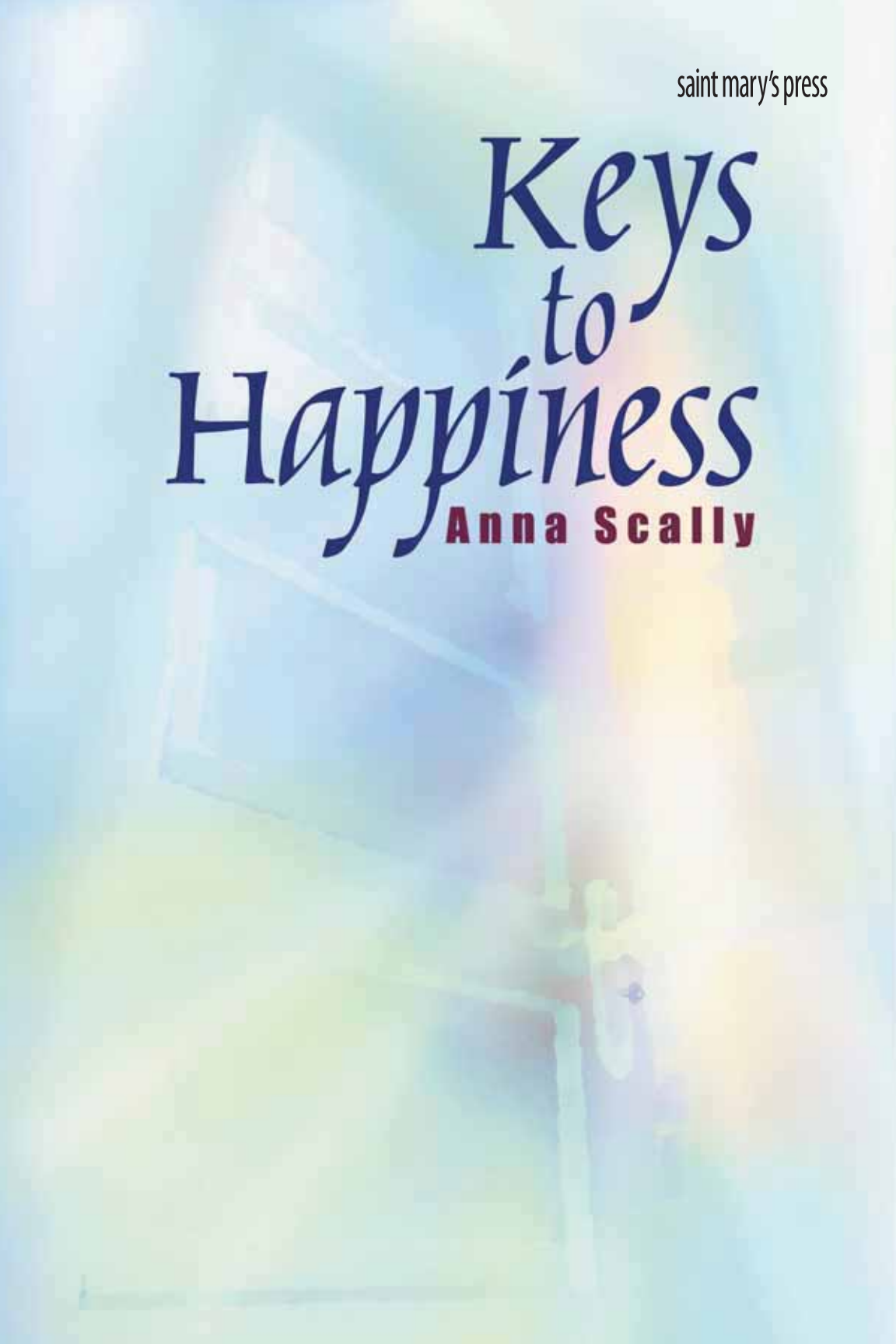


saint mary's press



*Keys
to
Happiness*
Anna Scally

*Keys
to
Happiness*

Keys
to
Happiness
Anna Scally



saint mary's press

The publishing team included Laurie Delgatto, development editor; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the prepublication and production services departments of Saint Mary's Press.

Interior icon by Paul Casper.

Cover Image from getty images/Photodisc Green.

The scriptural quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

During this book's preparation, all citations, facts, figures, names, addresses, telephone numbers, Internet URLs, and other pieces of information cited within were verified for accuracy. The authors and Saint Mary's Press staff have made every attempt to reference current and valid sources, but we cannot guarantee the content of any source, and we are not responsible for any changes that may have occurred since our verification. If you find an error in, or have a question or concern about, any of the information or sources listed within, please contact Saint Mary's Press.

Copyright © 2006 by Anna Scally. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

3346

ISBN 978-0-88489-951-8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Scally, Anna.

Keys to happiness / Anna Scally.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-88489-951-8

1. Catholic teenagers—prayers-books and devotions—English. 2. Happiness—Religious aspects—Catholic Church—Meditations. 3. Popular music—Religious aspects—Catholic Church—Meditations. I. Title. BX2198.S23 2006 248.8'3—dc22

2005037421

To my mum, who has taught me to respect others, to make the best of each day, to take care of other people, and to live with pride.

To my dad, who never gave up, who always saw the bright side of any situation, a Scottish soldier with a huge heart, who knew the song of life. You are always with me. Shine on, Dad.

Author Acknowledgments

No book can be written by an author alone. Sure, this book is a collection of my experiences of people, and the wisdom and spirituality I drew from those moments. But I have to give special thanks to:

God, who started all of this, sent us directions for living and keys for gates and doors, and who participates in “every move we make,” to paraphrase a great song. And God did all of this so we could be happy. What’s not to like about this plan?

Those who believed in me, gave me a great set of keys, and even opened many doors for me.

Young people, for their inspiration.

The staff and volunteers of Cornerstone Media, Inc.

Those dear to me who have passed on, and who are my constant helpers.

My closest friends, who keep me grounded, keep me laughing, and keep me looking forward to every gathering around the table.

The individuals who are the stars of my stories, just by being themselves. They are real people, and those are real stories.

Contents

Introduction.	7
Section 1: Wanting to Be Happy.	9
Chapter 1: From Fear to Security.	10
Chapter 2: From Doubt to Trust	18
Chapter 3: From Feeling Stuck to Feeling Free to Move.	28
Chapter 4: From Helplessness to Finding Someone to Help You	37
Section 2: Choosing to Be Happy	47
Chapter 5: From Unhappy to Happy	48
Chapter 6: From Greed to Sacrifice	56
Chapter 7: From Being Fake to Being Real.	64
Chapter 8: From Gossip to Truth.	72
Section 3: Finding Others Who Are Happy	81
Chapter 9: From Isolation to Friendship.	82
Chapter 10: From Desperation to Rescue	90
Chapter 11: From Boredom to Involvement	99
Chapter 12: From Bystander to Player	107
Section 4: Inviting Others to Be Happy	115
Chapter 13: From Tuned Out to Tuned In	116
Chapter 14: From Feeling Ugly to Feeling Attractive	125
Chapter 15: From Hurt to Handshake	133
Chapter 16: From Dropout to Teammate.	141
Appendix.	150

Introduction

From Anna Scally to You, Book Person

I am not an expert in theology, or in anything else, especially your life. But I am a good facilitator. A facilitator is someone who makes things easier to grasp, or to accomplish. In other words, you are the expert on your own life, but you can discover a lot more about yourself, about the people around you, and about God, who is with you right now. There is always more to find: answers to your questions, ways to deal effectively with others, even some simple ways to notice God in your life.

This is not a textbook. You already have a bunch of those. Consider this book to be a friend, a buddy who can listen to you and explore your life with you so you can become happier. This is not a book of advice, and you will not be scolded by anyone. This is a book of adventure, and you are the main character. You will see others in your story. And you can choose your episodes, and even pick your favorite ending. If you are totally happy with yourself, with others, and with God, and have no interest in being happier, put this book away, or give it to someone else who needs it.

Keys! Keys! Keys!

I am always losing my keys to my car, house, office, and other things I use. Everyone around me gives great advice about putting them in one place where I can always grab them. But I ignore this great advice and keep losing them. So I picked *keys* for the title of this book because maybe you could understand. Maybe you've got a set of keys to your own happiness, but lose them once in a while. Or maybe, like me, you have totally lost those keys and need a new set made from backup copies. In some cases, I've had to have my locks replaced and then acquire a whole new set of keys. So I'm in no position to give advice. But like my friends who have helped me find my keys sometimes, I'd like to help you find your keys to happiness if you have lost them. And if you haven't ever been given a set of those keys, I'd like to present you with your first set! Keys won't automatically make you happy, but they can let you into areas of your life where you can live better.

Inside This Book

This book will help you explore sixteen different issues that pertain to teenage life. The issues come from hundreds of conversations I have had with teens over many years as I have spoken at youth rallies, teen retreats, and teen workshops. I am a disc jockey, and I believe any issue in people's lives will show up in a song somewhere. I am really good at picking these songs to start teen discussions. And I have been in some great discussions. I have learned that I can even disagree with the artist in a song but still use the song to discuss the issue. Because songs quickly come and go on the music charts, I can't use any in this book. So I am providing a section in each chapter for you to use your own favorites. You can also create your master list in the back of this book, writing the names of some current songs in nine major subject areas. It's a chart I use myself on a monthly basis. I thought you might find it interesting. I suggest you go to the appendix of this book and create this list yourself before going into the rest of the book. Then you can use the list when you are picking songs within each chapter, or use it to raise your own awareness on what the world is talking about.

How to Use This Book

These chapters don't have to be explored in the order they appear in the book. I suggest you start with any chapter that appeals to you. You'll see in each chapter different exercises for you to consider in order to get a full spirit-workout. You don't have to do all these exercises. Just try the ones you find interesting. But you might surprise yourself. This is just like body-building, only it's actually spirit-building. The goal is for you to become happier. You are in control. You make the choices. And you get the consequences. But think ahead. Picture yourself letting God manage the big world stuff while you manage your everyday stuff, the stuff you are responsible for, with God's help always available. Would that kind of partnership excite you? Hang on to that picture. It's going to come in handy very soon.

Section 1

Wanting to Be Happy

Are you angry a lot?

All your time spent angry is time lost from being happy.

Do you collect a lot of showy and expensive toys?

Or want to?

Money can buy only what is cheap.

It can't buy happiness.

Do you walk around wearing that “foul mood game face”?

Negativity closes the door to receiving kindness.

We can all do better.

Whether you are in misery or denial

or almost totally happy,

you can be happier than you are right now.

But you have to want it.

Inside this section you will find the keys to open doors

that may seem locked to you.

But first you have to open this door.

If you want to, then you are ready.

I am unlocking this door for you.

Turn the page.



Chapter 1

From Fear to Security

Fear Lock

You feel trapped,
overwhelmed,
terrified.
Your hands are sweaty,
and your lips are dry.
Something bad is happening.
It may be your fault.
It may not be.
What now?
You just want this to end.
What if it gets worse?
On the distant horizon of this moment
lies your goal:
security,
life without this fear.
You want to feel safe,
fearless,
unthreatened by anyone and anything.
How do you get there?

The Girl Who Wanted to Be Happy

Recently at a youth rally, I was talking with a girl who was just finishing ninth grade. She told me that the past year had been a living nightmare. She had transferred from a small school where she had lots of friends to a new school where she felt isolated and disrespected. Unfortunately, she became a target of some vicious rumors spread by a handful of students, none of whom she really knew personally. At her previous school, she had had a healthy social life with no great hassles.

To add to the problem, she felt unable to discuss this with her parents, who used to be good listeners but were now distracted by their own issues. Her insecurity was growing because it was fueled by fear. And fear is a spirit-killer. She was unable to speak up in class. She couldn't find good friends. She didn't even know any adults who would understand her. And she didn't feel she knew God well enough to send off a good prayer for help.

Embarrassed by her own inability to talk to anyone she trusted, she was now taking a big chance in talking with me. She had just heard my presentation to the whole youth rally and decided to take a risk, meeting me at the foot of the stage. I was thrilled for her.

As we talked, she revealed that she had already done something hopeful. At home she had opened a previously unpacked box of her best memories of her years before ninth grade. She pored over notes and photos of her friends from her previous school. She floated back in her memory to good times when she still had close friends. She read cards and notes from those she had trusted. She felt that old confidence in herself that had gone missing this past year. But she was the same person now that she had been then. What had changed?

She realized at this point that when things had gone wrong in a new school with a few negative people, she had frozen up with fear. And fear took it downhill from there. I suggested that she had already proved from her memories that she could be a good friend. And I got her to agree that only a few students at school were being mean to her. There were probably lots of other students who could use a good friend like her. She just had to find them.

This helped her reset her attitude, like restarting a computer when it crashes. And because I'm a disc jockey, I suggested she pick out three songs she knew: the first song would describe her good old days (she got that right away); the second song would describe this recent "year of fear" (she got that one too); and the third song would picture the way she wanted her school life and home life to be from now on (she had to think about that one).

Only one thing was left for her to do: Go back to school and pick someone who needed a friend. Just one, for starters. And we left it at that.

She and I each went home after that youth event, and we have stayed in touch. Last I heard, she has new friends who deserve her, parents who are rediscovering her, and a school who needs her. She still thinks she was lucky to meet me. But I know the truth. I was the one who was blessed by the girl who wanted to be happy.

Note below the single most important thing you want to remember from this story.



Where Am I?

Where am I on the line between total fear and total security? On the lines below, mark an X to indicate just where you think you are at this point in your life.

Example:

I'm fearful all the time.....X.....I'm totally secure and unafraid.

I'm fearful all the time.....I'm totally secure and unafraid.

My life is out of my control.....My life is totally under control.

I feel threatened by a situation.....I'm secure going into any situation.

I wish I were someone else.....I really like who I am.

Looking at my Xs above, I'd say I'd locate myself right now at one spot (mark your X) on the line below:

Fear.....Security

This mark lets you know where you are for now and where you would like to be. The rest of these exercises are keys designed to help you become more secure.

My Music Mirror

My door is shut.
My songs help me get my focus.
Turn up the volume,
 and blot out all threats and fears.
Music is my audio mirror.
 There I am, brilliantly reflected in my ears.
I can see myself in some of these songs.

What songs are you listening to these days? There are plenty of songs about feeling scared. There are lots of songs about people who are secure. Pick out one song that helps you describe exactly what you are going through right now. (For a great tool, go to the appendix of this book and look at the music category chart.)

Song:

Artist:

Lyrics: [Write out as much of this song as you can. Underline a key line in this song that talks about your fear. Double underline a key line in this song that talks about the security you want.]



I Wish I'd Said That!

**Music is my audio mirror.
There I am,
brilliantly reflected in my ears.**

Let me say that my own way. . . .

Rewrite this quotation in your own words, keeping the insight but making it your own. For example: "Every time I listen to certain songs, I am watching myself on my own life stage. I am both singer and actor, a hero in every scene."



Prayer

In the Grip of Fear

God,
I'm in the grip of fear.
It owns me,
dominates me,
controls my thinking,
and scares me.
It scares the people who love me,
if anyone does right now.
I would get out of this mess in a flash,
if I only knew how.
Will you help me?
Please.

Say this prayer three times. The first time, say it silently as you listen to the song you picked out earlier. The second time, say it silently, with no music in the background. The third time, in private, say it out loud.

Now, still in private, write down whatever you sense God has said to you during any part of this prayer. For example, God's response might be: "I am listening to you. I know your fears. I have seen you struggle. And I am right here with you. And I am going to show you a way to make this better."



A Gospel Story That Ends in a Question for You

On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” (Mark 4:35–40)

This is a great story about fear and the insecurity fear generates. A great storm, a sinking boat, and Jesus asleep all contribute to the disciples’ loss of faith. There are really two questions asked by Jesus aboard the disciples’ boat during their fearful experience. And now, they are your questions to answer.

You’ve had spiritual storms in your life, and maybe at some point your life looked like it was going under. And God seemed to be asleep just when you needed a zipload of help. Imagine Jesus turning to you right now as he experiences your own fears with you. He says directly to you, and only to you:

“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

How will you answer him? Write your response below:



Did Something Good Happen Here? Remember It!

I want to remember the following things from these spirit-workouts:

About myself:

About others:

About God:

Right now, where would you place yourself on your line between:

Fear.....Security

Mark your X and compare it to your mark at the beginning of this chapter.

Did your mark move this time? In which direction?

Who or what made it move?

Who or what can stop it from moving or cause it to move backward?

How did you experience God's involvement with you during this process?

Chapter 2

From Doubt to Trust

I Don't Think So

He says he's cool, whatever that is.
She says I should do things her way.
My parents want me to grow up to be like them.
In fact, they're stressed about it.
So should I be cool like him,
or demanding like her,
or stressed like them?
I don't think so.
So why be like everyone else,
especially when they don't look happy?
Why trust anyone when no one can be trusted?
I have to be careful with the people I know at school.
A secret at school is as safe as a wet sugar cube
protected by an ant colony.
I don't want drugs,
weapons,
or a broken heart.

I want to be safe with someone.
But I don't know anyone I can trust.
I want to know how to live better,
but how?

I want to get better results from my choices,
but I want to talk this out with someone I can trust.
I'm becoming independent
just when I need someone close to me
to understand me.
Should I just give up?
I don't think so.

My Next Opportunity

Recently I was on a road trip, trying to get home earlier than scheduled. I talked my way all day through various airports, trying to get myself home a few hours earlier to enjoy a little extra time with my family and friends. On the last leg of the journey, I found myself next to a very kind, elderly gentleman, who had just retired after many years of hard work. He was ready to enjoy the next phase of his life with a little leisure and much needed time with his wife.

We were about twenty minutes out after takeoff when a passenger in a seat behind me noticed a problem with the right wing outside his window. An eight-foot chunk of the top of the wing had been ripped off after take-off. The man quickly notified the flight attendant, and the captain decided immediately to turn the plane around and go back to our departure airport. The next twenty-five minutes seemed like eternity to me. As a seasoned traveler, I had begun to take safe air travel for granted. Now, I had my doubts.

As we bounced our way back, I found myself playing over and over in my mind all the things I wish I had done in my life. I had heard that people, when faced with death, don't cry for the things they did in their lives. They cry for what they didn't do.

Faces, conversations, moments with those close to me, everything flashed before me. We were asked by the pilot not to use our cell phones, because they might interfere with the radio transmissions. Of course, those who had their phones within reach ignored this plea and began to call those most important to them.

With no cell phone near me, I turned to my seat partner, who looked ghostly grey. We shared our names, held hands, and sat in silence. We safely landed amid a planeload of cheers. And I realized I had stared death in the face, and survived. A cabin of strangers became united through this near tragedy. How did this change their lives? How did it change mine?

Well, I don't know about them, but I certainly have a different attitude about my daily life. I also have a different attitude about the things I worry about. I have a different attitude about the decisions I make. This powerful event, which was out of my control, has reminded me each day not to take anything for granted.

Sure, there have been many moments when I have slipped back into my old mindset. But I try to catch myself. When I do, I recall how Jesus also turned over his fate to God in heaven. I'd like to tell you I did the same. But I wasn't so cool. Nor was I so brave. Sure, I still fly. Sure, I still walk

back to the middle of each plane I'm on, just to check the wings. But I no longer glide through the air without giving thanks for all the new opportunities that still lie before me. Telling you this story has been one of them, because you are my next opportunity.

Note below the single most important thing you want to remember from this story.



Where Am I?

Where am I on the line between total doubt and total trust? On the lines below, mark an X to indicate just where you think you are at this point in your life.

Example:

I'm doubtful all the time.....X.....I'm totally trusting
of those who deserve it.

I'm doubtful all the time.....I'm totally trusting
of those who deserve it.

People never trust me.....Most people trust me.

I'm not good at picking.....I'm great at picking
trustworthy types. trustworthy types.

I doubt even God.....I know God can be
can be trusted. completely trusted.

Looking at my Xs above, I'd say I'd locate myself right now at one spot
(mark your X) on the line below:

Doubt.....Trust

This mark lets you know where you are for now and where you would like to be. The rest of these exercises are keys designed to help you be more trusting of those who deserve your trust.



Mood Music

My music never lets me down.
It's always in my mood.
I can trust my favorites.
When I'm misunderstood,
 it understands me.
When I'm depressed,
 it picks me up.
When I'm alone,
 it offers me an inner conversation.
I'm safe here.

What songs are you listening to these days? There are plenty of songs about doubt. There are lots of songs about trusting others. Pick out one song that helps you describe exactly what you are going through right now. For a great tool, go to the appendix of this book and look at the music category chart.

Song:

Artist:

Lyrics: [Write out as much of this song as you can. Underline a key line in this song that talks about your doubts. Double underline a key line in this song that talks about the trust you really want.]



I Wish I'd Said That!

**A secret at school is as safe as a wet sugar cube
protected by an ant colony.**

Let me say that my own way. . . .

Rewrite this quotation in your own words, keeping the insight but making it your own. For example: "As soon as anyone shares a secret at my school, people swarm all over it."



Prayer

Open My Eyes

God,
people are always letting me down.
I'm doubting everyone right now.
Who can I trust?
People I know either want to control me,
or they talk about me to others.
I've been hurt by others I've tried to trust.
I'm looking for someone who is already happy,
and who wants me to be happy as well.
I know these people are nearby.
I just can't find them.
I'm looking,
but I can't see.
I need to see better so I can find the right person.
God, open my eyes!

Say this prayer several times—with or without your music—until you sense God is answering you. Don't lose that special moment. In the space below, write down whatever you realize God has just said to you during any part of this prayer. For example: "I have heard your prayer, and I want you to know there are some great people near you who can be trusted, just like I can be. I will open your eyes to see them."



A Gospel Story That Ends in a Question for You

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." And their eyes were opened. (Matthew 9:27-30)

These blind men must have had some guides helping them follow Jesus, especially when everyone got to the house. But Jesus saw their faith, and he knew his power would cure them, but he just had to be sure they really wanted this. So he asked them a crucial question, and they had the right answer. Now it's your question to answer. Have you been blind to what God wants to do for you? Doubt is a form of blindness. And trust is a form of sight. Imagine Jesus turning to you right now as he gazes on your own doubts. He speaks directly to you, and only to you, about your willingness and readiness to have your spiritual sight given to you. You just prayed for this moment. Doubt won't get this miracle done. There is only one question asked by Jesus of these two blind men. And now, this is your question to answer. He is asking you to trust him:

"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

How will you answer him? Write your response below:



Did Something Good Happen Here? Remember It!

I want to remember the following things from these experiences:

About myself:

About others:

About God:

Right now, where would you place yourself on your line between:

Doubt.....Trust

Mark your X, and compare it to your mark at the beginning of this chapter.

Did your mark move this time? In which direction?

Who or what made it move?

Who or what can stop it from moving or cause it to move backward?

How did you notice God's involvement with you during this process?

Chapter 3

From Feeling Stuck to Feeling Free to Move

Stuck Within Myself

I'm no one,
going nowhere.
They ask me, "What's up?"
I tell them, "Nothing."
They ask, "What are you doing tonight?"
"Nothing."
They ask, "What do you think?"
"I don't know."
I'm stuck within myself.
To be young without dreams is to be a sports car
without fuel.
My thoughts,
my dreams,
my feelings,
my relationships,
all paralyzed.
I can't believe,
hope,
or love.
And I don't know how to get out of this.

The Lady Who Owned Herself

The God of surprises keeps showing up in my life. On days when I seem to be feeling sorry for myself, or maybe finding myself in a whining mode, along comes one of God's secret messengers to remind me of my blessings.

Such a day happened when I was in a hotel lobby at the checkout desk. It was very early in the morning, and I was in no mood for much conversation. I handed over my hotel bill to ask about some room charges before checking out. The hotel had experienced a power outage the night before, so there were many problems with rooms, bills, and, mostly, upset guests. Each guest ahead of me complained loudly to the desk clerk. Then my turn with the clerk finally came.

I expected a fire-breathing dragoness. But, to my surprise, I encountered a woman in her early sixties with a grin on her face. And when I asked how she was doing, she said, "Great, my day is going to be fine!"

A little puzzled, I asked her why. Very simply she replied: "Because I choose it to be fine! I have had too many years of people choosing for me how things are going to go, and how I am supposed to feel. I have learned to handle my own life and my own feelings. And if by God's grace I get the chance to make their day better as well, then all the better."

I thanked her, and later I prayed for some of her wisdom. After all, I had met the lady who owned herself.

Note below the single most important thing you want to remember from this story.

