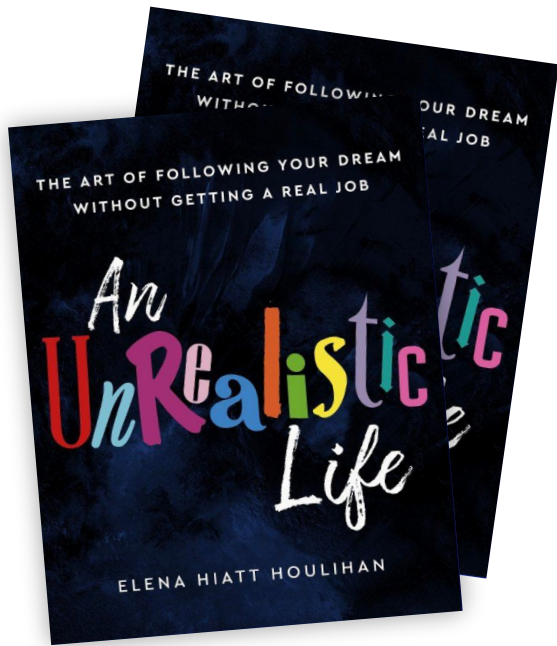


An Unrealistic Life



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An Unrealistic Life: The Art of Following Your Dreams Without Getting a Real Job describes the highs and lows of being an artist, romance, and betrayal, adventures in distant lands, and profiles of fascinating people met along the way who have braved the odds to do what they love.

This illustrated memoir is designed to inspire budding entrepreneurs and artists who feel that the corporate structure restrains their creativity and innovation, as well as those nearing retirement who have been stuck due to a need for security.

An Unrealistic Life is a call to embark on your own journey of creativity and discovery.

Technical Information

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Keywords: Art, Photography, Travel, Romance, Lifestyle, Creativity, Life dream, Tango



A **Five-Star Review**
on Reader Views



A book for both the **Young**
and the **Young at Heart**



Featured in
Inkubator Magazine

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“Houlihan paid the price for being an artist and did it bravely.”

“Through it all, the internal debate continued,” Houlihan writes. “Was it selfish to be an artist when people were starving? My social conscience argued with my artistic soul. What was the best way to spend my time on this planet? My practical Indiana upbringing urged conformity. My need to create tugged me toward freedom.”

Readers will feel that tug as well, and not a jot less for the author’s lovely palette of local colors and elegant prose. But “freedom” in this case means a lot of roughing it while traveling in overcrowded automobiles. It means a life that casts new light on the term uncomfortable, with barely more than the clothes on her back to make up a wardrobe. What readers won’t find is a step-by-step guide to launching oneself as an artist and throwing security to the wind.

Nevertheless, it can be done. Houlihan paid the price for being an artist and did it bravely. In place of security, she became a renowned sculptor, creating large-scale aerial works for public spaces and living in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Along the way, she met others who had made similar choices, suggesting that more people than we might expect do listen to that distant drummer—and Houlihan’s story may inspire readers to listen more closely to themselves.

“It shows that the unconventional path can be hard, but, oh so worth it”

You are the real deal, a true artist in talent and heart. I’m so impressed with your life and how you express yourself on the page. To write in such a flowing manner is a gift. You have such artistry on so many levels.

Your book gives people like me inspiration. And it shows that the unconventional path can be hard, but, oh so worth it. Your book is an art piece in both writings and the photographs/creative layout.

—Christina Demetro, Sculptor

A Marriage of Art And Memoir

The time, care, love and passion that Elena Hiatt Houlihan has injected into her book show up on every single page. From her photographs to her font choices, from the swirls of color that may surprise you to her deliberate choice of words, her meticulous attention to detail add a layer of distinction to what was already an exceptional memoir.

I applaud the artist, the writer and the photographer in Elena, for the courage she manifested to step into her vision, and her determination to live by her convictions. May her story inspire you to examine your life path with a new perspective.

**—Donna Dahl, Author and Award-winning
Master Leadership Empowerment Coach**

“An invitation to live more freely and authentically”

Your story is bold, lyrical, unflinching—and inspiring...full of vivid imagery, vulnerability, travel, art, and yes, tango—it's incredibly moving. You dared to follow your dream, not just in words but in the way you've lived: with curiosity, defiance, and grace. You created something truly special. It's clear how much care and soul went into every page. This isn't just a memoir—it's a visual and emotional journey, an invitation to live more freely and authentically.

—Allan Karl, Bestselling Author: *Forks: A Quest for Culture, Cuisine and Connection. Three Years. Five Continents. One Motorcycle.* WorldRider Productions: Speaker, TV Host, Global Adventurer

“A beautiful gift”

Elena Houlihan is an artist and writer who combines her talents in *An Unrealistic Life*, a beautifully written and illustrated memoir. She blends her story with the art and stories of other artists in a way that will uplift and inspire her readers' creativity. A beautiful gift for anyone interested in writing, art, and creativity

—Michael Larsen, coauthor of the six books in the *Painted Ladies* series about Victorian houses; coauthor, 5th Edition *How to Write a Book Proposal* with Jody Rein; cofounder, San Francisco Writers Conference

“A heavy, lovely masterpiece — it is powerful.”

A quiet triumph occurred last night at the International Friendship Club's meeting space when my friend Elena Hiatt Houlihan presented her book, "An Unrealistic Life."

This project, 20 years in the making, and Elena's entire life pushing against the mainstream, has become a fabulous testament of a woman saying 'no' to convention and 'bring it!' to art in so many ways.

I happily read this book as a beta reader for Elena a year ago and was absolutely thrilled with her reading aloud the beginnings of her heavy, lovely masterpiece - it is powerful.

It was quite the production, with photographs and pages from her wonderfully designed book projected onto the wall as she spoke about pivotal moments in her life that led her literally halfway around the world before settling down (for now) in Puerto Vallarta.

Misael Lopez, an old friend and a fabulous painter and muralist whose work adorns the walls of La Catrina Cantina, was in the audience; his unconventional life and work are a chapter in "An Unrealistic Life."

Brava, Elena! Congratulations at last! I will treasure my signed copy for the rest of my life, for I, too, am an addict.

—Marcia Blondin

“[The book] will inspire many people to step out of the box”

You write eloquently with a strong voice seasoned with vast experience. I think your book will inspire many people to step out of the box and have the courage to forge their own artistic destinies.

—Michael Castleman, author of *The Untold Story of Books: A Writer's History of Book Publishing.*