

Welcome

A Letter Just to You from the Authors

Dear Friend,

Isn't it good to have sisters of the heart? Someone to share trivial happenings with as well as the heartrending, soul-shattering moments? We hope we can be sisters to you as you delve into this book. Know that we're praying for you as you dig in and find out what you really want and how God wants you to grow.

We thought it would be good for you to know a few key things about us and our book before you dive in. Although we're in very different phases and stages of life, we've seen firsthand the power of a sister of the heart, because we've been dear friends and in business together for almost fifteen years. That power of our friendship isn't in our similarities. At the time of this publication, Lisa will be leaving her thirties and hitting the big 4-0; Rebecca will have celebrated her fifty-fifth Princess Rebecca Week (complete with tiara). Lisa is married and raising three young children, while Rebecca is a lifelong single who invests herself heavily in friends and her extended family. Different as we may be, there are common causes that unite us: we've shared giggles over idiotic, funny moments, and laughter even in the midst of our crises. We've wept together, over the phone and face down on

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Rebecca's carpet in prayer. We've challenged each other in areas where we know we can do and be better. And we've seen the power of what a friend can do, how sisters can help one another—encouraging and comforting when needed most, coaching and prodding where we can grow, and loving one another through it all.

In our own friendship, we've often talked about where we are; sometimes the exchange has been just girl talk, other times more serious. Often we've wondered: *Is it just us or do all women feel this way about certain longings and aspirations and the realities in chasing after those? Why are we always in a state of unrest, desiring something more? How do we find life and soul satisfaction this side of heaven? Who are the women who seem totally satisfied, and how can we be more like them?*

Our questions to each other turned to questions we asked other Christian women who crossed our paths: older, younger, married, single, divorced, stay-at-home moms, working mothers, new Christians, and saints rich in faith. Before we knew it, our questions turned into a national survey—not a scientific survey but one from the heart, one getting at women's real hopes and dreams, doubts, and fears. We began polling female business contacts and then e-mailing sample groupings of women across the country. *What do you want? What are you missing? What's going on in your life? Talk to us!* That survey led to this book.

We heard from women of all ages, from New Jersey to Florida, Washington to the Dakotas, and California to Canada. We even got some responses from Germany, Guam, and South Africa; and from all walks of life—single and married, parents, childless—all women who hunger for many of the same things we do.

We all seem to want...

- inspiration and insight that lead toward a solid, growing relationship with God.
- to know love, peace, and balance in life.
- to find the way to true joy, and be able to remain there.
- emotional, spiritual, and physical health.
- deep friendships.
- to have meaning and purpose.

We realized that every one of us is going to have unique hot-button topics—the things we most want to work on right now—even though hundreds of women chose the top eleven you see in this book. So for more than a year we fol-

lowed up on some of the greatest wants with e-mail questions, in conversation, and through formal interviews. We talked to some of today's leading and most respected thinkers for Christian women. Stories poured from women's hearts and minds.

We formed the book's concept, discussed the issues at length, and coauthored it for all of us as sisters. Just as our mothers and their mothers passed along woman-to-woman know-how, such as recipes or advice before marriage, we're passing along to you the ideas and thoughts in these pages as a guide to getting more out of life, to getting on track, to getting to work on areas that God is nudging each of us to attend.

Our most fervent hope is that you find encouragement to begin your work here, that the chapters you read on your hot-button topics will be catalysts toward true growth in those areas.

As you get ready to read through this guide, keep in mind a few things:

- Though both our hearts as authors are interwoven into each sentence of this entire book, Lisa took the lead in writing part 1, the main narrative sections (and hers is the "I" voice you hear), while Rebecca took the lead in writing part 2, the discussion and Bible studies.
- The unvarnished, honest comments from women in our surveys appear as subtext sprinkled throughout the chapters, though all names have been changed to protect their privacy.
- The insights in chapter 9 (since the roles and situations of mothers and wives rated high on our surveys) are aimed mostly toward women who are married or have children in proximity. If you're not married or a parent, we're convinced you'll still find the insights helpful; in particular, see the section called "Intimacy Is Not Just About Sex."
- This book is designed to be your personal guide as well as a great tool for women to use in groups. For additional icebreaker, leadership, retreat, and group-formation ideas, see our resources at WhatWomenWantBook.com.

So are you ready to face your own transparent, gut-level thoughts on what you want, where you are, and where you want to be? Are you ready to hear the unvarnished thoughts of other women on these things too?

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Details are just a page away. So get ready. Because, as we learned...

We're not done growing.

We want to heal where we hurt.

We want to shine where we're tarnished.

We want to connect, share, laugh, and squeeze the very marrow out of life.

We're willing to push to become all we're meant to be.

And we can think of no better way to realize these wants than in the company of you, our sister of the heart. Come, let's explore our lives together! This is what women do best!

Lisa Rebecca



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Some details in anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved. All names, unless specified with first and last names, of responses from interviews and surveys have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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