



Glennon with Oprah
at her home
in Santa Barbara.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **Rob Howard**

FIGHTING the Good FIGHT

What happened when **Glennon Doyle Melton** got knocked down by some devastating news? Instead of giving up, she rose up. That makes her a Love Warrior—and it's why her new memoir is Oprah's latest book club pick.

BEING HUMAN, we are all alike in at least this respect: On any given day, we're just trying to do the best we can. Too often we forget that and don't forgive ourselves for our mistakes, or forgive others for their betrayals, large or small. And we think we're alone in our pain.

For months I'd been hearing from friends and colleagues about Glennon Doyle Melton—how she was a truth teller, someone who had helped countless people through her online community, Momastery, and in her work with Together Rising, the nonprofit she founded to serve people who need help getting through hard times. SuperSoulers like Elizabeth Gilbert, Brené Brown, and Rob Bell were using words like *epic* to describe her work. I was eager to find out what all the fuss was about, so I settled in with an advance copy of *Love Warrior*, Glennon's second book. Immediately, I was struck by her candor. It was as if I'd been given access to a friend's intimate journal.

Glennon hit rock bottom 14 years ago—or so she thought. She was so hung over, she couldn't pick herself up off the bathroom floor. Suspecting alcohol wasn't the only reason for her nausea, she took a pregnancy test. It was positive. Only a few months earlier, she'd had an abortion. She was still seeing the same guy, Craig, though they hadn't thought of the relationship as serious. But that day, Glennon felt something shift inside her. "What happens next," she writes of that moment, "does not feel like a decision, but a discovery.... I will have this baby."



Glennon had begun numbing herself as a young girl. She overate, which satisfied her momentarily, then disgusted her. That led to bulimia. In high school, right before the homecoming parade, where she was being honored for leadership, she was hospitalized for her eating disorder—and released in time to ride in the parade. At college, Glennon resumed her self-destructive behavior, regularly drinking so much that she'd black out and doing cocaine. After graduation, the attempts to escape

herself—to escape *feeling*—continued. But it wasn't until that day on the cold tile floor that Glennon realized there was something she wanted more than numbness: motherhood.

She cleaned up her act and got sober. Glennon married Craig, had the first of their three children, and became involved in her church, teaching Sunday school. She started blogging and wrote her first book. But she was still hiding. From intimacy. From the possibility of being hurt.

Then came another wake-up call. More on that in a moment. First, though, let me tell you how *Love Warrior* made me feel. I read it as a testament to the power of vulnerability. Through it, Glennon shows us the clearest meaning of "To thine own self be true." It's as if she reached into her heart, captured the raw emotions there, and translated them into words that anyone who's ever known pain or shame—in other words, every human on the planet—can relate to. She's bravely put everything on the table for the whole world to see. That's why I had to share her book with you.

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OPRAH: There's so much I want to say to you that I'm not sure where to begin. We're just meeting for the first time, but reading *Love Warrior* made me feel I know you.

GLENNON DOYLE MELTON: And I've loved you for so long!

OW: From the outside looking in, people thought you and your family were perfect. And then boom: You found out your husband was keeping porn on the family computer and had been having one-night stands for years.

GDM: Yes, there was the part of me on the outside, the pretty, shiny part. I'm out there saying the things I'm supposed to: "I'm fine." "My marriage is great." "My kids are great." "I'm fulfilled." It's like a Disney film.

OW: And what's on the inside?

GDM: Inside I'm scared, lonely, and confused.

OW: You've said that, especially when it comes to little girls, the world doesn't want to see the ugly, afraid, secret version of who we really are.

GDM: Absolutely. We're told that to be successful girls, we have to be small and quiet. Yet to be successful humans, we have to become big and have a voice. There's an inherent contradiction. And there's something else: People need truth the way they need air. They're desperate for it. Even when you risk rejection, telling your truth clears the field for others to tell theirs.

OW: Before you learned of your husband's infidelity, you'd been feeling a lack of intimacy and connection, and blaming yourself for it, right?

GDM: We were in therapy, and I thought we were going to talk about something mundane. And then Craig made a confession: *I have to tell you something. I've been unfaithful. There have been other women—lots of them.*

OW: And what are you feeling then?

GDM: Landslide. Like everything is being pulled out from under me. We separated that day. I felt like someone had handed me an eviction notice from my life. That's what crisis does. It comes into your life, and you have to watch everything you thought you needed fall away.

OW: Yes, but then what's left?

GDM: The things that can't be taken from you: faith, hope, love. And that's when fear disappears.

OW: Down there at rock bottom.

GDM: Yes—rock bottom is an identity changer. I was a mom and a wife and a writer, and those things were good. If you ask a woman who she is, she'll tell you who she serves and sometimes what she does. But that isn't the whole story.

OW: Mm-hmm.

GDM: That's a precarious position. If you're only identifying as a wife, what happens if he leaves? Or as a mother, when your children go off to college? When crisis came in and stripped me of that perfect-mom-and-wife thing, I found a truer identity—I no longer felt I was faking it.

OW: So that loss, that grief, eventually enabled you to feel stronger.

GDM: I really think things have to die for new life to emerge. I think of love and marriage in the same way I do plants: We have perennials and annuals. The perennial plant blooms, goes away, and comes back. The annual blooms for just a season, and then winter arrives and takes it out for good. But it's still enriched the soil for the next flower to bloom. In the same way, no love is wasted.

OW: If you've had love in your life, however it showed up, it was there to elevate you, to change you, to make you better.

GDM: That's exactly right.

OW: What are you most proud of now?

GDM: My sobriety. For the first half of my life, I was so afraid of pain that I ran from it in every way I could. I didn't think I could handle it. Now I think of pain as having life-changing properties. When I was 10, I started feeling uncomfortable emotions. Fear. Jealousy. Anger. Loneliness. This wasn't in keeping with the pretty little girl everyone found adorable, or with my comfy childhood, including the most loving parents imaginable. But because we are encouraged to talk about only the shiny, happy feelings, I thought something was wrong with me. I didn't know this was just a natural part of being human.

OW: Everybody runs away from those feelings. We should be running toward them.

GDM: Pain is mandatory for all of us. It's what teaches us. Suffering is what's optional. That's what happens when we try to skip over the pain.

OW: Shortly after the Oprah show went national, I got a letter from an Ann Arbor, Michigan, viewer named Carol. She wrote: "Watching you be yourself every day, Oprah, makes me want to be more myself." Since that was what I strove to do every time I went in front of an audience, I took that as the ultimate compliment. And Glennon, that's what you do for me. You make me want to share my truth. You make me want to be more myself. Thank you.

*From top: Glennon helping her sister prepare for her seventh-grade dance; in her college partying days; with Craig on their wedding day; nine months pregnant; working in the "cloffice" where she wrote *Love Warrior*.*

What I Know for Sure



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THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW ME AND KNOW THIS MAGAZINE

have for years heard me speak about leading with your truth.

Living authentically is the only way to lasting happiness. This I know for sure.

That's why I feel such deep kinship with Glennon Doyle Melton, best-selling author, wildly popular blogger, and writer of my latest book club selection. (You can read more about the book starting on page 140.) Glennon wants to shout it from the mountaintops:

Sharing the truth of your life—the whole truth, including the good, the not so good, and the completely messed-up stuff that leaves you crying on the floor—is the key to unlocking a genuine spiritual connection with the people around you.

She's gathered a tribe she calls Love Warriors, who believe "the only way to live peacefully is to forgive everyone constantly, including yourself."

This idea resonates so strongly with me. Because I, too, know that hanging on to resentment and grudges keeps you locked in the past. Even when people do or say things that are less than kind, even when you know you got the short end of the stick, the only way forward is onward. Otherwise you get stuck. You stagnate in bad feelings.

I try always to let my pain and disappointment be my teachers. In fact, I've learned my most soulful lessons from betrayal—from people who let me down, who acted one way to my face but very differently behind my back. From every disheartening experience, I've gained new insight. And a firmer resolve to see what I see and know what I know, for sure.

That's what it means to be a true Love Warrior. I wish it for you, too.

Oprah