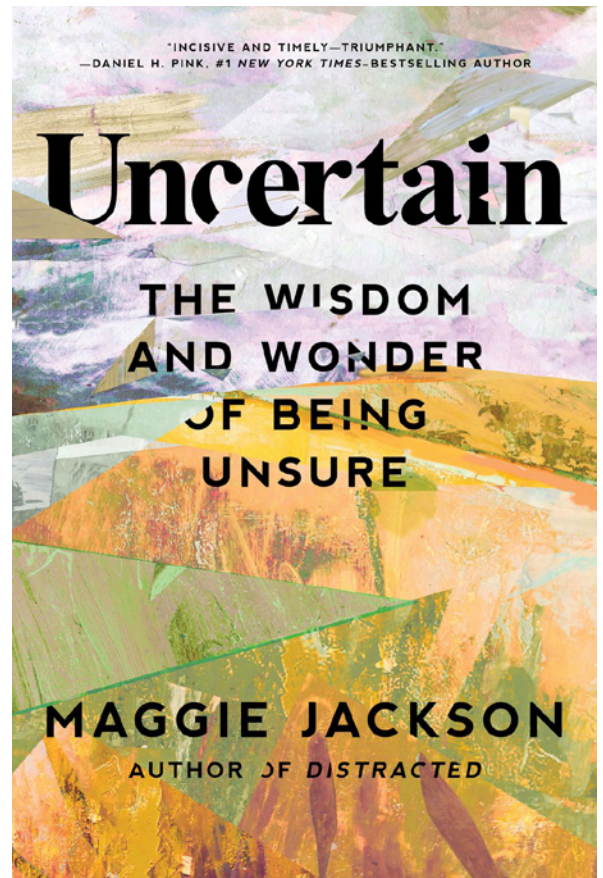




PHOTO: KAREN SMUL



UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE DON'T UNDERSTAND

Little Compton's Maggie Jackson has written a book on the benefits of being unsure in today's world.

BY MARLISSA BRIGGETT

MAGGIE JACKSON'S essays, commentary, and books have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and on National Public Radio. *South Coast Almanac* first met Jackson with the posse of cold-water swimmers, which we featured in last year's fall issue.

Her National Book Award-nominated book *Uncertain: The Wisdom and Wonder of Being Unsure*, will be published this month. We caught up with her recently and asked her a few questions.

SCA: In your past two books, *Distracted* and *What's Happening to Home?* you've tackled weighty issues. What makes you stop and think, there's a book here?

MJ: I like to grapple with very big issues: the changing nature of home and work, distraction in the information age... with this one, it feels like the end of a trilogy.

SCA: And what drew you to the topic of uncertainty?

MJ: I find that people are really eager to talk about uncertainty in a meaty way... there's a hunger for it. As big and as uncomfortable as it is, *Uncertain* shows readers how to confront the unexpected by harnessing not-knowing in pursuit of wisdom and discovery. Part of the joy of writing this hopeful book was meeting the incredible scientists, artists, activists, and parents who are decoding the power of being unsure.

SCA: You live in New York and Little Compton. How did the South Coast inform the book?

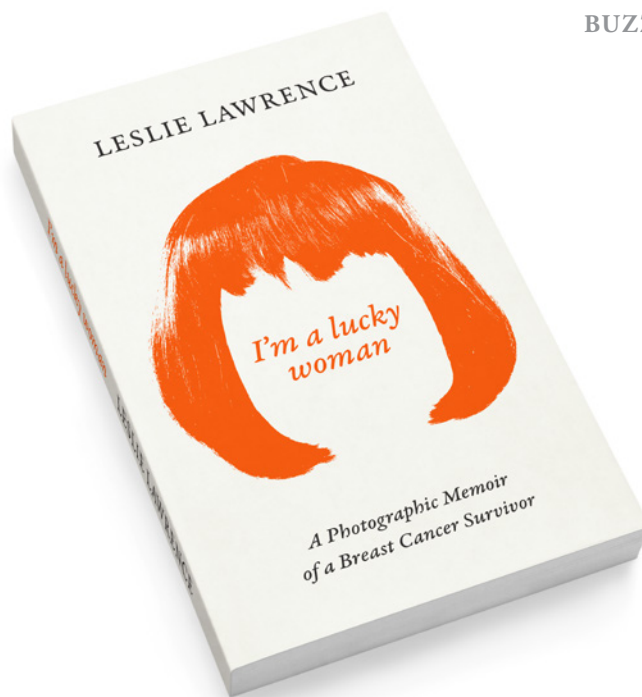
MJ: I see this region as very close to the unknown. Any coastal shoreline is. We're literally on the edge, which for thousands of years has been battling the elements. We are also close to the soil. You've got farming communities dealing with fickleness, with climate change. How do we live in the "not knowing" when we confront it. We need to educate ourselves. Also, I realized that the open water swimming that I've become enamored of here, it's a practice in uncertainty. A daily dose of meeting uncertainty. It has strengthened me in both mind and body.

SCA: We're excited to feature you and the book on our walking book tour in December. Tell us what we can expect.

MJ: It's a chance to stretch your legs and learn about the wisdom and wonder of uncertainty. The beautiful village of Little Compton is the backdrop for a deep-dive into the stories and findings behind the book. We'll have art, a mystery game and snacks and discuss why uncertainty fuels the success of great thinkers, from Martin Luther King Jr. to Charles Darwin. We will learn why treating knowledge as mutable and evolving, rather than 'set-in-stone,' helps us grow and learn.

See more at maggie-jackson.com

Learn more about the December 2 event at southcoastalmanac.com/walking-book-club



A JOURNEY THROUGH CANCER

BY MARLISSA BRIGGETT

The photographic journal of a former marketing exec from Dartmouth became her book *I'm a Lucky Woman*

WHILE worried and waiting for results at a mammography callback, Leslie Lawrence snapped a photo of the lonely and ominous mammogram room.

Throughout the next nine months through diagnosis, treatment, and ultimate recovery from the disease, she took photos with her iPhone. Lawrence found the act of photographing had a calming effect on her.

Approaching the important five-year cancer-free milestone, Lawrence dug out her journals, photos and remembrances of that time. This fall, she published *I'm A Lucky Woman: A Photographic Memoir of a Breast Cancer Survivor*. "I'm a shutterbug," she says. "The photos drove the prose."

Her no-holds-barred approach pairs the vulnerabilities of breast cancer patients with a great deal of humor and positivity. She shares raw photos of her newly bald head and her body post-mastectomy, along with more buoyant photos taken during that same time period (i.e. planting dahlias, celebrating her son's engagement).

"It's not necessarily a death sentence," she says. "I ultimately want to provide hope and inspiration to women who are going through it and the people who love them."

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