

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Triumphant coming-of-age memoir uncovers the truth about love and queer pride after purity culture

Minneapolis, MN – In the inspirational coming-of-age memoir, **“Finding Sunlight” (Wise Ink, November 2023)**, Chrissy Holm separates purity culture, LGBTQ religious trauma, and a patriarchal father-daughter relationship from all the possibilities of meaningful love.

The church has a lot of views on women’s relationships. Respect the sanctity of marriage. Save yourself for your husband. And never, ever think about having a wife.

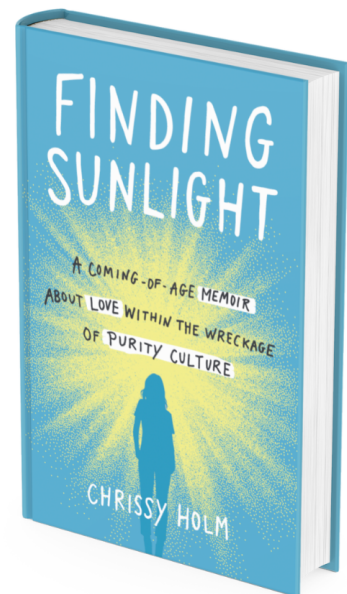
Homeschooled at church and raised by a devout father, Chrissy internalized scripture’s strictest messages. She suppressed her bisexuality and followed all the teachings of purity culture.

When she turned sixteen, her parent’s divorce flipped the script. Devastated and unsure of her values, Chrissy jumped from one relationship to another, searching for commitment and solace from a depression that crept more to the forefront every day.

Readers who grew up in evangelical or fundamentalist religious communities will find themselves in these stories as Chrissy seeks meaning in her religious upbringing—finding forgiveness for her dad, her past relationships, and ultimately, herself.

Raw and hopeful, this liberating memoir is an intimate look at how one woman found the courage to question what she was taught to believe to uncover *her own* truth and navigate love with pride.

“We don’t have a map or directions for relationships, love, religion, or God. We get lost. We stumble . . . and we pray that we will find the sunlight.”





**Finding Sunlight: A Coming-of-Age Memoir
About Love Within the Wreckage of Purity Culture**

Chrissy Holm | November 14, 2023 | Wise Ink Creative Publishing | Nonfiction, Memoir
Paperback | ISBN: 9781634896498 | \$18.95

Praise for the book...

“‘Finding Sunlight’ is an **eye-opening** journey. Told through the lens of growing up in the church, various tumultuous relationships and her parents' marriage, we get a glimpse into how it truly feels to wrestle with one's own queer identity. That feeling of authenticity within ourselves is one we can all relate to, and **you'll be rooting for her until the very last page.**”

—Stacey Chomiak, author of “Still Stace: My Gay Christian Coming-of-Age Story”

“‘Finding Sunlight’ is a reflection on the impacts of growing up within Christian fundamentalism and the shaping of adolescence onward. Religious harm is real and silences too many with shame and guilt about their sexuality and being their authentic selves. A **must-read** for anyone who questions what the church taught them to know they are not alone.”

—Stacey Schultz, Rosen Method Bodywork Practitioner

“Those with similar stories will find **an invitation to the same freedom Holm has found for herself.**”

—Matthias Roberts, queer psychotherapist, podcaster, and author of “Beyond Shame: Creating a Healthy Sex Life on Your Own Terms”



About the Author...

Chrissy Holm (she/they) is a writer, editor, and project manager. She is the host of the podcast *Stirred By Words*, where she talks about words, writing, and wellness. Her writing has been featured on *Everyday Health*, *National Council on Aging*, *Gizmodo*, *Lifehacker*, and more. She is an alumni at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, where she studied Public Health Education and Promotion. Chrissy lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with her husband and daughter.



For more of Chrissy’s writing—and support on your own creative projects—connect with her on social media [@chrissyholm_](#) or visit www.chrissyholm.com.

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In an interview, Chrissy Holm can discuss:

- How “Finding Sunlight” began as a way to work through her parents divorce but ended up being about so much more
- Her experience with purity culture and what it took to move beyond confusion and shame into a place of greater clarity
- How embracing her bisexuality helped her find her individuality and learn what love means to her
- Her advice for teens (and adults) who may be struggling to find their true selves amidst restrictive church teachings



An Interview with Chrissy Holm

1. What was the inspiration behind “Finding Sunlight”?

Since I was little, I’ve always wanted to write a book (inspired by many authors before me), and in 2018, I was hiking in the Grand Tetons, finding a million excuses not to write it. One of the people on the hike suggested one simple solution, which flipped the script in my head, and I dedicated myself to writing it. Initially, I wanted to explore why my parents divorce hit me so hard and wanted a space to reflect on why I made certain relationship choices. For many years, I felt alone in my struggle and wanted to be vulnerable and connect deeply with others.

2. For those who aren’t familiar with purity culture, what does that phrase mean?

Purity culture often is related to conservative religious practices of promoting abstinence before marriage, emphasizing traditional gender roles, and discouraging any form of sexual expression outside of heterosexual marriage. Typically, there are strict rules around how one should dress (i.e., girls have long hair and wear dresses) and limited sexual education (i.e., abstinence-only approach). It also includes other ideals, such as women being responsible for men’s sexual behavior.

3. How did your perspective on love shift after your parents divorce?

Before my parents divorced, I thought love was about finding the “right” man with whom I would share intimate experiences and my life. Love essentially was only reserved for whomever I would marry, and anything outside of that was shameful. After my parents divorced, my perspective broadened. I learned that love and intimacy could happen outside of marriage. And although I hadn’t always been truthful in my relationships, as time passed, I had a greater appreciation for communication and honesty.

4. What advice would you give to others who are struggling to find their true selves, queer and otherwise, within the church?

Finding your true self can be challenging in general, whether within the church, outside of it, queer, or not. So first, acknowledge that it is HARD work and self-discovery is a lifelong journey! Some things that have helped me are engaging in personal reflection (i.e., journaling and writing this book), leaning on a community that supports the



multifaceted layers of me, and prioritizing my mental health and well-being (one of which I still struggle with). If you stay within the church or religion, find one that supports and affirms you. If you choose to leave, know that you can still have a meaningful spiritual life outside traditional religious institutions.

5. What's next for you?

Speaking of mental health, I will celebrate my accomplishment of publishing this book over the last five years, then take a mental break for a short while. After feeling rejuvenated, I will work to promote Finding Sunlight, attend events, and connect with readers and writers. I've also been slowly percolating ideas for a second book! As I focus more on writing, I will attend writing conferences to continue learning about the book publishing industry, connect with other authors, and grow my writing skills.