

# *The Gift of Transformation*



*by Dwight A. Clough*



*When we talk about a changed life, people imagine many things.*

*Some imagine setting goals and working hard.*

*I admire people like that. But you can get this by working hard.*

*Sorry.*

*Some imagine days of fasting, sweaty prayer meetings, shouting hallelujah, and calling down from heaven fire.*

*But this doesn't work that way.*

*Again, sorry.*

*This is easier, much easier, and harder, much harder. Because it only takes one thing.*

*Courage.*

*Oh, yes, I need to tell you it will take courage to read this book.*

---

*"Every bad thing that ever happened to you is like money in the bank." writes author Dwight A. Clough. "You just have to learn how to cash it in."*

*Join Dwight and his wife, Kim, as they share the discovery that is transforming people just like you all over the world.*

*Reading Dwight's writings is like having a heart-to-heart talk with a trusted friend. The time flies by and suddenly you realize how deep you are into each other's world.*

*When Dwight isn't in his Wisconsin office writing, you might find him out in his back yard trying to figure out how to build a tree fort for his four children.*



*Get to know Dwight, learn more about transformation and make new friends at [www.GiftOfTransformation.com](http://www.GiftOfTransformation.com).*

# *The Gift of Transformation*

*The Gift came to me  
wrapped in a package  
I did not expect.*

*With gratitude  
I convey it to you.*

*Dwight A. Clough*

*This Gift is for*

*From*

*My deepest gratitude to:*

- *Rev. Steve Freitag and Dr. Ed Smith for pointing the way.*
- *Kim Schwenn and Darcy Kamps for cover art.*
- *the members of the CrossCounsel board for their ideas and encouragement.*
- *JTW for the gift that made this possible.*
- *my sweetheart, Kim, for walking this journey with me.*

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*Author's edition published by  
Dwight A. Clough  
1223 West Main Street #228  
Sun Prairie, Wisconsin 53590*

*[www.GiftofTransformation.com](http://www.GiftofTransformation.com)*

*ISBN: 0-9670718-3-6*

*Printed in the United States of America*

*For a long time  
my wife wanted a dishwasher.*

*It might have something to do  
with our four kids  
and their tendency to eat  
a lot*

*every day.*

*So she prayed,  
and when my wife prays for things  
she usually gets them.*

*I don't know why that is.*

*She prayed for a dishwasher,  
and she got one.*

*We were very happy to get our dishwasher  
even though we didn't know how  
to install it.*

*We brought it home  
and put a blanket over it.*

*For many months it stayed warm  
under its blanket.*

*But my wife was not happy  
with this arrangement.*

*She brought this up  
in a gentle way*

*about two thousand times.*

So

*being the man that I am  
I decided to ask for help.*

*Several of my friends  
came over,  
looked at the dishwasher,  
looked at the kitchen,  
looked at me,  
left the house and  
did not return.*

*One of these friends  
single-handedly  
tore the cabinets  
out from under the counter  
and left me with  
helpful hints.*

*You can tell he's a real friend  
because he really thinks  
I can do it.*

*And he's not even crazy.*

*Armed with new confidence,  
I started drilling holes  
all over the place.*

*Drilling is a lot of fun.*

*Now there are wires running everywhere.  
Sort of like chipmunks.*

*I pause here  
because I don't know what to do next.*

*And because I want to talk with you.*

*I've written this book  
as a conversation  
with you.*

*I've written it because  
my life has changed  
and yours can too.*

*When we talk about a changed life,  
people imagine many things.*

*Some imagine setting goals  
and working hard.*

*I admire people like that.*

*But you can't get this  
by working hard.*

*Sorry.*

*Some imagine days of fasting,  
sweaty prayer meetings,  
shouting hallelujah,  
and calling down  
from heaven  
fire.*

*But this doesn't work that way.*

*Again,  
sorry.*

*This is easier,  
much easier,  
and harder,  
much harder.*

*Because it only takes one thing.*

*Courage.*

*Oh, yes,  
I need to tell you  
it will take courage  
to read this book.*

*In fact,  
so far we've been going along  
in a carefree manner  
that might suggest  
that this is a book  
just like any other  
you might choose to read.*

*So I need to draw your attention  
to the warning label  
on the next page.*

**\*\* WARNING \*\***

*This is a book  
different from any you will ever read.*

*Reading this book  
might change your life forever.  
The stuff in here is powerful,  
and -- just like medicines and explosives --  
we need this warning label.*

*Please understand:  
I'm not a psychologist.  
I'm not a counselor.  
I'm only a friend.*

*You alone are responsible  
for your decisions  
-- not me.*

*If you wish to make me responsible  
for any outcome that results  
from you choosing  
to read on  
or to follow anything  
you believe I suggest,  
then close the book  
and walk away.*

*Whew!*

*I'm glad that's over.*

*And I would like to congratulate you  
for your courage.*

*It takes courage to look inside  
ourselves.*

*Inside  
we find what we buried  
and what we hid  
from everyone  
including ourselves.*

*It usually begins  
with our feelings.*

*In my lifetime, I've felt a lot of feelings  
-- all different kinds.*

*I've felt hopeful, self-important, secret pride.  
Come on! Hurry up! Get out of my way!  
Can't you see how smart I am?  
Can't you see my destiny?*

*I shake my head and cover my eyes,  
and see a girl in the Tijuana prison.  
She was seven, maybe eight.  
The sores in her mouth --  
none of us knew  
what they were.*

*Years ago, I shook inside  
whenever I sat at a kitchen table.*

*Can you imagine that?  
A kitchen table would leave me shaking  
so hard inside that I had to stand up  
and walk away.*

*What about you?  
What feelings do you find inside?*

*Feelings are like threads  
woven through the fabric of our lives.  
If you follow them back far enough,  
they take you someplace.*

*My own feelings  
-- all different kinds --  
they take me back.  
They carry me back in time,  
over the years,  
past the decades,  
back to my childhood.*

*Sometimes  
they take me back to 1965,  
to a place just off Dixie Highway  
about 40 feet from the shore  
of Lake Saint Clair.*

*I was barely eight years old.*

*I don't suppose you would even notice  
our little place if you drove by.  
So small and so insignificant  
to the big Detroit cars  
roaring past  
in the night.*

*No, you'd never see it.*

*I was awake. I wanted to be asleep.  
I wanted to sleep and wake up and  
discover it was all a dream.  
But it wasn't a dream.*

*My dad was coming back.*

*"Danny!" I whispered  
to my little six-year-old brother  
down in the bottom bunk.  
"Danny!"  
I don't know if my lips made a sound.  
I dared not let my dad hear me.  
"Pretend you are asleep,"  
I mouthed into the darkness.*

*I wrapped my blanket tighter and shivered.  
"Pretend you are asleep,"  
I cried into silence.*

*I don't think my brother ever heard me.  
But if he did, and if he did follow my advice,  
it didn't do him any good.*

*The door was torn open.  
My brother was jerked out of bed.  
The beating started again.*

*I'm not sure what happened to his screams.  
I still can't find them in my mind.*

*Adults are funny, in a way.  
It's the middle of the night,  
so they assume the children are asleep.  
Mom was home now,  
back from the PTA.  
But it was my dad's voice that I heard.*

*"What are you telling me?  
"You don't want me to lick your kids?"*

*It seemed to take a long time  
for my mom to answer.  
"I'm not saying that," she said,  
"I just don't understand ..."*

*My dad interrupted.  
"I didn't give him one licking," he said.  
"I gave him four."*

*Justice was done.  
My brother was guilty.  
He put his clothes  
in the laundry hamper inside out.  
Now his six-year-old body  
was black and blue.*

*The stick was back on top of the refrigerator.*

*But later,  
much later,  
my mother threw it into the fire.*

*Are you okay with me telling you this?*

*Sometimes  
when we try to put together the pieces,  
some pieces just don't seem to fit  
at first,  
and we'd like to throw them away.*

*But what can you do?  
You can't throw away the past.  
If you try, it will surprise you  
like a boomerang.*

*What do you do?  
How do you navigate  
around the hurting places in your soul?*

*Some people don't believe  
they have hurting places.*

*These people are tricky.*

*So tricky  
they have tricked  
even themselves.*

*Some people think you can walk  
away from pain?*

*I was one of those people.*

*I believed you could forget the past.*

*Nobody ever told me  
that the past  
never forgets you.*

*On a sunny August day in 1975,  
I finally escaped the gravitational pull  
of all my troubles.*

*I went to heaven  
(I hoped)  
even if everyone else called it  
Chicago.*

*This was no ordinary college.  
This was a place of angelic song  
where everyone  
just like me  
wanted Jesus  
and nothing else.*

*Nobody told me  
that all my old bullies  
had been invited to attend.*

*If I were a psychologist  
speaking to an assembly of 17-year-old  
freshman students like me,  
I would tell them plainly,  
"The more you need this place to be heaven, the  
more it will feel just like hell."*

*I can't fault the school.  
They didn't know they were supposed  
to rescue me from my past.  
How could they?*

*How could they know  
what's buried deep inside all of us?*

*But I kept looking for a way  
to walk away  
from pain.*

*Then, in 1977,  
as the earth turned away from summer  
into the fall,  
I finally I found  
my escape.*

*She called herself Kim.*

*Have you ever been in love?*

*If you have,  
then maybe you will understand  
my questions.*

*Why did I trace the veins in her hand?  
Was my love clean and pure?  
Why did I want her?*

*Why did I carry around  
that slip of yellow paper  
with those magic words,  
"I love you very much,"  
branded on my heart?*

*How did she release the dam inside me?  
Who gave her the key  
to my heart?*

*The best I could figure  
I was in love.*

*I don't know.  
People talk about a dry kind of love  
where Commitment is spelled  
with a capital "C."*

*But mine was intertwined  
with every thread of feeling  
in my heart.*

*Maybe that was a problem.*

*When I was with her  
my pain went away  
until one night  
she said to me,  
"I need to tell you about the men in my life.  
I need to tell you about my pain."*

*Once there was a little girl,  
and everything she had  
was taken away.*

*When she said it,  
I didn't understand.*

*Nobody does.*

*Once upon a time  
there was a land in which  
all the girls wore dresses  
with beautiful flowers  
embroidered on them.  
This was a land where flowers ruled.*

*Each young woman  
kept her own flower garden.  
And each garden was surrounded  
by a high stone wall.  
A thick wooden gate  
barred the entrance to each garden.*

*Each young woman  
was allowed to choose one young man  
who alone could enter her garden.  
There they would build their cottage  
and live a happy life together.*

*There was a certain woman  
who said to a certain man,  
"If you want to enter my garden  
there is something  
you need to know.  
Other men have been there.  
One broke down the gate.  
Another climbed over the wall.  
A third tricked me into opening the door."*

*The man looked  
at the beautiful embroidered flowers  
on her dress and said,  
"I'm sure it will be okay.  
In fact,  
I can hardly wait."*

*The day came.  
The gate was opened  
and the young man walked inside.  
Behind him the gate clanged shut  
never to open again.  
He looked around.  
Where were the flowers?  
There were supposed to be roses,  
but he could only find thorns.  
There were supposed to be  
beautiful flowers of every variety,  
but he found only weeds  
and a few petals trampled in the mud.*

*In his preoccupation with flowers,  
he almost forgot the young woman.*

*Where was she?  
He looked around  
and found a hut  
with a thick glass window  
and a heavy metal door.*

*She was inside.  
Her beautiful dress  
had been replaced  
with a black dress of mourning.*

*"Where are the flowers?"  
he demanded.*

*But there was no response.  
Only a single tear fell  
and made a little river down her cheek.*

*He pounded on the door,  
but she did not answer.  
He shouted for her to open the door.  
Her lips moved in reply,  
but he could hear no sound.*

*"We will plant new flowers," he offered.*

*But she remained silent,  
unreachable,  
untouchable,  
alone,  
-- cold and still as stone.*

*Many days passed,  
and finally he understood.  
She wasn't coming out.  
He now knew  
that he must build his own shelter  
for protection  
from the storms and snows of life.*

*But, every so often,  
he remembered the beautiful young woman  
with her beautiful dress  
embroidered with flowers.*

*He remembered her and he cried.*

*It was a horrible trick  
that God had played on me.*

*I was married,  
and I was all alone.*

*What gives porn its power?*

*Is it curiosity and testosterone?*

*Is it a male defect  
-- an inherent disrespect for women?*

*Or is it the growing awareness  
that our dreams  
may forever be locked away from us  
and the only place  
to keep them alive  
is in our fantasies?*

*What do you think?*

*For me,  
I think,  
porn fueled the fantasy  
that I really could be  
somebody's hero,  
somebody's knight in shining armor.*

*We men are a lonely bunch.  
We are herded together  
into accountability groups  
where we are supposed  
to bare our souls.*

*Silence.  
Shame.  
Condemnation.*

*Covered over with talk so fast  
we don't even know  
what's inside.*

*Oh, sure,  
we can work up the courage  
to say we looked in the wrong place,  
and say our Hail Marys  
or the Protestant equivalent.*

*But who will know  
what hurt drove us  
to deny Christ three times  
before the rooster crowed?*

*O God.*

*Where do you go for solace?  
Where do you go for comfort?*

*Long ago I learned  
that comfort and solace  
are hard to find,  
and some places that should be safe  
are not.*

*"It's a business,"  
the well-dressed woman said.  
And when she said it,  
I noticed that her lipstick  
was applied with precision,  
her hair sculpted to reflect  
Southern elegance.*

*I was here  
because I was learning how to be a pastor,  
and working at this church  
was part of my education.*

*"It's a business,"  
she repeated.*

*"I never knew that  
before I started working here.  
But the church is a business,  
like any other."*

*If church is business,  
then this church was big business.  
The pastor had arrived twenty years earlier  
to transform a struggling handful  
into visible thousands.  
They imported speakers and singers  
from around the globe.  
While other churches were trying  
to find a way to send their kids  
to summer camp,  
they were flying theirs to Wyoming  
to go elk hunting  
and to Guatemala  
to view earthquake damage.*

*It came as no surprise, then,  
to discover  
that while other churches in the city  
were losing young people to the beach,  
to the movies,  
to the back seat of automobiles,  
or to whatever teenagers do  
instead of church,  
the twelve to eighteen year olds flocked  
to this church.*

*Maybe it was the electric chair.  
The youth pastor spent hours in his garage  
creating and perfecting it  
from a metal chair and a car battery.*

*"It's completely harmless,"  
he assured us,  
"lots of volts, no amps."*

*Then he smiled.*

*The electric chair was part  
of the get-acquainted process  
for visiting teens.*

*The process worked like this:  
The visitor was a boy,  
about fifteen.  
He was fat.  
And he was as streetwise  
as a newborn kitten.  
When they asked who was new,  
he raised his hand.*

*"Well ... come on out to the middle here.  
Let's get acquainted."*

*The cleared away area in the center  
functioned as a stage.  
All around it,  
100 teenagers leaned forward in their seats,  
restless as wolves.*

*The interview started  
with harmless questions like:  
"What's your name?"  
"Where do you go to school?"  
"Do you have a family?"*

*After the subject of the experiment  
loosened up,  
the interviewer proceeded  
to his favorite question:  
"Are you an inner or an outer?"*

*The fat boy blushed.  
He wasn't sure.  
He had no idea  
what the man was talking about.*

*The interviewer offered  
to rescue him  
from his quandary  
by changing the subject.*

*"Want to try my chair?"*

*Did you ever stop to think  
what people risk  
every day?*

*Judging by the way people laughed,  
it must have been funny  
to see a fat boy jump.*

*But now,  
the wolves were satisfied.  
The plump kitten flew from the chair.  
The wolves had been entertained.  
They would now submit  
to a twenty-minute Bible lesson  
with a minimum of snapping and snarling.*

*I have great compassion  
for those who have no taste  
for organized religion.*

*For many years  
it had a sour taste  
in my mouth.*

*In the Gospels,  
we read of a woman  
who spent all she had  
in search of a cure.*

*Always in the shadows,  
invisible,  
from physician to physician,  
her hopes drained away.*

*In the same way,  
we spent all we had.*

*All our money.  
All our dreams.  
All our energy.*

*Our youth melted away  
into a search  
that seemed to have no end.*

*Arthur Janov said we were all neurotic  
until we writhed and screamed  
our way to normal.*

*I saw a picture of Janov's eyes.  
They looked full of five-year-old wonder.  
So I decided he must be right.*

*There was a problem, however.  
Straight-laced churchmen  
do not like writhing and screaming.  
It seems unseemly to them.*

*The club held meetings.  
I was summoned.*

*I was told  
my problem  
was my relationship  
to the cross of Christ.*

*So I tried to relate to the cross.  
But I couldn't find the ignition switch  
that turned on the engine of change.*

*The cerebral cross didn't stop me  
from shaking inside.*

*But when I writhed and screamed  
on the floor.  
I found God*

*just like Jacob  
who wrestled with the Angel  
until the break of day.*

*I pause here,  
because this might be a bumpy ride  
for you.*

*Be at peace.*

*My journey is not your journey.*

*Why did I find God on the floor  
and not at the altar?*

*Because I finally found a place  
where I could tell Him  
what was happening  
deep inside.*

*In the whole scheme of things,  
someday I'll understand  
why my therapist had to die  
and why I had to run out of money  
at the same time.*

*At the time, however,  
I just figured  
God had a plan.*

*I made a discovery though:  
If you leave pain alone,  
it doesn't go away.*

*But sometimes,  
it changes flavor.*

*"I can't breathe!"  
my wife whispered to me  
in the middle of the night.*

*"I can't breathe,"  
she repeated,  
and when I turned on the light,  
there was terror in her eyes.*

*Nonsense, I thought.  
Just open your mouth and breathe!*

*She ran out of the room.*

*I followed.  
I found her in the living room  
with her face pressed up against  
the window air conditioner  
gasping for breath.*

*From then on  
it got worse and worse.  
She couldn't stay inside  
because the walls were closing in.  
She couldn't go outside  
because tons of atmosphere  
were pressing down against her.*

*It was bewildering  
until the doctor gave it a name.*

*Panic attacks.  
They started slow and few,  
but grew and grew,  
until her panic was 24/7.*

*In the Gospels,  
we read of a woman  
who spent all she had  
in search of a cure.*

*One day she discovered  
that Jesus knew how to heal  
hidden pain.*

*When we made the discovery  
that Jesus heals hidden pain,  
we never really asked  
why  
all our prayers  
never worked.*

*We figured  
if somebody else  
knows how to touch  
the hem of Jesus' robe  
for us,  
then, hey,  
that's okay.*

*There we were,  
in Steve's office,  
a medicated woman,  
a hurt and angry man.*

*He offered to pray with us.  
But this was prayer unlike any other  
we had ever seen.*

*To understand why  
let me tell you a story.*

*A few years ago,  
someone managed to steal  
a tank  
from an army base  
and drive it onto the freeway.*

*The man who stole the tank  
was an ordinary man.  
He had no special power  
in and of himself.  
But, inside that tank,  
he was nearly invincible.*

*There was the tank  
surrounded by a dozen police cars  
all of whom were impotent  
-- powerless to stop the tank.*

*But he was stopped.*

*One of the policemen  
knew how to open the hatch.*

*In the same way,  
the messages that destroy our lives,  
by themselves are nothing.  
They are ridiculously anemic.  
But,  
from their protected place  
in the basements of our minds,  
they wield enormous power  
over our lives.*

*We can shout at the man in the tank  
to give up all we want.  
But he will just laugh at us,  
until Jesus opens the hatch  
and removes the lie.*

*Steve prayed with my wife  
for a half hour.  
The next morning  
she put away her medications  
and began to live  
panic free<sup>1</sup>.*

---

*1 For eighteen months, Kim lived panic free. As she worked her way through some difficult memories, some panic returned, but that is being resolved by the Lord. When you have a thousand reasons to have panic attacks, every time the Lord takes one of those reasons away, that is a miracle in itself and a reason to rejoice.*

*I didn't know  
Jesus  
did this sort of thing.*

*Many years ago,  
I lived in Carolina Beach  
down by the ocean.*

*In that little town,  
the pastor came to me and said  
you can invite God  
into your life.*

*There I was,  
praying a prayer,  
asking God to forgive  
to release  
to allow  
to open His arms to me  
because Jesus took the nails  
into His hands,*

*and,  
all of a sudden, it happened.  
God really did swoop down from heaven,  
and Jesus came to live  
inside me.*

*But I never knew  
that Jesus wanted to find  
all the hidden corners of my soul.*

*All the places where we hide  
are places Jesus wants to bring  
out into the light.  
Not to shame us,  
but to soothe  
to comfort  
to heal  
to set us free.*

*Why is it so hard to believe  
that we have hurting places  
inside?*

*Because we spend a whole lifetime  
hiding these places  
from others  
and from ourselves.*

*But God sees all the way through.*

*Ever since Eden  
our fig leaves  
have not hidden us  
from God.*

*And He has a journey for you.*

*Transforming a life  
is like building a house  
one brick at a time.*

*Every time  
we take Jesus  
to the inside of our soul  
we come out changed.*

*Let's start with panic.  
Millions of people  
suffer from panic attacks  
and rely on medication  
to keep them away.*

*My wife had a thousand reasons to panic:*

*"I'm trapped."  
"I can't get away."  
"I can't breathe."  
"I'm choking."  
"I'm dying."*

*These messages from the past  
were frozen inside her soul.*

*Like the tank on the freeway,  
they bullied their way  
past all her brave defenses.*

*But Jesus opens the hatch  
and takes them away.*

*Let's talk about porn.*

*Some surveys say  
over half the men in our churches  
struggle with porn.*

*Yes, I stopped doing porn  
over two decades ago,  
but porn never lost its lure  
until God rebuilt  
the inside of my soul.*

*What was driving it?*

*A hurt little boy inside  
who never knew if he would be  
worthwhile.*

*Every time Jesus visits  
that little boy inside,  
I become more of a man on the outside  
-- the man God created me to be.*

*I used to get angry  
and yell at my wife and kids.*

*As that anger subsides,  
I ask myself,  
Did I "try" to be nice?*

*No.*

*"Trying" never did anything for me.  
But, piece by piece,  
Jesus takes the anger  
away from me  
and sets me free.*

*Jesus isn't "helping" me  
do anything.  
I can't explain the change in me  
by anything I've set out to do.  
When I try harder,  
I end up like Peter,  
face down in the mud,  
and you will too.*

*Call it the kindness of God.  
He wants us to know  
the difference  
between wood, hay and stubble  
and the transforming work of God.*

*Most of us live under the illusion  
that becoming a man or woman of God  
is something  
anybody can do  
with a little help from God.*

*This, of course, is a lie.*

*God doesn't "help" anybody.*

*Understand what I'm saying.  
God is not our assistant.  
God is not a tool.  
He is God.*

*Jesus said,  
"Apart from Me,  
you can do nothing."*

*If we are going to partner with God,  
we need to be clear  
on how this works.*

*Jesus didn't "help" the Pharisees  
try a little harder.*

*Jesus came to set people free.*

*Jesus didn't "help" Peter  
when Peter vowed  
to follow Christ to prison and to death.  
Instead, Jesus let him fall flat on his face.  
When Peter's performance  
was fully spent,  
then Christ's transformation began.  
Peter became a leader  
that shook the world.*

*So also,  
the real Christian life  
is not the sum  
of our vows and commitments,  
no matter how grand they may sound.  
Rather,  
it is the result of saying "yes"  
to Jesus  
when He asks  
to enter the broken places in our soul.*

*If ever a marriage needed work  
it was ours.*

*We lived in the same house,  
ate at the same table,  
slept in the same bed  
a million miles apart.*

*And every time I worked on our marriage  
it got worse.*

*So how did the cold winter turn to spring?  
How did the glass wall between us  
crumble and fall?*

*For ten years I hardly slept,  
lying awake with hurt  
I assigned to my wife.*

*But as God took apart the hurt,  
only once did He comment on my wife  
-- and then just to say  
how precious she was  
to Him.*

*The rest of the time,  
He worked on me.  
Almost everything I pinned on my wife  
really came from someplace else --  
the anger  
the hurt  
the fear  
the jealousy  
It was all in place  
long before we ever met.*

*I gradually awoke to discover  
the treasure  
that had been mine  
all along.*

*As for my wife,  
the Lord was merciful to her  
and set her free  
from her fears,  
from her pain,  
from the shame  
that never belonged to her.*

*Somewhere there is a garden.*

*For many years  
winter blew icy shivers of pain  
through a woman dressed in black  
behind a great glass door  
and through a man  
huddled in a hut of hurt.*

*But one morning  
the sun broke through.  
We heard a robin's song.*

*Could it be?  
Spring?*

*We looked at ourselves  
happy and sad  
at the same time.  
Sad because the young man  
and the young woman  
were gone forever.*

*But happy because  
at long last  
flowers were starting to bloom.*

*It seemed awkward at first  
stepping out  
to dance with someone  
I hardly knew.*

*But as her hand rested in mine,  
as all the stars in the sky  
swirled around and danced with us  
-- as angels sang,  
I looked into her face  
and then I knew  
at last  
we were home.*

*No, we aren't perfect.  
We have our moments  
-- good and bad.*

*But once again  
I trace the veins in her hand  
and I am at peace.*

*As for my dad,  
I've known for a long time  
he was never the real enemy.*

*The real enemies  
were the pain-infested lies I believed.*

*"I am not safe."  
"I dare not speak."  
"I may not sing or celebrate."  
"There's something wrong with me."  
And the list goes on.*

*My dad and I made peace  
before he died.*

*Along the way,  
the Lord has been emptying out  
the hate and fear,  
and replacing it with respect,  
compassion and understanding.*

*My dad was a courageous man,  
a survivor of trouble  
most people would not understand.*

*One time when I was bringing Jesus  
to a hurting place,  
the Lord spoke to me  
in a way that the child inside could understand:  
"Your dad was just a broken man  
trying to be whole."*

*Then again,  
isn't that what all of us are?*

*Once I was a little boy  
and I had a little brother  
that I wanted to protect.*

*I couldn't protect him, of course.*

*Now I know  
deep inside  
that I don't need to.*

*I can love  
without rescuing.  
I don't need to be the savior.  
Someone Else already has that job.*

*I pray for that young man  
who jumped from the electric chair.  
Many things are done  
in the name of Christ  
that don't turn out  
the way we want them to.*

*If church is a business,  
then it is God's business  
and He does business His own way,  
not ours.*

*I've made peace with the church.  
The more God works in me,  
the more I overlook the mistakes  
and see the treasure  
of brothers and sisters  
all over the world.*

*I could tell you many stories  
about a changed life.  
But here's one thing you need to know:  
It keeps on changing.*

*Life doesn't stand still,  
and God's work in us  
is never done.*

*My story is not your story  
in a way.*

*Maybe you always felt safe  
with your dad.*

*Maybe the garden of your marriage  
has always been in bloom.*

*And maybe the church has always been  
a cozy place for you.*

*But, in another way,  
my story is everyone's story.*

*Outside the walls and doors of your heart,  
Jesus stands knocking  
longing to come in.*

*Not just once.*

*But day after day,  
week after week,  
again and again.*

*Along the corridors of your heart,  
His footsteps fall  
and His voice quietly calls  
to the you  
hidden within.*

*Life changing encounters with Jesus  
are really not all that mystical  
or complicated.  
All we have to do  
is find the place inside  
that Jesus wants to change  
and invite Him in.*

*All of us have hundreds of places  
like this,  
and every time  
Jesus shows up  
our life is changed  
forever.*

*I would be misleading you  
if I left you with the thought  
that bringing Jesus into hurting places  
is all about emotional healing  
for the few.*

*It is not.*

*Bringing Jesus into hurting places  
is about spiritual transformation  
for us all.*

*It is about finding the grace of God.*

*It is not mainly about getting better.  
Instead, it is about getting Jesus  
deep inside our hearts.*

*As long as Jesus remains outside  
these doors of our hearts,  
we will try to pretend  
our way through life.*

*Our great accomplishments  
wrought from a place  
disconnected  
from Christ*

*will falter  
on the day of testing  
just as Peter stumbled and fell.*

*The time has come.  
Soon God will again make a distinction  
between the work of man  
and the work of God.*

*Everything that can be shaken  
will be shaken,  
so that what cannot be shaken  
will remain.*

*December 26, 2004  
brought the devastating tsunami  
that left over 100,000 dead.  
All of us were touched  
by this terrible tragedy.*

*Another great wave is coming.  
An enormous wave is about to crash  
on the shores of Christendom.  
The church of try-hard religion  
will crumble,  
for it is a house  
built on sand.*

*In that day  
the work of God will stand,  
and the work of men  
will fall.*

*That is why  
we each must find  
the place of transformation  
inside  
and bring Jesus there.*

*There is a place  
inside your soul  
where transformation takes place.*

*It is a sacred place,  
and it isn't easy to find.*

*As I say,  
it takes courage.*

*Do you have the courage to say "yes"?*

*Before this planet spins us both  
off into eternity,  
I am here  
with you  
to invite you  
to say "yes."*

*This book is an invitation  
to courage.*

*And courage begins when you say "yes."*

*Here's the first "yes."*

*Are you willing  
to invite Jesus  
to go with you  
as you take this journey?*

*He does the transformation,  
not you,  
not me.*

*Here's the second "yes."*

*Are you willing to feel?*

*Let's talk about why.*

*Your feelings take you  
to the place of transformation  
faster than any other ride.*

*Feelings are like roads  
that connect  
all the landmarks of your soul.*

*Learn to navigate your feelings,  
and you will find the places  
where your life  
can be changed  
forever.*

*Is it okay to feel?*

*Yes, it is, and here's why:*

*Feeling your feelings  
is NOT a way of affirming  
you want something sinful or unpleasant  
to remain.*

*Rather,  
it is just a way  
of admitting to yourself  
and to Jesus  
what is already in your heart.*

*There is a word for feeling what you feel.  
It's called honesty.*

*Here's the third "yes."*

*Are you willing to be honest?  
Are you willing to look  
at what is really there?*

*There's no such thing  
as fake transformation.*

*Most of the time  
we go to hurting places.*

*Why is that?*

*Because life-controlling messages  
that could harm you  
are usually stored  
in hurting places.*

*Here's the fourth "yes."*

*Are you willing to discover  
how the hurt you feel  
became part of your life?*

*Deep inside.  
there is a part of you  
that knows  
where the memories are  
that seared your soul  
with pain.*

*We can't ignore the past,  
and we can't change it,  
but Jesus can visit the past  
repair the damage  
and take away  
all the hurt.*

*When Jesus speaks to you,  
how do you know  
if you got the real thing?*

*Three tests.*

*First,  
review what Jesus shared with you.  
He will never contradict Himself or His word.*

*Second,  
look for peace.  
Are you at peace?  
Jesus is the Prince of Peace.*

*Third,  
you will see good change in your life.  
A good tree bears good fruit.*

*Here's the final "yes."*

*Are you willing to allow others  
to journey with you?*

*There are some things  
we cannot do on our own.*

*We need each other.*

*God put us here on this planet*

*together*

*because we need each other.*

*The scriptures say,  
"Confess your sins to one another,  
and pray for each other  
so that you may be healed."*

*All of us need each other.  
At times, each of us needs help  
getting to places inside  
we can't get to on our own.*

*As you need help,  
getting to the place of transformation,  
talk to your pastor,  
and find a prayer minister<sup>2</sup>  
in your area.*

*Or visit  
[www.GiftofTransformation.com](http://www.GiftofTransformation.com).*

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*<sup>2</sup> Jesus transforms lives many ways. We have seen the most consistent results with Theophostic® Prayer Ministry. While Kim and I have benefited from this approach, we are not officially affiliated with Dr. Ed Smith or his ministry. I, not they, am responsible for the content of this book.*

*As we help each other  
along the path of honesty  
we find God's gift of transformation  
that restores our souls.*

*The scriptures say,  
"Confess your sins to one another,  
and pray for each other  
so that you may be healed."*

*All of us are needy.  
And all of us are ministers.*

*By listening to each other  
and praying for each other  
we become whole.*

*Any Christian can listen and pray.*

*In that moment of listening and praying,  
we have a great opportunity  
to help others find  
Jesus  
in their own place of transformation.*

*But there is finesse needed here,  
and it shouldn't be done haphazardly.*

*If you want to help others experience  
life-changing encounters with Jesus  
visit [www.GiftofTransformation.com](http://www.GiftofTransformation.com).*

*Watching God do His quiet miracles  
in the lives of people He loves  
is a wonderful privilege  
and an awesome responsibility.  
So, please,  
never minister  
apart from the covering of your local church,  
get adequate training,  
and always network  
with other prayer ministers.  
They will enrich your life and ministry.*

*God is not limited to a technique,  
and He certainly doesn't need me  
to tell Him how to transform lives.*

*But He does give us Biblical principles  
to show us the way.*

*That's probably why  
life-changing results  
have been duplicated  
in hundreds of thousands of lives  
worldwide.*

*I want my world to experience  
God's gift of transformation.*

*That is my mission.*

*Join me.*

*Let's bring Jesus  
into the hurting places  
in our world.*

*To help you with this journey  
I've created a place on the web  
[www.GiftofTransformation.com](http://www.GiftofTransformation.com)  
where you can learn more,  
get help and find friends.*

*Jesus said,*

*The Spirit of the Lord is on Me,  
because He has anointed Me  
to preach good news to the poor.*

*He has sent Me  
to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to release the oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

*May all of this be yours.*

*Your friend,*

*Dwight A. Clough  
[www.GiftofTransformation.com](http://www.GiftofTransformation.com)*

*PS. While I was trying to figure out  
what to share with you,  
I installed the dishwasher.*

*It works great,  
but today my wife brought in the directions  
that I never read.  
They tell me that the drain  
I incorrectly installed  
will siphon dirty water  
back into the dishwasher  
while it's running.*

*Oops.*

**Connecting the Real Jesus  
With the Real You**

*Dr. Jim Vann*

*As many people as there are,  
with as many different hurts  
is how many forms  
this experience takes.  
He knows you uniquely  
and each experience you have  
will be unique.*

*REAL experience.  
You know it is Jesus right with you.  
Right where it hurt.  
Jesus!*

*And the experience of being hurt changes  
and becomes entirely different.  
Reality stopped.  
Reality was overturned.  
From that hurting place,  
reality was renewed for you.  
Jesus!*

*That encounter brings you new life,  
and you know it, and you know it is Jesus.  
A fundamental alteration  
in everything you know.  
You know Jesus, by experience.  
You know healing, by experience.  
Creation of a new you, by experience.*

*It is bewildering to try and take it in.  
You know Jesus was really in you just now.  
You know something inside really happened.  
Something not humanly possible.  
Jesus!*

## ***Witnessing a Changed Life***

*Rev. Steve Freitag*

*I personally have watched Jesus transform Dwight & Kim's life and marriage, and I can tell you that everything in this book is genuine -- the real deal.*

*Jesus invites everyone -- Christian and otherwise -- to experience the gift of transformation. Life-changing encounters with Jesus Christ are not only possible -- they can be an every day miracle. I have had the pleasure of witnessing this hundreds of times. I, and many others, are speechless at this transformation.*

*This book is for you. But it will not transform you by itself. It's only a tool to put you in touch with the One who can change your life forever -- Jesus Christ. The message is Come as you are, but don't expect to stay that way. He wants to reveal the treasure He has created inside of you. It will blow your mind ...*

*None of us has the same journey. But the same Jesus does His unique and creative work in all of us. As we walk the path with Jesus, we can discover how to truly encourage one another. There is plenty of room next to the Master.*

*Join us! .... Some things are too good to keep to ourselves. Please spread the good news of God's gift of transformation. Give this book as a gift and encourage those you love to read it.*

*Blessings,*

*Rev. Steve Freitag*

*Director, CrossCounsel*

*A ministry of renewal and transformation*

