

Each Day a New Beginning

Daily Meditations for Women Karen Casey

Introduction

For years I struggled to believe in my worth, my capabilities, my strength. And on many occasions I failed to meet the test. Because I didn't understand the source of all strength and goodness, I turned to men first and then to alcohol and drugs. I expected to find my security but found instead an even deeper level of despair. And then, seven years ago, I found Al-Anon which nudged open the door to a new way of life. A year later I found A.A. and the door swung wide.

The program has given me roots where none existed before. It has given me courage to dare to do that which I shuddered before in years gone by. It has given me a sense of belonging to the human race. I no longer feel that I'm outside of the fish bowl looking in.

And the additional and very fortunate gift which has accompanied my program involvement is friendship with women. For years I had been leery of women, assuming they were after my boyfriends, husband and lovers. I was always quite certain that women were not to be trusted. Coming together with women in meetings, hearing how much alike we all are, eased my anxieties. But more importantly, it offered me the opportunity to love women as sisters, as equal travelers on our parallel spiritual journeys.

From so many women these last few years I've received "just the message I needed at the time." The more I've learned to turn in a woman's direction as she speaks, the greater my desire has grown to "hear" what women in all walks of life, all experiences, all times in history have said. Thus, it seemed only fitting when I wrote this book to let the wise words of many women, close at hand and far away, some recovering, some still suffering, some free from any particular struggles but who struggled nonetheless, set the tone for a book that speaks to us all. I've taken the liberty to quote from women who represent the full spectrum of womanhood, believing that much spoken by any one of us is sacred, meaningful and necessary to the fuller development of at least one person someplace in time.

I wrote the meditations to complement the quote chosen for each day. So often I've needed to hear "the right message" in order to move forward when inside I was all a jitter—something to center on which could invite the Spirit within to take charge for me. I hope these meditations may bridge whatever gap exists, on any one day in your life, between you and your Spirit. Their sole intent is to make life easier for you; to give you hope when all seems lost. Please accept each day's meditation as an offering of my hand to you. I've learned that when we travel together, nothing is too great for us to bear. And each day can be a new beginning.

I want to offer my thanks to all women for making this book possible. The efforts of the women all around me to live, to survive, to succeed, gave me strength to push ahead one day at a time.

I offer a special thanks to a woman friend and excellent editor who smoothed the rough spots so these words could touch your life in a more certain way. To my family, friends and spouse I say thanks for being patient when my writing took precedence over all else. My need was great to write a book that I believed was needed by my sister travelers on this journey we share.

—the author

Each Day a New Beginning

January 1

We don't always understand the ways of Almighty God—the crosses sent us, the sacrifices demanded . . . But we accept with faith and resignation the holy will with no looking back, and we are at peace.

—Anonymous

Acceptance of our past, acceptance of the conditions presently in our lives that we cannot change, brings relief. It brings the peacefulness we so often, so frantically, seek.

We can put the past behind us. Each day is a new beginning. And each day of abstinence offers us the chance to look ahead with hope. A power greater than ourselves helped us to find this program. That power is ever with us. When we fear facing new situations, or when familiar situations turn sour, we can look to that power for help in saying what needs to be said and for doing what needs to be done. Our higher power is as close as our breath. Conscious awareness of its presence strengthens us, moment by moment.

The past is gone. Today is full of possibilities. With each breath I will be aware of the strength at hand.

January 2

I believe that true identity is found . . . in creative activity springing from within. It is found, paradoxically, when one loses oneself. Woman can best refind herself by losing herself in some kind of creative activity of her own.

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Creative activity might mean bird watching, tennis, quilting, cooking, painting, writing. Creative activity immerses us fully in the here and now, and at the same time it frees us. We become one with the activity and are nourished by it. We grow as the activity grows. We learn who we are in the very process of *not thinking about* who we are.

Spirituality and creativity are akin. There is an exhilaration rooted deep within us that is a lifeline to God. Creative activity releases the exhilaration, and the energy goes through us and out to others. We find ourselves and our higher power through the loss of our self-conscious selves while creating—a picture, a sentence, a special meal.

Creativity is a given. It is another dimension of the spiritual presence guiding us all. I'll get out of its way today.

January 3

Like an old gold-panning prospector, you must resign yourself to digging up a lot of sand from which you will later patiently wash out a few minute particles of gold ore.

—Dorothy Bryant

Sometimes we feel buried in sand, blocked, clogged, unable to move. Then we must remember that we are not alone. Help is at hand, if only we will ask for it. If we invoke our higher power, our source of spiritual strength can help us to believe that there is gold somewhere in all this sand, and that the sand itself is useful.

No one and no thing is good all the time. Let us remember that if we expect nothing but gold, we are distorting life, getting in our own way. We don't want to falsify the texture of our lives; the homespun quality helps us to appreciate the gold when it appears.

I will find some gold among the sand, today.