

Deciding on Joy! My Journey from Breakup to Breakthrough in 30 Days

Stephanie D. Barnes, PhD

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Reviewed by Araceli Noriega for Reader Views (2/19)

Dr. Stephanie D. Barnes' self-help book, "Deciding on Joy! My journey from Breakup to Breakthrough in 30 Days," proposes to guide women through the necessary steps to come out of a heartbreak with resiliency and peace of mind. She uses a combination of journal entries, writing activities, positive affirmations, and powerful narrative to share her own experience as an example of recovery from divorce.

The author is able to demonstrate the way in which a person's will and faith in God can be enough to eventually alleviate the pain experienced after divorce. Furthermore, she shows readers that not only can one overcome heartbreak, it is also possible to gain empowerment through the process. Throughout her book, Dr. Barnes uses stirring language to passionately express all of the feelings associated with the ending of—and recovery from—a relationship. She employs powerful metaphors to captivate her audience as seen in the following excerpts:

"Revenge may be a dish best served cold, but ultimately you get the indigestion."

"Joy is a decision. It is a decision to be real and quit dealing in hope and start operating in the dirty truth—the dirty truth about you and the dirty truth about him."

She writes in such a way that the message is heard loud and clear, but with a gentle wit that embraces the reader in acceptance. Her journal entries poignantly lead each chapter. The effigies dispersed in between the narrative connect readers to the intuitive element of their recovery. Bravo, Dr. Barnes!

This guide is for readers of any age who have a strong sense of religious faith and a great work ethic. Dr. Barnes asks her readers to put in the work—emotionally, spiritually, and physically—to come out of this difficult time of their own volition. She uses a wide range of references, alluding to the work of artists from pop culture as well as classical styles in art and music.

I laughed out loud when Dr. Barnes asked, "Is our marriage Jesus?" (referencing the fact that her relationship had ended and then restarted three days later). I surmise most readers will relate to the break-up and reconciliation (and subsequent break-up) phase towards the end of a relationship. Her humorous take on the frustration of this aspect of the relationship is a welcome description as the whole process can be emotionally draining.

I recommend this book to readers who are looking for an uplifting and motivating take on how to manage all of the challenges that come with the end of a stable and loving marriage (or otherwise long-term romantic relationship). Dr. Barnes covers all relevant aspects including handling the financial settlement and how to tell family members that the marriage is over.

In “Deciding on Joy! My journey from Breakup to Breakthrough in 30 Days,” Dr. Stephanie D. Barnes provides readers with a resource that teaches them that with faith in God and the will to overcome, they can thrive after a difficult break-up. Dr. Barnes’ book provides a much-needed strategy for anyone seeking a break from the tumultuous aftermath of the ending of a meaningful romantic relationship. Readers will find much solace in the plan of action proposed in this movingly written publication.