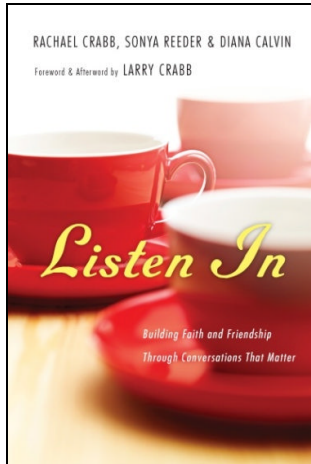




BOOK EXCERPT



Listen In: Building Faith and Friendship Through Conversations That Matter

Available March 2015

\$16, 176 pages, paperback
978-0-8308-4316-9

How can we use words to connect with each other in ways that can do deep and lasting good?

In *Listen In* Rachael Crabb, Sonya Reeder and Diana Calvin, friends in ministry, take up this question of words in a creative and informative way, providing model dialogues with one another exploring the deep issues of their lives. You will be informed by their journeys and learn how you can start similar meaningful conversations with your friends.

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Have Conversations That Matter

Why *Listen In* Is in Dialogue Form

We want our readers to join in our conversation, and we want you to start your own conversations with your friends. We want you to relate to us as women who also struggle, and who long for your beauty to be discovered and revealed. Together, we can move toward becoming women who talk with one another in ways that help us live for kingdom purposes instead of our self-serving desires and agendas.

– Taken from the introduction

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Mother had left for the hospital two weeks before to deliver Lowell, and he was one of two newborns to survive a staph infection that took the lives of seventeen other babies. I (Rachael) didn't know any of this; all I knew was that I missed my mother. And now they were coming home!

The ambulance arrived quietly at our home, but I did not see it. I was not peering out the living room window onto the street, nor was I standing on the porch to watch my mother and baby brother arrive on a stretcher. Instead my ten and fourteen year-old sisters, who were making sure I was out of the way, sat waiting on the dining room table (yes, *on* the table) with one on either side of me.

I heard the front door open, and I could not wait to see Mother! At first I could not see her, but as they brought her down the hallway to the stairs, she came into view. I could hardly sit still, and I yelled out, "Mother, Mother!" Immediately two hands covered my mouth, and my sisters said, "Quiet! The baby is sleeping." It was as if they had put a pin in my party balloon.

I wish my sisters would have held me on their laps or acknowledged that I was excited. Instead, that day they covered my mouth and silenced me. That day I lost my voice, and for years to come I stayed silent. This single event began to shape my life, my journey, and began to incorrectly define who I would become.

Staying on the Surface

Thursday evening at Joanie's ranch.

Rachael: Before we began, you, Sonya, asked how I was feeling starting this conversation about losing my voice. You noted that losing my voice was the catalyst to the rest of my story. That incident with my sisters that I shared with you set me up for everything that has affected me in a negative way, yet right now I do not have a fear of talking because I can tend to stay on the surface. My comfort zone is to tell a story about someone else in detail

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***Shares model dialogues between three women of different generations**

***Discussion questions accompany each chapter to allow the reader to unfold her own story**

***Includes guidelines for starting your own listening group**

***Afterword by Larry Crabb emphasizes how men can read this book alongside women**

"In Listen In, my dear friend Rachael Crabb has given us a glimpse into the way that she builds deep friendships with women. The powerful and transformative conversations between the three women in this book provide a model and an inspiration for those of us who long for real spiritual connection. I highly recommend this book for individuals, prayer partners and small groups."

—Elisa Morgan, author of *The Beauty of Broken* and cohost of *Discover the Word*

before sharing the depths of me. But I don't mind being pulled back from the surface when I trust the hearts behind the questions.

Diana: So are you uncomfortable about where we might take you?

Rachael: No, excited. I've known each of you for some time, in different ways. So I think I'm excited for where we're going to go with this conversation.

Sonya: I wonder what it is like for you to tell that story now.

Rachael: Until we started this whole process, I never even thought of this story. Writing this memory gave me the opportunity to call my sisters and ask what they recalled about the night Lowell came home. They each told the story I remembered, but added things I never remembered, like Daddy directing traffic in the hallway, moving the metal coat rack in order to get the stretcher moved up the stairs. Neither sister could recall where my older brother, Philip, was during the confusion. And they didn't remember putting their hands over my mouth. One said, "I don't remember doing it, but I can picture that we did."

Sonya: Today, if we said to somebody who knows you, "Early in life, Rachael lost her voice," would most of them say, "Really?" Would they be surprised?

Rachael: The "always have something to say party waiting to happen" mask has been in place for a long time. Until a few years ago I felt, and it was reinforced to me, that I had no substance.

Sonya: So, what did *you* grow up believing about yourself?

Rachael: I talk too much, I am too outspoken and no one listens.

Sonya: Maybe you felt you had to be gregarious and outspoken to be heard.

Rachael: Yes, but now I want my voice to have substance on behalf of another person.

Diana: Giving your voice for the sake of another?

Rachael: Yes, for them. And that deep shift is very difficult after age sixty, but I'm willing to change. I mentioned to you before that I've been with a group of women for twenty years, and they actually listen to me. When they look at me as I talk, I get so nervous I don't know what to say, but I do recognize that I've got a voice to give on their behalf.

— Adapted from chapter one, "Hands Over my Mouth: Rachael's Story"

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AUTHOR BIO



From left to right: Sonya Reeder, Diana Calvin, Rachael Crabb, authors of *Listen In: Building Faith and Friendship Through Conversations That Matter*

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Longtime Friends Come Together for *Listen In*

"God works through Christian community to heal and redeem the past, but the question remains, how? How do we engage with the Holy Spirit in conversations that actually redeem the locust eaten years of our lives? In this remarkable book, Rachael, Sonya and Diana invite us to Listen In on their conversation as they 'lock arms to face the past' and 'search for and find the truth and beauty in one another.' Listen In is a pocket guide to authentic Christian community – a must read for every person committed to being formed in the character of Christ."

—Miriam (Mimi) Dixon, pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Golden, Colorado

Rachael Crabb is a motivational and inspirational speaker, author and ministry consultant and has spoken for conferences and retreats worldwide for over twenty years. She is the author of *The Personal Touch: Encouraging Others Through Hospitality* and is a contributing author to several motivational books, including *Quiet Moments for Ministry Wives* compiled by Joyce Williams. Rachael is married to Bible teacher, author and psychologist Dr. Larry Crabb and is the mother of two married sons and grandmother to five.

Sonya Reeder, a licensed professional counselor, has operated a private practice for twenty-three years. She holds a masters of biblical counseling from Colorado Christian University and a masters of crosscultural ministry from Dallas Theological Seminary. She lives in Longview, Texas, with her husband and three children.

Diana Calvin is connections minister at Trinity Fellowship Church in Richardson, Texas, where she loves to help people connect in small groups and adult ministries. Formerly she served as director of women's ministries at Trinity for over ten years. She is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, where she frequently serves as a resource for women's ministry students. She is an experienced international missionary and lives in Mesquite, Texas, with her husband and daughter.