



Chapter 1



# Quietly Quitting on Hope

**M**oving forward in trusting others, God, and yourself is brave. It's the opposite of staying stuck, giving up, and quitting on hope.

Not to say you should feel bad for the moments you've done that or that you won't suddenly hit a place where you feel stuck again. That's normal. In fact, you might feel some resistance while you journal. That, too, is normal. You can pause if you need to, but don't let it stop you altogether. Keep moving forward in your healing journey.

I'm not sure which season you're in as you journal, but I'm in the Christmas season as I write.

One of my favorite things is to sit in a room lit only by the twinkly lights of my Christmas tree. I mean, really, can we just leave the tree up all year?

In this room filled with the glow of twinkly lights, I open my Christmas devotional

where I read the familiar verses of Luke 1. These verses, however, were never meant to be just for Christmas. They are promises of hope all year long.

These are words from the familiar verses in Luke:

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason also the holy Child will be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth herself has conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called infertile is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, the Lord’s bond-servant; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:34–38 NASB)

In these words I found a beautiful treasure for us:

“For nothing will be impossible with God.”

In all this moving forward on a new path of trust, it’s not all up to us. We walk with God where nothing is impossible. Circumstances may not work out like we hope and pray, but that isn’t an indication that the outcome was impossible for God. It means He’s making another plan possible because He sees and knows things we don’t. And from His unchanging goodness, He is leading elsewhere.

I don’t know what you’ve been through and how deeply you’ve been hurt, but I do know that just because your trust has been broken, this doesn’t mean your joy has been stolen. My hope is that by the end of this journal you will be filled with more hope, joy, contentment, and peace than you could imagine.

Just as there will be glimmers of hope, there will be glimmers of joy and gladness as you move forward. Some will be because of sweet assurances and revelations from the Lord. Other glimmers of joy will be because as you come out from the fog of pain, you’ll start to notice simple joys again. He is providing those for you through a child’s laughter, a sunrise with exquisite colors, twinkly lights on a tree, an unexpected blessing that comes your way, or a sweet note from a friend.

Remember, you didn’t choose what happened when others broke your trust. But you do get to choose how you look at your life today. You get to choose to intentionally put things in your life that remind you of the goodness of God, and things that remind you to

look for glimmers of joy and gladness. You don’t have to quit on hope; you get to believe that with God, all things are possible.

For me, I just might leave my Christmas tree up longer this year. I mean, since it’s not a real tree, I could keep redecorating it for every holiday that comes after Christmas. Too much? Maybe so. But I love that I get to choose that if I want to!

## Guided Journaling

1. In this journal, we are going to do quite a bit of exploration. But here’s what I want us to declare right from the beginning:

I’m giving myself permission to do *compassionate* investigation and exploration. I don’t want to use this journal as a place to further compound the hurt in me, nor do I want to compound bitterness because of the hurt done to me. I want to use this journal as a safe place to be honest with myself and with God for the purpose of learning, growing, changing what I can, and accepting the realities that are beyond my ability to change. There’s been enough turmoil. Now I’m on a journey toward the peace Jesus promised could be mine even when the world around me isn’t always peaceful.

Take that declaration and write it below or on a separate piece of paper. Feel free to change some of the words to better fit your journey toward healing and peace.

---



---



---



---



---









## Take Action

When we begin to heal from the hurt of broken trust, we'll feel all kinds of things—mad, bitter, sad, hopeless. Sometimes our feelings are directed at the person who betrayed us. (And we'll do some exercises about that later.) However, we can also be hard on ourselves.

We fill ourselves with the weight of regret with statements like:

Why did I . . .                      I should have . . .                      I can't believe I . . .  
 Why didn't I . . .                      I shouldn't have . . .

An effective tool for healing from broken trust is to write a letter to yourself. You can write in your journal or on separate pieces of paper.

You might want to use the above prompts to express some of that regret. Then move into writing to yourself with compassion. If that's hard to do, imagine you're writing to a friend. What would you say to her? Sometimes we are so much kinder to others than we are to ourselves, right? But remember, this needs to be a letter to *you*.

In addition to the above prompts, these questions and statements might help you write the letter to yourself.

- What are you afraid of when it comes to hope and trust?
- “When you know better, you do better.” How does this statement help you move forward?
- “I did the best I could at the time.” Is this a helpful statement for letting go of regrets?
- How can I avoid victim mentality?
- How can I make sure not to shame myself?
- Who can I trust and share with in my healing journey?
- By the end of my processing through *The Trust Journey*, I want to be . . .

Did writing this letter give you a new perspective? What insights were revealed?

## Scripture

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Trust in him at all times, you people;  
 pour out your hearts to him,  
 for God is our refuge.

PSALM 62:8

He will lead you in the way that you should go.  
 When you feel dried up and worthless,

God will nourish you and give you strength.

And you will grow like a garden lovingly tended;  
 you will be like a spring whose water never runs out.

ISAIAH 58:11 VOICE

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

## Playlist

- “Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor,” Matt Boswell
- “God Is in This Story,” Katy Nichole and Big Daddy Weave
- “If I Could Have Anything,” Housefires, featuring Blake Wiggins and Ahjah Walls

## Guided Prayer

---

Heavenly Father, as I journal, You know where I am with my feelings and thoughts about hope. You know where I've quit. Where I've gotten stuck sometimes on anger or bitterness about the way things are. Forgive me for that and help me to trust those things to You. Even with disappointments and discouragements, help me not to quit on hope. I'm looking forward to seeing how Your tender love helps me to heal and to grow in hope and trust. I want to keep moving forward with You, amen.

*Hope is either the most beautiful feeling of possibility or the worst feeling of defeat. To dare to hope is to simultaneously open up our greatest desires and our greatest fears.*





## Chapter 2

# What Is This Feeling: Discernment or a Trigger?

*A* text from someone I hadn't been in contact with for a long time caught me off guard. Although I no longer thought too often about the hurt she'd caused me, this text led me to rehash our last encounter many years before.

It had been such an emotional and damaging conversation. As I remembered it now, the shock of her breach of trust made my heart beat faster; my breath grew shorter, and

tears filled my eyes. There had been a few half-hearted attempts to heal our relationship. But it had been a huge betrayal, one I never could have imagined. I had decided the safest place for me was to have zero contact.

But now I sat with the text, remembering how close we'd been and wishing that hard thing hadn't come between us.

Her out-of-the-blue text came with apologies. I was immediately suspicious. What made her reach out now after so long? What was her motive? What did she want from me? I turned these thoughts over and over. What if I opened the door and responded, and if instead of apologies the conversation became angry and she lashed out? She could be so unpredictable. But what if something was going on with her that was really big? Would I regret not having contact? And what if we could actually have a friendship again?

And beyond all my fears, what did God want me to do? I'd processed all this with Him, I was sure I'd forgiven her, and I knew that forgiveness didn't always mean reconciliation. Maybe now was a time when I should reconsider.

Was I overreacting? Was the swirl of emotions I felt from this text just a trigger from the past, or was it discernment warning me this still wasn't a safe relationship?

I didn't know what to do. I got so stuck on the "what is the right thing to do?" question that I almost made myself sick. But then I realized that the decision was just that—a decision that I would pray about and then was mine to make. There wasn't necessarily a right or wrong decision here. So I decided that writing down each choice I could possibly make in response would help me get unstuck. And then I would also respond to these questions: What thoughts does that decision lead me to have? How does that decision make me feel?

- I could do nothing. That's what I'd been choosing to do for years, and it was a decision that I could live with, even though it still sometimes made me sad.
- I could respond with a text asking for more information. "Thank you for your apology. It's been a long time, so I was surprised to see your text. What made you decide to reach out now?" This made me think, *We'll see*. I wouldn't know what I thought or felt until I got a response. Mostly I felt guarded.
- I could say, "Thank you for the apology. Do you want to have a phone conversation?" This choice made my heart pound and made me recoil as I remembered how she'd hurled so many hurts my way. I decided I was not in a

place to have a phone conversation. That felt too scary and unpredictable. I didn't want to undo the peace and stability I'd worked hard to establish.

So I texted, "Thank you for your apology. It's been a long time, so I was surprised to see your text. What made you decide to reach out now?"

The text I got back helped me clear up whether my hesitancy in responding was a trigger from what happened in the past or present-day discernment. She immediately texted: "Why do you care about my timing? Why can't you just accept my apology?"

And I had my answer. That was not the reply I'd hoped for, but it revealed what I needed to see. It confirmed that I was discerning to be cautious for good reason.

I am wiser now. And based on a few other unsolicited follow-up texts from her, it was clear it was not wise to continue to open that door. It was not a safe place to reengage. I knew that exploring more with her would damage my heart and potentially derail me emotionally. My reengagement would not help the relationship to suddenly be healthy and could potentially pull me into having reactions that didn't reflect the health I'd worked so hard to pursue.

This boundary of not engaging in texts that are hostile, based on past experiences with her, was one I needed. This boundary was one I could live with. This boundary was one that helped me have healthier relationships now.

Wouldn't it be so much easier if relationships came with "How do I do this?" directions? That would make messy relationships so much easier to figure out. While we don't have clear-cut directions in relationships, we do have tools that we gain through reflection, prayer, and experiential wisdom. In this chapter about triggers and discernment, I hope your journaling will equip you with more tools and awareness you can use to make decisions about relationships like this.

## Guided Journaling

1. In this chapter I describe a situation where I got triggered and describe all the confusion and fear that welled up inside of me. It was as if I couldn't tell the difference











