

# UNTIE THE RIBBON



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As you open the pages of this book, think back to a time when you received a most wonderful gift. Maybe you're thinking of a gift that wasn't perfectly wrapped – perhaps a gift from a child, held together with lots of tape, lots of string and lots of love. Perhaps it was the perfect gift because it came from someone incredibly special – someone who loved you very much.

Now think about the most beautifully wrapped gift you've ever received. I'll bet you said something like, "Oh this is so pretty I don't want to open it. I just want to look at it!" After you enjoyed your gift *visually* for a moment, you had to take one more step. To enjoy it fully, you had to open it. And that means you had to untie the ribbon to get to the gift inside. Once you did, maybe it was exactly what you wanted, or asked for, or hinted for, or hoped for. Or maybe it was a gift you never expected – a total surprise.

Our lives are like that because life itself is a gift from God. But sometimes we're afraid to "untie the ribbon" to see what gifts and blessings God has in store for us.

What holds us back? Perhaps we hang on to our fears, our worries, our concerns, and our troubles. Maybe we're afraid that the ribbon itself is what's holding us together, and if we untie that ribbon life will fall apart. Can you recall a day when you felt like you were hanging on by a thread? Afraid to let go? Afraid to take the next step? Afraid to trust others? Even afraid to trust God?

Have you ever received a gift that took you totally by surprise? You smiled and said, "thank you!" while wondering, "What in the world am I supposed to do with this?" Think about it. Maybe the giver saw something in you that needed that gift at that very moment – something you didn't even see in yourself.

God in His goodness gives us what we need when we need it, even though we may not know we need it at the time. Don't be afraid to unwrap that gift and allow everything inside to flow into your life. God is generous and He will not be outdone!

Never forget that God made you in His image and likeness. How do you see yourself – inside and outside? How would you like your life to be different? How would YOU like to be different? What are your hopes

and dreams? What would happen if you untied the ribbon and opened your gifts from God? Maybe it means taking a leap of faith...trusting in yourself to make good choices.... trusting others...believing in yourself... forgiving someone else... or forgiving yourself.

You are a unique gift from God to others. You are loved by God. You are one of His treasures. He has many gifts in store for you if you're willing to open your mind and heart to receive them. Think about your talents, aptitudes, skills and abilities. Maybe you don't think you have any... but you do! So often we take our God-given gifts for granted because they've become part of who we are. They're simply part of our DNA. But just because we take them for granted doesn't mean that other people do!

Take a moment right now to grab a pen and paper and make a list of the gifts – the blessings – the graces – God has bestowed on you that make you who you are. List the ones you enjoy. Then dig deeper and list those you take for granted because they've always been there for you.

Because we're all unique beings, you possess many gifts that I didn't specifically identify in this book. Although

I may not have devoted an entire chapter to them, I'm sure you will find words, qualities, attributes and gifts in each chapter that describe you. Keep that pen and paper handy so you can jot down, as you read, any words that describe how you see yourself and how others see you.

What will you do with your gifts from God? How will you use them in service to others, and to bring you closer to Him? I hope and trust that the pages in this book, the stories I tell, the questions I ask, and the ideas I share will help you to decide. We are all unique, so I have no doubt that you will discover gifts that I didn't think to include. In fact, your Gift List may look totally different. That's OK because God's gifts are infinite! Ready? Let's get started!

“Your talent is God's gift to you.  
What you do with it is your gift back to God.”

*Leo Buscaglia*



“The future starts today, not tomorrow.”

*St. John Paul the Great*