



Meet Your Neighbors

You might not know it, but Cherry Point has an author in residence. **Kelly Ryan**, a licensed marriage and family therapist who lives over on Hibiscus, has just published a book: *Warrior Sisters*. Written in conjunction with her sister Karen in Florida, it tells the story of their addictions. Or as the book says, "One was a drunk, the other a junkie. To help each other, they had to save themselves first."

Both sisters had fought their way into sobriety when a friend suggested they write a book. Managing the distance, each wrote their own story, following the advice "Write until you have nothing left to say."

They then organized the book into two part chapters. One sister tells her tale and the other comments on what happened. Every other chapter, they switch roles. This is a fascinating structure, immersing the reader inside the addiction, then viewing it from the distance of the other sister's perspective.

The stories are very personal. For instance, Kelly reveals that she first faced up to being an alcoholic when her husband said he could no longer enable her drinking and considering separation. Don't worry, they are still married, which attests to her success in getting help. The book also shares their childhood abuse. One might wonder if such honesty alienated their family, but no. Kelly says her mother was their biggest champion and the other two sisters helped to edit the book.

When asked how their book differs from the many about addicts, Kelly says theirs isn't like a celebrity story, all about the sufferer. It focuses on healing, on hope. She points out that many families have someone close who is addicted but shame keeps them from acknowledging it or seeking help. She and her sister felt it was important to be open and vulnerable, which was somewhat frightening. However, they intend the book to be a legacy of hope to the community.

The sisters have a great website which includes more information about the book, about invitations to talk to groups (they were in Minnesota in June) and family photos: <https://kellyandkaren.com/>. Also check out the many wonderful reviews on Amazon.com, where you can buy your own copy.

