

ALL THE RAGE

How to Deal with Angry People without Becoming One Yourself

A Discussion Guide for **Faith-Based Groups**

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How to Use This Guide

This appendix offers seven discussion questions for each part of *All the Rage*, written for small groups, church classes, and study circles who want to explore the book's themes through the lens of Christian faith. Each set moves from the story and science of the chapter into personal reflection and Scripture, so that honest conversation and God's Word meet in the same space.

You may *not* have time to work through all seven questions in a single meeting, and you don't need to. Choose the three or four that fit your group best, and let the conversation breathe. You can bring in the other questions as time allows. The Scripture references are invitations, not obligations. Read them aloud together where they deepen the discussion, and pray over them as the Spirit leads.

A gentle word of care: some chapters touch tender places: grief, abuse, self-worth, the loss of a loved one. Move slowly there. Create room for silence, protect confidentiality, and remember that the goal is not to fix one another but to walk together toward the healing and freedom God offers.

Open every session with two questions:

1. What have you experienced this week that has allowed you to apply the principles we've been studying?
2. When you read the chapter we're about to discuss, what grabbed your attention? What can you use in your life?

Chapter 1 — The Anger Epidemic

“Why Has Everybody Gotten So Mean?”

1. The chapter opens with Samantha in her kitchen, coffee mug clenched, running her survival script: *Don't. Swallow it down. Keep the peace.* Where do you recognize your own “familiar script” in moments of frustration? What did you learn, and from whom, about what to do with anger?
2. One myth the chapter punctures is that *venting reduces anger*. **Proverbs 29:11** says, “Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end.” Where have you believed that “getting it all out” would help, and what did it actually produce?
3. Another myth is that *keeping the peace actually works*. Consider the difference between the false peace of avoidance and the true peace Jesus offers in **John 14:27** (“not as the world gives”). Where have you settled for keeping the peace when God may be calling you toward the harder work of making peace?
4. Dr. Bev notes that for some people, even the drive home “fills their stomachs with dread.” What situations create that kind of dread for you? Read **Philippians 4:6–7**. What would it mean to bring that specific, recurring dread to God rather than simply bracing against it? That anxiety is usually about uncertainty, unpredictability. Talk about the challenge of believing the certainty of God’s help over the stress of your circumstances.
5. The chapter names anger as a cultural “background noise” we’ve grown numb to. Where have you absorbed the surrounding hostility without noticing — in what you watch, scroll, or repeat? How does **Romans 12:2** (“do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”) speak to living differently in an angry age?
6. Dr. Bev debunks the myth that *time heals all wounds*, suggesting that time alone doesn’t heal; what we do with the time does. Where have you been waiting for time to fix something that may actually need honest attention or forgiveness? What’s one wound you’ve been hoping would simply fade?
7. The myth that “angry people are easy to spot” suggests much anger hides in plain sight; sometimes in the peacemaker, the joker, the quiet one. As you begin this study, are you more likely to *show* your anger or *hide* it? Pray together over **Psalms 139:23–24**, asking God to reveal what may be hidden even from ourselves.

Chapter 2 — Anatomy of an Anger Episode

“I Have More Control Than I Thought.”

1. Bev’s first guiding principle is that *feelings are not dictators*. When have you treated a feeling as a command that must be obeyed? Consider how the psalmists repeatedly *speak to* their own souls. “Why, my soul, are you downcast?... Put your hope in God” (**Psalms 42:11**). Additionally, the chapter’s third principle is focusing on *what you can control, not on forcing*

others to change. How much of your anger is tied to trying to change someone else? Read **Romans 12:18** (“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone”). What does that phrase “as far as it depends on you” free you *from*?

2. **Antecedent** — the state you’re in *before* the trigger ever hits. What primes *you* for anger: fatigue, hunger, unresolved stress, feeling unseen? Even Elijah’s despair in **1 Kings 19** was met by God first with rest and food. How might tending your antecedents be a form of stewardship over your own reactions? How can you do that?
3. **Adversity** — the trigger itself: a thwarted intention, an unfulfilled expectation, or an undelivered communication. Which of those three most often sets you off? How do unspoken expectations, in particular, set us up for anger (see **James 4:1–2** on where quarrels really come from)?
4. **Appraisal** — the story you tell yourself about what happened. Dr. Bev calls this the heart of the model. Where do you tend to assume the worst about someone’s motives? Read **1 Corinthians 13:7**; love “always trusts, always hopes.” How would a more positive appraisal change one of your recent conflicts?
5. **Arousal** — the body’s physiological response. What are your earliest physical warning signs: jaw, shoulders, stomach, voice? Why is noticing arousal *early* so critical to responding rather than reacting (**Proverbs 25:28**: “Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control”)?
6. **Affect** — the feelings that arise from your self-talk. David describes his transformation: “My emotions used to take off like they were on a motorcycle ramp. Now they’re on more like a wheelchair ramp.” What would a “wheelchair ramp” instead of a “motorcycle ramp” look like in your most reactive relationship? Sometimes Christians aren’t “given permission” to feel certain feelings. How does it help to acknowledge feelings but not let them rule?
7. **Action** — The author insists that “every stage is an opportunity to choose connection over conflict.” What do you most often choose to *do* when you’re angry? And, reflecting on the whole Six A’s Model, at which stage do you most often lose the battle? In other words, where might God be inviting you to insert a pause? Read **Ephesians 4:26–27**: how does letting anger run unchecked “give the devil a foothold,” and what’s one A where you could close that door this week?

Chapter 3 — Take the Quiz

“What’s My Anger Communication Style?”

1. Bev anticipates the natural resistance: “I’m just here to deal with someone else’s anger!” Do you feel that pull to keep the focus on others? Read **Matthew 7:3–5**, Jesus’ teaching on the plank in our own eye. Why does He insist we examine ourselves *first*, and what does that make possible in how we then help others?
2. Self-examination can feel threatening, but **Psalms 139:23–24** turns it into an invitation: “Search me, God, and know my heart.” How is inviting *God* into our self-assessment

different from anxious self-criticism or self-justification? What makes His searching feel safer?

3. **Blow-Up** anger is openly aggressive — yelling, blaming, threatening, dominating. Even if this isn't your primary style, when does it surface in you, and with whom? Read **Proverbs 29:22**: “An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.” What does the “stirring up” tend to cost those around a Blow-Up moment?
4. **Bottle-Up** anger is suppressed — the peace-keeper whose resentments quietly accumulate. Do you tend to swallow anger to keep things calm? Consider **Ephesians 4:26**: “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.” How does bottling quietly violate that verse just as much as blowing up does?
5. **Bubble-Up** anger is indirect — sarcasm, the silent treatment, “forgotten” commitments, plausible deniability. Why is this style so easy to deny in ourselves? Read **Proverbs 26:18–19** on the person who deceives and then says, “I was only joking!” Where might your humor or “forgetfulness” actually be carrying a sting?
6. **Open-Up** is the healthy outlier — honest, respectful, solution-focused communication. Bev frames it as speaking “the truth in love” (**Ephesians 4:15**). Why do we so often treat truth and love as competing rather than partnered? Who in your life models this well?
7. Our anger styles are usually learned in our families of origin, often passed down through generations. As you consider your dominant style, what pattern would you like to *stop* passing on? Read **Exodus 34:6–7** on generational patterns, and pray together about the legacy you want to leave those who watch how you handle conflict.

Chapter 4 — Blow-Up Anger

“At Least People Don't Have to Wonder Where I Stand.”

1. Chad's rage literally attacked him “from the inside out;” He thought he was having a heart attack. We often imagine explosive anger only harms *others*. Read **Proverbs 14:30**: “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” Where might unmanaged anger be quietly costing you physically, not just relationally? What physical symptoms have you noticed?
2. The first core belief driving Blow-Up anger is that *every interaction is a contest to be won*. Where do you turn conversations into competitions? Read **Philippians 2:3–4**; doing nothing “out of selfish ambition,” valuing others above yourself. How would seeing a person as a teammate rather than an opponent change your next hard conversation?
3. The second belief is that *others' actions are personal attacks on one's worth*. Why do we so often read an offense as a verdict on our value? When this happens to you, what do you tell yourself? How does anchoring your worth in being God's beloved child (**1 John 3:1**) lower the stakes of everyday slights and free you from having to defend yourself?

4. The third belief is that *striking first or hardest is the only way to stay safe*. Dr. Bev notes this is often rooted in childhood modeling or trauma. What did you learn early about power and safety? Read **Proverbs 16:32**: “Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.” How does God redefine strength here?
5. The fourth belief is that *blame always belongs to someone else*. Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent (**Genesis 3:12–13**). Why is blame-shifting our oldest instinct? Where do you most need to trade “look what you made me do” for honest ownership?
6. The author names an important tool as the *development of an early physiological warning system*. What are your body’s first alarms before an eruption? How could naming those signals help you “be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (**James 1:19**) in the crucial seconds before you react?
7. For those *living with* a Blow-Up person, Dr. Bev teaches how to set clear limits and refuse to absorb the rage as a statement about your worth. How is this different from being a doormat? Read Nehemiah’s response in **Nehemiah 6:3**. “I am doing a great work and cannot come down.” How does knowing your own God-given worth make loving boundaries possible?

Chapter 5 — Bottle-Up Anger

“Gotta Keep the Peace.”

1. Michael — accomplished, respected, “unflappable” — carried a secret for fifteen years, convinced that keeping the peace at any cost was the only safe option. Where do *you* wear a competent exterior while carrying something unspoken underneath? Read **Psalms 32:3–4**, David’s description of what silence *did* to his body. What does bottling cost us when we refuse to speak?
2. Dr. Bev traces one root of bottling to religious messages that “good people don’t get angry.” Did you absorb a version of that? Read **Mark 3:5** and **John 2:14–17**, where Jesus Himself feels and expresses anger. What did Jesus get angry about? How does the example of a sinless Savior who got angry reshape your belief about whether anger itself is sinful?
3. The author warns that suppressed anger “doesn’t stay suppressed;” it erupts, leaks out sideways, or calcifies into detachment. Which of those three is *your* suppressed anger most likely to become? Read **Ephesians 4:26–27** on not letting the sun go down on anger. How does bottling, not just blowing up, give the enemy “a foothold”?
4. The cautionary tale is devastating: a husband who announces he wants a divorce “out of nowhere,” having silently stored ten years of resentment his wife never knew existed. Where might unspoken resentment be quietly accumulating in one of your relationships? Does this really “keep the peace?” What would it cost to respectfully name one item this week rather than adding it to the pile?
5. The path forward includes *rehearsing brave conversations in safe settings* before having them for real. Why does preparation matter for those who freeze in the moment? Who is a safe

person, or how might prayer itself be the first place, you could rehearse a courageous conversation you've been avoiding? How about journaling?

6. Dr. Bev' talks about initiating the conversation with "empathetic and specific language." How is speaking up in love different from finally dumping years of stored grievance? Read **Ephesians 4:15** and **Colossians 4:6** ("full of grace, seasoned with salt"). What makes truth-telling constructive rather than destructive?
7. Dr. Bev closes with her own confession: she was a people-pleaser, too, until she realized "people like her best when she's being herself," and that saying *no* is not fatal. In what ways do you need to believe that? Read **Galatians 1:10** — "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?" What changes would you make if your deepest allegiance were to God's approval rather than everyone's comfort?

Chapter 6 — Bubble-Up Anger

"I Admit I'm Sometimes Nasty-Nice."

1. Bev defines Bubble-Up anger as "nasty-nice" — polite words carrying a hidden sting. Why is this the hardest style to admit to, even to ourselves? Read **Psalms 55:21**: "His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords." In what ways might your own smooth words be carrying a hidden sting? (This may be unintentional when you're carrying anger inside.)
2. Dr. Bev breaks Bubble-Up into three channels: *what you say* (poison darts disguised as humor), *how you say it* (tone and body language that contradict your words), and *what you do* (sabotage dressed up as forgetfulness). Which channel is your go-to? What would those closest to you say?
3. The "just joking" defense gets special attention. Read **Proverbs 26:18–19**. The person who deceives a neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" is compared to "a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death." Why does God use such strong language for sarcasm masquerading as humor? When has a "joke" wounded you, or your words wounded someone else?
4. An important recovery strategy is "talk it out instead of acting it out." Read **Matthew 18:15**; "go and point out their fault, just between the two of you." Why does Jesus prescribe *direct* conversation over sideways signals? What makes the direct route feel so much harder, even though it's the one He commands?
5. The second strategy is "get radically honest about the real source of the anger." How does self-deception keep Bubble-Up anger alive? Read **Jeremiah 17:9–10** ("the heart is deceitful... who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart"). Why do we need God's help, not just willpower, to see our own true motives?
6. The chapter closes with Anne Lamott: "Your unspoken expectations are premeditated resentments. Turn your assumptions into conversations." Where are you nursing an

expectation you've never actually voiced? What assumption could you turn into a conversation this week?

7. Bubble-Up thrives in the gap between what we feel and what we're willing to say. Read **Ephesians 4:25**: "Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body." How is passive-aggression a subtle form of falsehood, and what would greater truthfulness, spoken in love, free up in your relationships?

Chapter 7 — Open-Up

"You Matter. I Matter. Let's Talk About It."

1. Bev draws a crucial distinction between *peacekeeping* (swallowing concerns and hoping things improve) and *peacemaking* (the courageous work of honest dialogue). Read **Matthew 5:9**. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Why does Jesus bless the makers, not the keepers? Where have you been confusing avoiding conflict with pursuing peace?
2. Open-Up rests on the conviction captured in the chapter title: "You matter. I matter." Read **Philippians 2:3–4**, valuing others above yourself *while also* looking to your own interests. How does healthy communication hold both truths at once, rather than sacrificing one person for the other?
3. Jeremy and Linda's old cycle was predictable: Linda bottles up until she explodes, Jeremy blows up in response, both retreat. What's the recurring cycle in your most difficult relationship? (You don't have to name *which* relationship.) What would it take to interrupt it before it runs its usual course?
4. The first step of the Three-Step Problem-Solving Process is understanding the problem *from both perspectives before rushing to solutions*. Read **James 1:19**, "quick to listen, slow to speak." Why is our instinct to solve before we've truly understood? When has jumping to a solution actually made a conflict worse?
5. The second step is brainstorming options that address *both parties' needs*, not one person winning. How does this reflect the "one another" ethic of Scripture (**Romans 12:10**, **Galatians 6:2**)? Where have you approached conflict as a zero-sum game ("I have to make you lose in order to win.") rather than a shared problem to solve together?
6. Dr. Bev names what each partner truly needed: Linda to feel like a valued partner, Jeremy to feel trusted as a provider. What do *you* most need to feel in your closest relationships? Have you ever spoken that need aloud, or only expected the other person to guess it?
7. Six months later, Jeremy and Linda still have money stress and occasional conflict, but they're "fighting about the actual problem instead of everything underneath it, and doing it as teammates." What would it mean to measure success not as the *absence* of conflict but as *how* you handle it? Read **Colossians 3:12–14**. How does "putting on love, which binds everything together in perfect unity" describe fighting as teammates rather than opponents?

Chapter 8 — How Strong Is My Emotional Immune System?

Building Your Emotional Immune System

1. Bev opens with a powerful analogy: just as the body's immune system recognizes threats, mobilizes defenses, and builds lasting resistance, our *emotional* immunity determines whether criticism derails our whole day or we process it and move on. How strong would you say your emotional immune system is right now? What's currently "getting past your defenses"? . Bev warns that this deeper work "requires harder habit change than anything in the book so far." Are you willing to let God reach the roots, even where it's tender? Read **Psalm 139:23–24**. What might you be tempted to keep at the surface rather than let Him search all the way down?
2. Bev distinguishes between white-knuckling through triggers with technique alone versus building deeper protections that reach "all the way down to the roots." Where in your life are you exhausted from constant self-monitoring? Read **Jeremiah 17:7–8** about the tree planted by water whose roots reach deep and doesn't fear when heat comes. What does it mean to be *rooted* rather than merely coping? This chapter is a hinge, moving from skills and strategies to "something deeper... more intimate, more spiritual, closer to the bone." Why can't technique alone produce lasting change in the heart? Read **Romans 12:2** on transformation "by the renewing of your mind." How is God's work different from behavior modification?
3. **Practical Optimism** — realistic, constructive thinking. On the immunity profile, is this a strength or a vulnerable entry point for you? Read **Philippians 4:8** ("whatever is true... noble... lovely... think about such things"). How is disciplining your thought life a form of spiritual protection, not just positive thinking?
4. **Self-Worth** — a grounded sense of value "that doesn't require proving or defending." Do you carry worth you don't have to defend, or are you still trying to earn it? Read **Ephesians 2:10**. "You are "God's handiwork." How would resting in given worth, rather than earned worth, disarm much of your anger?
5. **Post-Traumatic Growth** — becoming stronger *because* of hardship, not just in spite of it. Where has hardship already grown something in you? Read **Romans 5:3–4**. "Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." Do you believe growth through pain is possible for you, or does that feel out of reach right now?
6. **Forgiveness** — freedom from "accumulated hurt and resentment." How much of your emotional energy is currently tied up in old wounds? Read **Hebrews 12:15** — the warning that a "bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." How does unforgiveness weaken the whole immune system, not just one relationship?
7. **Purpose** — "the clarifying sense of meaning that puts frustrations in perspective." When your sense of purpose is strong, how does it change what's able to anger you? Read **Philippians 3:13–14**. "Straining toward what is ahead... I press on toward the goal." How does a clear "why" shrink the power of petty offenses?

Chapter 9 — Practical Optimism

“I’ll Find a Way Through This.”

1. Bev insists practical optimism is *not* toxic positivity or “smiley-face thinking.” Why is that distinction so important, especially for Christians who may feel pressure to always appear victorious? How is biblical hope (**Romans 5:5** — “hope does not put us to shame”) different from denial or forced cheerfulness?
2. The Stockdale Paradox anchors the chapter: unwavering faith you will prevail, held together with clear-eyed refusal to deny brutal present realities. The optimists who set false deadlines “died of broken hearts.” How do you hold hope and honesty at the same time? Read **Psalms 42**. How does the psalmist both lament his reality *and* preach hope to his own soul?
3. Bev’s first strategy targets *explanatory style* through the 3 P’s — challenging the pessimist’s default of seeing trouble as **Permanent, Pervasive, and Personalized**. Which of the three most traps you? When a hard thing happens, do you tend to think “this will never change,” “this ruins everything,” or “this is all about me / my fault”? Against *Permanent* thinking, Scripture offers a different timeline: “Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (**Psalms 30:5**). Where are you treating a temporary season as a permanent verdict? What would change if you truly believed this chapter isn’t the whole story?
4. The second strategy builds *hope* on three legs: **Goals, Pathways, and Agency**. Which leg feels wobbliest for you right now — knowing *what* you’re aiming at, seeing a *way* there, or believing *you can* take the steps? Read **Proverbs 16:9**. “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.” How does partnering our agency with God’s sovereignty steady all three legs?
5. The third strategy is *mining your strengths* — recognizing hard things you’ve already survived as evidence of future capacity. What’s a past hardship that proves you’re more resilient than you feel? Read **1 Samuel 17:37**, David facing Goliath by remembering the lion and the bear. What are *your* “lion and bear” stories?
6. Patti was laid off repeatedly, delivered groceries to pay bills, restarted at a third of her former salary, then rose to leadership. Her reframe: “I never tell myself something bad happened *to* me. I remind myself this happened *for* me.” Where do you need to shift a “to me” into a “for me”? How does **Romans 8:28** ground that reframe in something more solid than mere positive thinking?
7. Practical optimism is ultimately about where you fix your gaze. Read **2 Corinthians 4:16–18**, fixing our eyes “not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.” What “unseen” reality could you begin rehearsing to yourself this week, in place of the pessimistic script that fuels your anger and discouragement?

Chapter 10 — Self-Worth

“I’m a Work-in-Progress, but I Like Me.”

1. Leah “absorbed her mother’s contempt so thoroughly that she turned it on herself,” exploding at every boss who offered feedback and confirming her secret belief that something was fundamentally wrong with her. Whose voice have you absorbed and turned against yourself? Read **Psalm 139:13–14**. You are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Whose verdict about you have you trusted over God’s? Bev names the first origin of low self-worth as *old negative voices* — “the childhood soundtrack that plays long after the speaker is gone.” What plays on your soundtrack? Read **Romans 12:2** on the renewing of the mind. What would it take to record a new track in God’s words rather than the old ones?
2. The second origin is *abuse*, violations that teach the nervous system that “danger is always imminent.” Bev handles this with clinical care. If this touches your story, how has it shaped what you believe about your worth and safety? Read **Psalm 34:18** — “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.” Without detailing the abuse you experienced, talk about how the abuse affected how you have seen yourself over the years.
3. The third origin is *mistakes and regrets*, which Bev calls “the Miracle-Gro of low self-esteem when dwelt on obsessively.” Where do you keep re-watering an old failure? Read **Philippians 3:13** — “forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.” What would it mean to stop fertilizing a regret God has already forgiven?
4. Bev draws a crucial clinical link: *low self-worth and anger are deeply intertwined*. The person who explodes at feedback is often “running a preemptive strike, attacking before they can be rejected.” Do you recognize that pattern in yourself? How might some of your anger actually be self-protection in disguise?
5. Whether anger goes outward or inward, Bev says the root is frequently the same: *I am not enough*. Where does that whisper show up most for you: at work, at home, in your own head? Read **2 Corinthians 3:5** and **12:9**. Our sufficiency is *from God*, and His grace is enough. How does “enough-ness” as a gift, not an achievement, quiet that root lie?
6. Bev’s first strategy is “talking to yourself like someone you love.” How do you currently speak to yourself when you fail? Read **Mark 12:31**. “Love your neighbor as yourself.” What if loving yourself well were actually part of obeying that command, not opposed to it?
7. The second strategy is “noticing your own progress without waiting for external validation.” Why do we so easily discount our own growth? Read **Philippians 1:6** — “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.” How does trusting *God’s* commitment to finish you free you from needing everyone else’s approval to feel okay?

Chapter 11 — Post-Traumatic Growth

“I’ll Keep Going, Keep Growing, and Come Out Stronger.”

A note for facilitators: This chapter carries Dr. Smallwood’s own family and the loss of her grandson Joseph. Some group members may be carrying fresh grief of their own. Hold this session gently, leave room for silence, and be ready to walk alongside anyone for whom this

surfaces more than the discussion can hold. A trusted pastor or counselor is a good companion for that deeper work.

1. Bev is careful to say Post-Traumatic Growth “is not toxic positivity or silver-lining thinking. It doesn’t mean the loss was worth it.” Why does that distinction matter so deeply for anyone who has grieved? How is this different from the well-meaning but wounding things people sometimes say to the hurting? Read **2 Corinthians 1:3–4**. How does God comfort us “so that we can comfort others?”
2. **Spiritual Growth** — “God as lifeline.” When has your faith been less a comfortable belief and more the thing you clung to for survival? Read **Psalms 18:2**. “The Lord is my rock, my fortress... in whom I take refuge.” What does it mean to know God as lifeline rather than luxury?
3. **Appreciation of Life** — Amy’s practice of “micro-thankfulness.” How can gratitude for small things coexist with genuine grief? Read **1 Thessalonians 5:18**, giving thanks “in all circumstances,” not *for* all of them. What is one small thing you could name with thanks today, even in the middle of something hard?
4. **Meaning-Making** — Amy’s shift from asking *why* to identifying, “a small step I can take right now?” Where are you stuck on a “why” question that may never be fully answered on this side of heaven? Read **Deuteronomy 29:29**, “the secret things belong to the Lord.” How might releasing the unanswerable *why* free you to take the next faithful step?
5. **Recognition of Strengths** — “the quiet confidence that comes from having survived what you thought would destroy you.” What have you already survived that you once believed you couldn’t? Read **2 Corinthians 12:9**. How has God’s strength shown up in your weakness, in ways you might otherwise overlook?
6. **Relational Renovation** — learning “to trust wisely rather than blindly, and to seek depth over superficiality.” How has hardship changed what you now value in relationships? Read **Proverbs 4:23** (“guard your heart”) alongside the call to love deeply. How do you hold wise discernment and open-hearted love together?
7. Amy offers a moving image: “God is that moving sidewalk underneath you. Whether you are face down and can’t move, or standing and walking forward, He’s moving you forward whether you feel it or not.” Where do you most need to trust that God is carrying you even when you can’t feel it? Read **Isaiah 41:10**. “I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Bev’s gentlest invitation: “You don’t grow *instead* of grieving. You grow *while* grieving, through grieving. The wound will always be there. But wisdom can grow around it, and joy can coexist with it.” Where are you tempted to believe you must choose between grieving and growing? Read **John 16:22** and **Psalms 30:5**. What would it mean to let joy and sorrow occupy the same heart, trusting God with both?

Chapter 12 — Forgiveness

“I Release Me by Releasing You.”

1. Bev names three core reasons people resist forgiveness. Before reading her answers, name your own: what has made forgiveness feel impossible, unsafe, or unfair to you? Read

Matthew 18:21–22; Peter asking “how many times?” and Jesus answering “seventy-seven times.” Why do you think Jesus set the bar so far beyond what feels reasonable? A common fear is that forgiveness means excusing the offense or pretending it didn’t matter. How does Bev’s framework distinguish forgiveness from approval or reconciliation? Read **Romans 12:19**. “Do not take revenge... leave room for God’s wrath.” How does entrusting justice to God actually *free* you to forgive without minimizing the wrong? The science is striking: a SPECT imaging study of veterans showed a 10-week forgiveness program literally restored blood flow to damaged heart muscle — no surgery, no medication. What does it stir that unforgiveness may be harming your actual heart? Read **Proverbs 17:22**. “A crushed spirit dries up the bones.” How is forgiveness a gift you give *yourself*, not just the offender?

2. Walter’s wound was planted at ten, watching his father get into a fishing boat without him. “There’s no room in my life for you.” That wound metastasized into decades of rage, self-hatred, and a nearly broken marriage. What early wound may still be driving reactions in you today? How does naming the *original* injury help explain present anger?
3. Bev’s preparation process begins with *humanizing the offender through empathy* — seeing the wounded person behind the wounding behavior. Why is this so hard, and so powerful? Read **Luke 23:34**, Jesus on the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” How might understanding an offender’s own brokenness soften your grip on the offense? What would make that step difficult?
4. The process also requires *honest self-examination*. How can looking at our own need for grace change the way we extend it? Read **Matthew 7:1–5** and the parable of the unforgiving servant (**Matthew 18:23–35**). How does remembering the enormity of what *you’ve* been forgiven reframe the debt you’re holding against someone else?
5. Bev walks readers through a concrete forgiveness ritual: an empty chair, and a dated, signed record of each release. Why might forgiveness need to be a deliberate, even physical *act* rather than just a feeling? Have you ever tried to “feel” forgiveness into being and found it didn’t come? What would it mean to *decide* it, and mark the date?
6. Bev addresses *self-forgiveness* explicitly, which is often the hardest release of all. Where are you withholding from yourself the grace God has already extended? Read **1 John 1:9** and **Romans 8:1**. “There is now no condemnation.” If God has forgiven you, on what authority do you keep condemning yourself? Talk about your struggles with self-forgiveness.
7. Walter today teaches and fathers men at a homeless shelter: “With the same emotional intensity I had with rage, now I have compassion.” God didn’t erase his intensity; He redirected it. Where might God want to redeem, rather than remove, something intense in you? Read **Genesis 50:20** and **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Who might one day be blessed by the very energy your wounds have generated, once it’s been transformed?

Chapter 13 — Purpose

“I’m on This Planet for Good Reason.”

1. The science is striking: brain scans show people with high purpose have less amygdala activation — they “perceive fewer threats and recover faster.” Why do you think a strong

sense of purpose literally makes us less reactive? Where have you noticed that when your “why” is clear, small offenses lose their grip on you?

2. Donna, cleaning up Bev’s mother’s accident, reframed her whole task: “I’m not cleaning up a mess this morning. I’m helping your mother have dignity in the last years of her life.” How does purpose transform the *meaning* of ordinary, even unpleasant, work? Read **Colossians 3:23** — “whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” What menial task in your life might be transfigured by a change of *why*?
3. Kayla quietly wondered if she was “just a toilet-scrubber” until she discovered her purpose: “to help people transform chaos into order so they are free to focus on what’s most important.” Once she knew that, “a stubborn stain was just a stubborn stain” — the chronic anger “lost its fuel source.” What might your anger be running on, and how could clarity of purpose starve it?
4. Kayla’s purpose emerged from the convergence of her chaotic childhood, her natural wiring for order, and her lifelong gift for helping others. How has God woven *your* history, temperament, and gifts toward something? Read **Romans 8:28** — even the hard threads worked “for good.” What painful thread might actually be part of your purpose’s design?
5. Bev’s Treasure Map process uses seven reflective questions to surface “the purpose already woven through a person’s life.” Notice the assumption: purpose is *discovered*, not manufactured. How does that change the pressure you may feel about “finding your calling”? Read **Psalms 139:16** — “all the days ordained for me were written in your book.” What threads did you see when you answered the 7 questions? The chapter moves toward crafting a personal purpose statement — identifying recurring action verbs and desired outcomes. What *verbs* keep showing up across the seasons of your life — do you tend to build, heal, teach, organize, encourage, protect, create? What might that pattern be telling you?
6. Bev’s distilled wisdom: “When your why is clear, petty conflicts lose their power, slights stop feeling like verdicts, and you have something larger than this moment to protect.” Where are you currently letting a petty conflict consume energy that belongs to your larger purpose? Read **Nehemiah 6:3** — “I am doing a great work and cannot come down.” What “great work” is worth staying focused on rather than coming down to fight?
7. The chapter closes: “You are on this planet for good reason. Now go live like you believe it.” What would change this week if you truly *lived* as though your life had God-given purpose? Read **Jeremiah 29:11** and **Esther 4:14** (“for such a time as this”). What might God be preparing you for, right where you are, right now?

Epilogue — Your Story Isn't Over

1. The Epilogue opens not with catastrophic loss but with a quieter crisis: in the months before her 65th birthday, Bev was “genuinely uncertain whether her best years were behind her.” Have you ever wrestled with whether your most meaningful days are past? Read **Psalms 92:14** — “They will still bear fruit in old age.” What does that promise stir in you?
2. Bev prayed, journaled, and “sat with the uncertainty” rather than rushing to resolve it. Why is sitting with uncertainty so hard, and why might it be spiritually necessary? Read **Psalms 27:14** — “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart.” Where are you being invited to wait rather than force an answer?
3. At her uncle’s 90th birthday, a cousin described her own “fourth quarter” of life in words that “landed like confirmation.” When has God spoken encouragement to you through an unexpected person? How do you stay open to hearing His voice through others?
4. A reel-to-reel tape of her late father’s sermon surfaced the same evening — his voice, unheard in over fifty years. Her father, a pastor, died of cancer at 38 when Bev was nine. What does it stir that God’s timing brought that voice back at the exact moment she needed it? Read **Romans 8:28**. Where have you seen God’s timing prove trustworthy in hindsight?
5. The sermon was about “the stewardship of gifts and talents and the call to use everything God has placed within us all the days of our lives” — and before preaching, her father prayed for his congregation about that very subject. How does the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:14–30**) speak to the season you’re in? What gift might you be tempted to bury rather than invest?
6. Bev walks through this whole season using every framework in the book — the Six A’s, the four anger styles, the five immunity boosters — not as a perfect model, but as an honest demonstration that “the tools work, even when life is devastating.” Looking back over this study, which tool has become most real to you? Where have you seen it work in your own life?
7. Bev didn’t blow up about her aging anxiety, bottle it up, or let it leak out sideways. “She opened up — with her cousins at breakfast, in her journal, in prayer — and stayed in the process until the process bore fruit.” Where do you tend to bail out of the process too early? What would “staying in it” look like for you right now?
8. The final words: “You didn’t choose what happened to you, but you can choose what happens next.” How does this echo the small “space of choice” from the Introduction? Read **Deuteronomy 30:19** — “choose life.” What is one thing you can choose next, in light of everything you’ve worked through?
9. Bev insists that “the fire you’ve walked through, the anger you’ve experienced or absorbed, the wounds that still ache — they don’t disqualify you from a meaningful future.” Where have you believed your wounds disqualify you? Read **Joel 2:25** — God’s promise to “restore the years the locusts have eaten.” What might restoration look like in your story?

- 10.** The book ends: “No, your story isn’t over. In fact, you might just be getting to the best part.” As you close this study, what is the “next part” you sense God inviting you into? Read **Philippians 1:6** and **Jeremiah 29:11**. Take time to pray over one another’s “fourth quarter,” whatever season each person is in.
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Keep going, keep growing, and you’ll come out stronger on the other side.