

To say that my marriage was unconventional and that it was difficult is an understatement. But I would do it all over again because my journey with Jeff provided me the opportunity to discover my own true definition of love. You see, I remained “Committed to Love” throughout my twenty-five year marriage to a bisexual man who had contracted HIV. My best friend of thirty-seven years and husband of twenty-five, Dr. Jeffrey A. Mintz was diagnosed on June 19, 1992 with AIDS-related pneumonia and died on August 17, 1994. In those twenty-five years I was able to find my core, my strength, my faith, my hope, and my true understanding that I was chosen to love him. I was chosen to stay with him. And I was chosen to watch him become the stranger in my bed as the virus wreaked horrific devastation.

My world was crumbling slowly before my eyes. I wanted to die with him, but I couldn't. I had to live and stay strong and healthy because I was his support. Life support to his eventual death. As I held him in my arms so many times night after night, he would convulse from the spiked 105-degree temperatures that accompanied the illnesses associated with AIDS. I changed the sheets at 3:00 AM because his night sweats left him in a pool of water and drenched clothing. It was a movie. The movie was from hell.

We had our secrets well hidden from everyone. After Jeffrey was diagnosed with Pneumocystis Pneumonia, while at his bedside I could only watch him fight for life. He lay so gravely ill. I started to document his ordeal and never stopped writing during this insanity. My writing saved me. I recorded every detail of this period of time in fifteen journals. My emotions were rampant. Rage, denial, hate, resentment, love, sadness, chaos. My toughest job was to have to tell his parents, our families, and our friends that Jeff had AIDS and how he acquired it. I could lie no more. The truth was all we had left.

My marriage under these wild circumstances was, to say the least, insanely chaotic and yet also rewarding. The word love for me had always meant commitment, unconditional acceptance, and facing every problem with a solution even if I didn't know what the solution would be or if it was the right one. To this day, I remain in my heart, Jeff's wife, friend, care giver, and devoted partner. My hope is that as I share my story, others may gather up the strength and fortitude to commit to their marriage vows before God first, and then commit to their marriage.

My autobiographical book, *Committed to Love A Woman's Journey through Love and Loss* challenges readers to love someone unconditionally in spite of their faults. I am a baby-boomer, motivational author, lecturer and fitness guru originally from Troy, New York. I currently reside in Boca Raton, Florida, and spend my days encouraging and supporting people by promoting wellness through diet, exercise, and “healthy choices.” I am a member of Jesus People Proclaim International Church (JPPIC) in Deerfield Beach, and the executive director of their "*I Love My Life Wellness Center*".

Writing over the years has been calming and healing for me, having written a weekly motivational column for the Boca Raton Newspaper and a monthly cooking column entitled “Cooking With Yeshua” for the JPPIC newsletter. But my writing legacy also includes, *Safe Sex Never Tasted So Good*, a healthy and sexy (actually XXX-rated) cookbook. Donning the alter ego “Mrs. Boner”, I provided a hilarious treatment of nutritious, easy and fun recipes...for adults only! Self-published without major promotion or distribution, my naughty cookbook sold over 30,000 copies just by word of mouth.

Overall, despite periods of overwhelming sadness and depression, I have also soared mountaintop highs, and I truly Love My Life. For more about my story, please go to my web site at www.susanmintz.com.