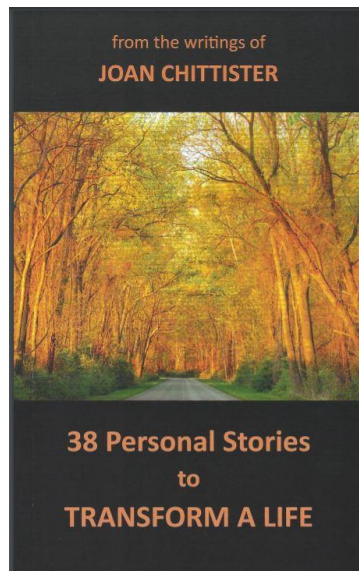


Discussion Questions

From the Writings of Joan Chittister: 38 Personal Stories to Transform a Life



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Respond to One or More of the Questions Below:

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Personal Story #2:** Carefully reflect on the last line of this story. Have you had a similar learning experience regarding patriarchal power? If yes, please share it.
- 2. Personal Story #3:** If you were having a conversation with Sister Joan and she said, “Happiness, I have learned, is a work in process.”(10) How would you respond to her?
- 3. Personal Story #6:** Sister Joan writes, “Every day we are meant to become more human. Every day we are meant to make humanity a glimpse of the Divine.”(17) What are one or two of your daily spiritual practices that make this real for you and how you relate to others?
- 4. Personal Story #7:** “Someday I will make a list of the photographs that have shaped my life,”(19) writes Sister Joan. Then she gives seven examples of what the photographs do for her. Choose 3-5 photographs that have shaped your life; then share several examples of how they help you endure, survive, thrive.
- 5. Personal Story #10:** “I have come by this time in life to realize that everyone has a hideout inside themselves,”(27) states Sister Joan. Do you? How does silence, solitude, contemplation nurture and protect that hideout?
- 6. Personal Story #12:** According to Sister Joan, “There is something in every life that must be confronted – death, social injustice, personal conscience. The only question is whether or not we’ll do it.”(32) Share something in your life that you have confronted in the past or are confronting currently.
- 7. Personal Story #13:** Share 3 people who, for you, embody “the qualities of God.” What has each taught you?

8. **Personal Story #15:** Re-read the opening paragraph of this story several times. What line or lines in it resonate most with you? Explain why.

9. **Personal Story #16:** “Silence, I knew now, confronts us with the hardest question of them all: What are we hiding from that our flight into noise holds at bay? (45) Can you answer this?

10. **Personal Story #18:** How do you practice hospitality? Is there any one person or group to whom you are “inhospitable?” Share why if you can.

11. **Personal Story #20:** Pray with the paragraph that begins, “Going into the self. . .” and closing with “We tend to the substance of our souls” (54) How do you relate to the challenges presented in this passage?

12. **Personal Story #25:** In this story Sister Joan asks herself, “Could a woman really be a Catholic at all?”(67) If you are Catholic, have you raised this question? What do you think of Sister Joan’s response? What is yours?

13. **Personal Story #26:** Do you agree or disagree with Sister Joan when she writes on page 70 that, “To suppress half of God’s creation in the name of God is a sin against the Holy Spirit for which we have no name.” Discuss.

14. **Personal Story #28:** Read the first sentence in this story more than once. Then share one of your “small moments of courage,” your “icons of possibility.”

15. **Personal Story #29:** What is one or more of the most meaningful sentences in this story for you? Why?

16. **Personal Story #31:** If you have had a pet companion or do even now, what has that pet taught you about playfulness and living your life more freely?

17. **Personal Story #32:** How have you dealt with certitude? With doubt? With your questions on your journey to union with God?

18. **Personal Story #33:** Sister Joan writes that “Darkness is a time of beginning again.”(93) Has this been true for you? How so?

19. **Personal Story #34:** How do you nurture “soul” in your life?

20. **Personal Story Overall:** Which of these 38 stories “to Transform Life” is the one that may transform you the most? Explain why.