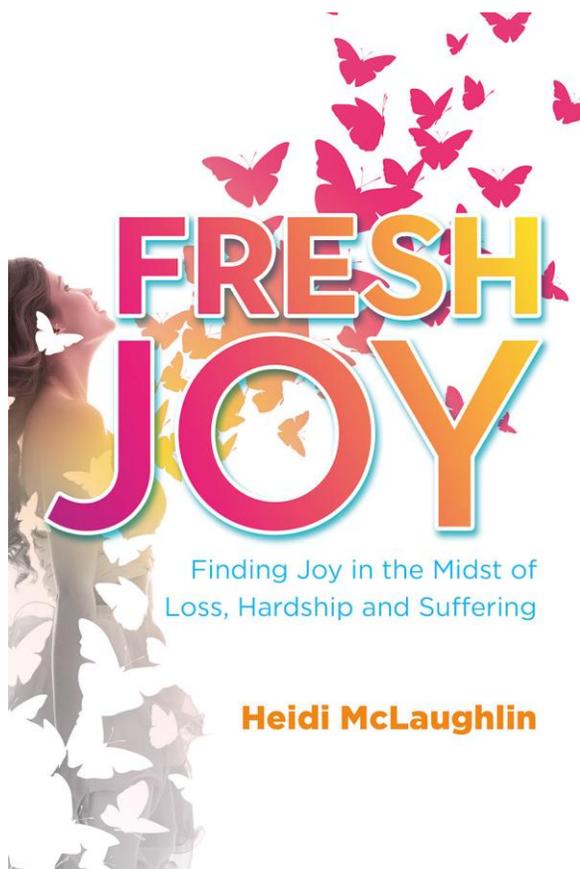


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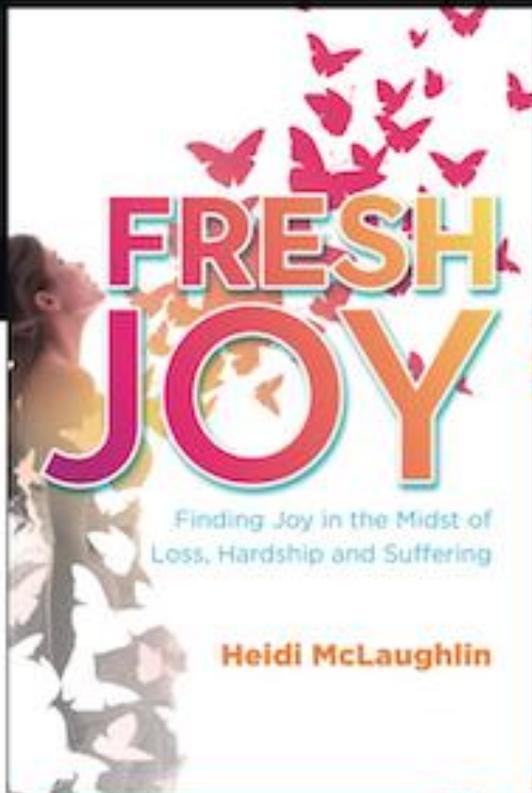
For

## ***FRESH JOY***

***Finding Joy in the Midst of Loss,  
Hardship and Suffering***



Connect with the author at:  
[www.heartconnection.ca](http://www.heartconnection.ca)



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We live in a time where world events and personal stresses have left many in a joy-depleted state. Their lives are full of fear, confusion, anxiety, restlessness and they have to admit they have lost their joy. For Heidi McLaughlin, following the death of two beloved husbands, her joy vanished. Determined to recapture it and overcome her PTSD and grief, and turn her weeping into joy, she began a relentless three-year quest for joy-reading about it, studying the Bible and asking God many solemn questions.

***Fresh Joy: Finding Joy in the Midst of Loss, Hardship and Suffering***  
by Heidi McLaughlin  
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In her new book *Fresh Joy: Finding Joy in the Midst of Loss, Hardship and Suffering* Heidi shows how anyone can regain their joy, grow it and keep it. As Heidi discovered "joy is not exclusive; and it's available to everyone." It is not achieved or dependent on circumstances or feelings but is a gift from God and is received from our connection to God and his endless resources. Have you lost your joy? Then this book is for you and will lovingly guide you into an unimagined, glorious new day of *Fresh Joy*.

Heidi McLaughlin is an international speaker and author of 10 books, 6 anthologies and many articles. For over twenty-eight years she has guided women to grow in their spiritual journey through teaching studies, mentoring and through her talks at conferences and retreats. For the past twenty years she has travelled across Canada, the United States and internationally, to teach and speak to women about how they can connect to God to find their full potential in Jesus Christ. She is affiliated with the Word Guild, Women Together, International Messengers and is a member of the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association.

HEADSHOTS AND PROMO  
PICTURES  
FOR AUTHOR  
*HEIDI MCLAUGHLIN*



# Suggested Interview Questions For Heidi McLaughlin, author of *FRESH JOY*

*Finding Joy in the Midst of Loss, Hardship and Suffering*

**Q. What qualifies you to say we can have joy in the midst of our suffering?**

- **A.** I have been widowed twice and I understand the pain of suffering. My first husband died two weeks before Christmas playing basketball in 1994 and my second husband died while going for a cup of coffee in our kitchen in 2016. Experiencing that kind of grief twice is unfathomable. But I was able to find nuggets of joy in the midst of that grief by intentionally seeking it. Joy is a fruit of the spirit and lives within us and is available 24/7, but we have to tap into it. We tap into it by acknowledging that it is the resource of Heaven and we have to ask for it, and secondly by entering into the presence of God and Heaven through praise and thanksgiving. At first it comes slowly and in snippets, but the more we seek it and exercise it, soon it flows more often and freely.

**Q. You call thankfulness the “superpower of joy.” What do you mean by that?**

- **A.** I am making that statement through God’s word and my own discovery. The Bible tells us in numerous places that we are to be thankful, that we are to cultivate it and that it is God’s will for us. Whenever the Bible tells us it is “God’s will for us.” (1 Thess. 5:16-18), there is a valuable truth for us to seek and enjoy. When we carry grief and hardships around in our spirit, those feelings consume us and that’s all we can focus on. But, when we take the time to stop to be thankful and remember God’s grace, his goodness and all the good things we already have, it doesn’t change our circumstances but it shifts our spirits into a different way of thinking and observing our problem. In my discovery I’ve found that by being thankful in every circumstance, it gives God permission to open the portals of Heaven and pour out his joy. I’ve found no greater or easier way to access joy.

- Q. How did you come to terms with the fact that not only have you been widowed twice, but God did not answer your prayers for Jack's healing?**
- **A.** After the death of my first husband Dick, I knew that if I was going to survive and move forward, I had to come to terms with all my questions of "why God?" I've had to accept the fact that there is an "upper story" and a "lower story" and that is explained in Chapter 2. After Dick's death God took me to Isaiah 55:8,9 where God clearly told me: "Heidi, don't try to figure me out, because my ways are beyond anything you can even imagine. Trust me with your life, I know what I am doing." I have to trust God that he answered my prayer in accordance with his perfect plans for Jack's and my life. I don't understand today, but I know that one day I will.
- Q. Part of your PTSD was caused by your regret of not calling an ambulance when Jack had a dizzy spell. How does anyone find healing for their "if only's?"**
- **A.** Yes, that was an incredibly painful part of my grief journey. "If only" I'd called an ambulance when Jack had his first dizzy spell, would he still be alive today? Haunting, gripping pain. Through the story of Lazarus God taught me that resurrection life is available to us at all times and we don't need to walk around in our grave clothes. Through counselling, prayer and obedience I let go of my "if only" by allowing Jesus into my story and pain. I did this by being honest with my regret, by recognizing that all our days have been numbered and that it was time for Jack's graduation to Heaven. I did not cause Jack's death and I had to forgive myself and accept Jesus' resurrection life.
- Q. You tell us that relationships bring us our greatest joy and our deepest pain. Why even bother with the pain of relationships?**
- **A.** Oh the joy of belonging to a tribe or group of friends where we can be vulnerable, authentic and laugh until the tears flow down our cheeks. But we all know it doesn't always happen like that. I believe God has put certain people in our lives to "sandpaper" us, to rub us the wrong way so that God can unveil our faults and ugliness. God does that to make us into more loving, kind and generous people. When we see relationship pain

as a gift, rather than something to break away from, in the end it will bring us more joy.

**Q. There is nothing pleasant about walking through the desert or being in a fire. How does that bring us joy?**

- **A.** In our world of needing comfort and quick fixes, it's hard to embrace the fact that God does his greatest work in our darkest moments. That is the place where we are vulnerable, where we need comfort and often cry out to God. This is the place where we recognize that we cannot control life, that we are helpless and we need God's strength and wisdom. Once we are set free from our self-sufficiency and find peace that God is working out our best life, we can find peace and joy is right on it's heels.

**Q. Many people feel they are stuck in their humdrum life. How do we get unstuck?**

- **A.** To get anything we want we have to "plant" what we want. For instance, if we want to grow a flower, we have to plant a flower seed. If we want to grow corn, we have to grow a corn seed. If we want to get unstuck and find joy, we have to go out and plant some joy. If we want blessings, we have to bless someone. If we want purpose, we have to go and serve. In God's Kingdom, anything we want, first of all we have to give it away. Then eventually it will come back us because we reap what we sow.

**Q. Loneliness seems to be an escalating joyless epidemic. What's a person to do?**

- **A.** You are correct; in fact it's so invasive that the UK has appointed a "Minister of Loneliness." Sadly, you and I are the only ones who can change our status of loneliness. Loneliness is dark, sad, draining and depressing. The first step is to "want to" get out of it and then do something about it. Ask for help. Reach out to a church. Find a Library reading group. Start a recreational activity. On a particularly lonely day I would walk in the downtown area and smile at people and say "hello." Even that helped. We have to look up into other people's faces for a human connection to heal our lonely hearts. No one will do for us, we have to step out and just do it. It's hard but the end result is that we will find that joy. Joy flows through our spirits because we are created for connection first with God and then each other.