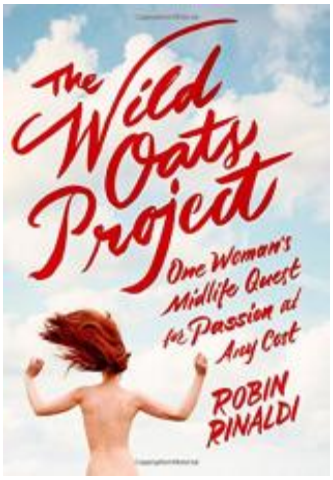
The Wild Oats Project: One Woman's Midlife Quest for Passion at Any Cost

by Robin Rinaldi



About the Book

A brave, provocative memoir that raises powerful questions about sex and relationships, THE WILD OATS PROJECT is sure to spark eye-opening conversations. Robin Rinaldi, an attractive, successful magazine journalist, recounts the year when she moved into a San Francisco apartment, joined a dating site, and started having the best sex of her life. Never mind that she was still married to the man she?d been in love with for 18 years, and that he was fully aware of her plan. She and her husband would live their quiet, domestic life together on weekends. During the week, they would each have their freedom. What followed was a process of self-revelation that ranged from exhilarating to heartbreaking, with unexpected revelations for both of them.

Delivering an everywoman?s account of sex and sensuality, THE WILD OATS PROJECT raises the stakes in the conversations begun by Cheryl Strayed?s WILD and Elizabeth Gilbert?s classic EAT, PRAY, LOVE.

Discussion Guide

1. What did you predict for Robin when she went to Paul?s on that rainy first night? How did your predictions shift throughout the memoir?

2. In the initial passages, Robin describes herself as a 43-year-old good girl who has slept with only four men --- the least experienced woman in her circle of friends. How do you define ?good girl?? Does her project necessarily make her a bad girl? Would it have mattered if she?d had an abusive husband or a sexless marriage?

3. How did Robin?s childhood prepare her for relationships with men? How did her responsibilities to her mother and younger brothers affect her sense of self? How did Scott?s grief over his mother?s death shape his relationship with Robin? What fears did Robin and Scott share?

4. Robin writes at the end of Chapter 6 that after Scott?s vasectomy, she told him, ?Starting now, we?re in this for our own individual goals.? In Chapter 13, we see her trying to explain her motivations to her friends. She is frank with us about having conflicting reasons for wanting a wild-oats contract. Why do you think she reacted to Scott with a request for sexual freedom?

5. What was the relationship between Robin?s maternal longing and her sexual longing? Why, if she couldn?t fulfill the former, did she feel compelled to fulfill the latter? How does this relationship play out in you?

6. What does motherhood mean to Robin? What does fatherhood mean to Scott? How do their perceptions of parenthood compare to yours?

7. If you read THE WILD OATS PROJECT as a portrait of a marriage, how would you describe the birth, life, and conclusion of this marriage?

8. One of the concessions Robin makes is to move back to the West Coast because Scott dislikes Philadelphia. How do their notions of the ideal home reflect their personalities?

9. At the School of Womanly Arts, Robin is advised to make pleasure the basis for her decision-making. What would your life look like if you stopped participating in activities, conversations and habits that don?t give you pleasure?

10. Discuss Robin?s dilemma in trying to post her personal ad on Craigslist --- a dilemma that is solved when she discovers Nerve.com. Have you encountered double standards in how American culture perceives women?s sexuality versus men?s?

11. Are eroticism, romantic love and long-term commitment mutually exclusive? Does OneTaste?s approach appeal to you? How are individual goals achieved there, even when the male and female clienteles have different erotic desires?

12. Is there a common denominator between Paul, Jude and Alden? Does Scott possess any of their traits? What was it about Alden that forged the strongest bond?

13. In Chapter 24, how is Robin transformed by her experience with women?s bodies?

14. Were you surprised that Scott was seeing Charly? Would you have done the same thing if you were in his position? Would you want to be Charly, with a clearly defined end point to the dating?

15. From David Deida?s conference to sessions with George, Robin seeks insight from a variety of sources. Is her psychotherapy distinct from her sexuality workshops? Are her psychological, spiritual, and physical journeys expressions of the same quest?

16. Robin observes that her lovers introduced her to all the women she is, and that her marriage boiled down to a

question of eros versus agape. She chose eros, even while admitting that it would likely prove fleeting. Would you have made the same choice? What conflicting facets exist in all that you are?

17. If you were to sow your wild oats, what would that look like? What urges would you try to fulfill? Could you do it part-time, as Robin did, or would you need to step away from your current routine altogether?

Author Bio

Robin Rinaldi has worked for newspapers and magazines for 17 years. She has been the executive editor of *7x7*, a San Francisco lifestyle magazine, and written an award-winning food column for *Philadelphia Weekly*. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times* and *O, The Oprah Magazine*, among other publications. She lives in Los Angeles. For more information, visit www.robinrinaldi.com.

Critical Praise

?Robin Rinaldi?s horizontal adventures will make you howl with laughter and cry with recognition --- whatever the state of your romantic or sex life. And you?ll stay up all night reading to learn how it all turns out. Her bravery and introspection are inspiring to anyone who has taken a moment to wonder: Is there more to life than this??

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