

The Award-Winning Voice of the Advanced Writers & Speakers Association

EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN TO ARISE

2022 Summer Edition / Vol. 9, Issue 1

LEADINGHEARTS



Shine Don't Whine
Cherrilynn Bisbano

Touching Your Trauma
to Write Your Story

WORKING FROM HOME?
10 Ways to Feel Comfortable
& Stay Productive

SERVING THE GOD WHO HEALS
KATY NICOLE

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are you hoarding dust bunnies and bad attitudes?

Have you felt the urge to pull back your curtains and let a little sunlight shine into the sparkles of a dust bunny nest?

As I clean away the cobwebs left over from hiding from our latest round of COVID, I have several piles of possessions that need to be sorted, stored, and released to Goodwill before someone calls me a hoarder.

If you've ever caught an episode of the A&E TV show "Hoarders," you know it's a show where perfectly normal looking people become overwhelmed by their possessions. Their innocent collection of baseball cards expands to take over the attic, while a pile of magazines stashed in a closet forces its way into the hallway before filling the living room to the rafters. Add in a few bags of trash that can't find their way to the curb for pickup, and the next thing the hapless hoarder knows, their house is holding them hostage.

They end up sleeping on top of a pile of dirty clothes because they can't find their beds.

Their house has become a mildewed and macabre mess—a mess you'd think they'd love to be rescued from—but when a concerned family member tries to remove so much as a cobweb, the trapped inhabitant protests, "But that's the work of Sylvia, my favorite spider. Her work has been hanging on my walls for years!"

But by the end of the show, after a professional cleanup team sorts through the massive contents of the house, clears away the carcasses of a few expired pets, and hauls away the trash, a miracle happens. The homeowner is able to walk from room to room, admiring the fact that yes, their house does have a floor and even a couch you can sit on! One woman gushes, "I have so much space that I can now open my refrigerator door!"

Another amazed homeowner looks around at her now livable space and says, "I had no idea I'd let things get so bad."

Somehow, I believe their admission of blindness because I've seen this same blindness at work in my own life.

Yes, every year I need to air out my home and reorganize my closets, but I also need to put my fears away, clean out my disgruntled thoughts, and make sure my quiet time is in place.

When I'm able to sweep out my bad attitudes, and throw away my list of grudges, I see myself open my heart to more love and acts of kindness.

This is a new season, and though it's starting to show a few signs of wear, it's not time to discard it. It's time to invite the Lord of the Universe to meet up for a cup of tea and an opened Bible.

We may not know all that this season will bring, but we know that God is with us as our King and friend, our Lord and Savior, our miracle worker and provider.

No matter what comes, we'll get through this season with grace.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10 KJV ☉

Love,

PUBLISHER, *LEADING HEARTS* MAGAZINE | AWSA, FOUNDER

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if they only knew

What is your “if they only knew”? The one thing that if you were transparent about, you feel that you would be kicked out of your circle of Christian influence?

I want to reframe your perspective with some game-changing wisdom from my beautiful friend Tracy Hester, author of *Get Up, Girl, Let's Go*:

“What is holding you back from sharing your complete testimony? Are you afraid of shining too bright, or are you hiding the light of your testimony under a bushel of shame?”

Ouch! That hit close to home. For a long time, I hid my testimony about my deep dive into a major bipolar episode that almost cost me my life. I was silent about it because I was so fearful about losing my place in the circle of acceptability. It's amazing what we do to hide from the judgment of others to preserve our well-groomed reputations—at Church and in our own ministries.

I remember my momma telling me, “God didn't bring you out of so much to have you keep quiet about it.” But sometimes, honesty has a price tag. If we want to share with honest vulnerability, we must be comfortable with other people not being comfortable with our vulnerability.

Unfortunately, even some of the same sheep that walk with us are capable of wielding stones of judgment, gossip, and disqualification, some which might cost us that job or promotion.

I assure you that God isn't asking you to put a play-by-play of your past on the big screen; we need Holy Spirit discernment. But ladies, it's time we stopped holding our reputations higher than the God who pulled us from the pit.

So the question that you have to ask yourself is: “Whose voice is shaming you, trying to keep you quiet about the work that God has done in your life?”

You see, even though God has forgiven you, the accuser—the enemy of your soul—tries to exhaust you with the weight of the shame. He certainly doesn't want you to walk in authentic freedom so others might find freedom in the God we serve.

It's time to live in the truth of Psalm 37:6: “He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun” (NIV).

I hope this issue of *Leading Hearts* inspires you to cut through any thoughts, habits, and old baggage that might be holding you back from walking in the freedom that God has freely given you!

I guarantee God wants you to shine. He wants His Glory to shine brightly through your complete story. And girl, prepare to wear the sparkle! ☀

Love,

EDITOR | ART DIRECTOR *LEADING HEARTS* MAGAZINE
| AWSA, MARKETING DIRECTOR



4-STAR Principles— Shine don't Whine

cherrilynn bisbano | cherrilynnbisbano.com



“Cherrilynn, you complain too much.”
My friend’s comment made me
confront a harsh reality I hadn’t seen
before in myself. I did complain A LOT.

Her words echoed in my ear.

Lord please help me be thankful and
not complain about everything.

God reminded me of my disgust as
an unbeliever when I attended combat
photography school in Denver, Colorado. One of my
roommates was a born-again believer.

Daily, my roommate criticized the people in school and
grumbled about life in general. My desire to hear the Word
was snuffed out by her constant complaining. Her whining
dimmed her light.

I cringed as I thought about my constant whining. Have I
hindered others as she hindered me? Do I complain too
much? That memory lit a fire of commitment in my soul. Stop
whining, Cherrilynn, and shine like a star so others can know
Jesus and find freedom.

I researched the word complain in the Bible.

*“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may
become blameless and pure, ‘children of God without fault in
a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among
them like stars in the sky.’”*

I want to shine like a star, Lord.

I wrote the acrostic STAR vertically on my notebook and
prayed. After a few hours of study, the STAR principle was
created.

S: see yourself as God sees you. Some of us struggle with
our identity. We think we are too fat, too skinny, too ugly, or
too_____ (fill in the blank). We believe we cannot please

God no matter what we do. We compare ourselves with
the girls in magazines or with the women’s ministry leader
in the church. To get the surprising truth of our real identity
in Christ, we need to look at our spiritual position before
salvation and after salvation.

T: transform your mind with the Word. Real transformation
takes place when we allow the living and active Word of God
to transform our lives. The catalyst for change is memorizing
Scripture. We will learn the importance of the Word and how
to remember it. Thus, we will have an arsenal of weapons for
spiritual battles.

A: always pray. Prayer is talking to God. In this section, we
will take a journalistic approach to prayer, dissect a prayer
that will dramatically change us from the inside—the surgical
prayer—and we will become equipped to fight daily spiritual
battles by learning to don the armor of God through prayer.

R: refined to shine. Pain is inevitable. We must expect trials
and heartache because we live in a world filled with sin and
its effects. How does God use the sin of the world for his
glory? This final portion of this book will address the reality of
trials and tribulations and how to get through them with joy.

Over the last twenty-five years of speaking and ministering
to women, I find one or more of these principles can affect
our shine. Our light will dim with life’s circumstances or wrong
thinking.

Sin will continue to invade; trials will come; and pain is
inevitable. We may doubt our identity in Christ, forget to
meditate on the Word, allow prayer to elude us, and falter
when trials come.

The surgeon is always ready to remove the darkness and
replace it with his light of truth. We need only ask him to
reveal which principle we need to work on so that our light is
not dimmed or extinguished.

Let’s shine not whine. ☉



be
nice



While our Savior never
backed down from
confrontation, He did choose
very carefully those He
shared the truth with.

I NEVER REGRET BEING NICE ON *social media*



As ministry leaders, we have many obligations and responsibilities.

We want to serve God and the people He's put in our paths. We do this through encouragement, teaching, empowering, and sometimes correcting those we meet.

However, if we're not walking closely with Him, these things can become sources of conflict instead of opportunities to draw others to Him.

The words we share through social media and other online outlets have a purpose and carry weight. We all know the old adage about sticks and stones ... but it's one old saying that isn't true. We all know words can hurt—deeply. Sharing opinions and even truth can also stir up a hornet's nest of conflict.

We need to pattern our behavior on Jesus. He is the perfect example, and we can't go wrong when we follow Him—especially on social media. While our Savior never backed down from confrontation, He did choose very carefully those He shared the truth with. His messages to the crowds were very different from those He spoke to His closest disciples.

What does all this have to do with being nice?

I think this slightly old-fashioned word is an excellent standard by which to judge what we post online. I also believe niceness is undervalued in this world. As the posts we read online become shriller in an attempt to be heard, they also become harsher. Anyone who shares online content that's grace-filled and kind has become the exception rather than the rule.

Even as we're called to kindness and being nice, we should never compromise or water down God's message. That's the tightrope we can walk only with the aid of the Holy Spirit. But there are some things we can consider as we're navigating the online universe.

Here are some practical considerations when you are

sharing content online:

Pay attention to the audience.

Notice if the social media post is going to the general public, a focused group, or a few trusted friends. Then adapt your message accordingly.

Never share in the heat of the moment.

When I'm passionate, especially angry, I've learned the value of taking time before commenting. What sounds reasonable to me when I'm emotional is something very different than when I'm calm.

Give others the benefit of the doubt.

Sometimes the things I write come out less clear than I'd like. I want those who read what I write to look for the best, not the worst. I try to offer the same courtesy to others who post online.

Consider carefully before you engage in controversial topics.

We should never dilute God's truth. But I believe there are specific times and places to get into difficult conversations, and I've never found social media to be a good choice.

I'm happy to sit across from someone with a cup of coffee and a Bible and discuss what God has to say about any subject. But posting a short snippet online to a bunch of people who don't know me isn't something I find wise. When controversy crops up online, I opt out.

Follow the Holy Spirit, not anyone else's suggestions.

I truly believe that some of you are called to engage in difficult subjects online. And as the world gets darker and more steeped in sin, more of us will hear that calling.

My Bottom Line

No matter what I'm writing or speaking, I've learned the necessity of praying first. Before my fingers type anything—especially social media—I take a moment to pray.

Our words can go places we never imagined. But when we're willing to be subject to God, He can use them to bring light to the darkest places.☺



With each crisis, I
put my trust in God,
believing that He
would not have chosen
me to be the leader
unless He was going to
see me through...



—Susan Neal—

FINDING FAITH TO WALK IN A CALL *greater than myself*

Has God ever called you into a new direction? One you'd never imagined for yourself? A new call way beyond your qualifications?

This has also been true in my life. When God first called me into publishing, He gave me this key verse:

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think" Ephesians 3:20 (NLT).

I began to sense change was on my horizon when my daughters were in high school. I knew I'd soon be an empty nester and decided to take inventory of my skills and life lessons so I could prepare for what was next.

I was a nurturer and loved being a stay-at-home mom. But I was also an organizer and had loved my previous work as an administrator at the Mayo Clinic Jacksonville. I also knew I had a call to write as I had two unpublished book-length works on my computer.

So one day, I packed my bag and drove to Lake Yale Conference Center, in Leesburg, to attend the Florida Christian Writers Conference. It was in these classrooms I discovered I knew nothing about writing. I walked to the lake's edge and realized this new journey of mine was like the journey of growing closer to God.

I contemplated on how the closer you get to God, the more you realize you need to learn, grow, and repent.

After the conference, I threw myself into learning all I could about both writing and publishing. Soon I felt ready to take a leap of faith by writing and publishing my own books. But it was my third indie-published book, *7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates*, that put me on the map with over 20,000 sales in four years. This new career was turning out better than I ever imagined.

My publishing journey was opening new doors, and I decided to attend the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention with my friends at Christian Independent

Publishing Association (CIPA) to promote myself to media. That's when I met Sarah Bolme, the CIPA director.

After spending several days with Sarah, I asked about her plans for 2020. I was surprised when she said she was retiring to start a retreat ministry at the end of the year and was confident God would soon send her replacement. So, when I prayed with Sarah about this new direction in her life, I never dreamed I was the replacement we prayed for. It never crossed my mind, until God woke me in the middle of the night for a wrestling match.

For starters, I already had a mission of inspiring others to improve their health so they could better serve God with my repertoire of healthy living Christian books. Plus, I was afraid I didn't have the skills to take over Sarah's 20-page, monthly newsletter.

I wasn't worried about writing the content; I was worried about the nitty-gritty of formatting and designing this journal. That's when God reminded me that formatting and design were my daughter's strength, and she could help me with this monthly task.

The excuses continued, and with every excuse, God countered with another answer. After an hour of wrestling, the Lord won, and I chose to be obedient to His calling and became the director of CIPA.

My first few months were filled with constant spiritual attack. With each crisis, I put my trust in God, believing that He would not have chosen me to be the leader unless He was going to see me through these difficulties.

As I put my faith in Him, I quit trying to figure out solutions and relied on His divine intervention and favor. Soon each crisis was conquered, and I was free to step into my spiritual gifting of teaching, a joyful part of my new job.

I began to realize that the knowledge I gained through my publishing journey would be helpful to other authors.

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CIPA

CHRISTIAN INDIE
PUBLISHING
ASSOCIATION

Christian Indie Publishing Association (CIPA) provides Christian authors with resources to publish professionally and market effectively.

ChristianPublishers.net

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As I look back at this whirlwind of change since my mission to improve the health of the body of Christ, I realized God expanded that mission to help fellow Christian authors get their divinely inspired words into the hands of more readers.

God continues to speak to me. Last month, while on a trip to Colorado, I met with Linda Evans Shepherd (publisher of *Leading Hearts* and founder of Advanced Writers & Speakers Association [AWSA]), and she prayed that I would positively influence more people for the kingdom through helping authors effectively market their books.

I embraced this new calling God has for me, and I hope you will embrace His calling for you, too. He will bring to you the people you need to accomplish His purpose for your life. God may call you to do far beyond what you're capable of, as stated in Ephesians 3:20. For example, recently I became the president of Christian Authors Network (CAN).

If God is calling you to grow in your leadership role, or prompting you to go through an uncomfortable stretch to step into something new, I would suggest being humble. We all try to do good job, but no one is perfect.

Apologize when you make a mistake, be thankful when someone points out an item that needs to be corrected, and accept constructive feedback gracefully.

Through this process, you and your leadership skills will grow, and you will be much more approachable.

Right now you may be asking God, "Are You moving me in a new direction, or is this new opportunity a distraction from Your intended call for my life?"

These are the essentials when making those decisions:

- Pray to be in God's will for your life.
 - Spend time with the Lord, meditating and listening for His quiet voice.
 - When making big decisions, consult with God and ask for His input.
- Know, after you've made a decision, you should feel peace in your heart.

Remember His promise in Psalm 3:6: "*Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take*" (NLT). 🕯

FIND MORE ABOUT SUSAN AND HER BOOKS SERIES AT SUSANUNEAL.COM





YOUR FAMILY *Compass*



We saw a refrigerator magnet that read, “Marriage is when a man and woman become as one; the trouble starts when they try to decide which one.”

It is easy in marriage to drift different directions, instead, we encourage couples to decide together the direction they want their marriage and family to go. In this way, everyone is pulling in the same direction. For all couples, this is a smart idea, but for couples and families

Carrying leadership roles, it is imperative we all are working together as one team from the same play book! It will save time, help with tough decisions, and give your children a strong family identity.

In our new book, *10 Best Decisions a Couple Can Make*, we walk couples through three simple activities that bring unity: creating a family mission, motto, and moniker.

Mission

The most time-consuming activity but the one that will produce the ability to make clear decisions, is creating a marriage mission statement. Ours reads:

We, Bill and Pam Farrel, have a desire to fulfill the Great Commission through using our skills in professional ministry, with a focus of using the communication gifts God has given us. We are committed to personal discipleship as a lifestyle. We want our home to be an oasis where those who enter can see Christ at work in our marriage and family and where they can find hope.

We, the Farrels, are committed to fun and friendships. We value people more than things. We prefer memories over

material goods. We are committed to raise our children in such a way as they have the opportunity to know the benefits of personally knowing Jesus and walking with Him. We are committed to helping them discover their talents and equipping them to help fulfill the Great Commission and to have fun and a fulfilling life while doing so.

Motto

Next, you want to produce a marriage and /or family motto. A motto is something short like a phrase you'd see on a tee shirt or coffee mug. Ours came from a prayer we prayed when we were engaged, then we adopted to guide us in our parenting. We simply claimed Psalms 84:11, “No good thing does God with hold from those that walk uprightly.” Our summary of this principle is in 1 Sam. 3:20 says, “those that honor God, God honors . . .” which became our marriage and family motto.

Moniker

Lastly, take these values and principles to the graphic level and design a family crest or moniker. On military uniforms, on private school jackets, you will usually see an emblem that depicts the values of that institution. On our family crest are three L's down the center stand for Learner, Leader, Love God. Each year from the time our oldest was four, we have had a “Learner and Leader” Day.

That's the day we negotiate privileges and responsibilities, select one leadership trait to focus on for each son each year and we give a gift that applauds the uniqueness (passion, bent, calling, platform) we see God building in each of their lives. (More details on how to do a Learner / Leader day and other parenting tips are in our book: *10 Best Decisions a Parent Can Make* (Harvest House).

We want our sons to be known as:

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You
were
Created
for this!



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Learners. Those who want to compete in life so they are willing to do the challenging work to learn and become excellent.

Leaders: In their sphere of influence using their own unique leadership style

Love of God: We want them to own their own faith.

A cross with the star rising from it represents that we want them to seek God's vision for their life. We want the source of all their hopes, dreams, and desires to come from God's heart.

Two interlocking hearts represent integrity and commitment. When a Farrel says something, we want it to be truth and we want to be known as a family that keeps all of our commitments, especially the marriage covenant.

For our 25th wedding anniversary, we gave our sons a tie tac with a family crest Bill and I designed. We wanted the boys to have an heirloom to be passed down from generation to generation that would symbolize the values the Farrel family stands for.

Now you try.

What do you want your family known for? What are your core values, those 3-4 traits you want your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to possess? Draw a symbol to explain your values, write a mission for your marriage, and then summarize it into a motto.

Each day we choose to live the legacy we want to leave.

You'll see decisions, planning, and unity will come easier. Your love will become a light to all those around you as your energies are focused. We set our family compass in place as a young couple with a baby, and now that all our sons are grown, all are loving and serving Jesus, and have married and have written their own family compasses! ☺



BOOKSPOTLIGHT♡



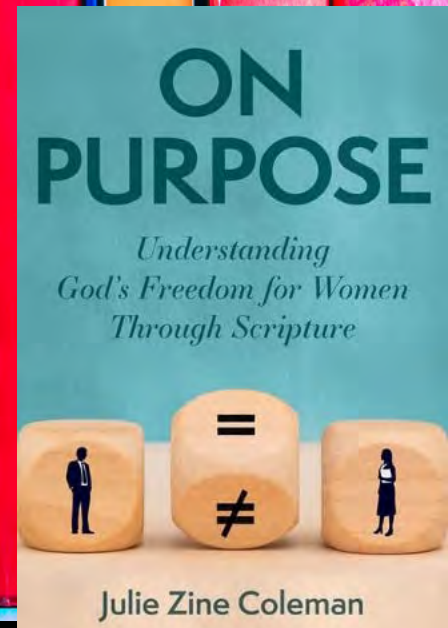
GET UP, GIRL, LET'S GO
tracy hester

Christian women are hurting but do not know how to shake the pain. They may even feel guilty for their pain. After all, shouldn't Christians be able to overcome their problems?

Some emotional problems go so deep that uprooting them is more than a notion. And as much as one wants to be released from its grip, the pain cannot be soothed until the source is discovered and discarded. *Get Up, Girl, Let's Go: Getting Unstuck and Living Free* takes women on an interactive journey to identify:

- destructive family patterns,
- the source of bad decisions,
- God's healing and restorative plan,
- the purpose for which they were born, and more.

After twenty-four years of marriage, Tracy began a journey she'd never imagined—walking through a divorce. Overwhelmed by pain, rejection, and abandonment, she fell into a pit of despair and depression. A note from her daughter, pleading for her to survive, started Tracy on her healing journey, getting unstuck, and discovering her purpose. ♡



ON PURPOSE
julie zine coleman

Many Christian women are torn between how the church has taught traditional gender roles and the liberty they see secular society afford to women. But what if the church's conventional teachings on the place of women aren't really biblical at all?

On Purpose is a serious study on the verses in the Bible that have often been interpreted to define the role of women in the church, at home, and in the workplace. Each chapter focuses on a single passage, considering what it meant to the original recipients, understanding each author's intent, and applying its true meaning in today's cultural setting.

With each chapter, Julie Coleman thoroughly reveals how the timeless principles in the Bible actually teach freedom for women. In fact, when rightly understood, these verses are a wake-up call that we are handicapping the church's role on earth by limiting women unnecessarily. Instead, men and women should be working side-by-side for the advancement of the kingdom of God. *On Purpose* is an enlightening study offering a fresh, scriptural perspective. ♡



jennifer taylor
profile contributor



Katy Nichole

THE POWER OF HIS NAME

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In late January, 21-year-old Katy Nichole released her powerful, prayerful song “In Jesus’ Name (God of Possible)” on TikTok to the world.

In just 12 short weeks, the song catapulted to No. 1 on Billboard’s Christian Airplay chart, breaking a 19-year record by a female artist’s debut song. The viral hit continues to chart atop Billboard and iTunes charts today.

To hear Katy’s story, make sure you have tissues nearby. God’s anointing on her life is so evident when you hear that she was born with congenital scoliosis. This rare and progressive form of scoliosis affects only one in 10,000 babies, but today she is healed. “I was diagnosed at five years old, and doctors were saying I might not be able to walk or do normal childhood things,” she said. “I was ready to start running. So, I definitely don’t think I was limited as a child. I was gonna be running, I was doing backflips and everything I possibly could.”

However, Katy realized soon, though, that it was not in her own strength that she was operating. “All the strength that I had God gave me, and God was just constantly holding me up.”

At 14, metal rods and screws were surgically placed in her spine in hopes of helping fight against the progression of the disease that was starting to affect her heart and lungs. But unfortunately, the surgery left her in daily excruciating pain so much that she didn’t want to get out of bed.

“I was dealing with severe depression and anxiety to the point where my life was taken away from me,” Katy said. “Every single day, I would just be asking God why. Why didn’t things go the way they were supposed to go? Why do I deserve this kind of thing? It wasn’t God’s plan for all of these things to happen. There was one day that I was really out of place. I looked at a bottle of pills on my dresser, and I picked it up. I immediately felt something say that I’m not done yet. My story wasn’t over.”

For three years, Katy continued to hold onto that moment and trusted God had a plan beyond what she could see. “So after that day, I just kept going, and I kept believing that God had more in store for my life.”

Soon one of the doctors on her team, not wanting her to live in pain, said the only option left for her was to remove the metal rods and screws.

“Hearing those words, it was hope for the first time, and I hadn’t experienced that,” she said. “On that same day, I saw a rainbow outside. It was one of the biggest rainbows I’d ever seen in my life. To this day, I carry around a rainbow keychain because it’s God’s promise. God was going to fulfill the promise and is still fulfilling the promise today in my life. I look back on that day, and I just remember having peace. There was something in me that assured me that God was about to do something here.”

After the second surgery, Katy had a miraculous encounter with the Lord. “There wasn’t a single window in the ICU, but I was seeing the light for the first time. I had an encounter with the Lord that I’d never had before. I knew at that moment that God had a purpose for my life. I didn’t see it immediately. I

just knew that there was a reason why I'm here," she said.

"After the surgery was done on my back, my spine is actually straighter without the metal rods and screws in it. Medically, that's not really possible." People are amazed by the healing Katy received and cannot fathom how her spine hasn't returned to its previous condition.

Today, she's incredibly grateful for the three years of struggle that she endured. She knows the test of faith was worth it. "I look back, and not a single second is wasted. Not a single second doesn't bring glory to God's name. For so many people out there, we all have our three years. And I don't know what that is for you or for anyone else. But those three years can be brutal. And it can really test your faith in ways that you just don't expect."

Fast forward to 2020, Katy felt an intentional need to start a prayer journal. "When everything shut down, it was scary. The journal was a way for me to jot down some anxiety that I had and give it to God," she said. "Over the next couple of years, I saw God answering prayers that I had no idea how He ever would. That was something that I never would have thought was in my wildest dreams. And God brought that to fruition. I think those moments for me are absolutely incredible."

Her healing story and journaling led to the writing of her hit song "In Jesus' Name (God of the Possible)," but it didn't exactly start out how it's heard today.

"In August 2021, the night before I went into the writers' room, I had a panic attack, and I felt God leading me to a piano. When I wrote down the original words of the song, they were 'let there be healing, let circumstances change,' like God allowed this to happen," she said "But when I went to the writers' room, both the other writers said that what the world needs is prayer. And so, this was part of the song that I had just had on my heart. Originally, the song was not what you hear today on a song called 'God of the Possible.' It's completely different."

Katy said that "God of the Possible" wasn't the same clip that she posted on TikTok praying for circumstances to change. "That whole portion was the bridge of 'God of the Possible,' so it wasn't the chorus of the original song. So, over the course of August to December, I was rewriting the song. It took months for us to rewrite and captivate the message of the song because I knew what I needed it to be but I didn't know how to write that. But I didn't have to do a whole lot of work when it came down to writing the song. The

Holy Spirit had every word that I'm saying," she said.

"The verses of 'In Jesus' Name (God of Possible)' came out of another panic attack that I had, where I felt God leading me to my piano. I had an encounter with the Lord every time that I would write another piece of the song. I think that my whole life led up to this song. I know God had this plan from the start."

Going through this journey, Katy believes she's in a place where she doesn't need to see gigantic miracles to know that God is good. "I don't need to see it to believe it," she said, "but I just see God showing up in these little moments. And I am in awe constantly."

The viral success of "In Jesus Name (God of the Possible)" has opened tremendous doors for Katy, including performing the hit song during Chris Tomlin's Nashville Good Friday service. Her schedule is filling up quickly for this summer also as she prepares to release a new project.

"I just constantly remind myself it's not about me," she said. "I've been given this gigantic gift. So, I praise God for every single little thing. I'm constantly thanking Him and being grateful for where I'm at. Even if I had little, I'd still be thanking him for that."

In today's uncertainty, Katy knows that it sometimes feels like a dark cloud hovers around, but she wants to remind everyone that God is present as well. "God's light is beaming through that dark cloud constantly, and it's shining on us," she said. "If we receive that light, we can go out to the world, and we can shine for others to see. Jesus says that and I really want to urge people to do that. I've dealt with quite a bit in my life, and I am reminded of the goodness of God when I see someone else beaming in the light that Jesus has given."●

Watch Katy's video single "In Jesus's Name by clicking on the CD. Visit KatyNichole.com



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TOUCHING YOUR TRAUMA

to write your story



“How did God confirm it was time to go public with your story of childhood trauma?”



A couple months ago I saw one of my dreams come to fruition as my book *The Tapestry of Trauma: Transforming the Tangles of Childhood Sexual Abuse into God's Masterpiece* released. My family, friends and I celebrated as colorful balloons floated in the air. Voices chattered with joy and excitement. My hand tingled as I joyfully signed book after book. Toward the end of the celebration, a friend of mine interviewed me.

We laughed as she exhibited an Oprah-like persona prepared to entertain our captivated audience. Initially, the questions were lighthearted until my Oprah wannabe slowly asked,

“What was your first confirmed sign from God that you were free to speak about your trauma?”

Time froze as I tried to stop my mouth from dropping to my chest. How did I transition from silence to sharing?

I pray these essential steps will help you as God brings you from healing to helping others heal from your experience.

1. Pray and ask God for guidance.

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you” (Psalm 32:8 NIV).

Scenes from my healing journey flashed through my mind. I remember the first time I felt a tender prompting from the Holy Spirit to share my story in my small women's group Bible study. But I resisted. I was not ready to share my pain with anyone yet. Fear of rejection or judgment kept me silent. I needed more healing before safely revisiting my trauma and telling my story. I began to seek God's guidance about when I could safely share my testimony.

Years later, I addressed the topic, “Lord, Heal My Hurt.” The Holy Spirit whispered, “Share your story.” God knew I had healed enough from my trauma to speak about it objectively. “I'm a childhood sexual abuse survivor,” The words slipped through my trembling lips.”

I realized I wanted to teach the women the Lord would heal their hurts because He healed mine. God confirmed His timing as several women told me their trauma stories. They appreciated my transparency which empowered them to speak up too.

I took the next step under God's continued guidance and compassionate eye. I penned *The Tapestry of Trauma* with a biblical, therapeutic, and personal perspective.

2. Practice sharing your trauma with trusted people.

“Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed” (Luke 8:47 NIV).

In *The Tapestry of Trauma*, I tell the story of the woman with the issue of blood. I named her Eliana. After touching the hem of Jesus' garment, she was healed and tried to silently slip away. However, Jesus asked, “Who touched me?” Courageously, she publicly revealed her testimony. When you know you have healed enough to tell your story, how much do you share and to whom? Pray and ask God to lead you to one trustworthy person. Eliana told her story to the most trustworthy person ever. Jesus listened and comforted her. He blessed Eliana with peace and confirmed her healing.

3. Ask for support and feedback before you speak or write openly.

The more you practice sharing your trauma with safe people, the more confident you will become. Decide ahead of time how much of your narrative you are comfortable sharing. Ease your way in with small nuggets until you feel secure enough to share more.

4. Identify your motivation to go public.

I want to share my healing lessons with other childhood abuse survivors so they can mend too. Understanding your why equips you to fulfill your assignment from God.

5. Proclaim your story for God's glory.

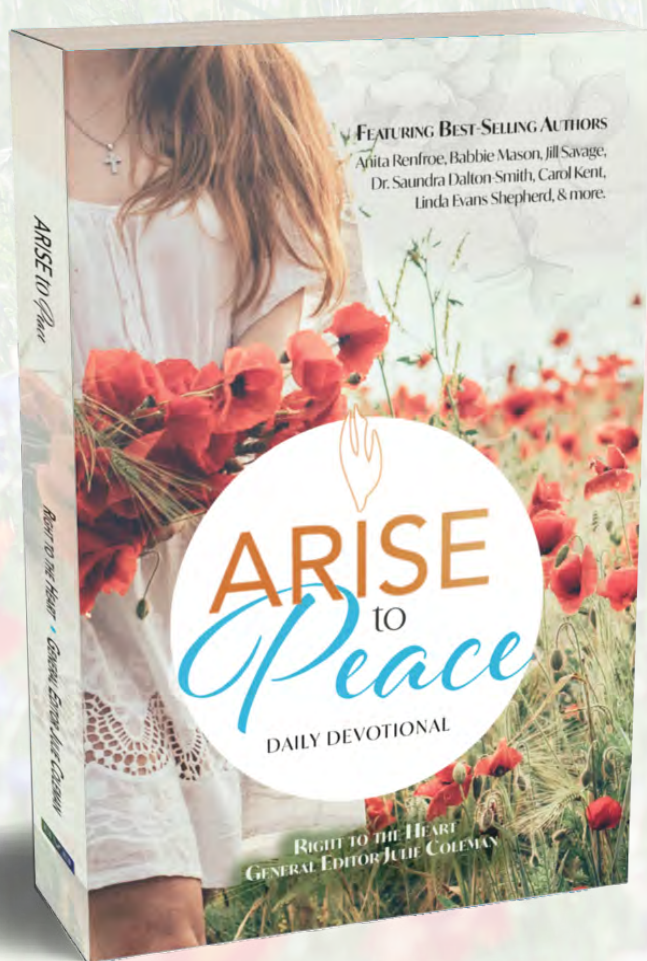
“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:3,25 NIV).

The story of the healed blind man is another example of public testimony. Jesus and His disciples see a man blind from birth. The disciples wondered if the man or his parents sinned, causing a punishment of blindness. Jesus explains that illness is an opportunity to display God's glory. Later the healed man endures extensive questioning because Jesus performed the miracle on the Sabbath. The religious leaders wanted to cause trouble for Jesus. Instead, the miracle man continued to proclaim the truth of his healing to anyone who listened. His story continues to proclaim God's glory even to this day.

Can you imagine Jesus speaking these words to you?

“You did not cause your suffering. Your trauma story will reflect My healing work in you, and through you, God will get the glory.” Hallelujah! Trauma touched your life, but your story will touch others as your message inspires hope. ☺

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THEBIGQ

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Q: Events going on in our nation and the world frighten me. How can I overcome fear with faith?

You are not alone.

The prophet Habakkuk complained to God about the evil he saw around him, and God revealed He intended to use the vicious Chaldeans to discipline his people. Habakkuk recoiled in fear at the intensity of God's judgment, but he learned a couple of lessons.

First, Habakkuk learned a healthy fear of God.

"... the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20 ESV).

You can sense awe in that verse. Certainly, if we saw God's glory as Isaiah did, we would crumple in humility. His holiness and wisdom surpass ours. God informed Habakkuk He would also deal with the wicked Chaldeans.

"The cup in the LORD's right hand will come around to you [Chaldeans], and utter shame will come upon your glory!" (Habakkuk 2:16 ESV)

On the other hand, Scripture commands us not to fear men or what they can do to us. For example, when Joshua faced the mighty Amorites, God said, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands ..." (Joshua 10:8 ESV).

Second, he learned that "... the righteous shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4 ESV). Hebrews 11 says, "... whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Hebrews 11:6 ESV).

The word reward pops off the page, and it means "pay a wage."

From other verses, we know our faith in Christ grants us

eternal life, which means we live forever in heaven despite the troubles we face in this life. That's truly awesome. On the other hand, let's remember some heroes of faith.

With God's help, Joshua won a battle using trumpets and pitchers even though his enemy had swords. That's supernatural! Daniel slept with hungry lions who didn't open their mouths all night.

Imagine that! The Israelites walked on dry land across the Red Sea to escape the Egyptians. Sarah bore a child even though she was too old. After Rahab chose faith, her child became a forefather to Jesus. Her story reminds us that God can continue to use our faith after we reside in heaven.

Finally, notice how Habakkuk lived by faith when he knew judgment was imminent.

"Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food ... yet I will rejoice in the LORD; ... GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places (Habakkuk 3:17-19 ESV).

Do you notice Habakkuk would rejoice in God even if he had no food? Most of us would panic.

He realized God would take care of him regardless of what happened. He also announced he could walk with confidence in rocky places.

Most people stumble when the land isn't smooth. Habakkuk trusted God when dark times loomed.

Choose faith! ☺

—New From Award-Winning Prayer Author **LINDA EVANS SHEPHERD**—

Power-packed prayers for every moment of life



Whether life sends us trouble or blessings, we should pray. We know this, yet we often don't know what to say—so we say nothing.

No more! This compilation of powerful prayers is arranged by topic so you can find the words you need when you need them in order to ask God for help, consolation, wisdom, patience, and more for yourself or others.

The prayers in this book will be the ones you turn to again and again as you walk through life with the ones you love.



LINDA EVANS SHEPHERD is a bestselling author of 37 books, an international speaker, and a media personality. She is the founder of Right to the Heart Ministries and publisher of **LEADING HEARTS** magazine and **ARISE DAILY** devotionals. For more, visit LINDASHEPHERD.COM.



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 **Revell**

on the wings of prayer

linda evans shepherd | lindashepherd.com



The Cessna 210 flew with my family tucked inside at ten thousand feet as the hum of the engine droned through the clouds.

I sat in the cockpit with my pilot husband and studied the earth dotted with green circles of crops.

The droning stopped, and we glided in silence. I turned to Paul. "Is this bad?" I asked.

He nodded. "We need to make an emergency landing."

To my relief, the engine sputtered back to life, but then it died again. I felt my blood drain from my face. I turned to the back seat, where our eight-year-old son sat, undisturbed as he read a book. "Pray, Jimmy. Pray!" I said.

"Okay," he said, unconcerned.

The plane continued to sputter. I stared at the earth below and asked my husband, "Where are we going to land?"

"We're only fifty miles out of Waco, and they have a repair shop. I'm going to try to make it in."

Paul expected us to glide with no engine power for fifty miles? I closed my eyes to beseech heaven for help.

That's when I saw a vision of Jesus standing like a tower. His feet were on the earth and His hand was cupped around our little plane floating through the sky.

"You are in the palm of My hand," Jesus whispered to my spirit. "You couldn't be safer."

You'd think this unexpected vision of Jesus would calm my heart. Yet fear gripped me tight. "It would really help me trust you, Lord, if the engine would stay on," I whispered back.

To my dismay, the plane sputtered, paused, and glided mile after mile until we spied the Waco airport. Just as our wheels touched down, the engine froze and we rolled to a stop in the middle of the runway.

A voice from the tower crackled on the radio: "Cessna, you are in harm's way. Exit the runway now."

"I'd like to, but our engine died. We'll need a tow," Paul replied to the tower operator.

They had to close the runway while they hooked our plane to a motorized cart and tugged us to safety. That's when one of our wheels popped off the plane and the metal wheelbase dug into the pavement.

Lord, what if that had happened when we were landing? We would have flipped end over end.

I felt the Lord's smile. "I was with you. You have never been safer."

I've often thought of these words: When God is with us, we couldn't be safer.

The thing that surprised me most was a phone call I received the following day from a friend. "What's been going on with you guys? The Lord had me praying nonstop for you yesterday morning. Tell me what happened!"

Isn't it like God to have placed my little family on the wings of prayer?

Dear Lord, You are with me. Thank You that I am in the palm of Your hand. ☉

Adapted from Linda Evans Shepherd's latest book, *Prayers for Every Need* from Baker Revell. Visit her at www.GotToPray.com



the waiting game

penelope carlevato | penelopecarlevato.com



How often have you been disappointed or discouraged waiting on God to answer your prayers?

You find yourself in another season of waiting, but this is nothing new! The Bible is filled with stories of people like us, waiting on God to answer prayer.

We have become an impatient society, and it's hard to wait long for anything, let alone our answers to prayer. Our modern society makes it worse as every new device promises to make life easier and faster.

Waiting on God can be difficult, but it should not cause us to doubt or worry that He is not in control. When we wait on God, something happens during this time. God can change us. And the change is to become more like His Son.

We can choose to wait instead of running ahead of God. Stay and Be are essential words to add to our vocabulary during this time. We can make a choice ... do I take the step of faith and wait on the Lord, or do I stamp my foot and rush ahead and demand answers?

When our daughter was just a little girl, she needed a coat, and we had little money. Even though it was an inexpensive purchase, I didn't want to wait for another week when the funds would be available. And I wanted her to look nice for Sunday School and not have to wear her brother's

hand-me-down sweatshirts. My friend brought a bag with some little girl clothes her neighbor was taking to Goodwill. The most beautiful white sweater with ribbons and little white pearls decorating the front was in the bag. And it was precisely my daughter's size and so much prettier than what I had planned on buying.

God taught me that I could depend on Him for all our needs if I waited for His answer. I often remember this story when I am tired of waiting.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!" (Ephesians 3:20 NIV).

Waiting on God also keeps us out of trouble. When we trust Him, we allow Him to work on His schedule and not ours. As humans, we can only see the future from our perspective.

God sees it all. His perspective is perfect because He sees the future, and He is perfect. His plans do not run on our schedule, nor do they need His approval. While we only see part of this situation, God knows it is part of a much larger plan. If only we could see the end, we would know it is worth waiting.

While waiting for answered prayers, we can learn so much about His character. We are not to sit around and be miserable. We are to be about life and learning from the many lives of Bible characters who also waited on God, some for a very long time. Jesus taught His followers how to pray, and He also taught them to be persistent. Don't give up and do something stupid. Remember God's past faithfulness.

He reminds us in Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (NIV).

We moved into a “surprise” house a while ago ... surprised by so many things wrong! Every time we turned around, we discovered something else that needed repair or replacing. I was very discouraged. One morning, I read Philippians, and the word “thanksgiving” jumped out at me. I knew I had to be thankful for something about this house. I focused on the refrigerator. I loved it. It had many wonderful features ... a deli drawer, water and ice dispenser, and my favorite item was the large freezer drawer. My whole outlook changed. And every time we found more surprises, I thanked the Lord for my refrigerator.

A positive attitude gives you power over your circumstances instead of them having control over you. It's amazing how that one behavior changed my perspective.

Waiting on God pleases Him. I am a fixer, and I want to fix my problems, your problems, relationships, etc. That's about as easy as trying to make the sun rise earlier.

When I am in God's Word, He reminds me of his patience and promises. The answers may not be how I had hoped, but He is never slow or late.

A great benefit of waiting on God is learning the lesson of humility and growing in faith. He uses this waiting time to refine my character and draw me closer to Him. Sometimes, discipline helps me understand that only by waiting can I expect true humility to kick in. This doesn't come from any self-help classes or do-it-yourself initiatives, but only by spending time with Him. In His work and prayer.

On a recent trip with friends to Ireland, we planned to stay the last few days in Belfast. Every hotel was booked. We didn't realize it was a national holiday, and it seemed like all of Ireland was visiting Belfast.

We walked all over the town without luck, praying that God might find us lodging. Not sure of what to do, we were standing on the sidewalk with a map, deciding where we should try next. A man walked by swinging a gym bag and stopped to ask if he could help us. We explained our dilemma, and he told us to follow him as he knew a place that would have room for us.

We followed him in his car for what seemed like hours. I became a little nervous and wondered if we were getting into a bad situation. I was about ready to quit following him when he turned into The Ivanhoe Hotel. Formerly a coaching inn, it not only had comfortable rooms but a fantastic restaurant with the best coconut cake and a short walk to a small neighborhood church.

As much as I tried to fix our dilemma of finding a hotel, God answered our prayer by sending a big burly angel that led us to a lovely place for our last few days in Ireland.

While waiting can be difficult, it can keep us out of trouble, teach us so much about our loving God, and allow us to see God's hand in our lives.



Coconut Bundt Cake

- 1 box white cake mix
- 1 3.4 oz instant coconut pudding mix (not sugar free)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons coconut extract
- ½ cup coconut oil or applesauce
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 ½ cups coconut

Thoroughly grease and flour Bundt pan.

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Combine the cake mix and pudding mix with a whisk in a large bowl.

In a medium-sized bowl, mix together the sour cream, eggs, oil (or applesauce), and coconut milk.

Add the liquid mixture to the dry mixture and mix with electric mixer on medium speed for 2 minutes.

Stir in the coconut.

Pour into greased pan and bake for 55 to 60 minutes.

Cool for 5 minutes, then invert onto serving dish.

Place strips of wax paper under edge of cake to protect serving dish when frosting.

Gently pull out the wax paper when finished with frosting and coconut.

Frosting:

- 1 8-ounce cream cheese
- ½ cup butter
- 2 Tablespoons cream or coconut milk
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon coconut extract
- 5 cups powdered sugar
- Coconut

Blend together all the above ingredients except the powdered sugar.

Gradually add the powdered sugar to the creamed mixture until smooth.

Frost the cake with the frosting, then cover top and sides with coconut, pressing gently into the frosting. ☺

dr. saundra dalton-smith | ichoosemybestlife.com

Working from Home?

10 WAYS TO FEEL COMFORTABLE & STAY PRODUCTIVE





Working from home presents unique benefits and challenges.

While the advantages of commute-free working days, wearing what you like while working, and cooking your lunch is undeniable, it can be hard to stay motivated and productive. You may have to balance childcare with remote work or live in a smaller space with no room for an office to keep your personal and professional lives separate.

Comfort is key to productivity, so you should prioritize making your workspace relaxing and beneficial. Here are some ways you can feel comfortable and stay productive while working from home.

1. Get Your Desk Set Up Right

If possible, it is best to set up a desk to work from. If you have a smaller space to work with, you should look at some of the smaller-sized desk options to conserve space. You will also need a suitable desk chair that provides good ergonomic support. Ideally, you should keep your desk a workspace only. Avoid doing leisure activities from it as this will make you blur the lines between your personal and professional life.

2. Disconnect at the End of the Day

It can be hard to disconnect fully at the end of the workday while working from home. It may be beneficial to move to a different area of the house or go outside. Follow your working hours and avoid the temptation to continue working beyond your hours.

3. Take Regular Breaks

Breaks are crucial to keeping you mentally fresh for work. It is a good idea to stand up and move around at least once per hour. You could do some stretches while you move and ensure your posture is good. You could also have a snack or drink.

4. Bookend Your Workday with a Walk

Starting and ending your day with a walk can be a great way to set boundaries on your workday. You could think of the walk as a kind of commute. Staying fit and active is more important than ever when working from home, as it can become easy to stay indoors for days at a time. Bookending your workday with a walk can be a great way to ensure you get out of the house every day.

5. Dress with Comfort in Mind

One of the biggest advantages of working from home is the ability to wear whatever you like while you work. If you have

video meetings, you may need to ensure you're dressed appropriately, but otherwise, you're free to dress how you like. You could consider comfortable athleisure wear or even pajamas.

You should ensure that whatever you wear helps you stay productive. It's also best to choose quality clothing that will feel good to work in. For instance, you could look for versatile and warming tracksuits.

6. Invest in Healthy Snacks

Snacking while working from home is a lot easier than snacking in the office. It is vital to make sure you have plenty of healthy snacks at home and avoid getting too much junk food or sweets. You could buy your favorite fresh and dried fruits, nuts, and other healthy snack options. Sweet treats like chocolate are fine as long as you enjoy them in moderation.

7. Light a Scented Candle

Scent can have a significant impact on our mood and how well we work. You could consider using a particular candle to scent the room you work in. This will make your mind associate the smell with work and help keep you energized and focused. Citrus scents are a good choice to keep you engaged.

8. Keep Distractions Minimal

There are plenty of potential distractions when working from home, from children and pets requiring attention to household chores that need doing. It can be easy to get sidetracked by different things at home, but it is crucial that you avoid distractions as much as possible to stay productive. Ensure that your desk is clear of anything not work-related, and save your household to-do list until the workday is finished.

9. Observe Yourself

Many people work better when being observed, whether by colleagues, managers, or customers. Working from home means that there is usually no one to watch you work, which can affect your productivity. You can mitigate this by observing yourself. Make a to-do list with your goals for each day and week and hold yourself accountable to complete it. You could also team up with a co-worker to help each other stay accountable.

10. Connect with Your Coworkers

Working from home can be lonely, so connecting with your coworkers whenever you can is crucial. Most offices use instant messaging channels like Slack or Microsoft Teams, so it can be beneficial to make use of these resources to talk to your coworkers. If your employer doesn't already, you could suggest a channel dedicated to watercooler conversation where you and other team members can chat when you need some social connection. ☺



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5 ways
PODCASTS
BENEFIT WRITERS



If you are a writer who desires to reach the masses, podcasting is in your future.

I'm not saying you must host your podcast, but I highly suggest you take advantage of listening to them.

Podcasting is considered the new radio. In fact, as the owner/host of the Not Just Talkin' the Talk radio program for more than a decade, I believe podcasting far outweighs the benefits of radio for authors who are ready to make their mark in larger markets.

Here are my five reasons podcasts benefit writers.

1. Listen to Podcasts to Learn the Craft of Writing

The avenues for authors to learn their craft via podcasts are beyond measure. In fact, through podcasts, we learn about in-depth character development, how to write book proposals, and how agents benefit our careers—in a short, play-on-demand, audio format so you can listen on the go.

There are numerous writer-focused podcasts—simply Google podcasts for writers. Of course, my favorite is “Your Best Writing Life.” I happen to be very familiar with that one. LOL

Look for podcasts geared to Christian writers of all genres. Attain PDF downloads from podcast show notes to find out more about industry experts, including active writers, publishers, editors, and agents willing to pour into you for a short amount of time knowledge to help you in the craft of writing.

When we listen to podcasts to better understand the craft of writing, our time spent is priceless. Writers must take advantage of podcasts. If we don't, we are leaving dollars at the door, leaving time in a vacuum, and clearly, we can't afford that today.

2. Listen to Podcasts for Article Content

Writers are always looking for article content. Whether we write for blog posts, magazines, online columns, inspirational content, or current events, you name it; we need fresh material quickly.

Although I'm not suggesting plagiarism, podcasts provide article content. Research podcasts that focus on your target audience. Parenting. Gardening. Youth. Romance. History. Sci-fi. No matter your genre, podcasters cover your topic and share it with their listeners. So, take a listen to hear what the hot topics are. Your goal is to find highly rated podcasts. Review the comments. Listen to current content for fresh ideas and evergreen content you can fit into an article or two.

3. Listen to Podcasts to Be a Guest

Not every podcast is your best choice when seeking to be a guest. In all truthfulness, pray for discernment and listen

carefully to two or three episodes before tossing your hat into the be-my-guest ring.

As you listen to podcasts that reach your audience for article content, as I mentioned above, ask yourself if your content would benefit the reviewed podcast's listeners as well. If the host is solo, they are not looking for guests. If they are interviewing, you could be a great fit.

For the podcast host who interviews guests, these three steps are next:

- Write down five topics the listeners would love
- Write out five talking points for each of your five topics
- Create one to five downloadable giveaways you could offer to the listeners

Take your bio and the five topics with their associated talking points, and create a query email. Then send to the podcast host, assuring them you are ready to help, encourage, inspire, and equip their audience.

4. Listen to Podcasts to Find Your Hosting Style

If you think owning a podcast is your next best step, listen to several to find your hosting style. Podcasts are versatile.

Here are common podcasting formats:

- The Interview
- The Solo or Monologue
- The Conversation/co-hosted
- The Panel—Topic based
- Nonfiction Storytelling—Entertainment
- The Theatre Style—Scripted Fiction
- Repurposed Content—Taken from Written content
- Anything You Want—Video content

To find more details about the pros and cons of each, take advantage of Google once again.

5. Listen to Podcasts for Spiritual Growth

One of my favorite morning routines is listening to inspirational podcasts. *Seeking Scripture* is one that goes through the Bible in a year. I plug in my earbuds and walk. I hear Scripture read aloud, and my soul feels at peace.

Writers are busy with the business of writing. I'd love to say that Christian writers are immune to life's distractions and able to spend the appropriate amount of time in God's Word every day. Alas, we are more susceptible to spiritual warfare, which includes heaps of distractions.

Ask your friends if they have a favorite podcast. Content that takes them to the Father, shares truth with abandon, and brings them peace that passes all understanding. That podcast may be worth the listen.

Which podcast focus is your next best step? I'd love to hear from you. Are you on FB? Connect with me @ CoachLindaGoldfarb. ●



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Called to Write & Speak?**

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awsa memberships

The Advanced Writers & Speakers Association (AWSA) has two levels of membership.s specifically designed for Christian Women Communicators.



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For women who feel called to communicate.

Annual Membership includes:

- Opportunity to attend live conferences and network with published authors. (\$1000 value)
- Invitation to join Protégé Power Call — lively group coaching with experts. (\$100 value)
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- Invitation to submit to AWSA's Leading Hearts magazine and daily e-devotionals. ((\$100 value)
- Access to Certified Writing Coaches. (\$100 value)
- News and happenings, plus invitations to ministry/career changing courses. (\$500 value)
- Fast Acting Bonus: "How to Get More Speaking Engagements" course. (\$500 value)
- Fast Acting Bonus: Writing and Speaking Guides by Kathy Collard Miller. (\$200 value)

Annual package worth: \$3000;

*Yours: \$47.00 per year.**

AWSA PROFESSIONAL —

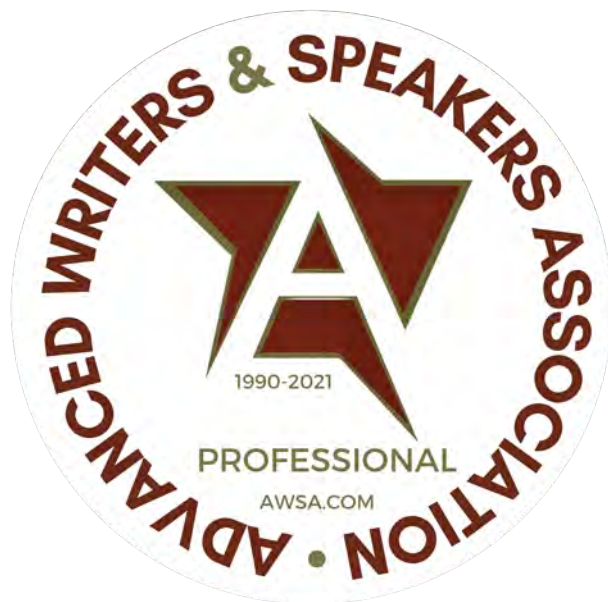
For women who are professional writers, speakers, or communicators.

Annual Membership includes:

- An online networking and resource loop. (\$1000 value)
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- AWSA Connect, virtual, quarterly mini-conferences with small group network time. (\$500 value)
- Invitation to submit to AWSA's Leading Hearts magazine and Arise Daily e-devotionals. (\$100 value)
- Fast Acting Bonus: "How to Get More Speaking Engagements" course. (\$500 value)
- Fast Acting Bonus: Writing and Speaking Guides by Kathy Collard Miller. (\$200 value)
- Exclusive access to Golden Scroll Awards Contest. (Priceless)

Annual package worth: \$4000;

*Yours: \$47.00 per year.**



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More Power to Ya!



Willpower! Where are you?
I need you, stat!

Dispatcher: 911. *What's your emergency?*

Me: *I've been cutting back on dairy and gluten and the waitress at this breakfast place just asked if I would like a side of gravy. And I would. I really, really would.*

Dispatcher: *Ma'am, this is not a real emergen—*

Me: *It's white gravy and I will have a stomachache for three days!*

Dispatcher (sighing): *I think you can power through it. How about you ask for some salsa for your eggs instead.*

Me: *::guzzles gravy::*

I've noticed something interesting about myself. Sometimes I'm less about finding the willpower and powering through and much more about powering up with the high drama. Powering way, way up.

Shouldn't willpower have a switch I can flip? Or maybe a button? Yes, a power button. A willpower button.

I'd like to think I would use that button to empower something weightier than gravy ("weightier"—not a calorie reference). But do you know what's amazing? I am the recipient of real power. Not just power, but power on power on power.

First, I've been gifted.

"Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10 CSB).

Peter doesn't say that a select few have received a gift. No, "each one" has a special gift from God. That's me! That's you! Have you ever thought about the fact that you were

created and gifted to be an influence on this planet?

Not only have you been gifted, but second, He is the one who will empower that gift to impact lives.

"For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13 CSB).

Our God does all the work. He works on our will, He empowers the work. Power on power.

So He gifted and equipped you, He empowers the work, and on top of that, He prepared the works.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10 CSB).

He makes it all happen. And when the Creator of the universe powers up a happening, chains break and people are freed, policies change and lives are altered—entire planets must flutter and tremble with excitement at every magnificent power move of God.

The good news is that we don't need to fret so much about powering up our own willpower. Rather, we need to plug into the Holy Spirit power that moves peoples, policies, planets. His Spirit—there's the power!

Lord, we glory in Your power. Open our eyes more every day to the abundant life we find as we plug into Your power to fulfill the purpose You so lovingly planned for each of us. Thank You for living in us by Your Spirit. It's a beautiful, flutter-filled thrill to watch as You work in others by working through us. What a miracle! Thank You for empowering it. Power on power on power!

I'm going to shoot for praying this regularly. Pondering His power is faith-building in every way.

And this is small potatoes compared to all that God is power-working around the world, but, FYI, I'm going to work back up to saying no to gravy. Next time. Because as for this time, that gravy train has already left the station. ●

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with
confidence!



contributors



meet the publisher

LINDA EVANS SHEPHERD @LINDASHEPHERD is publisher of *Leading Hearts* magazine. She is also a best-selling author, an in-demand speaker, and president of Right to the Heart ministries. She is founder of the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association (AWSA). She lives in Colorado with husband, Paul, and is a mother of two. www.lindashepherd.com



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AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY @BAREFACEDGIRL is managing editor and art director for *Leading Hearts* magazine and brand manager for AWSA. She is a writer, speaker and multi-award-winning editor, having spent over 25 years in the magazine industry. She is a mentor for AWSA Protege. Amber is owner of #barefacedcreative, providing branding support for authors, speakers, businesses and missionaries. She and her Brit-native husband, Philip, live in Missouri with two of their daughters: Imogen and Penelope. Their oldest, Saffron, is a Social Work major at Missouri State University. www.barefacedcreative.com.



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