



Waking Up in Paris: Overcoming Darkness in the City of Light

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Devastated by the unexpected end of her decades-long marriage, renowned spiritual teacher and intuitive guide **Sonia Choquette** undertook an equally unexpected move and relocated to Paris, the scene of many happy memories from her life as a student and young mother. Arriving in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo massacre, she found a Paris as traumatized by this unforeseen event as she had been by her divorce. Together, over the following years, she and the city she loves began a journey of healing that involved deep soul-searching and acceptance of a new, sometimes uncomfortable, reality.

In this follow-up to *Walking Home*, Sonia shares her intimate thoughts and fears, as well as the unique challenges of setting up a new life in a foreign land. From moving into a freezing, malodorous apartment, to a more pleasant—yet haunted—flat across the Seine, to her current light-filled home, Sonia shares how these changes parallel her inner transformation.

Along the way, Sonia regales readers with vivid stories of her unfortunate encounters with French hairdressers and beauticians, her adventures in French fashion, and her search for the perfect neighborhood café. Her companion throughout is the city of Paris—a character unto itself—which never ceases to fill her with wonder, surprise, and delight, and provides her with the spiritual strength to succeed in establishing her new life.

Waking Up in Paris: Overcoming Darkness in the City of Light Details

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From Reader Review *Waking Up in Paris: Overcoming Darkness in the City of Light* for online ebook

Leigh Ellis says

I've followed Sonia Choquette's work for many years. This memoir showed up at the perfect time for me. I loved reading about her journey from emotional devastation to finding her true home, both within and without. It's not a straight line journey and perfectly imperfect, and I could completely relate to the moments of self-doubt and seeking for a way to feel better through a challenging time. I'm sure I'll be re-reading this at some point as I'm sure there is more for me in these pages.

Judy Kaiser says

This is the second book by this author that was lent to me by a colleague who reads mostly her spiritual guidance books. Though I'm not interested in reading any of those, as one might expect, much of her belief system bleeds through the two books which I have read, but it isn't overwhelming or off-putting.

What I liked: I learned a lot about Paris. I fell in love with the details, the culture, the resilience of the people, the philosophy of Parisians, especially since this book took place during the Charlie Hebdo and subsequent Paris terrorist attacks. I found I related to Sonia's openness to living life with all of its challenges and choosing to be happy or gaining knowledge through the difficult times it inevitably brings. In other words, basic perspective flexibility.

What I disliked: For a spiritualist, Sonia complains on almost every page of the book. I could almost envision her stomping her feet as each new situation was encountered. As readers, we are voyeurs into her mental process of eventually getting to acceptance, which she does, but it came across (to me) as whining an awful lot. I much prefer her earlier book, *Walking Home: A Pilgrimage from Humbled to Healed*, which I found quite encouraging and inspiring. Both books I've read are good books to gain valuable information about locations (Camino de Santiago & Paris) and to receive encouragement in our shared human experiences.

Susan says

OMG, another insufferable woman whining her way through life. Sonia Choquette is an intuitive spiritual counselor?! You could have fooled me. She goes and has her hair chopped off - she didn't intuit that the coiffeur was bonkers? And then ends up with her eyebrows tattooed or dyed like Groucho Marx. She didn't feel the needles? And at one point she says her finances were precarious but she and her daughter ate breakfast out nearly every morning, treated themselves to dinner, go on vacations to Malta and Florence renting airbnbs while paying rent in Paris and renting Paris apartments they can't afford. I gave it two stars just for the descriptions of Paris and some cafés and restaurants I might try next trip.

Ruth Godfrey says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was very natural and sweet and as i had it on the audible app it felt as though she was a friend telling me all about her adventures. There wasn't any lightning strikes moments within the story but i liked that. It felt natural and loved the girly mistakes with slightly mad hairdresser giving a horror cut and the awful brows which let's face it ladies, we can all relate to that and for all the people saying that if she was in touch with her guides they would have steered her clear of the mistakes it was by having the mistakes she was able to learn and progress with her self worth. This book for me was like a lovely boat trip (on the Seine) and it was worth every moment.

Andrea says

Sometimes books show up in your life at exactly the right moment. The parallel between author Sonia Choquette as she deals with the break up of her marriage by moving to Paris was a soothing remedy to the challenges I am facing in life, and brought laughter in this time of personal adversity. I was able to lose myself, and my problems, in the clear imagery of the author describing the etiquette, challenges, and food of Paris.

This passage was particularly helpful:

...we set about creating an altar in the apartment, an absolute must in our home...statues of the Mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Saint Theresa we had collected over the years, as they were the providers of famine strength and nurturing comfort to whom we prayed for emotional healing. On our altar were also images of our favourite feminine Hindu deities, picked up on our many trips to India, which we also brought along with us. These included Lakshmi, the goddess of abundance (I needed all the help from her I could get); Durga, the goddess who alleviates suffering (she worked alongside Mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Saint Theresa); and Kali, the goddess of death and destruction and the one who liberates you and brings you freedom once you face your fears.

Lisamarie says

This was a fast, enjoyable read. I felt I was there in Paris with the author. I wonder what happened with the ghost? I would have liked a wrap up. Did he ever come back? Was he there all the time? Overall, I'm sorry the story had to end.

Lindsay Post says

Highly disappointing. I lost a ton of respect for the author herself. She is an overpriced intuitive that has no concept of the real world. And this is coming from a professional in the same line of work. So this is my professional opinion of her after reading this book that Hayhouse completely misrepresented as a book that helps you to overcome the pressures of being a spiritual councillor. This was nothing but a whiney, biography about an overprivileged divorcee that moves to Paris to heal herself.... If only we all had the resources to do that when our lives fall apart... Waaaa!!!! Her diamond shoes were too tight and can you

believe there is poverty in Paris? You would never see two immigrants fight in the street in America!!!
OMG! And it's so common there that nobody even pays attention. And they actually make you leave your backpacks in the front of the store in these terrible neighborhoods in Paris... Only in Paris though.... It clearly doesn't happen in the bad neighborhoods in the US.... But it's so exciting I think I will go back to the US and sell my 3 story Victorian House and move to Paris permantly.... Yes, great idea.... But I simply must move to a more posh part of Paris... But it's got to be affordable.... This is my impression of the author.... Completely clueless! I would never pay her 400\$ an HR fee for a reading.... She has no concept on balance (the dark aspects of life are just as important as the light) she is certainly not as qualified as she thinks/has been lead to believe she is.... This is probably why I never meshed well with any of her decks. Any way, unless you are interested in learning about Paris don't waste your time or your money.

Emmie says

I've enjoyed reading this book and got to know France a bit more. While the city is magical and sensual, its service management isn't very efficient. Sonia charts her new life in this romantic city and shares her frustrations about finding an apartment to rent and dealing with service. She also writes about her concerns about fitting in with the French culture. She gradually gets a grip on her new life with faith and hope and conquers the fear of the unknown with a positive mindset.

Leeza Robertson says

This is a fabulous book, but it is not like Sonia's other books. This is a personal, vulnerable account of how she found herself in a city that drove her nuts! Everything about this book is enjoyable. From the temper tantrums to the second-guessing to the moments of grace and awakening. If you have ever been through a life change so big it made you question everything about who you are, this book is for you. If you are thinking about making a change that would rock the foundation of your current daily life, this is the book for you. Oh and don't forget your white Parisian button down shirt :)

Kim L says

Being a huge Sonia Choquette fan, I really enjoyed this book. The book gives the reader a first hand look at life in Paris. I wonder if I am the only one who thinks this book could be made into a wonderful movie!

Laura says

I got this book from Goodreads #giveaway, and I guess I didn't read the entire description well enough. At it's core, it is about a woman who moves to Paris with her adult daughter so they can both get over failed relationships. That's fine, but the part I originally missed was that the author is a spiritual and "intuition" guide (I'm not sure how you teach intuition, but it must pay pretty well), which amounts to attributing everything good that happens to angels, or Jesus, or spirits, or saints, or the universe (she's very diverse in her beliefs). Anything that seems to be a struggle is her soul pulling her in another direction. The hall lights not working properly in her recently renovated apartment could only be the spirit of her dead father

(grandfather? not sure) saying hello and "playing", not faulty wiring. I know everyone has different beliefs and ways of dealing with things, but I had a hard time relating to her. I spent most of the book alternating between wishing she had thought to go to a therapist, and wondering how you get into making enough money to live in Paris by selling this spiritual/intuition crap to people over the phone.

Babajaga says

This book fell into my hands thanks to a Goodreads giveaway. I'm so grateful for having had a chance to glimpse into the author's life as she decides to start from zero and move to Paris after the dissolution of her marriage. I appreciated her honesty in describing her emotional state of mind while she was trying to overcome the heartbreak. It was thoroughly enjoyable to learn how she had to tackle all the challenges associated with this move. Not only did I learn about life in Paris, but I also got a few good tips on how to approach the "dark times" which one might encounter.

Syrena says

An honest memoir of one woman's transformation from broken to filling the cracks with gold in the alluring city of (self) love- Paris?

SundayAtDusk says

This is at least the fifth book I've read about an American moving to France, and I enjoyed it more than the books written by my mothers talking about how the French raise their kids, as well as the books by foodies. While Sonia Choquette does take one of her daughters with her to Europe, her daughter is an adult, not a child still in school. Moreover, while food comes up a lot in the memoir, it's not dwelled on, with included recipes; but more about those who work in or visit cafes, restaurants and food shops; and about the adventures the ladies have in those places. In addition, there is some talk about wine and other alcoholic beverages, but, once again, the drinking does not keep coming up over and over again, like it does in foodie books.

Basically, what you have with this memoir is the story of a middle-aged woman whose 30-year marriage has ended, and who wants a new way to live and a new way to view her life. Fortunately, Ms. Choquette does not come across as self-absorbed or self-pitying, so there's also no dwelling on what went wrong with her life. It does come up multiple times, but then attention is quickly turned to everyday life in Paris--apartments, shopping, eating out and in, haughty waiters, neighbors, celebrations, clothes, the seasons, terrorism, etc. Yes, there are terrorists attacks while the author is in France, but she describes how the French moved forward after those attacks with courage, and determination that their lives would not be controlled or changed by cowards.

Sonia Choquette is apparently a life counselor, in a combination Catholic-New Age vein, as well as an author and "spiritual" teacher. She mentioned various times in the story how her work involved having phone sessions with others, although she never specified what type of work she did on the phone. If you go to Ms.

Choquette's website, you will see she offers guidance to those who want to change their lives, and "get into the flow of peaceful living". Apparently, she's not telling them to move to France, but that: "In our time spent together, I will reveal your soul plan, your soul's purpose, your soul lessons, and obstacles. Then we look at where you are today, and how to best align with your plan, overcome your blocks, and get into the grace and flow of spirit immediately. The result is a quick solution and return to peace."

The problem with that promise, besides the fact her phone counseling costs \$400 for 30 minutes, is there are no "quick solutions" to major life problems, no quick "return to peace". Her memoir clearly shows that. It took quite a bit of time in her new life in Paris to deal with her fears and feelings of being a divorced woman; to deal with living by herself for the first time in her life; to deal with playing the role of a guidance counselor to others for so many years. It took moving to a foreign land; moving to three different apartments; plus finally making a real effort to make new long-lasting friends, to make a whole new life for herself. Thus, why is she telling others she can provide them with a "quick solution" when she can do no such thing, and knows good and well they will have to change their own lives by changing their own lives? Furthermore, there is no way she would be able to "reveal" someone's "soul plan, soul's purpose, soul lessons". We all have to figure that out for ourselves.

P.S. Telephone callers may want to note that the author was looking for an even nicer apartment at the end of the story.

(Note: I received a free copy of this book from Amazon Vine, and the hardback's dust cover is lovely.)

Sandra says

Sonia Choquette, well-known spiritual leader, was desperate. After reconciling with her estranged husband, he decided to divorce her after all. A 32-year marriage was over. Sonia was so distraught; her daughter gave her a choice: either go to a hospital or move to France. Sonia had always loved Paris, so she and her daughter, Sabrina, moved to Paris. This book is Sonia's account of their difficulties, hardships, and disappointments, as well as her joys and triumphs, as they tried to make Paris their home. She also shares with her reader the way she handled the difficulties of moving to another country.

This is a realistic and enjoyable introduction to France, its people and its culture. It describes the beauty of Paris and its people, as well as their quirks and their differences from Americans. This is a candid and truthful account. Sonia tells us everything about her experiences. It is about her love story with Paris, however, she does not fail to see it in a very realistic light.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an unbiased review.
