



PRESS KIT

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to sound like you've read the book



A MESSAGE FROM JOANNE

I learned at a very young age that a home full of anger, divorce and disrespect was not the way I wanted to begin my marriage, so at age 19 I drew a line in the sand and declared I would change my family tree. But that took determination and intentional living. I had a lot to learn and I eagerly sought out resources to head me in the right direction.

Creating a Haven of Peace doesn't take a lot of money. It doesn't take a beautiful new home or all the *stuff* we think we need in order to be happy. You can begin building a peaceful and loving environment immediately by following the principles and insights I lay out in the chapters in this book.

Creating the proper ambience, practicing being kind rather than right and maintaining the proper hierarchy in the family are only a few of the many ways to loving and lasting relationships.

Distraction and disconnect, chaos and busyness, disappointment and frustration are realities that cover our days like a blanket of smog. Intentionally wiping the cares of the world from our shoes at the front gate and stepping into a sanctuary where love is unconditional, peace is the norm and laughter is abundant can make life a grand adventure in spite of what is happening in the world at large.

Joanne F. Miller

Joanne@Joannemiller.com



SUMMARY

“SANCTUARY! SANCTUARY! SANCTUARY!” yells Quasimodo (The Hunchback of Notre Dame) as he enters the cathedral to escape his tormentors. Sanctuary: A place of asylum and immunity. A place of peace and unconditional love. A place to escape from the everyday stressors of life. An attainable – and affordable – retreat accomplished through intentional living.

The image of a healthy, loving and supportive family is being ignored. The busyness and chaos in today’s society is taking its toll on families. While divorce continues at a high rate and depression among women is climbing, there is hope for those who feel lost.

Artist, speaker, blogger and author Joanne F. Miller candidly shares with readers a formula for creating a sanctuary in their home and how to escape from the busyness and chaos surrounding their life and family today.

Her intentional living message explains to readers how they can create a place to escape from the everyday stressors of life and how they can live a life they desire. They will discover how:

- Incorporating the five senses can turn a home into a sanctuary of peace and love that supersedes the “security” that many think money can provide.
- Relationship trumps all in building a foundation for peace.
- They can change their own life story.

Joanne and Dan Miller (www.48Days.com) have been married for nearly a half century. By telling her own stories of struggle around finances, family circumstances and job security, Joanne shows readers how they too can Create a Haven of Peace – a sanctuary – they long for, desire and envision in their hearts.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



In beginning her own marriage, **Joanne F. Miller** determined to change her family tree and break free from the cycle of divorce, poverty and sometimes violent behaviors of her upbringing. She intentionally laid out a pattern of peace and unconditional love for her family and that decision has served her well.

Creating a Haven of Peace describes the decorating ideas, meals, games and celebrations that built her family's respect, laughter and lasting relationships. She has found these principles to be easily shared and implemented by a growing audience of grateful families. Joanne's examples of how to create an atmosphere of peace and love in spite of

your circumstances or bank account will equip you with the tools to make your own home a sanctuary for anyone who enters.

Wife of 48 years to popular author Dan Miller (www.48Days.com), she has been his raving fan, speaker at their live events and an integral piece to the success of their thriving 48 Days community. She is an accomplished artist, speaker, blogger and author of five children's books and co-author of *Be Your Finest Art*. She finds the best fodder for her writing is right in front of her— being the active mother of three grown children and grandmother to 14 very creative and adventure-seeking grandchildren.

Joanne can be found at Joanne@Joannemiller.com



WHY JOANNE'S MESSAGE IS IMPORTANT

Being lost can lead to divorce

- The American divorce rate today is nearly twice that of 1960. In fact, for the average couple marrying for the first time in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation remains between 40 and 50 percent.¹

Being lost can lead to depression

- Drug-related emergency department visits involving suicide attempts among women aged 45 to 64 doubled between 2005-2011. (from 15,942 visits in 2005 to 33,188 visits in 2011).²

Close relationships matter

- The quality of close relationships matter. Living in the midst of conflict is really bad for our health. High-conflict marriages...without much affection turn out to be very bad for our health, perhaps worse than getting divorced.³
- Social connections are good for us...loneliness kills. At any given time, more than one in five Americans will report that they're lonely.⁴
- Those who were the most satisfied in their relationships at age 50 were the healthiest at age 80. Those who were in unhappy relationships, on the days when they reported more physical pain, it was magnified by more emotional pain.⁵
- Good relationships don't just protect our bodies, they protect our brains. People who are in relationships where they really feel they can count on the other person in times of need, (their) memories stay sharper longer.⁶

Choices matter

- The lifestyle choices people make in midlife are a more important predictor of how long you live.⁷

We're living longer

- According to an Urban Institute analysis of Social Security Administration data, "Women who will turn 65 in 2030 can expect to live four years longer than those who turned 65 in 1970," (the life expectancy for men at age 65 increased by six years over the same time period).⁸



INTERVIEW TOPICS/FOCUS

Being newly married, joining motherhood can change things

In our interview, we can talk about how young women who are newly married or have joined motherhood can handle all the changes going on in and around them.

How do you maintain your identity? Can you gain control of your home? What about the financial burden that comes with a growing family? Will your relationship with your spouse grow? All of these questions can lead a young woman to feel overwhelmed and lost.

Former First Lady, Barbara Bush, said, “Your success as a family...our success as a society...depends on not what happens in the White House. But what happens in your house.”

No matter the circumstances – financial, family history, job security – women who feel lost can create a haven of peace by implementing “intentional living” actions. Joanne believes it starts in the home.

Without taking purposeful actions, Joanne believes the feeling of being lost can spin out of control and lead to an unfavorable outcome such as divorce. The American divorce rate today is nearly twice that of 1960. In fact, for the average couple marrying for the first time in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation remains between 40 and 50 percent.⁹

Book Excerpt (pg. 13):

Decades of love bring on differing manifestations of love. They may not include all the tingles and butterflies and crescendos of orchestral music, but I challenge you to never forget why you fell in love with the one you love. Because, chances are, the very reasons you did are often the very attributes that cause you to bristle and pull your hair out in frustration. Funny how that happens.

Book Excerpt (pg. 21):

When it comes to parenting, we have always covered each other's back. We have agreed on a family mission statement, have a firm value system by which we parent, and we support one another in how that is carried out. Undermining one another's efforts would be counter-productive and destructive. And there is one important point we both firmly agree on that we feel undermines many marriages: A peaceful and loving home is not controlled by the children!



Approaching the empty nest

In our interview, we can talk about how women who are soon-to-be empty nesters can regain their identity, rekindle lost dreams, and return to their true selves.

Life doesn't just happen. Life on purpose does. In her book, Joanne shares eight intentional action steps women can take to create a haven of peace. She can talk in detail about what she has done and what others can do to create the life they desire. Pick one or a few from the action steps (listed below) and Joanne will be happy to share her thoughts.

1. Make time
2. Work to regain romance
3. Find common interests
4. Find new friends
5. Learn to touch
6. Play games together
7. Find yourself
8. Keep your sense of humor

Book Excerpt (pgs. 5-6):

No one comes into marriage without some baggage. Some have such heavy baggage that it takes years of therapy to unload it all. Interestingly, I wasn't even aware I had much baggage till long after I was married, had children and faced empty nest. At that point, in my early 50's, I really took time to evaluate who I was; what I brought to the table as a human being. I hadn't had much time to think about it before that because I was far too busy taking care of everyone around me; feeling if I wasn't strong for everyone and making their lives easy and happy, I was not doing my job properly. Through some intense therapy and soul searching I discovered I didn't know how to be happy except when I made others around me happy. I didn't know how to just be me. Be happy on my own.

On a trip to Chicago soon after our last child left home for college, my husband, Dan made a statement revealing a truth that hit me like a sledgehammer. I love Chicago at Christmas. It is truly magical. But everything I saw. . .the twinkling lights, the carolers, the window treatments, the light-falling snow...found me exclaiming, "Oh, I wish the kids were here to see this!" Finally, Dan asked me, "Can't you enjoy anything without the kids? Can you enjoy it for us? For you?" I realized he was pointing out a very valid fact. I simply didn't know how to enjoy my life without seeing it through the excitement of other people's lives. It was a pattern I had a hard time breaking and took a few years of introspection, counseling, reading and a concerted effort to discover who I truly was and how God had uniquely prepared me for the life I was to live.



Retirement and wondering what's next

In our interview, we can talk about how professional women who are approaching retirement or have recently retired can gain clarity on what's next for them and live happily ever after.

It's simply the next chapter. It's easy to say, but hard to embrace. We're living longer so having an idea on what you want to do in your retirement years is important. It's about "intentional living" and living a life you desire.

According to an Urban Institute analysis of Social Security Administration data, "Women who will turn 65 in 2030 can expect to live four years longer than those who turned 65 in 1970," (the life expectancy for men at age 65 increased by six years over the same time period).¹⁰

Book Excerpt (pg. 108):

I am a firm believer that happiness begins inside one's head and inside one's home and family. I know there are those who have no family or whose family is so messed up it seems impossible to find joy in the dysfunction. However, I have also seen how one can break away from those influences, make a decided effort to create their own happiness, and still live happily ever after. It is always a choice.

I take life seriously. I believe in being productive and hard-working. I used to think I took it too seriously and it bothered me a great deal. I felt the real need to embrace life rather than just endure life. I took action to find resources to help me learn to travel in the right direction. I read books to help me see life with new eyes. I saw movies that impacted me positively. I made a practice of incorporating fun and laughter into our days as a family and as a wife. I am not willing to settle for mediocrity. I want to know when I pass from this mortal flesh that I have no regrets about what I have missed. So I choose to embrace life with gusto and happiness.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What prompted you to write *Creating a Haven of Peace*?
2. Tell us what the book is about, who should read it and why.
3. Tell us how you and Dan met and how you made the decision to intentionally create the home and marriage you have had now for almost five decades.



4. You mention your home is a Sanctuary. Can you explain what you mean by this?
5. When asked the one word you feel is a critical aspect of a healthy relationship you quickly say, “RESPECT” and you mention this many times throughout your book. Can you share an example of how showing respect might have caused you to “eat humble pie?”
6. You have another motto you mention in the book, don’t you?
7. You relate how you have studied personality styles and how that has enhanced your marriage as well as other relationships in your life. Can you tell us about that?
8. You tell in detail how a seemingly disastrous event in your marriage led to the best education you could have ever received. Can you tell us about that event and why you determined it was an education?
9. How one handles change is often the very issue that creates havoc in a relationship. Can you comment on how you have dealt with change in your marriage?
10. Will you share how you implement the five senses to create the ambiance of peace and love you want for your home?
11. *“It’s never too late for a new beginning.”* Is a quotation from your husband in your chapter on living happily ever after. In that chapter you give some great suggestions on how one can begin now to create a more lasting, loving home and marriage, whether they are newlyweds or long married. Will you please share some of those ideas with us?
12. The last section of your book contains comments from your three children and what they remember most during those growing up years. You said none of them knew what the other had written until they saw it printed in the book. What stood out to you as the underlying theme of what they contributed and how did that make you feel?
13. Where can our audience get their copy of Creating a Haven of Peace?

¹ The State of Our Unions, 2012; [Social Indicators of Marital Health & Wellbeing](#).

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (August 7, 2014). [The DAWN Report](#): Emergency Department Visits for Drug-Related Suicide Attempts among Middle-Aged Adults Aged 45 to 64. Rockville, MD.

³ Harvard University Health Services Grant Study; [TED Talk](#), Nov. 2015, *What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness* delivered by Robert Waldinger.

⁴ Harvard University Health Services Grant Study; [TED Talk](#), Nov. 2015, *What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness* delivered by Robert Waldinger.

⁵ Harvard University Health Services Grant Study; [TED Talk](#), Nov. 2015, *What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness* delivered by Robert Waldinger.

⁶ Harvard University Health Services Grant Study; [TED Talk](#), Nov. 2015, *What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness* delivered by Robert Waldinger.

⁷ Harvard Gazette, [Decoding Keys to a Healthy Life](#), Feb. 2013.

⁸ As reported by Emily Brandon, U.S. News & World Report online article; Feb. 12, 2016, [5 Baby Boomer Retirement Trends](#).

⁹ The State of Our Unions, 2012; [Social Indicators of Marital Health & Wellbeing](#).

¹⁰ As reported by Emily Brandon, U.S. News & World Report online article; Feb. 12, 2016, [5 Baby Boomer Retirement Trends](#)