
Gems of Delight

seasonal inspiration for moms
to heal the hurry and
embrace what is sacred

LISA MCCROHAN

Introduction



The Hand of the Beloved



My Darling,
how is it that you search for Me like
a poor beggar on hands and knees, frantically
scrounging the dirt floor for food?
My Dear Heart, if you wish, I can continue
to beg and scrounge alongside you, and
we can keep bruising our hands and knees,
never really filling our bellies on the scraps
this world happens to toss our way.
But wouldn't it be easier
and a lot less on our hands and knees and hearts
to take the hand of the Beloved who
has always been holding such sweet
nourishing delights to
your parched lips?
Come, let's rest for a while.
Let's go outside and
lay under the vast moonlit night.



It's Mother's Day. We've had a full day of handmade gifts from my children and visiting my parents. We've also had squabbles, tiredness, and misunderstandings. We're on the highway returning home and I'm noticing how "quietly whole" I feel. Though nothing is perfect, I'm okay with that. Gentleness has taken root in me. I realize that life is both messy and miraculous. Sitting in the car – stuck in traffic, looking at my husband, looking at my children – I notice it: I'm not scrounging anymore.

When I became a mother, I scrounged for control. I scrounged for connection in a harsh and disconnected world. I scrounged to feel like I was enough.

A move to a new town, a tough pregnancy, a long labor that ended in a Cesarean section, and the shock of healing while caring for a newborn almost broke me. But I carried on. Then finally one day, while pushing my son in the stroller uphill in the cold and rain, alone, and utterly exhausted, I broke.

The cold wind and rain pelted my face while baby slept and I wept. My cries were uncontrollable. A neighbor drove past and later said I was crazy for being out on such a cold day. But I hadn't even seen her. All I saw was my brokenness. All I heard were my cries and the splash of stroller wheels on wet pavement. All I knew were my desperate prayers.

Then, in the midst of walking and weeping, I heard God gently whisper to me, *"Lisa, I'm here. I just want to be alongside you."*

That's the day I heard the holy invitation to go about motherhood in a way that was radically different from what our mainstream culture promotes.

- ~ I would base my everyday life on what was most sacred to me.
- ~ I would nourish myself with compassion and deep regard.
- ~ I would "listen within" to embody my feminine power, sensuality, and truth.
- ~ I would pause to truly see my children's light and empower them to be a compassionate presence in this world.

Slowing down would nourish me and my family. Learning to "listen within" would be our guide. Honoring the truth within me would be my compass. Compassion and love would lead us. Delight, beauty, and connection would save us. Embodying my feminine, sensual self would awaken my power.

What did I do?

I began to take Sacred Pauses. These little moments of getting grounded and reconnecting to my heart became my saving grace. They resourced me to respond instead of react. They became my gentle daily reminder to soften and go gently. They became the sacred space where I lingered with my children and really saw and regarded them.

I began to connect to a God of Compassion. I journaled with God. The "messy and miraculous" of daily life became my meditation cushion. "Listening within" taught me the power of kindness in a harsh world. As I

connected to a God of Compassion, my capacity to have compassion for myself and others deepened.

I began to care for myself in deep, nourishing ways. I gave myself permission to invest the time, energy, and money in my own healing. I began to more deeply embody my sensual, feminine power.

I began to make decisions based on what was most sacred to me and my family. I made “big” decisions like leaving my full-time position at Georgetown University and “everyday” decisions like making time to cuddle in the morning.

Slowly, over many years, I am scrounging less. That quiet wholeness remains, along with a deeper sense of ease. Though I am far from perfect, I’m not trying for “perfect” anymore. I’m practicing embracing delight, extending compassion, and creating connection. My favorite mystical poet, Hafiz, said, “One regret dear world, that I am determined not to have when I am lying on my deathbed is that I did not kiss you enough.” I want to spend my life kissing my dear ones and filling this world with delight and compassion.

Ten years ago, on that cold and rainy day, I chose to go about motherhood in a radically different way than our culture of hurry and quick fixes. Slowly, day by day, I have chosen to take the hand of the Beloved to linger, go gently, and love. My days now align with what is most sacred to my family. And I am devoted to the call within me to be a source of delight and compassion for my family, my clients, and this world.

I want this for you, too! And it's possible. That same hand of the Divine is outstretched to you. Yes, you can live your everyday life according to what is most sacred to you. You can heal the hurry. You can tap into your inner vibrancy and let it shine. You can have more capacity to see the light in your dear ones and be a presence that lets it shine brighter. You can connect more deeply. You can embrace your sensual, feminine power. An inner sense of freedom and spaciousness awaits.

In *Gems of Delight*, I share selections from my private journals, conversations with God, and honest expressions of my heart to help you journey from busyness to pausing, from harshness to compassion, and from brokenness to connection. These gems guide you into the inner landscape of your own heart. They help you take hold of the hand of the Beloved and live with clear focus and deep devotion to what is most sacred to you.

I designed this book with short gems so you could pick it up, turn to any page, and find inspiration at any time, in any season. With 52 gems, this book can also be your weekly guide to connect throughout the year.

You'll notice that I use "God language." I come from a Catholic background and have studied Christian theology, yoga, Buddhist meditation, Sufi spirituality, and various healing modalities for over two decades. Throughout this book, I use different words for the Divine – like Spirit, Beloved, and God. Choose the language that best resonates for you. God is bigger than labels.

I arranged *Gems of Delight* into seasons. Aligning our rhythm with the seasons connects us to our inner landscape. It grounds us to attune our senses to the pulse of the earth. It is how our ancestors lived for centuries. To honor the seasons is to reclaim this ancient wisdom and bring a deeper sense of ease to our day. We heal the disconnect. We discover a tremendous wellspring of inner vibrancy. And we live in rhythm with the Divine.

There is a sacred invitation in each season. Winter invites us to rest and lay fallow. Spring invites us to notice what wants to be birthed. Summer invites us to delight in play. Fall invites us to visit our own grief, practice forgiveness, and cultivate gratitude. Each season in this book contains five different types of entries:

- ~ Journal entry
- ~ Reflection
- ~ Conversation
- ~ God talks, I listen
- ~ I talk, God listens

“Journal entries” come from my own personal quiet time. “Reflections” come from my blog posts, workshops, sessions with clients, and sacred moments from everyday life as a family. “Conversations” are times God and I talked. And the “God talks, I listen” and “I talk, God listens” are times when one of us had something to say while the other one listened! For each entry there is a prayer and invitation to support you.

My life’s work is about accompanying people to base their everyday lives on what is most sacred to them and feel the freedom that awakens when they live this way. I

support people to live with a deeper sense of delight, compassion, and connection in simple, nourishing ways. I believe this is how we inspire a more compassionate world.

It is my hope that these gems help you reconnect to what is sacred to you, and to sense a God of Compassion alongside you in the messy and miraculous. Together, we can move from harshness to compassion, busyness to pausing, and discord to connection. I'm alongside you!

Spring



SPRING

The Invitation of Spring



Sacred Possibility

May you open to Sacred Possibility.

May you let go of efforting.

May you remember that you are not the god to make it all happen.

May you slow down to allow the wisdom of your body and spirit to dance with the Divine's Grace that brings you into sacred alignment with what is holy and true to you.

May Sacred Possibility begin to organically flow within you, illuminating your inner vibrancy so it shines in this world longing for such light.



Spring calls us out of our homes and into the world. If winter invited us to look inward, spring now prompts us

to look up and out. This is a season of hope, birth, and growth. We begin to see new life sprouting all around us.

Hope also sprouts. It grows and sends roots deep into the earth while at the same time reaching for the light. It can appear quite fragile – like a simple purple crocus blossom or fragile fruitless strawberry vines. But hope’s root system is deep and tenacious. It breaks through rocks and mud to reach the light. Where hope is planted, it takes up residence. We may not see its “work” going on beneath the surface, but then one day, we notice that life is sprouting.

And when we see such life peek through what used to be barren landscape, something ancient within us remembers how hope is always here. We sense possibility! We see how the Divine has been here all along, breathing us into the next stage and planting seeds of hope. We sense that, somehow, our stories of “this isn’t possible” and “it’ll always be this way” are no longer true. We remember – deep in our bones – that life has a way of triumphing over death. Again and again.

These springtime reflections mirror the birthing process: from opening to the possibility of birth to saying “Yes”; from “I can’t do this!” to “We are doing this!”; from gripping to letting go of control; from doubt to trust; and from what feels like death to resurrection. Whether we are birthing a child or a dream, we need others alongside us. We need faithful companions to remind us of what is possible. These reflections encourage us to reach out to soulful friends and build our tribe. Together, we stand, sing, dance, cry, and rejoice our way to life.

SPRING

May these springtime reflections support you in giving life to what wants to be birthed from within you. May they encourage you to reach out to other like-hearted people to hold space for each other and the dreams you are about to birth.

SPRING

Today I am Going to Believe



I Talk, God Listens

Me: “I am done spending my energy trying to change my dear ones. I am done trying to arrange circumstances just ‘perfectly so.’ Today I am going to believe that happiness is a choice – my choice. I am going to believe that I choose my inner experience, I choose the lens through which I look, and I choose my happiness.

“Today I’m going to believe that You exist even in the self-doubt, the unmet dreams, and the parts of me that feel lousy, insecure, crappy, and ashamed. I don’t have to do anything to be holier or more loved.

“Today I’m going to believe that I don’t have to ‘go’ anywhere to remember wholeness. Healing happens right here in this moment, arriving in this body, being present to the beating of my heart and softening instead of analyzing, dissecting, asking why, blaming, or being harsh.

“Today I’m going to believe that this very moment is here to awaken me, open my heart, and draw me closer to You.

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“Today I’m going to believe that opening my heart feels a lot better than closing myself off, and that the holy is right here within me as I treat everyone (myself included) with a gentle regard – slow kisses goodbye, kind eyes, and gentle words.

“Today I’m going to believe that this messy, fleshy, human experience with all its brokenness and uncertainty is where Your Grace shows up and miracles happen. And my job is to surrender.

“Today I’m going to believe in do-overs and beginning again.

“Today I’m going to believe that wherever I am, Love is also – alongside me, accompanying me, gently whispering prayers to my heart – to soften, to go with ease, and to love.”



Prayer: God, today I have hope in my soul and in my step. I feel a surge of empowerment. I have a choice about how I want to live this day. I’m going to believe that you are right alongside me. I’m going to believe that the messy and imperfect are holy because they are sacred opportunities to hear You calling me to laugh, let go, give myself (and others) a break, and let Grace in.

Invitation: Write your own “Today I am going to believe” statement.