

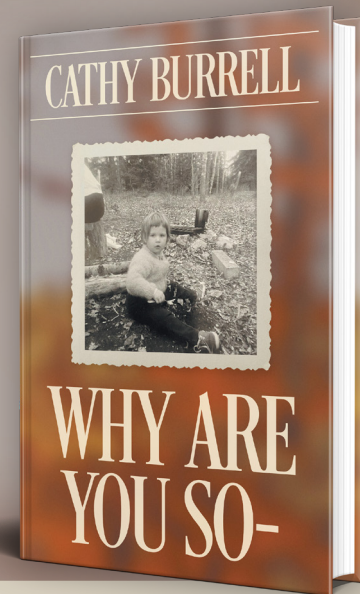
# CATHY BURRELL

*"When I was starting to think about writing my memoir, I came across a phrase that resonated: 'I have a story to tell!'...and I think everyone does. It's not always easy to look back...but I hope you will consider writing YOUR story."*



CATHY BURRELL has been a fashion designer, adult educator, serial entrepreneur, and author. Cathy's interest in creative writing came about after her mother died when Cathy was 37, and the family stories flowed from there. When Cathy closed her two retail clothing stores after 18 years, she began teaching, consulting and facilitating.

With social media emerging as a way to promote everything from blogs to businesses, she began teaching social media for adults at her local community centre. The teaching experience was so rewarding, she went back to school at age 50, and received a Provincial teaching certificate, and a few years later, a Master Degree in Adult Education. The constant of Academic Writing combined with extensive reading, lead to more story-writing, and encouragement from peers. Her publication journey began with a piece in Maclean's Magazine in 2022 that referenced her Aunt and the start of the war in Ukraine (*Dear Aunty Mary*), and two years later a Semi Finalist honour via the Shevchenko Foundation for a piece about her Baba, titled 'Cathy Burrell Really IS Ukrainian'. Cathy's memoir came about after her husband of nearly 40 years experienced a health crisis that led her to think about her family and the financial crisis that happened when she was 10-years-old. That crisis ignited an innate ability to look after herself in every circumstance. Writing the memoir was extremely therapeutic as she recalled decades old resilience, and discovered a newfound empathy for her family.



FOR EIGHT SUMMERS, my life went on the same way. The smell of lilacs, and when school was out, two tickets to the Calgary Stampede tucked into my report card, and a trip to Winnipeg to see Baba.

And then Dad said we were moving. I said no, I wasn't, but when it was clear I had no choice I asked where we were going. He said he got a job as the bakery manager in Yellowknife, a town in the Northwest Territories. I stared and stared at the map and finally realized that at 10 years old I'd had no idea there was any sort of land beyond the northern border of the province of Alberta.

After her father's third bankruptcy and the sudden estrangement of her two adult brothers, young Cathy Yurkiw was dragged away from a comfortable—if somewhat dysfunctional—childhood in Calgary to follow her father north. In Yellowknife, isolated from family and friends, she struggled to grow and put down roots, and to take care of her mother—whose depression and alcoholism were getting worse every day they stayed in the North.

A raw and tender retelling of having to grow up without help in a strange place, and the kind of family falling-apart that leaves tangled relationships and bittersweet memories in its wake.



# CATHY BURRELL

## WHY ARE YOU SO-

Author | Entrepreneur  
Adult Educator/Facilitator  
Small Business Owner



Cathy is interested in presenting at literary festivals and book signings in Kelowna, Calgary, and Yellowknife.

### Presentation Topics

Cathy is interested in presenting on the following topics:

- Writing about family, specifically challenging families
- Being a Ukrainian-Canadian child of an immigrant
- Growing up in the 1970s
- Living in the North
- Being the child of an entrepreneurial father-having a family business

*"Your description of dinner at a friend of your father's house in Yellowknife made me feel like I was sitting around the dinner table enjoying the meal alongside you! The friend reminded me of my father-in-law . . . and I could almost smell the hearty stew."*

—Brandi R.

*"Reading your memoir, I found myself thinking about moments in my own childhood that I hadn't thought of in years. Brownies, Barbie, small town cafes. Long ago freedom to wander without fear, beloved childhood pets . . . but most of all, my parents."*

—Brenda F.