

I WANT  
TO TRUST  
YOU,  
*but I don't*

*Moving Forward When You're Skeptical of Others,  
Afraid of What God Will Allow,  
and Doubtful of Your Own Discernment*

LYSA TERKEURST



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*I Want to Trust You, but I Don't*

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*To Chaz: you helped me see that trust is possible. I love you.*

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Broken trust complicates every bit of the  
parts of love that should be comforting.

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# Introduction

## Fear Has the Louder Voice Right Now

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I want to trust you, but I don't.

I want to believe you have my best interests in mind, just like I do for you. I want to believe you don't have a hidden agenda, motivations that are completely self-serving, or something going on behind the scenes I would be crushed by if I knew about it.

I want to believe the good feelings I have when you are being kind to me will still feel good a month from now. A year from now. I want to believe you've told me the whole story and that I won't make discoveries later that make me cry and feel the brutal weight of regret. I want to believe I won't lie in bed sobbing over the red flags I missed or chose not to pay attention to.

I want to believe you aren't writing a narrative about me and our relationship that doesn't line up with the facts. I want to believe you have the ability to know right from wrong. I want to believe you are wise. I want to believe I can count on you. I want to believe you won't hurt me. I want to believe you won't talk behind my back. I want to believe that you are honest, good, fair, godly, kind, and accountable to do the right things and think the right things.

I want to believe your love is real and your care is genuine.

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I want to believe my relationship with you will be calm and not chaotic.

I want to believe I'll feel wise and not stupid for trusting you.

I want to believe I'll forever love to tell the story of how we met and how long we've been this close.

I want to believe I'm safe with you and that you really are my person.

I want to believe I'll be okay if I trust you.

But I'm scared.

I've been burned before. So many times before.

I fear getting this wrong.

I'm unsure.

My anxiety tells me to run. But do I build my life around anxiety?

Are these trust issues really triggers from past pain? Or are these trust issues legitimate warning signs?

I want to be okay. I want us to be okay.

But I'm afraid the risks are just too high.

My heart says I love you, but my fear says it's not safe.

And fear has the louder voice right now.

So, I want to trust you, but I don't.

And this is where I put my head down on my desk. I don't know whether to cry or to hold this angst in and stare at the wall.

I want my closest relationships to have the assurance of safety, honesty, and stability. But we don't always get what we want. We get what we get.

Is this just my experience, or is this yours too? This is the confusion that first got me thinking I needed to do some work around my busted-up trust. If you've followed my journey, I don't need to catch you up on all the events that made me feel foolish for giving people access to the most vulnerable parts of my heart. But if you haven't, let me encapsulate it for you.

Friendship breakups. Loved ones not having my back. Several

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deeply hurtful and life-altering betrayals. Lies. Gaslighting. Me feeling crazy. Me making shocking discoveries over and over. The death of my marriage. Another couple of friendship fractures. Time spent grieving. Being thankful some lost relationships could be repaired and restored. More grieving over other relationships that won't ever be the same. Wrestling with who I can trust and who I can't. Swinging the pendulum from being too trusting to being skeptical of just about everyone.

It was exhausting. But I wanted to move forward. Get on with my life. The problem was, being alone in the quietness of my house had become so much more appealing than opening my door, walking on, and trying to figure out how to trust again when mostly everyone felt unsafe. An annoying warning kept going off in my mind, like a smoke detector when the battery is low. It wasn't a full-on alarm, but the shrill chirp was not something I could just ignore either. Even as I forced myself to appear okay in front of others, the dialogue inside my head kept sounding the alarm: *Things aren't normal. People aren't good. You're risking too much trusting those who you think love you. Just when you think you are safe enough to open up a bit, they'll hurt you. They all have secrets. They all will eventually let you down, betray you. None of them can be trusted.*

Those thoughts turned into skepticism and eventually turned into an off-kilter belief system. Filtering everyone through my hurt was turning me into someone I'd never been before I was so deeply affected by having my trust broken. I felt suspicious about the real intentions of others. I started mentally filling in blanks in relational uncertainties with increasing suspicion.

Have you ever found yourself imagining all the *real* reasons your friend seemed distant the last time you saw them? Or tried to figure out the hidden agenda of family members who say one thing but you are certain mean something different? Or started making assumptions about a coworker after getting a weird feeling from them, mentally

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accusing them of what they're doing that could potentially put your job in jeopardy? Or questioned how much freedom you, as the boss, have given to an employee who is just giving you the bare minimum and can't possibly be working all the hours you are paying them for?

Sometimes, what we are sensing is spot-on and helps us know what needs to be addressed. But other times we are unnecessarily projecting things onto others that just aren't there. We don't want to get it wrong, but we also don't know what to do from here. These kinds of mental gymnastics are exhausting and make us hold back the very best of who we are for fear of getting hurt. That's exactly what was happening with me.

But it wasn't just other people causing my issues with trust to be at an all-time high. I was also questioning myself.

I was usually the one who believed the best about everyone and thought they had my best intentions at heart. It used to be easy to trust people. And in the few situations when I felt scared or not as sure of that trust, I calmed myself down by noting my own keen discernment. I was confident I would be able to detect if something were going sideways.

But then, after years of correctly sizing up situations, when I started getting hit with my own shocking discoveries, I was stunned by how much I'd missed—how many times I had given people the benefit of the doubt when I shouldn't have. What happened to my ability to sense when something was wrong?

Now I wasn't sure I could trust my discernment, which I'd always viewed as such a sweet gift from God. And I even started doubting I could fully trust God. I stopped having the passion I'd once had to read my Bible, go to church, or listen to worship music. I secretly questioned how a good God could see what was going on behind my back and not do anything to either stop it or help me find out before it got as bad as it did.

I don't want to admit this, but I felt betrayed by God. He had allowed so many things I didn't understand. In my mind, so much

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hurt could have been avoided if only He had intervened in ways that I assumed a good God would. And most confusing of all, my suffering felt never-ending while the people who hurt me continued to make choices that didn't honor God, yet seemed to be carrying on just fine.

All my skepticism and doubt about the people in my life, about my own discernment, and about God was turning me into someone I didn't even recognize. Someone I didn't want to be. I didn't want to give up on all relationships, but I also didn't know how to keep trying, knowing I may get hurt again. Trust just felt like a fool's game with way too much risk.

But life kind of requires us to be trusting.

When my daughter had her son, a wise nurse told us, "Trust is the oxygen of all human relationships." A relationship without trust is a relationship without vulnerability and depth. A relationship without trust is void of the kind of love we were meant to give and receive. A relationship without trust is one with very little vibrancy and eventually no life at all.

I'm not just talking about romantic love. I'm talking about all relationships where we want a deep connection that is both safe and lasting. When I feel that kind of warmth with a close friend or loved one, that's home to me. It's a haven that makes me think of what heaven will one day be like.

Remember in Genesis 2:25, "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." The lack of shame referred to in this verse means they were sinless and unbroken. They saw each other in their naked form and fully accepted the gift of each other with no fear. But on this side of eternity, sin has caused that kind of innocence and purity to be tainted. So what do we do?

What happens to a girl who feels forced to trust when she just simply can't? And what happens to a Bible teacher others expect to be unwavering but who feels overwhelmed with confusion about God, others, and herself?

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The process of wading through all of this can feel like trying to run through quicksand. When I was in the middle of it, I couldn't just stop; otherwise I would sink and drown in all that hurt. But every step I tried to take to keep going forward took unusual effort, with a heaviness I couldn't get off me. I wanted to get through all of this quickly, but the pain made me hyperaware of every move. I felt forced to be in slow motion while everyone else was zipping past me at normal speed.

The shock of broken trust makes life feel painfully slow and uncomfortably fast at the same time. The disbelief that this is your reality makes everything grind to a halt. But the reality of jobs and bills and kids who need a ride to school all feels unrealistically normal, and normal feels too fast for a brain that can't process what's happening.

I want to fully acknowledge how difficult all of this has been on your heart and mine. I want to leave space for raw emotion that can so easily come to the surface when talking about events you may be still processing. But, mostly, I want to gently pass along something I've learned that I want you to hang on to as we keep turning these pages.

The trauma of having your trust broken by people you thought would never betray you is life altering. But it doesn't have to be life ruining.

That's why I wrote this book. I have walked the road of hurting and healing for years. There has been lots of counseling. Lots of internal work. Lots of praying and seeking. Lots of perspective shifts and healing. New hope. New discoveries. And finding a life that's so different from what I thought my future would look like. But finally realizing different can be wildly beautiful.

Now I'm walking forward in ways I never thought possible. And you can too. I want to hold your hand as we explore what's happened to us and how it affected not only our emotions but also our brains and central nervous systems.

The trauma of having your  
trust broken by people you  
thought would never betray

you is *life altering*.

But it doesn't have  
to be *life ruining*.

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Yes, the damage of emotional hurt really does go much further than we think. And if you have people in your life who have minimized your pain or who don't understand how serious betrayals and broken trust really are, I want you to know, it's not that you're being too dramatic or overly emotional as you process all of this. The damage is real. I'm not just talking in theory here. I've seen what relationship dysfunction and trauma can do.

As crazy as this might sound, I had my brain scanned.

I went through a battery of tests and then several scans, because I wanted to know the facts. More than just feeling the impact of what I've walked through, I wanted to see it. I wanted to stare at the results with a doctor who studies this. And I wanted him to tell me what he saw and what story my brain scan was telling him. I wanted the truth.

Once I had my scans done, I sat down with Dr. Daniel Amen, a physician and psychiatrist specializing in brain health. Together, we compared my brain scans with the scans of a perfectly healthy brain. It was really telling to both of us that, as a result of experiences I've had, I now show clear evidence of what's called "the trauma diamond."

Dr. Amen has done studies of trauma survivors and found their SPECT (single-photon emission computed tomography) brain "scans show significantly increased activity in the limbic, or emotional, areas in a pattern that looks like a diamond."<sup>1</sup> As I sat there with him, looking at evidence of how all I've experienced in my life has impacted me, I felt, for the first time, I could use the words *emotional abuse* without flinching.

Here's the reality of how the affected areas of my brain have changed the way I process life and relationships:

- "Anterior cingulate gyrus: This region is the brain's gear shifter and helps you go from one thought to another. Too much activity here is associated with a fixation on negative thoughts or behaviors.

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- Basal ganglia and amygdala: These are the brain's anxiety and fear centers, and overactivity is linked to heightened anxiousness and predicting the worst.
- Thalamus: The thalamus acts as a sort of relay station for the brain, and increased activity in this region heightens sensory awareness.
- In some people, the right lateral temporal lobe is also overactive. This area of the brain is involved in reading the intentions of other people. When activity here is excessive, people can misread cues from others."<sup>2</sup>

So the shift in how we process life situations and relationships after trauma is more than just our emotional reactions; it's a change that happens physically in our brains. The more I learn about the physical side of what happens to us when we are betrayed, the more it makes sense to me that so many of us have issues with trust. And that's not a bad thing we should be ashamed of. Nor is it a label we should put on ourselves—"Well, you know, I have trust issues"—like it's a disease or a diagnosis we can't ever heal from.

As a matter of fact, that day Dr. Amen showed me that the work I've done and continue to do is actually helping to heal my brain.<sup>3</sup> The counseling, Bible study, EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing; a type of mental health therapy to help "alleviate the distress associated with traumatic memories"<sup>4</sup>), and taking better care of my brain through supplements and a healthier lifestyle is working. I remember my counselor once saying to me, "We have more hope and help than you have problems." I now see that he was right. And I want to share that hope and help with you. So, I pray this book will be a significant and important part of your healing process.

Having trust issues makes so much more sense when we have some of these facts.

I also want to bring to light that the anxiety often accompanying

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our fears around trust may be trying to serve us, not hinder us. Though we want to keep it in check and not let our anxiety spiral out of control, we should also know God designed our bodies to detect when situations or people are not safe. Think about the natural instinct of an animal when it senses danger. Though we are different from animals, Job 12:7–13 tells us that God designed us with the same creative brilliance to use our senses and discernment to pick up on danger.

The increased anxiety we experience when we are unsure about trusting others doesn't mean we are broken. But we do need to learn how to bring these feelings back to a healthy level so we can have better discernment and more clarity.

You've got questions about this, and I do too.

*Can I rebuild trust with the person who hurt me? Or is distrust the wisest choice here?*

*Can I discern if someone is really being honest?*

*Can I still trust God?*

These are good questions that deserve to be explored. I can't promise you that I'll have all the answers you need. But I've learned so much that I wanted to invite you into my journey, to share the transferable wisdom I've gained, the tools that have been helpful, the setbacks, the victories, and the deepest wrestling I've ever done with questions about myself, others, and even God.

The subtitle of this book is exactly what I feel passionate about for both of us: *Moving Forward When You're Skeptical of Others, Afraid of What God Will Allow, and Doubtful of Your Own Discernment.*

I understand the fear of trying again. I know the heartbreak of having to let go of some relationships with people I shouldn't trust. I know the hesitancy in trying to repair some relationships to see if trust can be given again. And I know the resistance to meet new people and explore if, how, and when you can trust them.

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But I also know the joy of moving into new seasons. I know the thrill of feeling safe enough to connect deeply with people who are trustworthy. I know how much courage it will take to keep walking into a future full of possibilities.

And I promise you the risks are worth taking.

Now, let's go learn a thing or two about trust.

### **One More Thing I Want You to Know**

Okay, so usually this section after each chapter is to give you a little deeper research or insight into that chapter. But since this is the introduction and I'm feeling a little protective over you, I have something I want you to know in case this has ever happened to you: no one has any business labeling others with "trust issues" when we *all* have them.

I have to get this off my chest, because when someone says another person has "trust issues" like it's a bad smell that person puts off, I believe they are announcing their own lack of awareness and compassion. If I'm honest, one of the reasons I didn't want to admit I had trust issues was because that term has been used against me.

Here's the truth: if someone is struggling to trust, chances are there's a reason. Whether they can recall the exact reason or not, they've had an experience that has made them recoil in angst and pain. Of course they are hesitant or possibly resistant to trusting people, especially those who have hurt them or who remind them of someone they trusted and got burned by. It makes sense that they are skeptical of other people's intentions. And of course they analyze

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people with a heightened awareness of the irresponsible and cruel ways humans sometimes act.

Sometimes distrust is the most appropriate response there is.

I think that's been true of a lot of the distrust in my life that makes me uncomfortable, hesitant, and sometimes resistant to engage with certain people. My issue with trusting those people may honestly be a sign of wisdom, not weakness. And my tendency to overanalyze their words and actions, or even a feeling I get when I'm around them, may actually be an exercise of discernment, not deficiency.

Other times, I have trust issues that are more of an indication of past traumas I still need to work on than of the person in front of me doing anything deceitful. Or I have trust issues because I don't want to risk people getting close enough to hurt me like I've been hurt before. There are many reasons we can find ourselves grappling with trust, reasons that are sometimes good and sometimes not so good.

Here's a crucial thing to remember: not one of us gets to live this life unmarked by hurt. So not one of us gets to live this life without trust issues. Maybe that makes you feel comforted. Maybe that makes you feel unnerved. This will be a tension to manage, not a problem to solve. As humans, we are made for connection. But connection always comes with risk. But having the right tools to better navigate this is what so many of us have been missing in order to move forward. Feeling understood in our hurt and learning how to use these tools in a safe atmosphere of hope and healing is where we are headed in these pages. It's good to know we are in this together.

As humans, we are  
made for *connection*.

But connection  
always comes  
with *risk*.

**Remember (Statements to Cling To):**

- The trauma of having your trust broken by people you thought would never betray you is life altering. But it doesn't have to be life ruining.
- God designed our bodies to detect when situations or people are not safe.
- Sometimes distrust is the most appropriate response there is.
- As humans, we are made for connection. But connection always comes with risk.

**Receive (Scriptures to Soak In):**

“The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.” (Isaiah 58:11)

“Does not the ear test words  
as the tongue tastes food?  
Is not wisdom found among the aged?  
Does not long life bring understanding?”  
(Job 12:11–12)

**Reflect (Questions to Think Through):**

- When you think of the word *trust*, what are some situations, good or bad, that instantly come to mind?

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- How have you experienced having your trust broken by people you thought would never betray you? What impact has this had on your life?

### **Pray:**

*Heavenly Father,*

*Thank You for leading me here. I ask for Your help, guidance, and wisdom. As I move forward and process the ways I've had my trust broken, I know You are with me to help me walk this road toward healing. Thank You for being right beside me and for being a trustworthy Father.*

*In Jesus' name, amen.*





## Chapter One

# Quietly Quitting on Hope

•

If you and I were sitting together talking today, just us, it wouldn't be long before I'd want the conversation to go beyond the initial awkwardness of pleasantries and dive into the deep places. And the topic I'd want to get to is the way we sometimes quietly quit on hope. I bet we both have reasons for wanting to quit, especially when we've hoped for something for so long that now it's starting to make us feel foolish. It's brutal to hope for this thing that, in your mind, makes so much sense. So why isn't our good God making it happen?

Your soul can feel a bit rubbed raw from opening yourself up to the possibility of "it" happening. You grip tightly onto the confirmations that seem to point in the direction of your prayers being answered. Like in a game of tug-of-war, you give it your all to hang on. Then, the resistance finally seems to lessen, the rope starts getting pulled in the right direction toward you, and you smile so big, knowing the moment is finally close . . . but then suddenly the rope is yanked by the opposition and you fall flat on your face. Your blistered hands and your exhausted soul sting as the hope you were clinging

## I WANT TO TRUST YOU, BUT I DON'T

to is ripped away. The tighter you were holding on, the worse it hurts when it's pulled away.

To manage the disappointment, you may say things like:

"It's just better if I reduce my desire for this down to a zero."

"Maybe it's not meant to be, and I'm good with that."

"I'm actually okay being alone, because I just don't have it in me to make a new friend."

"I just don't care about this any longer."

"I must not be built for this."

"I made some really foolish decisions in the past, so I don't deserve what I've been praying for."

But then you cringe inside, because you know you're saying something with your mouth that your heart desperately disagrees with. But what choice do you have? You have cried out to God more times than you can count, yet nothing seems to be coming through. His silence is deafening. The results are shocking. The betrayal is crushing. The outcome is so disappointing. The way you were treated is maddening. The tears you cry in the darkness of night seem never-ending. Another "no" is disillusioning.

You really believed this friendship would be lifelong.

You really believed you would be healed.

You really believed he would come back.

You really believed you'd get pregnant.

You really believed your parents would eventually be proud of you.

You really believed your child would be okay.

You really believed you would meet the man of your dreams.

You really believed this company had your best interests in mind.

## QUIETLY QUITTING ON HOPE

You really believed this leader cared about you and this was a safe place to plant deep roots.

You really believed God's answer would line up with what you prayed for.

So, quitting on hope seems like the only reasonable choice to make at this point. After all, hope is the most brutal risk of all.

I get it.

For me, hope is either the most beautiful feeling of possibility or the worst feeling of defeat. To dare to hope is to simultaneously expose our greatest desires and our greatest fears. But if we're not willing to risk hoping, then we are already quietly quitting on a better future. The hardships of today will feel so much heavier when we limit our view of life to the hardships of right now. We will trade dreaming for dread. We will exchange looking forward with joy for looking backward with sorrow. We will swap the anticipation of future possibilities for the angst of staying stuck in the pain of what happened.

When we quit on hope, we will become blind to the evidence of God's goodness all around us. And if we lose sight of God's goodness, trusting Him will feel foolish. It's difficult to keep trusting God and other people when we feel they constantly let us down and don't come through for us.

Sometimes we need new perspectives to start to believe trust is possible. That God is still good. And that there are still good people out there. But that's really hard to hear when your life doesn't look like you thought it would and relationships aren't playing out like you hoped.

You've received enough hurt and bad news. It's high time to now receive some hope. Instead of filling our thoughts today with all the worst-case scenarios we fear, I want to challenge us to stop and say, *But what if it does all work out?* Now pause and let that new question have some space in your thoughts. I can make the choice to stop

To dare to hope is to  
simultaneously expose  
our greatest *desires*  
and our greatest *fears*.

feeding the anxiety and instead start fueling hope by recounting the many everyday moments where God *has* come through for me and where things *did* work out. For example, “I made it to work safely this morning,” “That bill did get paid,” “My child passed that test,” “My body was healthy enough to do all that I did today,” and so on. Just because these are small things that didn’t hit my radar doesn’t mean they are insignificant things. They are all evidence that more times than not, things really do work out okay, and that fuels my hope for today. Again, this isn’t denying there are still hard things happening, but remembering all that *is* working out will help bring balance to our thoughts. I find great comfort in the truth of Ecclesiastes 7:14: “When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future.”

While we may not know the exact details of the future, we can trust and hope in a good God who does (Romans 15:13). When we start to feel hopeful again, we can start believing our future still contains good possibilities. Believing there is good ahead of you will give you the courage to try to trust again. And I want to make sure, as you dip your toes into this journey back to healthy trust, that you are equipped with the right tools to help this process not feel so daunting, scary, and impossible.

Having the right tools is crucial. And that’s why we’ll spend the rest of this book learning to use new tools I’ll share with you. But it’s not just about having tools; it’s also about having the confidence to use them.

I saw this play out a few years ago when I was getting ready to speak at a church conference. I was sitting backstage, feeling the usual pre-message jitters, when the event coordinator asked if I would wear an oblong plastic device hooked to my shirt. Thinking this was a modern version of a lapel microphone, I explained that I was just using a handheld mic, so there was no need for a clip-on.

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An anxious look crossed her face. She went on to explain there was a woman in the audience who had asked if I would wear this as a special favor so she could better hear my message. I wanted to do this for the audience member, no question. But not really understanding the situation, I grew concerned. I didn't want my blouse to droop in places that would make me hyperconscious, and there didn't seem to be any inconspicuous way to wear the new device. Trust me, I've been in many embarrassing situations while standing onstage, and I try to avoid adding any more stories like these to my life.

Thinking of other possible solutions, I went to find the sound guy. I asked him if I could clip the device onto the podium or my Bible as long as I stayed close enough for it to still properly work. That's when I was given more explanation. For forty-five years, the lady in the audience had never been able to hear a sermon being preached. She'd actually never even heard a prayer being prayed. Her doctor had been working on this special device that would send the specially magnified sound of my voice directly into her hearing aids, allowing her to listen as never before. Me wearing this clip wasn't just a special favor. This was an epic event in this woman's life.

Now that I'd heard the whole story, I felt like such a heel for worrying about my shirt. I clipped the device directly below my chin and suddenly couldn't have cared less about the shirt droop. I walked onstage and immediately asked my new friend if she could hear me. With blinking eyes and a huge smile, she nodded. Several times during my message, she had tears streaming down her face. So did her friend who was with her. By the time I concluded with a prayer, I knew this was an incredible victory for her lifelong struggle.

It's amazing what a gift it is to be able to hear. I guarantee you, of all the hundreds of people in the audience that day, there was no one listening with more intentionality than my friend with the device. She knew she needed help to hear. The device filled a gap she couldn't fill on her own. Once she made use of it, she was able to listen . . . really listen.<sup>5</sup>

## QUIETLY QUITTING ON HOPE

Most of us don't have the same hearing challenges this sweet woman has. But the way trust has been broken or eroded in some important relationships has been painful and confusing, and it has diminished our hope down to the faintest of whispers. Honestly, at times, hope is completely blocked all together. I want the voice of hope to break through, and I want this book to be the device that helps us hear it loud and clear.

Why is it important to reignite our hope as we seek to work on trust issues? Because without hope that things can get better, we'll just stay stuck. We'll let the pain of what has happened to us negatively impact us to the point where we no longer want to open up our hearts and be fully alive in other relationships. We aren't made to live in fear of getting hurt and hesitant for connection. We aren't made to let skepticism be our primary filter through which we see God and others. We aren't made to constantly doubt ourselves and feel we can't even trust our own discernment.

We were made to love and to be loved. We were made to embrace others. We were made to be wise and discerning. We were made to live with assurance of God's faithfulness. We were made to hope and rise back up with resilience. We were made to be fully alive. So, let's go figure out what to do with our busted-up trust.

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*We aren't made to let skepticism be our primary filter through which we see God and others.*

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## **One More Thing I Want You to Know**

Throughout this book, I want us to use compassionate processing. Sometimes you'll come across some sentences or paragraphs that feel too much for the most tender parts of your heart. Other times, you may be tempted to personalize and turn the information against yourself, wishing you had chosen more wisely with certain relationships. Or something will require you to be honest about things that for years you have pretended are better than they are. All of this has been true of me walking through this message for myself.

I had to learn to be gentle with myself. That doesn't mean I don't acknowledge things I need to do better or develop in, but it does mean I won't beat myself up for things that happened in the past. We can't change what happened then, but we can change what happens from here on out. As we learn, grow, and gain new insights, we will be gentle with where we still feel fragile and at the same time be brave with taking steps forward.

Here's a list of compassionate statements we can say out loud to ourselves and revisit when necessary.

- \* I'm going to be honest with myself and stay committed to reality throughout this process. I won't sugarcoat or make things look better than they are.
- \* I will not take responsibility for or try to fix other people. I will own only what is mine to own.
- \* I will be compassionate toward myself, realizing that when you know better, you do better. The fact that I picked up this book shows I want to know better so that I can do better.

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- \* Instead of shaming myself for not picking up on the red flags in previous relationships sooner, I'm going to choose to feel appropriately convicted to make better choices in the future. I'm not going to believe the lie that it's too late to change.
- \* I will acknowledge I'm a victim of hurt, but I'm not going to live as a victim. I am now going to be empowered to take charge of my own healing.
- \* I still believe there's a beautiful world with wonderful people to connect with, to laugh with, to dance with, to explore with, to live with, and to have purpose and make a difference with.
- \* I am now willing to learn how to trust my own discernment again, how to appropriately trust the right people, and how to trust God even when I don't understand what He's doing.

This kind of compassionate processing has given me the freedom to acknowledge what I can work on without beating myself up for trust mistakes I've made in the past. And it's also given me the courage to see myself as someone who will rise up and keep going.

### **Remember:**

- To dare to hope is to simultaneously open up to our greatest desires and our greatest fears.
- When we quit on hope, we will become blind to the evidence of God's goodness all around us.
- Hope is the most brutal risk of all.
- We aren't made to let skepticism be our primary filter through which we see God and others.

## I WANT TO TRUST YOU, BUT I DON'T

### **Receive:**

“When times are good, be happy;  
but when times are bad, consider this:  
God has made the one  
as well as the other.  
Therefore, no one can discover  
anything about their future.”  
(Ecclesiastes 7:14)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

### **Reflect:**

- What are some of the statements you commonly say to yourself and others to help manage your disappointment? (*See the list at the beginning of the chapter.*)
- What life circumstances have tempted you to want to quit on being hopeful?
- Which one of the compassionate statements in the “One More Thing I Want You to Know” section resonates with you the most and why?

### **Pray:**

Lord,

*I want to keep hope at the forefront of my mind in the days ahead. Help me give myself grace and accept Your grace as I learn and grow in this area of trust in my relationships. I'm*

## QUIETLY QUITTING ON HOPE

*feeling fragile, yet brave, in this process. Steady me and continue to speak life into my weary soul as I work through this message and apply it to my life.*

*In Jesus' name, amen.*