovery. She lives in Marin County, California close to her children and grandchildren.

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