

WRESTLING THE BEAR

Sample Author Questions and Answers

Wrestling The Bear: Confronting Your Self

by Clint Loftin

1. What was your inspiration for writing *Wrestling The Bear*?

The book came out of a period of intense retrospection. I was arriving at the midlife period and seriously contemplating a career change. The journey turned out not to be so much about the career change but rather the power of having a devoted inner life. I wanted to share my journey because the willingness of others to share their own journeys has so deeply impacted my life.

2. What type of career change did you make?

I was a high school teacher, coach, and mentor for 16 years. It was a very rewarding experience, particularly in regards to developing meaningful and lasting personal relationships. But it was not feeding me like it used to and I was changing. I began to do some side work in the afternoons with a contractor as well as taking on some small projects of my own. At the same time I was reading a lot of books on Jungian psychology and seeking out professional counseling. The new work was invigorating. The things I was learning about myself in counseling were propelling me forward. Serendipitous events began to happen. All of this was confirming that a change was in order. With a partner, I started Heart To Home of Asheville, a small home improvement business. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

3. Who are some writers you admire?

With particular regards to *Wrestling the Bear* I drew a lot of inspiration from reading Carl Jung, as well as authors like James Hollis and Bud Harris, who have taken Jung's ideas and applied them to their own lives and shared their experiences. I also found inspiration in the writings of Joseph Campbell and Alan Watts, independent thinkers who I felt had the ability to step outside of the culture when necessary and whom I admired for leading very authentic lives.

4. Why did you choose to self-publish?

Honestly, I'm not sure why anyone wouldn't self-publish in this day and age, particularly if you are a new author. I had a very helpful editor and a knowledgeable publicist in my corner and I felt like that was all I needed. If a book is good it's good. It will get picked up by a publisher eventually. My main concern was not reaching the widest possible audience, it was sharing my personal journey and producing an authentic piece of writing.

5. Who do you think will be most interested in reading *Wrestling The Bear*?

People that are arriving at a transition point in their life can draw strength from the book. We all have these transitions that take place at various points in our lives and often it is the stories others are willing to share that serve as the guideposts for such periods. I have received great feedback from college students, people in middle age, as well as older folks. All of those ages tend to be very transitional by nature.

6. How did studying psychology and your experience in counseling inform and influence the book?

This is not an intellectual or academic work. I consider it a "feeling" book. I hope it hits people on a "feeling" level. It was these types of books that fueled my journey. I wanted to add to that library. A major decision in including such a wide variety of other writers in the book was to lend it some professional backing. I went through three years of very intense reading, writing, and counseling which was far and away the best education I ever received. It's self-affirming to me that the best education of my life came without a diploma or certification. This gave me all the confidence I needed.

7. What would you want your readers to know about you?

That I am a normal and thus very flawed person. I am a husband and father. I do blue-collar work most days. I believe in the end, though, it's not what the readers know about me, it's what they know about themselves that is most important.

8. Do you regularly write poetry, or is it something new to you with this book?

For the most part, writing poetry is new to me. I've always been moved by poetry but this book is my first attempt to share my own. I believe whenever someone commits to the inward turn, the hard look at one's own life, creativity of all kinds--writing, painting, performing--provides a much-needed release. As Robert Bly said, you have to "let your darlings out."

9. What's the main message this book gives to men in their mid-life transition?

A: To have the courage to step outside of the flow of the culture and create a life for yourself that you believe is authentic. The hardest part of that, though, is you have to do it while remaining a contributing member of the culture. Also, I would add that I do not consider this a book written specifically for men. The nicest compliments I've received for the book thus far have come from women.

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