


IF YOU'RE IMPATIENT TO FIND OUT WHAT LIFE HAS IN STORE FOR YOU, THEN DON'T PUT THIS BOOK DOWN!

In this delightful, girl-to-girl, let-your-hair-down book, Rissa Singson-Kawpeng shares her funny, tear-jerking or sometimes downright embarrassing experiences as a woman finding her place in this world.

Taken from her column "Just Breathe" that appears in *Kerygma*, the country's no. 1 selling inspirational magazine, this paperback chronicles her struggles and victories as a single woman in pursuit of her calling in the Lord and, later, how God fulfilled His many promises regarding marriage and having a family.

Through her stories and godly insights, learn how you can:

- Nurture your soul with God's Word and discover His grace at work in your circumstances
- Eliminate your worries and enjoy life where you are — right here, right now
- Enjoy your single life to the hilt while waiting for Mr. Right to take you to the altar
- Overcome your trials and sorrows with the strength of God
- Stay happy even when life isn't going according to your plan
- Discover God's presence in the mundane and the ordinary
- And many more life-changing lessons!



Rissa Singson-Kawpeng has been proclaiming God's Word through radio, TV and print media for over two decades. In her many years as a single woman, she traveled around the Philippines and the world to share Jesus with others. She has served extensively in youth and singles ministries and is an inspiration to many women in living godly lives.

Today, Rissa is a wife and mother, and continues to give hope and encouragement to many.

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Rissa Singson-Kawpeng

CONFESSIONS OF AN IMPATIENT BRIDE

From the Editor-in-Chief of *Kerygma*,
the Country's No.1 Catholic Inspirational Magazine

Confessions of an

Impatient Bride

Godly Lessons
You Can Learn
While Waiting
for Mr. Right

Rissa Singson-Kawpeng

Foreword by Bo Sanchez

To Chris and Charlize



Inspiring You to Live a Fantastic Life

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RISSA SINGSON-KAWPENG

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This is a *KERYGMA* collection book.
These writings first appeared in *KERYGMA*, a Catholic inspirational magazine, as monthly articles written by Rissa Singson-Kawpeng in her regular column, *Just Breathe*.

Layout and design by Rey de Guzman

Foreword

If you're a single woman searching for answers to life's complicated questions, this book is for you.

Years ago, when Rissa took on the job as editor of Kerygma magazine, she was still single. But this beautiful woman who was in her mid-30s (but who still looked like she was in her 20s!) wanted to get married. She felt this was God's call for her. So she prayed to God for a husband.

It wasn't easy. Being her friend, I witnessed the roller-coaster ride she was on. Rissa went through a couple of failed relationships, bucket-loads of tears and many days when she'd rather hide beneath her blanket rather than face another day of despair.

Until she found Chris. And as they say, the rest is happy history. They now have a lovely family with a cute baby girl who is utterly adorable.

Indeed, the wait was worth it.

That is why this book will inspire you.

It will teach you to hold on and persevere in your trust in God.

Rissa will open her heart to you, and she'll pour out her struggles, her stories, and her faith in God. She'll inspire you with her message — that God has great plans for you far better than whatever you can dream of for yourself.

Read this book.

Be very inspired.

May your dreams come true,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bo Sanchez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Bo Sanchez

An Introduction

This Is the Story of a Dash

It's just a short stroke — a small mark — but it felt like forever before it got attached to my name.

She was four years old when she had her first crush. He was a bespectacled boy named Nestor and he was her classmate in Nursery.

They had a tradition in that small preschool that whenever it was anyone's birthday, the whole class would line up to kiss the celebrant.

One day, it was Nestor's birthday. After singing the birthday song, all the kids made a beeline to greet him. As the little girl's turn approached, her heart pounded with excitement. When she found herself in front of her crush, she kissed him and was instantly in heaven. As soon as she landed back to earth, she scooted to the back of the line again for another kiss. She did this for a few more times until she was the only one left in line.

This little girl was me.

With a history like this, it's not hard to guess that I'd grow up to be a dreamy romantic who couldn't wait for her Prince Charming to show up.

I was impatient to grow up. I couldn't wait to turn 13 because then I'd be a teenager who, I thought, would be ready for love. But then my mom handed down the no-boyfriend-till-you're-16 rule, and so I was in a hurry to be Sweet Sixteen.

Then I came to know Jesus in a personal way and joined a Catholic Community. No boyfriend and no suitors until you're 23, our norms dictated.

Again, I was raring to be 23.

Suffice it to say that it took many, many more years of waiting and longing for Mr. Right to come my way.

By then, my age was way past the numbers on the calendar.

Years rolled by mercilessly, leaving me still loveless and aging. By then, I was as old as the numbers on a thermometer.

A couple more years passed and my age equaled the temperature of a slight fever. And still I was single!

Aaaaargh!

My desperate prayer was, “Lord, please send the man You will for me to marry before I get a convulsion!”

Thank God, just when my age reached the temperature of a full-blown fever, I finally walked down the aisle.

So now my name has a dash.

People often take note of my new family name — and almost always fumble over it! — but hardly ever notice that little dash between Singson and Kawpeng.

Unknown to them, it represents my long journey from singlehood to married life.

The following pages contain these stories and the lessons I learned from my experiences. These articles first appeared in my column in *Kerygma*, the no. 1 inspirational magazine in the Philippines, from 2004 to 2009.

The lessons before each chapter are actually my confessions of faith as I got to know the Lord and myself more.

Some of these stories are serious. Some are funny. And a few are downright embarrassing.

As you read through these pages, I invite you to share in the struggles, frustrations and victories of an impatient woman who couldn't wait to be a bride.

In the end, I hope that my experiences will help you to know Jesus a little better as you forge your own path from point A to point B.

Rissa Singson-Kawpeng

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Lesson #1: Read my lips: God loves you.

Decoding X, Y, Z

We were at an afternoon party at my best friend's house, a group of adolescents with raging hormones. I was only 11 then but my best friend, who was a year older and more mature than me, was matchmaking me with the cutest guy in the group. (You know my type: *tisoy*, can qualify for a Close Up commercial; turns bronze when tanned, not red like a tomato.)

So my crush and I were standing by the buffet table near the swimming pool. We were exchanging small talk. (What can you expect when you're 11?) Then he leaned towards me, his tantalizing, dark brown eyes gazing into mine. With all the self-control I could muster, I managed to keep the flutter of my eyes to a minimum.

He whispered something into my ear. My heart leaped out of my ribcage and pounded so loudly I didn't hear what he said.

"Come again?" I asked as I smiled back sweetly.

"X, Y, Z," he mumbled tenderly.

Sweet nothings. Innocent me immediately concluded it was a code. I deciphered he was saying, "I love you!"

"Huh?" I asked again coyly, baiting him to come right out and express his feelings.

"X, Y, Z," he repeated, more sure of himself.

"X, Y, Z? What's that?" I asked, feigning innocence, all this while keeping my batting eyelashes from deliberately making "beautiful eyes" at him.

"X, Y, Z!" he replied forcefully this time, "eXcuse me, Your Zipper is open!"

My eyes popped out of its sockets before I managed to direct my gaze toward my pants. And there, in all its glory was my unzipped fly!

I went ballistic. Like a stray rocket with a lit fuse, I went out

of control and ran off to take cover — under the buffet table. As if an open zipper wasn't bad enough, I had to embarrass myself even more by ending up down there.

OK, quit laughing. End of story. Now to redeem this pathetic tale.

God's presence envelops you. He spreads His love like a banner over you and whispers in your ear, "I love you."

"Ha?" you reply unbelievably. Thinking it's a code, you discern that His message means He's asking you to measure up to His love. So you increase your one-hour prayer time to two, add on more novenas and double your tithes and love offerings.

"I love you," the Lord says to you on another occasion. You squirm as you reply, "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening." And the "revelation" hits you. God is asking you to be celibate for life, to become an ascetic and join a religious congregation, or give up your dream career so you can serve full-time in a ministry. It's so far from what's in your heart but you know that doing anything less would displease Him. So you give up the life that you know, pack your bags and leave behind all that's near and dear to you.

The Lord speaks to you again. "I love you." By now you're so afraid to find out what He means. What will He ask of me this time, you ponder anxiously. And, quoting Teresa of Avila, you say, "God, if this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few of them!"

BRAKES! Stop right there. Now backtrack.

When God says, "I love you," He means just that.

No strings attached.

No conditions you have to meet before He gives it.

No hidden meanings.

No codes.

He loves you. Period.

Unzipped fly and all.

It is precisely in this that God proves His love for us: that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Lesson #2: There's one thing you have to do to experience God's love — just breathe.

Under Water

Breathing. It's the most natural thing to do. I don't even think about breathing... unless I'm scuba diving. That's when breathing takes on a whole new perspective.

Yesterday, I went down for the first time in 15 months. Experienced divers would say, "That's OK, it's like riding a bike. You never forget." Well, not for me. Scuba diving is a little bit more complicated than that. If I bike and forget to balance, I just fall and maybe get a scraped knee. But if I dive and something goes wrong while I'm 90 feet under water... hmmm... now that's a problem.

I geared up and made sure I told the dive master (DM) that I hadn't been diving for almost a year and a half. He assured me we'd have an easy dive and then reoriented me with the hand signals. Then our party of five headed for the Pinnacle, a coral reef wall just three minutes by boat from our resort.

I'm sure the Pinnacle was a sight to behold. Unfortunately, I never made it there. The remnants of a cold that I was hoping wouldn't give me any problems kept me from going deep. After descending to 25 feet, I couldn't equalize and my ears just couldn't take the pressure. I signaled to the DM that I would just stay by the anchor line and explore the corals there by myself. After he made it clear that I was not to let go of the line, they left me.

All alone under 14.7 pounds per square inch of water, prayer came more naturally than breathing. Instantly, the corals became a sanctuary where the Lord and I communed. I marveled at the vibrant colors of the corals, the bright yellows and electric blues that the fishes came painted in, the various shapes and sizes of the creatures that swam past me. *Praise You, Lord...*

As more thoughts turned into prayer, I felt that familiar Voice speaking to me. "You put more emphasis on how you should love

Me and not enough on how much I love you.” His word left me momentarily breathless — not exactly a good thing when you’re under water. I checked my gauge to see how much air I had left in my tank. A conversation like this could take time...

After I made sure I had ample air left, I pondered on what the Lord had just said and realized that I was guilty. Guilty of being overly concerned that my prayer life wasn’t “active” enough. Guilty that I exerted more energy on the treadmill than on serving the Lord. Guilty that at a time when even non-religious people were acquiring purpose-driven lives, my goals seemed so domestic.

The Lord had to take me under water to reiterate that there was no height or depth where His love could not reach me. On sea or on land, all I have to do is *just breathe*. The rest is up to Him.

For the spirit of God has made me, the breath of the Almighty keeps me alive. (Job 33:4)