

Seattle Author Elizabeth Kovar: The Most At-Home Abroad

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What would it be like to drop everything, and abscond alone to a foreign country to study something new? [Elizabeth Kovar](#) has done it, twice. In 2005, she wanted to get away from the party lifestyle and embarked on a study abroad trip to the Gold Coast of Australia.

"I went to Australia to get away from the party lifestyle... I had some really bad patterns," she said. "I wanted to pursue something more focused on health and wellness."

She began journaling about her experiences. "I was seeing life from a different perspective, doing all of the things you do when you're trying to figure things out."



Elizabeth Kovar, photo credit: [Stephen Matera](#)

When she returned home after her time abroad, she underwent a severe reverse culture shock. "It was a big transition," she said. "There was a lot of emotional instability. I wasn't who I was when I left."

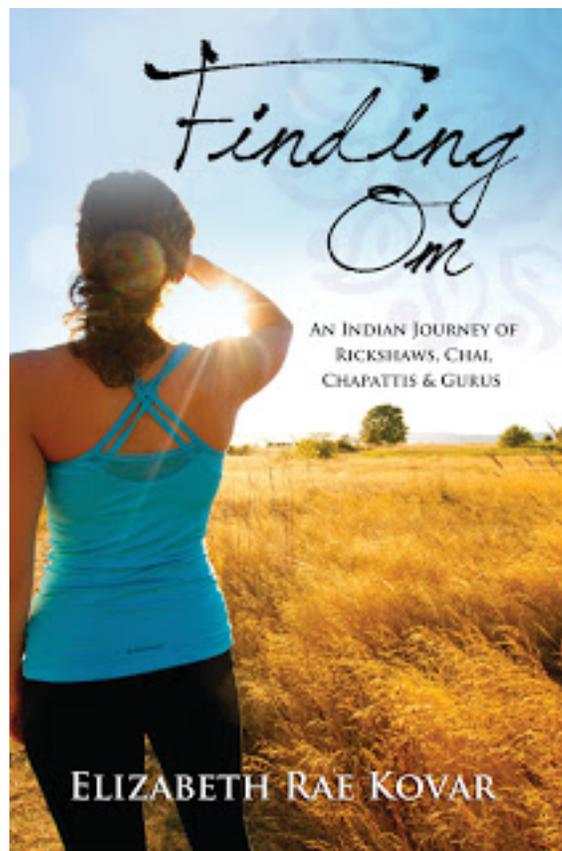
After a couple of years of overworking herself into a complete breakdown, she had a chance at the [Stuart R. Givens Fellowship](#) (2007). "When the fellowship came up, I decided to apply. I wanted to learn yoga from the best, in India." The point of the fellowship grant was to allow a student to do something to change their own life. Elizabeth thinks that may be part of why she won; since many of the other applicants were likely submitting applications for projects that would change others' lives, and not their own.

Elizabeth set out once again to travel alone, and backpacked through India studying yoga

and other facets of health and wellness. "I have learned that I am at my best traveling... I feel at home abroad," she said. "I had so many highs and lows. There's an intensity traveling alone. I had lots of experiences of things you wouldn't think you would go through as a traveler."

After she returned, refreshed and with a new vision, she traveled and studied for several more years, building a portfolio as a freelance writer as well. "I always wanted to be a writer, in fact, Charles Dickens and I share a birthday! My goal was to become a freelance writer," she said.

She moved to Seattle in February 2011. After the move, she met someone publishing travel journals, who was interested in helping her publish her story. "I never planned to use the journal, but the entries really showed the human emotion I was feeling at the time," Elizabeth says. After three months, she had a manuscript but she realized it needed a lot more development. The other party backed out of the project, and Elizabeth decided to finish it on her own. "I didn't want the story to be changed," she said.



She used original journal entries from her travels in Australia and India to share her experience in a memoir. "I wanted people to realize that ordinary people go through struggles, but they can do something extraordinary. We go through those random lessons in life. People can connect to it," she said. "I'm a logical, yet spiritual person. I'm connecting the dots now, but I had to shift my mind back to 2007 because I didn't see those things at the time."

Elizabeth finished *Finding Om: An Indian Adventure of Rickshaws, Chai, Chapattis and Gurus* while living in Germany for the last 15 months - in fact, she just moved back to the Seattle area about a month ago. "It was a three year process, with lots of editing, and critique from other writers," she says.

The result is a memoir that will resonate with readers who love travel, in addition to yoga enthusiasts and beginners who can appreciate and learn from Elizabeth's experiences and education. "A lot of what I've learned about yoga is in the book, and I hope people can learn for themselves and expand their understanding of yoga by reading it. This isn't just a look into someone else's life," she said.

When it came time to publish the book, she went the independent route. "It was a struggle, and I hit more roadblocks than successes, but I like having more control," Elizabeth said. "It was a great time to publish a book, but it's also the worst." She had lots of time to work on it in Germany, but didn't have the financial support she could have used to publish the book with a higher-end, more meticulous publisher.

After *Finding Om* was released in October 2015, "I've hit a few bumps, but I'm trying to put myself out there... Everything happened the way it was supposed to. I even have a few friends who are asking to translate the book!"

"You just need to do it and don't be afraid," Elizabeth advises aspiring writers. "There's a lot of growth that a person goes through themselves ... You can get a lot of growth and comfort telling your story by writing it down," she said. "This is the best time to tell your story because there are so many options for telling it, with independent publishing."

That being said, in order to succeed with publishing, authors need the entrepreneurial mindset, according to Elizabeth. "Being humble is a good thing, but don't sell yourself short. You worked many hours for free, and although sometimes you have to give your book away (to reviewers and book distributors), you deserve to be paid."

In addition to providing health and fitness training and instruction, Elizabeth is a freelance writer. She is in the process of completing the manuscript for a vegan cookbook.

Posted 2 hours ago by [Norelle Done](#)

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