

Praise for *Too Blessed to be Stressed. . .*
Inspiration for Every Day

“A devotion from Deb Coty for every day of the year? Yes, please! Deb’s truly unique gift of speaking to us with equal mixes of laughter and truth is sweet medicine for the body of Christ, and now it comes in premeasured doses? Excellent. I plan to apply *Too Blessed to be Stressed* liberally and often.”

~Shellie Rushing Tomlinson, humorist, radio host,
author of *Heart Wide Open*

“*Too Blessed to be Stressed. . . Inspiration for Every Day* is like just the right touch of soul caffeine—perfect for my morning. I love that it’s compact and clever. Witty and heartwarming, yes, but best of all, the wisdom tucked inside is biblical, and each devotion directs my focus to the God who wants my day. Yep, every morning. . .gotta have me some!”

~Rhonda Rhea, humor columnist, TV host, author of
Espresso Your Faith and *Join the Insanity*

“Focusing on Papa God’s never-ending love for us is a great way to start a day or end one before turning out the light, or anytime a reminder of His goodness will put the wind back in our sails! This new journal in the *Too Blessed to be Stressed* collection helps us laugh (often at ourselves), reflect, and walk in the bounty of blessings in our everyday lives. This book would make a great addition to your personal collection and a delightful gift as well.”

~Deb DeArmond, speaker and author of *Don’t Go to Bed Angry: Stay Up and Fight* and other books on family relationships

“These daily gems will lighten, de-clutter, and de-stress your day. We all need a friend like Debora to show us just how blessed we really are.”

~Cheri Cowell, speaker and author of *365 Devotions for Peace*

“Passionate, practical, and powerful all rolled into one. Filled with daily encouragement, Debora goes right to the heart of the matter with nuggets of genuine inspiration and tender reassurance of our Father’s love. You don’t want to miss this devotional—it’s a must-have for today’s chaotic world!”

~Laura Petherbridge, speaker and author of *When “I Do” Becomes “I Don’t”* and *The Smart Stepmom*

“You’ll be blessed by a daily dose of Deb and her divinely inspired words. Each day’s entry includes beautiful scripture and an anecdotal scenario, ending with a prayer to our Lord. You’ll laugh *and* learn from each devo. Grab more copies for your friends! They’ll love you forever!”

~Elizabeth Hoagland, blogger of *Worship with Words*

Too Blessed
to be Stressed...
Inspiration for
Every Day



DEVOTIONAL
JOURNAL

Debora M. Coty

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Our mission is to inspire the world with the life-changing message of the Bible.



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Dedication

To my sister Cindy:
childhood crash dummy, teenage
shoe-swapper, adult confidant.

You're my unsung hero.
Since the day I was born,
you've been the wind
beneath my wings.



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- Lotsa love to my parents, Adele and Frank Mitchell, both nearing ninety now, who still continually encourage and motivate me to keep writing, no matter what. I couldn't be prouder to be your daughter!
- And as always, mega praise and honor to my dearest Papa God, who never leaves my side.



Introduction



I never intended to become a potty writer. But, well. . .there 'tis.

My readers tell me the short, quick-read chapters in my books make them perfect bathroom fodder for read-and-run convenience. At least I gain a manly readership that way; I just love getting letters from menfolk who say their wives left me in the bathroom where they picked me up.

Oooo-kay. Nothing like a little potty humor to start things out, eh?

So here's another selection to add to your Debora Coty bathroom collection. Possibly the best yet. Because it's full of everyday kisses from Papa God. Yep, a warm, toasty reminder that your heavenly Father's there, He's aware, and He cares about you every single day of your life.

I hope you'll laugh with me, perhaps cry a little, and hopefully consider some exciting new aspects about your faith that haven't crossed your mind. Like how to combat killjoys that sabotage your peace, the surprise ministry Papa may be preparing you for, and why sphincter-pucker moments are actually a good thing.

Hmm. Maybe we shouldn't discuss potties and sphincters on the same page.

This would be a grand time to thank you for sharing my offbeat blend of humor and hope, wit and near-wisdom, through my books and speaking ministry. My BFFs (Blessed Friends Forever) mean the world to me; you're the reason I write.

So here we go again, this time a year-long quest to fully embrace the fact that we're loved, cherished, and *Too Blessed to be Stressed*. (Hey, somebody should write a book by that title!)

And please. . .don't squeeze the Charmin.



Fresh Hope

"Those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

ISAIAH 49:23 NIV

JANUARY
1

I awoke before dawn on New Year's Day in a fog of gloom. I was bummed by recent family problems, pressing decisions, and the sudden death of a close friend right before Christmas.

After wading through depressing headlines and unfunny comics in the Sunday paper, I dressed and headed to church alone. Spouse was under the weather. Wouldn't you know, the day I needed company most. . .zilch.

As I pulled out of my driveway and nosed the car around the first curve, I was immersed in light. Beautiful, sparkly, utterly amazing white light from a magnificent array of sunbeams. Maybe it was a unique combination of sheen and mist; perhaps the angle of the sun was different than usual, I don't know, but it was as brilliant as an elaborate Disney light show.

Okay, here you need to know that I'm a sunbeam connoisseur. Yep. Since I was a little girl, I've taken special joy in early-morning sunbeams—those translucent fingers of Papa God reaching down to earth to touch His creation with the first light of a brand-new day. Hope! That's what they make me feel. . .hope.

Such promise! Such possibilities! *Anything* could happen.

On the first day of a fresh beginning, those hope-filled sunbeams cut through my mental fog and clutter to reach right in and caress my careworn heart. I was surrounded with luminescent, soul-stirring reminders that I'm not alone—that Papa God is right here with me.

He's with you too, ya know, girlfriend. And He will continue to be throughout the upcoming year.

*Hope Eternal,
Help me see You in the first
light of a brand-new year. Such
possibilities! Such promise!
Anything could happen.*



JANUARY
2

Everybody Needs a Papa

You received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

ROMANS 8:15 NLT

It started in 2004 when I began writing my novel, *The Distant Shore*. The plot is based on the true story of a young girl sent away—for mysterious reasons that are gradually revealed—to live on Florida's remote, untamed Merritt Island in 1904.

Emma-Lee finds island life with crusty spinster Aunt Augusta bewildering and lonely until she's befriended by kindly Captain Stone, an Irish freighter captain.

Captain Stone is a godly man and introduces Emma-Lee to his beloved heavenly Father, whom Emma-Lee wholeheartedly embraces as "Papa God," the heavenly papa who will never abandon or forsake her like her earthly papa.

Papa God fills a hollow hole in her heart.

Along with Emma-Lee, I began referring to Him as Papa God and have done so ever since. Acknowledging that the Almighty views us through the lens of a faithful, unconditionally loving parent fulfills a deep need for belonging in each of us.

Abba is the intimate Aramaic form of *Father* used in the Bible numerous times, most notably by Jesus, referring to God the Father. *Abba* is translated into current-day *Daddy* or *Papa*. I love the term *Papa God*—it's warm, protective, and delightfully cuddly. What name could more richly express our close relationship with our heavenly Daddy?

I invite you to join me. I think you'll be surprised how quickly—and almost magically—the secret, deep longing in your heart for nonjudgmental, all-accepting, all-forgiving love will be fulfilled.

After all, He's your Papa too.

*Papa God,
Thank You for adopting me
into Your family as Your adored,
cherished daughter. You truly
are my Papa.*



Purse Politics

Prepare your minds for action.

1 PETER 1:13 NASB

JANUARY
3

Have you ever noticed that purse loyalties divide womandom like politics divide our nation? Such devotion toward swatches of leather and fabric!

Okay, you've got your two basic purse parties: bullmastiff (massive and intimidating) and Maltese (petite and adorable), with various trendy independent parties toting contraptions like moving vans with straps, Tic Tac-sized micro-clutches, and glorified horse feed bags.

My kids roll their eyes while claiming that my tendencies run toward the latter, but I never hear them complain when I happen to have the very item they need at the moment, be it dental floss, a blow dryer, or half a chocolate éclair. (You must be prepared; never know when you might become stranded on a deserted island.)

Of course, there are sporadic bipartisan crossover occasions like beach trips or formal dinners when party lines blur, but in general, each purse party feels absolutely certain that its platform is superior and will fight to the death to defend it.

According to my hilarious friend, author of *Purse-uit of Holiness*, Rhonda Rhea, "pursuing holiness is kind of like finding the perfect purse. You know it's out there—somewhere—if you could only find it."

If you could only find it.

It's my prayer that this little devotional will help you do just that. Pursue, discover, and embrace a deeper relationship with Papa God, the Master Designer. Trust me, regardless of your purse party, there's NO better designer label to wear proudly!

*Designer of Me,
I want more of You as much
as I want that Prada bag. No,
more. Help me be diligent
in my purse-uit.*



Killjoy

Be anxious for nothing. . .let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NASE

I love this Bible chapter. Not only does it contain my favorite decom-stress verse (above); it teaches us how to deal with everyday stressors that steal our joy.

Grab your Bible as we look at four killjoys in the fourth chapter of Philippians:

- **Killjoy #1: Conflict** (verse 2)
The apostle Paul sends a message to two women who can't get along. Know any of those? Women in Philippi were quite liberated and were allowed to take part in government and politics. But conflict divides and conquers; Paul cautioned them to make amends, not allow conflict to rob their joy.
- **Killjoy #2: Anxiety** (verse 6)
We sometimes feel overwhelmed by daily fears and anxieties, but hey, we can be whelmed without being overwhelmed. Will we choose to serve our crazy, runaway feelings or the all-powerful One who helps us manage them?
- **Killjoy #3: Stinkin' thinkin'** (verses 8-9)
Fear is like static blocking our inner faith voices. All we can pick up are those destructive, toxic voices that cast doubt on truth. Paul gives us a marvelous list here that enables us to change channels and focus on positives instead of negatives.
- **Killjoy #4: Fretting** (verse 10)
Fretting is our feeble effort to maintain control.
F: False sense of
R: Responsibility for
E: Every little
T: Thing

But guess what? We've never actually been in control. Papa God is.

*Emmanuel (God with Us),
Make me more aware of the
killjoys I allow to sabotage
my abundant life in You.*



Perfecting My Stinky Face

Encourage one another.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11 NIV

JANUARY
5

My three-year-old grandbuddy, Blaine, watching me apply makeup: “What’s that stuff do, Mimi?”

“Blush makes me look less dead. . .er, I mean it gives me more color.”

“Oh. Why do ya wanna be pink?”

“I don’t want to be pink. I just don’t want to look like a walking marshmallow.”

He contemplates this deep concept.

“What’cha doing now, Mimi?”

“Spraying perfume to make me smell pretty. See—[holding out wrist for olfactory inspection]—what do you think?”

[Making stinky face] “Ugghh. You smell like my Pull-Ups.”

Swell.

I too have been perfecting my stinky face. Not intentionally. But sometimes when I pass a mirror, I’m floored at my gnarly expression. The thing is, I’m not angry. . .or sad. . .or even displeased. I’m just preoccupied. So preoccupied that I’m not aware of what my face is doing, and apparently when ignored, my facial muscles default to my mother’s scowl.

I thought Mama was always mad at me. One time, I asked what I’d done, and she seemed surprised and said, “Why, nothing. I’m not upset; I’m focused on what I’m doing. Just ignore my face.”

Well, of course that’s impossible. The face is the window into the mind. Reading expressions is our feedback mechanism to know what’s going on inside others.

So does my countenance bless or intimidate people? Does Jesus-joy shine through my eyes and encourage through my smile?

Hmm. Maybe I should tell my stinky face the good news in my heart more often. And ditch the Eau de Pull-Ups.

*Sweet Lord,
Make me more aware of the
You I portray. I offer my coun-
tenance to You today as an
instrument of praise.*



JANUARY
6

Crash Dummies

*"I have had a great struggle with
my sister, and I have won."*

GENESIS 30:8 NIV

Siblings are the reluctant instructors in our life classrooms. They're our crash dummies, our failed experiments, the unfortunate people we practice on to learn how *not* to treat others.

They unwittingly teach us civility by suffering the consequences of our mistakes as we forge the virtues of kindness, fairness, and helping one another. They're our first and last teammates, the ones we're forced to depend on. The ones who bring us secret joy when they actually come through.

Of course, we're their crash dummies too.

Yet despite trampled feelings, bruises, and occasional concussions, what would we do without them? They're as much a part of our DNA as our crooked noses. We love them, admire them, and are irritated senseless by them all at the same time.

We share memories no one else in the world fathoms; they understand where we're coming from even better than our spouses. Siblings are passengers in our lifeboat, and it would be suicidal to try to blow them out of the water.

So we might as well accept them as heaven-sent companions for this voyage of life and try to paddle in sync.

In the movie *In Her Shoes*, Rose Feller (played by Toni Collette) voiced every sister's sentiments when she was trying to explain the unexplainable bond she shared with her incorrigible sister, Maggie (Cameron Diaz): "Without her. . .I don't make sense."

No, without our siblings, we just don't make sense.

And strangely enough—despite the lumps, bumps, and hard knocks—we don't want to go it alone.

*Prince of Peace,
Motivate me to tell my
crash dummies (siblings)
that I love them before
it's too late.*



Aging Gratefully

*I will still be the same when you are old
and gray, and I will take care of you.*

ISAIAH 46:4 CEV

JANUARY
7

As we cross that invisible half-century line, things begin to change.

Varicose veins pop and sizzle like tiny zags of electricity.

Harry Potter's got nothing on me—he may have a lightning bolt on his forehead but I have fifty on my left leg alone.

After decades of decorating ourselves with heavy earrings, those previously plump, robust earlobes droop to our Birkenstocks. Ever notice how in young folks, the piercing hole is a tiny dot? As we age, that dot elongates into a long wobbly slash.

I tell people Captain Jack Sparrow ran his sword through my piercing hole in a fit of passion. Right.

And our earlobes aren't the only things wobbling.

Cleavage suddenly quits cleaving and you find the best reason to wear low-cut blouses is to funnel crumbs down to collect in your belly button for a late-night snack.

My PAH theory—Physiological Aging Hypothesis—states that as a woman's age creeps northward, her body parts travel south, and hips expand to new horizons east to west. We hot mamas are all over the map!

But shouldn't maturity be the most productive season of life? After many years of trial and error, we finally get a grip on our unique sets of gifts and abilities and we can gratefully determine how best to use them for Papa God's glory.

Eyesight might be on the fritz, but insight is keener than ever. We've learned to take our eyes off the mirror and focus on things more important.

*Lord of My Later Years,
I refuse to die before my actual
death. I'm grateful to be here.
Use me to Your glory.*



JANUARY

8

The Revealing

*"He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness."*

DANIEL 2:22 NIV

Betty enjoyed being surprised when she gave birth back in the seventies. . .first she had one boy. Then another. Then a third. All unexpected marvels.

But she did *not* enjoy the surprise four decades later when her husband, Arthur, gave birth. . . sort of. . .to a turn signal lever from a 1963 Thunderbird.

The seven-inch metal lever had apparently impaled Arthur's arm in a horrific car accident. His life-threatening injuries took precedence over a little arm discomfort, so the imbedded metal wasn't discovered. Over time, a protective pocket grew around the lever, and Arthur went about his normal life, unaware of his strange bedfellow.

Then one day Arthur's courthouse visit mysteriously set off the metal detector. X-rays revealed a slender object, a little longer than a pencil, stuck in his arm. (Hey, if it'd been inflamed, do you think they'd have called it Arthur-itis? Tee-hee!)

There are times when we're all surprised at things stuck inside of us. Maybe not rusty T-Bird pieces, but other things. Ugly things like envy (*I wish my job paid as well as hers*), jealousy (*my sister's skinny little behunkus is SO not fair!*), or resentment (*I will never forget what my husband said to me ten years ago*).

We can just go on day after day, unaware of the ugliness festering deep inside, infecting our hearts. Or we can ask Papa God to x-ray our souls and reveal the foreign objects that need removing. The choice is ours.

*Great Physician,
Search me and reveal buried
ugliness that needs to be ex-
cised. I'm sick of being sick.
I'm itching to be healthy.*



Dis Equality

Keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble.

PROVERBS 21:23 NLT

JANUARY

9

The masculine sex has finally found their answer to the female's cover-all-sins catchphrase "Bless her heart."

It's always amused me how women—especially Southern gals—can say anything about someone, no matter how catty, scathing, or gossipy, as long as they end it with "Bless his/her heart." That little disclaimer supposedly makes everything palatable.

The vocabulary equivalent of ketchup.

Males have now gained *dis* equality. They've taken up a slang phrase that enables them to disagree, disparage, and disrespect without apology. And it's not only socially acceptable; it's considered hip. Ultra-cool. Tooled. Just sayin'...

In case, like me, you're not completely hip, ultra-cool, or tooled, I'm not just saying nothing here; that's the phrase: "Just sayin'..."

Oh, women use it too, but I've noticed the hairy gender has really latched on. Now they can shred, tear, and rip apart other people with a smile on their faces just like us girls.

"That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. Just sayin'..."

"You can't believe anything he says. Just sayin'..."

"You're not really going out with *her*? Just sayin'..."

It might behoove us all to remember a well-known scripture about now: "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." No, wait. That's the gospel according to my mother.

Actually it's today's verse, Proverbs 21:23. Now there's sage advice. Plain. Wise. Always hip. Just sayin'...

*God Who Cannot Be Deceived,
Let me not deceive myself with
weasel words. Please forgive my
critical spirit and make me cogni-
zant of what I'm really sayin'
about other people today.*



Journey to Dawn

PSALM 25:5 NIV

After my first lap around the large campground, the sky began gathering momentum in preparation for sunrise. It was still dark, but hints of light appeared. One lone mockingbird braved a medley in the crisp air.

By my third lap, layers of multihued crimson emblazoned the horizon. More color, more promise. Tag-playing squirrels scurried up a tree. The world was awakening to a new day.

What a difference the presence of the sun makes, transforming the world from stagnant darkness into teeming life!

You know, faith's journey is much like the journey to dawn. At first we fumble in darkness. But as trust grows and we mature as believers, our momentum builds until Papa God's appointed time when our debut arrives. Each phase of preparation is important and necessary to the end result. At last we burst through the clouds of obscurity to make an eternal difference in someone's life.

*Creator of New Dawns,
Fuel my faith, so that one fine
morning Your Son will rise in me
and erupt in dazzling Sonshine
that'll change someone's world.*



Crazy-in-Love

Children are a gift of the LORD.

PSALM 127:3 NASB

JANUARY
11

True, children are a gift. A blessing. Aack. Sometimes a mixed blessing.

Like the time my darling three-year-old Matthew appeared in the middle of our dinner party in nothing but his Spiderman underpants and dozens of my Kotex stuck to every square inch of his little body.

Or when he disappeared from his stroller in one of the most exclusive fashion boutiques in the mall and reappeared in the store's display window sitting on the lap of a mannequin, trying to squish a cookie between her painted lips.

How about the time adolescent Matthew accidentally drove the neighbor's riding lawnmower right through his screen pool enclosure?

Or when a horrified yowl resounded from teenage Matthew in the bathroom at seven o'clock one morning? He'd groggily begun brushing his teeth when he realized that the foul-tasting toothpaste he'd liberally applied to his toothbrush was his sister's yeast infection cream.

There are times you just want to hook a voltmeter up to their little punkin brains to see if anything is getting through.

Ulcer is *kids* spelled backward. Well, it should be anyway. The parent handbook should inform us of the risks before we swim upstream and spawn. Having a kid is like getting your tongue pierced; you're all in. Fully committed. No turning back. Life as you once knew it is over.

Yet we would do it all over again.

Are we crazy or what?

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for making me
crazy-in-love with my children.
And thank You for being
crazy-in-love with me,
Your crazy daughter.





JANUARY
12

Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.

LUKE 10:40 NIV

I've always sympathized with Martha of the Mary/Martha sister duo. Martha was zipping around cleaning, cooking, running errands. . .doing all that needed to be done to host a passel of dinner quests.

I totally get that. How will things get done if someone doesn't DO them? How will the bronco get broken if someone doesn't take the bull by the horns and ride him?

Is that cowgirl usually you?

So while the chickens were strutting around fully feathered and a mountain of unpeeled potatoes avalanched on Martha's head, Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, contentedly listening.

Martha probably would have *loved* to lounge around listening to the Messiah too, but she was too distracted. “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” (Luke 10:40 NIV).

Many of us identify with Martha. We yearn to focus our attention on Jesus, but we're distracted by our perpetual to-do lists too. So much to do, so little time. Don't fib now—haven't you ever jotted down your grocery list in church?

Jesus' response to distracted Martha shakes me to my cowgirl core: "You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better" (Luke 10:41-42 NIV).

What? Didn't Jesus realize His dinner would never materialize if everyone sat at His feet? How did He expect the grapes would get squeezed, the bread dough kneaded, the chickens fricasseed?

Hmm. Maybe, just maybe—He was trying to tell us that hearts are more important than stomachs.

*My Beloved Savior,
Help me buck all distractions
today and focus solely on You.*



He Did It

A little child shall lead them.

ISAIAH 11:6 KJV

JANUARY
13

It was a gorgeous Sunday morning at our remote Smoky Mountain cabin. Three-year-old grand-buddy Blaine had enough of a cough and runny nose to keep us away from traditional church, so we decided to worship at the Church of the Prayer Rock.

It really was a prayer rock—two boulders shoved together in the woods to form a crude bench facing a wooden cross nailed to a towering elm. The perfect setting to drink in the beautiful and majestic workmanship of the Creator.

Brother Blaine led us in singing “Jesus Loves Me” and “Amazing Grace.” Pastor Pop-Pop (my husband, Chuck) shared a made-up-on-the-cuff, toddler-friendly sermon about three little boys learning to be good in order to please Jesus, not just their parents, mimis, or pop-pops.

Then when Blaine pointed to the cross on the tree and asked why Jesus died there, Mimi (moi) had the privilege of explaining that because we all do naughty things, someone had to be punished (THAT concept he understands all too well).

I told him that Jesus loves us so much, He chose to die on the cross as punishment in our place so that we could live with Him and Papa God forever and ever. Blaine’s little forehead wrinkled in deep thought. He slowly nodded. He got it. Let me tell you, there wasn’t a dry eye in the Church of the Prayer Rock that day.

Does your heart still melt when someone meets Jesus? Are you tenderized to the God-shaped holes in the lives of people you know?

*Master Creator,
Thank You for saving my
soul through the willing
sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus.
Help me stay tenderized to
others’ need to know Him too.*



JANUARY

14

Returning Your Call

When I called, you answered me.

PSALM 138:3 NIV

Nancy spent decades praying for just the right time to share Jesus with her hostile father. But he always cut her off at every mention of her faith or the Bible. Wanting nothing to do with “foolish God talk,” he grew hardened and bitter, isolating himself from everyone.

Then one night, as she drove home from an unsettling visit with her ill, elderly dad in the hospital, Nancy felt an unshakable urge to go back. She resisted but finally turned the car around.

As she re-entered the hospital room, Nancy found him crying. Shocked by the image of her strong, fiercely self-sufficient father breaking down, she could only stand and gape.

“What’s wrong, Dad? Are you in pain?”

“Not physical pain. No.”

“What kind of pain then?”

“I’m . . . well, I’m lonely. Nobody comes to see me except you. And you never stay long.” He flicked a tear off his wrinkled cheek. “I hate this. . . being alone.”

Nancy sensed that the time was finally right. Jehovah was returning her call.

“Well, Dad,” she said gently, “if Jesus were in your heart, you’d never be alone. Will you let me tell you about Him?”

Twenty minutes later, Nancy was overjoyed to lead her father in a prayer to accept Christ as his Savior and constant companion for all eternity.

According to our human timetables, God is sometimes slow, but He’s never late. In the eleventh hour, He often shows up with the key that unlocks a bolted door. Or a map to a path we never knew existed.

We may be on “hold” for a while, but Papa always returns our calls.

*Ever-Loving Lord,
I'm so glad that in Prayer World
dropped calls don't exist.*



Fear Monsters

JANUARY
15

"Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."

DEUTERONOMY 31:8 NLT

In my travels as an event speaker, I've encountered countless women like me who've spent years running from their own personal fear monsters.

Some fears have names and specific countenances; others are faceless, frightening creatures lurking in the shadows just out of sight. But we know they're there. We *feel* them. And we yearn to boldly step up to those fear monsters and yank off their masks.

In preparation for writing my book *Fear, Faith, and a Fistful of Chocolate*, I wanted to pinpoint real fears women struggle with on a daily basis. So I conducted a survey of five hundred random women between ages eighteen and eighty. The results surprised me.

In ascending order, here's the bottom half of the top ten fear list:

- #10: Being judged unfairly
- #9: Specific critters (snakes, roaches, rats, etc.)
- #8: Rejection
- #7: Dependency on others
- #6: Loneliness

Do you experience some of these same fears? Which ones and how often?

What fears do you struggle with even more than these?

Sometime today, stop and jot down your worst fears. Then tomorrow, you'll find what the survey said were the top fears that women face. Try to figure out the top fear (now don't cheat and look ahead!).

I'll give you a hint: the #1 fear was w-a-y out in front of the others. In fact, across all age categories, twice the percentage of women named it their greatest fear. What do you think it is?

*Slayer of Fear Monsters,
Help me identify my greatest
fears; I know that's the first
step toward defeating them.*

