



CHAPTER 1



Enjoy Being God's Golden Girl

What would I do without my girlfriends? They support me, counsel me, take care of me, tell me my slip is showing, challenge me, recommend good books, call me long distance or email, share secrets and memories, cry and laugh and pray with me, listen to my crazy ideas, and travel with me. We visit the thrift stores together and on Tuesdays wander through the Ross store where they say we can “dress for less.” (Tuesday is senior discount day. We call it “old ladies’ day”!) We eat Hula Pie and Puka Dogs*, sing and sit next to each other in church, watch TV together, and go sunning and snorkeling at the beach.

My girlfriends are all different. But we have one thing in common. We’re all getting older, and we’re all having to reinvent ourselves, as forces beyond our control demand that we adjust.

*Hula Pie is a huge pie-shaped wedge of macadamia nut ice cream slathered with hot fudge syrup and generously topped with whipped cream. *Puka* Dogs are hotdogs with Hawaiian relishes (like coconut, pineapple, mango, and lilikoi) stuffed in a bun with a hole in it. *Puka* means “hole” in Hawaiian.

We're all coping differently with the grandkids and also pain, medical challenges, and the loss of loved ones—you might say we're being refined, like gold! I like to think that we're God's golden girls becoming who He has designed us to be! And I know, even though we seldom talk about it, that in the quiet of the night we all realize that the longer we live, the closer we come to the time when we, too, will check out of this old world. We want to be ready to meet our King, our Creator, and our God.

Until that time, however, we are determined not to let troubles get the best of us. We know what the ideal is: the pure gold of God's will! But the fact is, we're all a little tarnished. And so we ask, "God, considering what I've been through, what is Your ideal for me now? Who do You want me to be?" Then our job is to believe that God can take our blemishes and polish them out so we will be as good as new—if that's His plan for us! Or He may want to highlight those blemishes to show the universe that despite what Satan has tried to do to us—we can be faithful like Job!

We know God has plans for us, but at times we wonder why He doesn't come right out and tell us what those plans are in a "burning bush" experience. Why do we find ourselves stumbling around in the dark of uncertainty when what we want is to be confidently walking in the light?

I've wondered a lot about this. When my husband died, I thought I was prepared since he had experienced a life-threatening stroke twenty years before, and I knew he was living on borrowed time. But facing the reality of suddenly being "alone," I took an emotional nosedive. I lost all motivation. I didn't know who I was. No longer was I a loving wife who took care of her husband. In fact, I no longer felt called to a speaking ministry—and I turned down dozens of appointments using as an excuse the fact that I now lived thousands of miles away on a little island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and the time and cost of travel was so great that surely they could find someone else.

Then came the invitation from Perth. When I told my girlfriend Brenda Walsh that I didn't feel called to speak anymore and had turned down the call, she literally read me the riot act. "You have a gift. God expects you to use it. I want you to email those people immediately and tell them that you've changed your mind." It didn't help that my pastor, Douglas Na'a, who is from "down-under," felt the same way. "Kay," he said, "you've got to go. God can't direct you if you refuse to do what you're called to do. When you give those meetings, you'll know immediately if the Holy Spirit is still calling you. After your trip to Perth, if you still feel like quitting, I will accept your decision—but not now!"

Their counsel was not what I wanted to hear, but I took a deep breath and wrote the email saying that I had changed my mind and would be happy to accept the invitation to speak in Australia! (I couldn't have faced my girlfriend and my pastor if I ignored their counsel.) I was expecting that my contact in Perth had moved on and made other arrangements. Instead, he was excited I was coming. *Then, believe it or not, my own attitude changed.* Suddenly, I looked forward to the appointment. A week later, as if to confirm my decision, God sent me an invitation to speak at a mainland camp meeting—something I hadn't done in years!

I may be in my seventies, but I realize I'm still a work in progress. I'm becoming the new me with a new vision and a new zest for life. I may never reach God's pure gold standard of excellence, but I can follow where God leads, do my best, and let His Holy Spirit do the rest.

A number of girlfriends have come to visit me since I lost Jan, each trying to cope with the changes that life has forced upon them. In talking with them, I've come to the realization that there is *no one way to deal with loss and loneliness and growing older*, but it sure helps if we have girlfriends to listen to us, to laugh with us, and to encourage us to continue the journey. Their faith in the fact that *God is still in control* bolsters my faith. Their words

of wisdom have been priceless to me. That's why I now feel called to share with my girlfriends across the world what I've learned.

So my precious friend, I want to tell you that although you are growing older, *now is not the time to give up your dream of going for the gold*. Nothing that Satan can throw at you can stop you from becoming who God wants you to be—but you've got to believe that, and you've got to keep moving forward in His will day by day. As I've often said, "God can't move parked cars!"

So let's all look around and grab a girlfriend's hand and move forward together, encouraging each other to believe that we can be the women God has designed us to be: *God's golden girls!*