Rising UP!
Study Guide

by
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Smashwords Edition

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PREFACE:
INTERACTIVE STUDY GUIDE

Rising UP!
My Recovery from Multiple Sclerosis, Disability and Despair

This is an interactive study guide. Interactive means you have an opportunity to dig into the transformational experience of Rising UP! and get involved in the way that suits your own personal needs.
Perhaps you are reading for the story and don't want to be bothered with questions--at
least the first time through. That's a great way to enjoy a book.

On the other hand, as you read, you may come across some ideas you would like to pursue in more depth. You might jump over to the questions for a particular mini-chapter and mark the ones you are interested in. You may even decide to read Rising UP! a second time and do the whole Study Guide. The choice is yours!

**Highlights and annotations:** Most e-reader devices allow highlighting and some kind of marginal notes or annotations. I highly recommend using these tools. Instead of just reading the questions and thinking about them, make a habit of highlighting the answers to questions and making your own comments as you go along. Of course you can do all of the above in the print version as well.

**Journaling:** This guide will be especially helpful if you use the questions as probes for your own personal journaling. Highlights and marginal notes will help you focus your thoughts.

**Share comments and questions:** You can interact with the author and other readers by posting your questions and comments on Anna's Blog or on Anna's Facebook page.

May God bless you and may the Spirit guide you as you seek insight and healing.

Anna York, author of *Rising UP!*

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**INTRODUCTION: I AM ONE**

1. The first person Anna introduces in her book is her husband Don. What kind of person is he? What kind of attitude does he have as Anna moves toward an unusual mode of healing? In what ways might his viewpoint be of help to some readers of Anna's book?

2. You know up-front, before you read the book, that Anna will be healed. How does that affect the way you approach the book?

3. Don calls Anna "non-statistical." How does this affect your feelings about her experience?

4. In medical terms, Anna's story is "anecdotal." Why does the medical establishment not consider anecdotal evidence? Of what value are anecdotal experiences of healing?

5. Highlight at least three definitions of "miracle." What is your definition of "miracle?"

6. Anna describes the "offense of Christ's gospel." Highlight what is offensive about it.

7. In the last paragraph of the introduction, highlight the main purpose for Anna to write this book.

8. Quote for meditation: "The miracle is not finished. I will be working it every day, day in and day out, for the rest of my life. Living means working miracles, never stopping, never giving up, rebuking the impossible, grasping God’s new possibilities, snatching life from death, rising up to live again."
CHAPTER ONE: THE RISING HERITAGE

My Name is Anna

1. Anna says her name means "grace." How do you think this will affect her attitude about her journey?
2. What do you think is Anna's purpose in sharing family history?
3. Highlight some character qualities in Anna's family that will be important for her as she pursues healing. (You will find quite a few!) What does that say about "attitude genetics?"
4. Highlight two healing experiences in Anna's family background that will help her reach out for her own healing.

Growing Up Fundamentalist

1. Considering the unusual mode of healing Anna will have, why do you think it is important for her to describe her spiritual roots?
2. How do you think Anna's conservative religious background will help her healing?
3. Highlight some of the "rules" in Anna's religious background. (The big ones are found in bold headers.) How do you think these will affect her ability to reach out for healing?
4. Anna raises issues of feminine weakness and female submission to male authority. Why might these be important as Anna strives to become a whole person?
5. How might racial stereotypes affect Anna's healing by means of Traditional Chinese Medicine?
6. The last three paragraphs highlight Anna's conflicted feelings about Rising power as only for after death.
7. Highlight the positive and negative effects of the "One Way" teaching.
8. Highlight what Anna finds to be the biggest blessing about her growing up experience.
9. Reflect on your own life growing up. What aspects were positive? What were negative?
10. Quote for meditation: "The current circumstances, no matter how they may appear, are not the final indicator of reality."
CHAPTER TWO: FALLING DOWN

Dorothy in Kansas

1. Anna describes her first attack of MS at the age of 19 on a drama tour. Highlight circumstances that might have contributed to an attack at this time.

2. Anna refers to The Wizard of Oz twice in this mini-chapter, once at the beginning and once at the end. How is Dorothy's experience in The Wizard of Oz a metaphor for Anna's experience?

Signs in the Heavens, Signs in Earth

1. There are many references to stars, the Universe, space and astronomy in Rising UP! This imagery creates layers of physical, spiritual and emotional nuance in the text. An example is the following: "Ours was a marriage that started with stars in our eyes and continued through all the years, literally, with a focus on heaven." Perhaps you would like to highlight these references as you go along.

2. Anna's second experience with MS symptoms occurs as she is teaching high school and gets a diagnosis of "just stress." Stress was also a contributing factor in the "Dorothy in Kansas" mini-chapter and is often associated with MS exacerbations.

3. Look for and annotate indications of stress as Anna's story progresses.

Moving Out in Spirit

1. Highlight the emotional condition that sets Anna on a search for a deeper relationship with God.

2. Highlight how the miracle with Sean creates a rift between Anna and her traditional denomination.

3. Anna says the church walls came "tumbling down," and she began to experience a "larger world." Highlight some characteristics of that new world. How do you think this experience will help prepare her for her healing?

4. Quote for meditation: "I was moving out into a larger world where people are tied together by spirit rather than by doctrine and tradition."

I Feared a Fear

Anna's first contact with multiple sclerosis is a horrifying one that shapes her view of the
disease for years to come. She says: "I recall saying to God, 'Of all the things that could happen to me, please, Lord, don’t let it be multiple sclerosis!'"

1. How have your experiences with various types of disabilities and diseases shaped your emotions and attitudes toward people who gave those conditions?
2. In what way do your own fears affect the way you treat individuals who have various diseases and disabilities?

The Price of Liberty

Anna and Don have a "painful" departure from the Church of Christ. She says: "We were experiencing that there is a price for new growth and liberty that is paid in the loss of familiar relationships and comfortable patterns of lifestyle. Change has its benefits, but it also has its costs."

2. Reflect on your own life and see if there have been times when you have had to pay a price in order to grow and mature. What were the costs? What were the benefits?
3. Highlight how Anna's family plays a crucial role in her ability to grow and change. You may want to journal about the role of family in your own growth and maturation.
4. Highlight some unsettling characteristics Anna discovers in the "larger sphere in which the spirit moves like the wind."
5. Quote for meditation: "As we wrestled with these issues, none of us knew that soon I would be struck, for no apparent reason, with a horrible, incurable disease, a disease that would test our faith to the core."
6. Has disease or disability tested your faith?

Doing, Doing, Doing Too Much

1. Highlight the characteristics of Anna as "Wonder Woman. If you are female, in what ways do you think the need to be Wonder Woman drives your behavior? If you are male, what expectations do you have of women that encourage or require that self-image in women?
2. Recall earlier references to stress. Highlight some examples of stress in Anna's life. How do you think the Wonder Woman persona contributes to development of Anna's devastating health problems?
3. In the last paragraph, highlight how the Wonder Woman image is tied to Anna's assumptions about God and what God wants from people. Is Anna correct in her assumptions? Do you have similar ideas that you need earn God's favor?

Our Little Girl Dies
1. Why do you think Anna's Wonder Woman self-image dies with Charity Ann?

2. Anna worked on this book for twenty years. It was not until the last read-through before publication that she realized she had not mentioned the profound experience of Charity Ann's death. Highlight how her delay may be related to her description of "warp and woof" in the tapestry of life.

3. Describe some of the hidden "warp and woof" in the tapestry of your own life.

### The Fear Came upon Me

1. Highlight some ways stress begins to build up in Anna's life. What are the physical effects?

2. Anna describes an experience in which she feels she hears God speaking to her about her future. Highlight the prediction and her response. What do you personally think about these kinds of experiences? Could something like that happen to you?

3. Highlight how some of the things predicted in Anna's encounter begin to happen immediately. What aspects of the prediction will take much longer?

4. (Watch for ways this event will help Anna make an important decision at a later time.)

5. Anna describes how her nervous system "blows up." Even with all of the horrible signs, there are foundational assumptions she holds dear that cause her to reject the worst possibilities. Highlight her assumptions. What are the positive and negative aspects of the assumptions?

6. As Anna's story proceeds, observe how her disease forces her to change her underlying assumptions.

### Do-Be-Do-Be-Do

1. In this mini-chapter Anna articulates for the first time a philosophical dilemma regarding "doing and being" that she will wrestle with throughout her journey. Highlight the way Anna frames her dilemma at this time.

2. Are you a "doing" person? Do you know how to "be?" How do you think you would feel if you could no longer "do?"

3. Anna looks back at the experience in which she heard a voice. Highlight how that shapes her decision to go to Chicago.

4. Highlight some of the suggestions Anna offers about what triggered her sudden recovery.

5. Highlight what happens to the "doing-being" questions.

6. Quote for meditation: "When physical strength comes in, spiritual insight often flees."
Will Power Is Not Enough

1. Highlight some of the challenges Anna faces after her move to Chicago. What impact does her physical condition have?

2. Life gets more and more challenging. Highlight some personal qualities that keep Anna going during this time. In what ways are those characteristics helpful? In what ways are they detrimental?

3. What character traits does Anna lack that make this time harder for her?

4. Can people who are broken help fix other people's lives? What are the upsides and downsides?

5. Anna says: "I was fatally goal oriented." Highlight how this orientation is related to her Christian roots? How is the goal orientation destructive for Anna?

6. Anna describes will power as being like an engine. Highlight what the fuel is.

7. Anna discovers that her will power is not enough. Have you made that discovery in any aspect of your life?

8. Highlight what happens to Anna's strong sense of being a "doer."

Future Shock

1. Highlight what "future shock" means for Anna.

2. Have you ever experienced "future shock?"

3. Highlight how Anna's vision of the future affected the following:
   - Feelings of self worth.
   - Purpose for being here.
   - Capacity for self-actualization?
   - Hope?

4. Anna mentions the words "guilt," "defeat," and "shame" for the first time. How are these connected to "future shock?"

Demolition of the Past

1. Highlight what is wrong with the old saying "what's done is done"

2. Highlight how "hindsight" affects Anna's sense of personal identity.

3. The Wonder Woman image reappears. Highlight Anna's feelings about her now.

4. Quote for meditation: When you don’t know who you have been, how can you have
any idea of who you are now?

**Denial of the Present**

1. The present moment can be the cruelest of all times for a disabled person. Highlight how "now" like a perpetually crying child.
2. How does Anna's sense of time change? What is the psychological effect?
3. Journal about the imagery of being stuck on Good Friday with no Easter to come. Has that ever happened to you?

**Alone and Lonely**

1. Highlight some "guerilla" tactics of loneliness.
2. The "doing" dilemma comes up again. Highlight how the inability to "do" affects Anna's relationships.
3. Highlight two different types of "body loneliness." Have you ever experienced either type?
4. Highlight at least three ways lack of accessibility exacerbates loneliness.
5. Highlight how loneliness affects the ability to face death?
6. Why is guilt an arrow in the heart of loneliness? Have you had this arrow strike your heart?

**Does Anybody Know This Person?**

1. Self image is as important for disabled people as for anyone--perhaps even more so! Highlight the good aspects of being driven to make a good impression on other people. Highlight the bad aspects.
2. Why is it appropriate for Anna to call her fears and questions about self-image "ugly, primordial sea creatures" waiting to take a bite out of her?
3. Highlight a few ways that big celebrations such as Christmas can be times of pain and despair for those who are unable to participate.
4. Highlight some ways low self-esteem can be damaging to a marriage.
5. How would you describe Anna's psychological condition as she becomes more disabled?

**Victimized**
1. Highlight how MS is like a mugger that attacks over and over again.

2. Our Western medical system is one of the finest in the world, but it does have some drawbacks. Highlight some ways that traditional medical practices contribute to dependency and even to a "victim" persona.

3. Highlight how dependency causes a loss of personal will.

4. Highlight how Anna's relationship with God was affected by her increasing sense of victimization.

5. There is an inevitable emotion connected with victimization that Anna describes as a beast. Highlight what that beast is and how it behaves.

6. Quote for meditation: "The loss of will in the arena of personal health seeped out into the rest of my life like toxins through permeable cell walls. It became part of my muscles, my blood, my thoughts, my habits, my prayer life and my definition of relationship to God."

Unknowing

1. Anna describes her "rule book" or "book of knowledge" and how it functioned in her life. Highlight why her rules no longer worked when she got MS.

2. Highlight why Anna becomes disillusioned with science.

3. Highlight some ways Anna loses her sense of identity.

4. Highlight what happens to her relationship to God.

5. For journaling: What is in your own personal rulebook? It might be helpful to write out your rules and see which ones are still functioning for you and which are not.

6. Anna quotes a passage from Jeremiah. Highlight who gets the blame for his agony of despair. Does this heal the despair or make it worse?

7. What one word would you use to describe Anna's state of mind and spirit at the end of this chapter?

CHAPTER THREE: Seeking Who I AM

Seeking the Way

1. In the midst of her despair, Anna discovers that meditation can help restore her broken spirit. Highlight some of the practices connected with her meditation.

2. Anna has a dream that will provide a significant metaphor for her healing journey. What role do dreams play, if any, in providing insight for your personal journey?
3. Notice the capitalization in the titles of this section and its mini-chapters. What does Anna intend to convey with these titles?

**Finding "The Way"**

1. Describe "the Way" as a play on words.
2. Anna runs into the old "doing-being" dilemma in her search for the meaning of Christ as the "Way." Highlight the dilemma she describes.
3. Highlight Anna's big question about what it means to "follow" Christ as a disabled person.
4. Highlight Anna's description of following Christ without going anywhere or doing anything.
5. Highlight three ways the "Picture on the Way" helps anchor Anna in the present moment? Of what value is that?
6. Highlight the principle Anna learns that will guide her through years to come.
7. Anna is a Christian and therefore finds Christ to be at the center of her attention. If you are of another faith, what is or could be your center of spiritual attention?
8. The "Picture on the Way" may not work for everyone. If it does not work for you, there are many other meditation practices and modes of visualization available in the Christian tradition and other spiritual traditions. As you seek one that satisfies your need, be aware that any practice must be "practiced," faithfully and regularly. You may need the help or companionship of someone else as you begin a meditation practice.

**Being Who I Am**

1. Anna's inner life begins to flower as she uses her "inward eyes." Describe the role of imagination in her meditation. Do you use imagination in your spiritual meditation?
2. How does imaginative dialogue help her?
3. In this mini-chapter, Anna struggles with her self-image. Why does she, as a disabled person, have such a hard time thinking she can have an intimate relationship with God? Why is it important to her?
4. Highlight and comment on the extraordinary insight Anna has at the end of the mini-chapter.
5. Begin a practice of journaling, if you have not already done so. Track your inner conversations and use imagination to examine various questions.
6. [Note: Throughout this period, Anna recorded her thoughts and imaginative experiences through journaling. Journaling brought questions and issues to clarity in her mind and helped her reflect on the evolution of her thoughts. The journals eventually formed the basis of her book.]
Who I Am As Myself

1. Anna says: "Separation from human companionship produces a corresponding spiritual delusion." How does the loneliness of her disability affect her ability to relate to God?

2. A regular practice of meditation was essential to help Anna on her journey to healing. Even so, meditation must change and grow. Highlight how a daily practice of meditation at a certain time of day began to restrict Anna's ability to imagine herself in God's presence. Highlight how she attempts to overcome that restriction.

3. Anna lives most of her life as a disabled person in a small area of her house. Highlight how the spatial restriction affects her perception of God. How does she attempt to expand her idea of God?

4. Anna's rather impersonal imaginations about the Universe are suddenly changed to a very personal imaginative encounter with Jesus. What does this reveal about the changes in Anna's self image?

5. Highlight what Anna discovers about Jesus that helps her know she is welcome and can stay in his Presence.

6. Highlight Anna's great realization at the end of this mini-chapter. What is the significance of that for a disabled person?

Being Empty and Full

Notice how Anna's meditative life occurs in the midst of a bustling household with her husband and four children. During this time Anna also had a paid job that she performed at home in her office. She had to create space in her life for meditation.

1. What challenges do you face about creating meditative space in your own life? How can you overcome those challenges?

2. Notice that Anna describes her imaginative meditations as occurring over weeks and months. What change has occurred in Anna that makes this type of meditation possible?

3. How is the squirrel a metaphor for Anna's meditative life?

4. Highlight why Anna feels empty. What does this have to do with her old "doing-being" dilemma?

5. Anna wants to be filled with Christ. Highlight some of the imagery she uses to prepare herself.

6. Some teachers say that if you visualize clearly enough, your visualization will become reality. Anna discovers that is not true, that she has engaged in an attractive delusion. Highlight the error she makes. What does this say about the process of meditation?
7. When she confronts her delusion, she goes deeper and learns something much more profound. Highlight how Christ wants to fill her emptiness.

8. Anna says: "The void, the chaos, the darkness, the stillness is the medium in which the Spirit moves and into which God speaks the words, "Let there be light." Why is this reference to the Genesis Creation story important for her?

**Meeting the "I AM"**

1. Anna experiences a change of emphasis in her meditation on "I am the Way." What is the change?

2. Highlight some ways that God is the "I AM."

3. As Anna meditates on the "I AM," she gains insight into her ongoing dilemma about doing and being. Highlight what she learns about herself as one who is made in the image of "I AM." Why is this perspective important to a person who is seriously disabled?

4. Consider this quote: "For many years to come I would be exploring what it means to become all I can BE, all I AM." How do you think the insight about "I AM" will affect Anna's view of her future?

**CHAPTER FOUR: A RISING MANIFESTO**

**A Mountaintop Experience**

Don's job opens an opportunity for the family to retreat to a remote and beautiful place in New Mexico for a full year. Anna says: "It was here in this place of natural beauty and vision that I had a mountaintop experience."

1. Highlight the importance of the Rising Manifesto that will develop in Anna's mountaintop experience.

2. What is the importance of finding a quiet place to achieve inner quiet? If you do not have a mountaintop available, where is your quiet place?

3. Anna's meditations do not provide immediate physical healing. In this section of the book she describes how her meditative work helps her construct a "manifesto" for living--actually a new set of rules.

4. Here is Anna's previous list of rules, as described in the mini-chapter "Unknowing":
   I can do it.
   I can make myself do it.
   God wants me to do it.
   God will help me do it.
Working hard pays off.
There’s an answer for everything.
God has the answer.
God wants me to know the answer.
I can figure it out.
I am supposed to be strong and healthy.
God wants me strong and healthy.
God has something for me to do.
God will make me strong so I can do it.

5. In "Manifesto for Living" Anna's new rulebook evolves through little stories, which she then uses to expand on the themes of Faith, Hope, Joy and Love. What do you think is happening to Anna's "doing-being" dilemma?

Snowstorm

1. Those with disabilities--and many other people!--often push themselves to the edge of their capacities--and sometimes beyond! Have you ever had that kind of experience? How did it turn out?

I AM Faith

1. Anna describes her search for faith that will help her face the future as a seriously disabled person. Highlight some approaches to producing faith that Anna says she did not find effective in the past.

2. "Tools" and "techniques" such as journaling, dreams, meditation, research, memorization, introspection, imagination, dialogue, worship can be quite valuable in one's spiritual search. However, Anna finds that they are of no value in themselves.

3. Highlight what Anna describes as the "real key" in developing faith.

4. Previously Anna thought that faith is expressed in "doing" things for others and for God. Highlight some of the "being" aspects of faith that she discovers.

5. Quote for meditation and journaling: Anna takes another step forward in sorting out her "doing-being" dilemma. Journal about the following: "Faith is not doing or being, or doing and being. Faith is becoming, becoming one in character and Spirit with I AM. Faith means I keep on becoming All I AM."

Window Watcher
1. Those who have loneliness or disabilities (of any kind) often feel like outsiders, like they are looking through a window, watching the world go by but unable to participate. Try journaling about a similar experience of your own. Even though it may be painful, entering into the memory can be healing.

I AM Joy

Anna describes how her emotional life changes when she becomes severely disabled. She has several ways of describing emotions.

1. What are emotional mountains and valleys? Describe some of your own.

2. What is an "emotional bubble? Describe one of your own.

3. What is "geyser" joy?

4. Highlight some reasons why joy bubbles and mountains do not work for Anna when she is seriously disabled.

5. Highlight the source of Anna's joy before she was disabled.

6. Highlight how "geyser" joy is related to "doing" and the "bubbling spring" of joy is related to "being."

7. Anna decides she needs to find a joy that is independent of time-locked events, actions and people. That is a tall order. Highlight the joy she discovers and where it comes from.

8. Highlight what the "blips on a joy meter" meant. What role did they previously play in Anna's life? Why didn't the joy meter work any more?

9. Anna continues her "doing-being" meditation: Use the following quote for your own reflection and journaling: "The more I am centered, the more the life of I AM can infuse me, calm my thoughts, emotions and ego, and allow me to detect the subtle bubbling Joy deep in my innermost being. As that Joy bubbles up, it gives me strength to live, to will, to do, to be, to become."

10. There is a psalm that says, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." What does this say about the source of joy? How does the joy of the Lord provide strength?

11. Describe any insights about your own experience of joy.

Never Christmas

1. Highlight why Anna brings only one Christmas box from Chicago.

2. Anna's box is a metaphor for memories that we try to control in order to protect ourselves from hurt. Take a look at what Anna does with her box and see if you do anything similar.

3. What does it mean to bring the memory box on a long trip?
4. What does it mean to keep the memory box on the shelf?

5. Anna voluntarily opens the memory box and removes the contents one by one, examining and reflecting on each item. What does that mean psychologically and emotionally? Do you think there is healing in this process?

6. Memory boxes can be metaphorical or they can be real, actual boxes. It might be helpful to assemble a box with various memorabilia to help you reflect on something that is too deep for words. Perhaps there will photographs or items of clothing or various types of objects in your box. Choose a quiet time to touch, feel, remember, cry. Allow healing to flow with the tears.

7. As Anna goes through her memory box, she does not see that things will change for the better. However, something else happens. What does it mean when she says about the Christmas stockings, "I laid them aside"? What is the attitude when she says, "Those were the days." Of what value are these thoughts?

8. Anna's reference to "never Christmas" refers to C.S. Lewis's description of Narnia in his book The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. If you are familiar with the story or movie, it might be interesting to think about similarities to Anna's story. For example, who (or what) is the witch in Anna's story?

**I AM Hope**

1. Why does Anna say, "Hope is one of the last things I hoped for?" Why is hope so hard?

2. What were Anna's previous hopes based upon?

3. Highlight how Anna's "doing-being" dilemma manifests in the arena of hope. What is "helpless hoping"?

4. Anna is caught in tension between acceptance and hope. Read Anna's long quote revealing her conundrums about hope. Pick one aspect of it that rings with your own feelings and explore it in journaling. An example is: "How can I employ hope judiciously as a partner with peace and patience?" Look for Anna's solution to the conundrum later in the mini-chapter.

5. Highlight why Anna has to "spank" her hope.

6. Anna meditates on the Biblical meaning of hope. Highlight a kind of hoping that is not Biblical.

7. Highlight the Biblical view of hope.

8. Highlight the kind of hope Anna had in the past and why did it not work for her as a disabled person.

9. Highlight how desire is connected to "doing." Highlight how hope is connected to "being?"

10. People who experience great suffering in life often hope for resurrection in heaven in order to have release from pain. Highlight why Anna was not comforted by the hope of
heaven--what did she feel was missing?

11. Find and highlight: What is the "Rising" power that Anna discovers. Where does it come from? How and when is it available? In what aspects of life can it be manifest?

12. Highlight a quote that tells you whether Anna will be able to hope for healing. Why?

13. Highlight the commitment Anna makes.

14. Where will Anna find the power to hope?

15. Why can Christ himself be described as "hope?"

16. Anna says, "Resurrection hope energizes me to live as fully as I can now." Highlight the ways she anticipates it will change her outlook on life.

17. What kind of hope do you have? How can Anna's insights enrich your own experience of hope?

Broken Neck

In this mini-chapter Sean's broken neck adds a new disaster to an already overloaded family. Recall a situation in your life that seemed to be as bad as it could get--but it suddenly became far worse. What were the feelings at the time? How do those circumstances impact the way you view life now?

I AM Love

In this mini-chapter Anna uses Sean's broken neck as a metaphor for the social alienation she feels as a disabled person. If his head can be put back together with his body, Anna wonders if she can be reconnected to other people in a meaningful way.

1. I Corinthians 12 is a Bible chapter that uses the metaphor of a body: it describes all the body parts as necessary even if they are not so attractive. Read the chapter and think about whether it addresses the problems of people with disabilities. Is it good in theory but not in practice?

2. Anna faces her "doing-being" dilemma again. Highlight the parts of her body she has always thought of as being the most valuable. Why does that no longer work when she is disabled?

3. Anna discovers that she has "inner" body parts as well as "outer" body parts. What do "outer" and "inner" have to do with her "doing-being" dilemma?

4. Highlight the "inner" parts that Anna begins to value.

5. Anna realizes that love is a necessary element in her desire to be a functional part of the human body. Highlight some deep emotions that are inhibiting her ability to express love.

6. How is anger like a "bear out of hibernation?"
7. Highlight what Anna initially thinks will assuage her anger. What kind of "compensation" does she want?

8. What blaming mechanism does Anna recognize and have to let go of?

8. Describe how Anna's feelings are like those of a hurt child.

9. Anna wants to come to a more mature approach to her social relationships. Highlight what Anna feels she must do, even if others do not reach out to provide the acceptance she desires.

10. Anna entitles this whole section of her book as a "Manifesto for Living." What is a "manifesto?" What are the four major components of her manifesto? Is there any part that is more important than the others? How do you think this manifesto might change the way she relates to other people?

CHAPTER FIVE: RISING AND FALLING

Up and Down the Mountain

In this mini-chapter Anna uses the metaphor of a mountain to describe her experience with multiple sclerosis over a period of years.

1. Highlight the kind of experiences that occur at the top of the mountain.

2. Highlight the kind of experiences that occur at the bottom of the mountain.

3. Anna gets more in touch with her spiritual self, but her lack of understanding about her physical body causes her to overdo and ignore the needs of her body. Highlight several ways that MS begins to take a toll on her.

4. Why do you think Anna's spiritual life improves as her disease gets worse? Do you know any cases where this has occurred?

5. Anna says the progress of her disease can be mapped like a graph that has two lines, one representing her spiritual life and one her physical condition. Try to draw a graph of her experience. Then draw a graph that would describe your own.

Coming Together

1. Anna's desire to be a part of a community motivates her to put her "manifesto for living" into practice in her church. Who helps her? Could she have done it alone, or is it necessary to have this kind of help?

2. In what ways does Anna reach out to do ministry? Highlight some of the results?

3. Those who do ministry usually go "out" to do it. What was different about Anna's ministry as a disabled person?
4. How does Anna's "shameless" sharing encourage creativity in others?
5. How does Anna's disability promote "teaming" in the church?
6. One of Anna's gifts is prayer for others. How does this gift come back to her?
7. Anna describes an intimate scene in which the members of her small group anoint her with oil and pray for healing. How do you account for the scent of roses in the middle of winter?
8. Anna is not physically healed in that beautiful evening of roses and angels. Is there healing that does occur? What might be longer-term effects of the evening?

**Everybody’s Mom**

Anna's manifesto for living motivates her to reach out to a wider circle of friends in her community. In the process of doing so, she develops a "mom" persona that is recognized by everyone she knows.

1. Highlight some ways that Anna's mom persona helps her as a disabled person.
2. In what ways do you think the mom persona is limiting as a definition of Anna's personhood?
3. Highlight some circumstances that begin to disrupt the "mom" image.
4. Do you have a persona that helps you navigate the circumstances of your life? If so, describe it and articulate how it helps you. In what ways does it not represent who you really are? If you would like to break out of that persona, how might you go about doing it?
5. What special challenges do you face about the image you want to project to others? In what ways would you like to change it, and how might that happen?

**Parking Violations**

Anna steps out of her comfort zone in her attempt to raise awareness about an injustice and make a change in her city neighborhood.

1. While awareness of disability has increased, there are plenty of people who are more concerned about their own convenience than about the needs of the disabled.
2. Put yourself in Anna's shoes and consider why such a seemingly simple problem requires a lot of courage. What kinds of risks does Anna take? How could the situation have turned out differently?
3. Is there an unjust situation you know about that you need to address?

**The Man in My Life**
Anna describes her husband Don in these terms: "A dream as big as the Universe, a heart as big as the sky." This is a loving tribute but also an idealistic one. As this chapter progresses, notice how Don and Anna's relationship is tested by her chronic illness.

1. Highlight the spiritual experience Don has that helps him define his path in life.

2. One of Don's favorite sayings is: "Make no small plans." In what ways does that fit his accomplishments as a scientist? Highlight the source of Don's drive for excellence.

3. Don is not an astronomer who has eyes only on the heavens. Highlight some practical ways he puts his expertise to work on Earth.

4. Highlight why Anna thinks she and Don have been put into the crucible. Do you think the result will be worth the intense heat of suffering?

5. Everyone has patterns of dealing with conflict. Anna has a strong tendency toward passivity that keeps her from expressing her needs and standing up for herself. How do you think Anna's Christian background contributes to this passivity? How does Don's status as a world-class astronomer contribute to it? Highlight some role models in the past that have molded Anna's responses?

6. Don is a male and a scientist. Highlight how these characteristics affect his approach to Anna's feelings.

7. Which should prevail in situations of conflict--logic and argument or emotion?

8. There are many reasons why Don and Anna begin to drift apart and experience conflict in their marriage. Highlight some of them. Many of these things can happen in any marriage. How does chronic illness turn up the heat in the crucible?

9. Highlight ways that guilt and repression of feelings affect both Don's and Anna's health.

10. What do you think Don and Anna will discover to hold their marriage together that is "deeper than passion, deeper than suffering, deeper than all the troubles life can bring their way?"

11. Does Don and Anna's experience provide any insights into the way you deal with conflict?

**Flashes in My Soul**

As Anna experiences constant pain, she begins to come to grips with the possibility of her own death. Her pastor comes to help prepare her to die, and her friends have dreams she will die.

1. How does Anna's anticipation of death begin to change her?

2. Highlight how Anna's reading material changes.

3. While reading St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, Anna says she discovers the reason for her suffering. Highlight the reason. Do you think this reason is worth such suffering?
4. Highlight how Anna's view of herself changes after the banquet vision.

5. There is also a banqueting table in the Song of Solomon passage Anna mentions. What are the similarities? What is the "banner" that is mentioned and what does it mean?

6. How do you think the "garden" imagery will empower Anna to reach out for healing from unusual places?

7. What fears do you think Anna has and why does she think she will need protection?

8. Highlight the effect that Christ's unconditional love has on Anna.

9. What value do you think Anna's mystical experiences have in preparing her for her coming healing?

CHAPTER SIX: RISING UP!

Jubilee!

1. In the previous mini-chapter, "Flashes in My Soul," Anna was preparing for and anticipating her death and hoping to rise to new life in a spiritual body. In the beginning of this one, she is riding a horse. Describe the emotional impact of this change and the questions that it raises in your mind.

2. Highlight what Jubilee means and how it relates to Anna's condition.

3. Highlight three major signs of Jubilee in Anna's life.

4. Highlight some of the fears Anna has about being ordained as a pastor--a female, disabled pastor.

5. What are your feelings about having a disabled pastor? What would be the advantages? Disadvantages? Would you hold back in asking for things you need? Do you think it is really possible for a disabled person to be a good pastor? Journal about your true feelings.

6. Is it possible to be a pastor without actively going out and about to minister to people?

7. Anna's denomination does not require a Master of Divinity for ordination. Highlight the basis on which she would be ordained.

8. Anna is concerned about definitions of pastoral ministry based on traditional, male-dominated stereotypes. How do these restrict her capacity for pastoral ministry as a disabled female?

9. Anna's disability has taught her over the years to accept and rejoice in "being." Highlight how her "doing-being" dilemma has a new face on it.

I Am Who I AM: Preparing for Ordination
1. In this mini-chapter Anna describes how preparations proceed for her ordination and describes Shanta as a "radical." In what ways is he a "radical," and how does this help Anna?

2. Anna was a member of a Southern Baptist Church. Take a look at the statistics she provides for ordination of women in that denomination to understand why it seems unlikely that a disabled female could fit into the picture. Comments?

3. Shanta and Anna define two different models of pasturing. Highlight the definition of the "role" model. Why does Anna not fit this model?

4. Highlight the definition of the "person" model. How does Anna fit this model?

5. Do you think the "person" model for pasturing is a realistic one for your church? Why or why not?

6. Should the "person" model be part of a new approach that would open ministry of various kinds to people who are called to ministry but are now marginalized?

7. Can you think of any benefits to such an approach? Or do you (honestly) think disabled people cannot really qualify for ministry as you think it should be done? Journal your thoughts.

8. Anna says that Shanta decided she is a person who Christ is giving to the church as a gift. Do you think Anna fully accepts this herself?

9. In the last paragraph there is a suggestion that the new definition of ministry might benefit others. Who might benefit and why?

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**Riding the Wind, Serving Tea: Ordination**

1. What are some of the different types of people who attend Anna's ordination?

2. Highlight the "feeling" of the event.

3. At the beginning of Rising UP! Anna describes her fundamentalist family background. How does this event fit some aspects of her historical church background? How does it contrast?

4. Highlight what it means to Anna that her father is present. What kind of healing do you think is happening here?

5. Changes have occurred in the structure of the church as a result of Anna's process of ordination. What are they?

6. Shanta tells a story in his ordination address. Who does the woman in the story represent? How is her teacup too full?

7. In Shanta's story about Nicodemus, how is Nicodemus' cup too full?

8. Highlight how Shanta says Anna is like the old man who pours hot tea

9. Highlight three things Shanta says Anna has taught.
10. How does Anna "ride the wind?"

11. Even though it is an eclectic crowd, the group of Tai Chi people stands out as being different. How are they a sign that Anna is riding the wind and pouring hot tea?

Waving Palms: Healed by a Tai Chi Master

1. Anna now backtracks to an event that occurred about nine months earlier than her ordination. She is at a Tai Chi class at the University of Chicago. Highlight how she happens to be there and why is it so unlikely for a person of her background.

2. Highlight the changes Anna sees in Sean that help convince her Tai Chi might be okay.

3. Highlight some strange ideas Sean begins to share with Anna.

4. What does Anna find unusual about the Sifu?

5. Why does Anna finally decide to go to Tai Chi class?

6. Sifu Bruce's evaluation of Anna's problem contrasts strongly with that of her Western doctors. Highlight the way he proves his analysis is correct. How long does it take?

7. Describe Anna's condition before and after Sifu Bruce's intervention.

8. Anna's 20-minute healing accomplishes more than many sessions of traditional physical therapy. What questions does that raise in your mind?

9. Earlier in the story, Anna had the depressing experience of going into a wheelchair on Good Friday. Now she is being healed on Palm Sunday. What is the symbolic significance?

10. Highlight what Anna feels she will need to do as a result of her healing.

11. Anna has previously had a kind of "passive" hope for healing, praying and expecting healing to come to her from various sources. Highlight how her expectations are different now.

12.Highlight the religious holiday that provides a metaphor for the experience she is expecting.

13. Highlight what benefits Anna expects from her participatory healing.

14. Consider what happens to Christ between Palm Sunday and Easter. Do you think Anna expects her journey to be an easy one?

Born Again

1. Highlight several ways that Anna is "born again."

2. Highlight some problems other people have with Anna's arrival on the scene as a new person.
3. Highlight some ways she "shakes up the system."
4. What anxieties does Don have, and what role does he take on?
5. Highlight how a different type of energy is required for healing, as opposed to maintenance of a chronic illness.
6. Highlight what kind of new world Anna is hoping for.

**Tai Chi: Exercise I Could Do**

1. In this mini-chapter Anna talks about her Tai Chi teachers. Highlight some of the qualities they have that assist in her healing process.
2. Highlight some healing qualities of the Tai Chi class environment?
3. Anna attended classes three times a week. Think about what effect it would have on your life if you added something three times a week. How do you think that affected her life?
4. Highlight how Anna was different from other class participants. What do you think kept her going?
5. Highlight some benefits of warm-ups.
6. Highlight the importance of stepping exercises.
7. What is Qigong? You can find out more about it on Anna's website: [www.annayork.com](http://www.annayork.com)
8. Highlight some benefits of Qigong for Anna.
9. Highlight some benefits of Qigong breathing. What MS symptoms did breathing help to heal?
10. Highlight some of the benefits of Tai Chi form for Anna.
11. What does sensitivity training consist of, and what are the benefits?
12. Highlight some benefits of energy bodywork for Anna? In what ways does it relieve MS symptoms?
13. What do you think Anna means when she says "Tai chi was teaching me the language of my body."
14. Highlight some ways Tai Chi is empowering for Anna.
15. Anna is surprised when people at church are not so thrilled about her improvements. Put yourself in the shoes of her friends. Why do you think they are skeptical?

**Easternizing My Healing**

1. Notice that Anna continues with traditional physical therapy as she does Tai Chi.
Anna is currently a strong supporter of this type of integrated approach. Highlight why Anna meets with some skepticism about her mode of healing.

2. Even though there is a lot more recognition now of the benefits of Tai Chi and Qigong, what do you think still needs to happen to make the benefits of these arts available?

3. What problem did Anna have with "anecdotal" evidence? She also mentions this in the introduction to the book.

4. As Anna works with Sifu Bruce, she discovers the healing benefits of a fusion of Western and Eastern therapies. Highlight some ways that worked.

5. Anna says the healing process was gradual. Fifteen years later she still believes she is in the process of healing. Describe the mental, spiritual and emotional qualities required to engage in such a long-term process. How is it different from what we expect from Western medicine?

6. Anna's healing begins to take on a strong Eastern flavor. How would you feel about making some of those types of changes in your own life?

A Grace Place Healing

1. Anna's sons play a vital role in her healing. Highlight some ways that their participation increases her ability to heal.

2. Anna describes a healing by Sean. How do you feel about this? Is it really possible?

3. Highlight what Jeremy senses and feels when he does healing work for Anna.

4. What questions arise in your mind regarding Jeremy's healing work with Anna?

5. Highlight the role environment plays in the healing Anna receives at the Tai Chi class in Grace Place.

6. How does the Tai Chi class assist in the healing?

7. What thoughts and feelings do you have about Anna's healing at Tai Chi class?

8. Later, there is follow-up healing work that needs to be done. Anna does not know how to describe what happened for a long time afterward. How would you describe/explain what happened?

9. What is the importance of a community of caring people in doing deep healing work?

10. Quote for meditation: "It was a landmark experience that changed my life forever. . . Like many acts of pure Grace, the surpassing, boundless magnanimity of it broke out of the finitude of time, space, doctrine, and imagination, transcending my capacity for understanding and expression."

Food for Life
1. Anna says, "My food changes disturbed the Universe even more than my newfound energy and my practice of Tai Chi." Highlight some ways Anna decides to change her diet.

2. Anna describes frustration and confusion in her household when she changes her diet. Think about your own family. Select one popular food and describe what you think would happen if you eliminated it. On the other hand, what would happen if you something like tofu were to become a key element in recipes?

3. Highlight some emotions that emerge connected to food changes.

4. Highlight some ways shopping changes.

5. Highlight some specific conditions and symptoms that are relieved for people in Tai Chi class by dietary changes.

6. Highlight why Anna decides that eating organic foods might help her reduce her MS symptoms.

7. What role does the Tai Chi community play in helping Anna make changes in diet and lifestyle?

8. Highlight some symptoms Anna relieves by significantly reducing sugar intake.

9. Note that Anna's dietary changes take place over months and years, not days and weeks. She uses a process of trial and error to discover how her body responds to various foods. When she discovers something that works, she puts it into her regimen. Patience and thoughtfulness are keys to success. Think about your own diet. What is one thing you might try to change that you feel sure would make a difference in your health?

10. There are certain habits and cravings we have that make it difficult to make dietary changes. What are some of yours?

11. Highlight how diet changes affected the York family food budget.

12. What eventually happens in Anna's family that helps her with dietary changes?

13. What social challenges arise from Anna's dietary changes?

14. Do you think changing the diet is worth all the trouble?

15. Does Don have a valid point to make about scientific evidence for changes in diet?

16. Highlight why Don refers to Anna as "five sigma."

17. Quote for meditation: "We were learning that there are some people in the world who just don’t fit into statistical patterns and who have to seek diligently for their own unique paths to healing and wholeness."

Walking Free

1. Multiple sclerosis is an immune system disease. When the immune system is triggered, it can bring on an MS attack. Anna goes to her mother's bedside when she has a
severe viral infection and is in isolation. Is it foolish or brave for Anna to do this--or are there other factors at work?

2. Anna finds courage to take a new step in her recovery by walking without a cane. Highlight the role her hometown environment plays in her decision.

3. Highlight the ways Anna describes the positive and negative aspects of using the cane.

4. Highlight the preparations Anna makes before trying to stop using the cane.

5. Anna goes to see a behavioral optometrist. Highlight the effect better vision has on gait.

6. How do Anna's memories of her mother assist her in her attempt to walk without a cane?

7. How do Anna and her mother both "walk free?"

A Traditional Chinese Medicine Diagnosis

1. Autumn is statistically a time when more MS attacks occur. When Anna reverts to use of a cane and scooter, she blames it on MS, but Bruce says it is the weather. Highlight why Anna decides she should pay attention to his outrageous claim.

2. Use of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) herbs causes Anna's MS symptoms to go away within a few days. What questions would rise in your mind if something like that happened to you?

3. Anna learns that in the Traditional Chinese system her problems are related to "dampness," and she begins exploring what that means. We are accustomed to thinking of Western medicine as the most scientific and practical way to address illness of any kind. What does Anna's experience with TCM suggest?

4. Even though TCM does not meet Don's "scientific" tests, Anna begins treatment based on TCM, stepping over into a completely different medical paradigm. Highlight some ways she prepares and informs herself.

5. Highlight the role of molybdenum and its results.

6. Highlight what the jaw dropping is all about. How would you feel if people began responding in such ways to changes in your physical appearance?

7. When one lady hears that Anna's complexion is due to a changed diet, she says in a tone of regret, "But I don’t think that’s my route to a gorgeous body. I like my food a little too much for that." Everyone has to decide personally about whether the benefits outweigh the negatives in making big changes. What do you think you would be able to give up, and where would you draw the line and say, "I'm not going there!"

8. Highlight the benefits of Tai Chi breathing in Anna's renewed health.

9. Highlight how TCM changed Anna's view of China and the world.
Drug Free!

1. Highlight the symptoms Anna had from Betaseron that caused her to consider stopping its usage.
2. How is reliance on Western medicine like the "One Way to Heaven" doctrine of Anna's youth?
3. Highlight some ways Anna's reliance on Western medicine was tied up with her religious assumptions.
4. Highlight some ways that science is the "God of Western medicine." What fallacy does Anna's experience reveal in that idea?
5. Don represents the scientific establishment point of view in her household, while Anna holds a more open attitude. Highlight some positive aspects of Don's view. Does either Don or Anna have the "correct" attitude?
6. Why does Anna tell the story of Dr. Komer?
7. What are the financial concerns about using supplements, herbs, bodywork and other services?
8. Highlight some ways Anna prepares herself for going off of various drugs.
9. Highlight some benefits of a "complementary" approach (using natural therapies alongside of Western medications and therapies) as opposed to "alternative" methods that eliminate Western medicine.
10. What event triggers Anna's decision to stop taking Betaseron?
11. Highlight how Anna determines whether her decision was a good one.
12. Anna says her decision is a scary one, like putting body and soul in jeopardy. Describe her emotions and fears about going off of drugs? Are they justified?
13. Because of Anna's own fears and strategies, she would not be able to suggest a similar course for someone else. Each situation is unique. What wisdom is there in Anna's experience that other people could apply to their own circumstances?
14. Highlight how Anna's attitude toward science has changed because of her experience.
15. Highlight how Anna's healing changed her view of the ways God can work in healing.
16. How was Christ an "alternative" healer?
17. What role does faith and trust in God play in seeking for healing?
18. Quote for meditation: "I was taking responsibility for myself and believing in myself, a very scary enterprise indeed!"
19. Quote for meditation: "Those of us who are "incurable" need to open our eyes and our hearts, to search without ceasing anywhere and everywhere, inside and outside ourselves, for the answers we need, for the answers that are certainly there as God’s gifts
Body Prayer

Throughout her book, Anna has repeatedly pondered her "doing-being" dilemma. Earlier in life she was a hard-core "doer," while later she felt fulfilled in "being." In this mini-chapter, she attempts to bring together her body as the "doing" part of herself and her spirit as the "being" part of herself.

1. Highlight Anna's reasons for needing to "get it all together" and become whole in body, soul, mind and spirit.
2. Highlight some ways breathing methods help Anna develop her spiritual practice.
3. Highlight the difference Anna describes between "transcendent" visualization and "immanent" visualization.
4. Wind, fire and water are Biblical images of the Spirit of God. Highlight how Anna visualizes "chi" as fire. As wind? As water?
5. Highlight Anna's definition of "incarnational" meditation. What does Anna eventually begin to call it?
6. Highlight some ways that traditional Chinese Qigong fits with Anna's practice of body prayer.
7. How does body prayer differ from traditional Christian prayer? Do you know of any Biblical basis for body prayer?
8. How does the Creation story form a bridge between the Eastern practice of Tai Chi and Qigong and Anna's own Christian heritage?
9. Highlight some elements of "mental practice." What are its benefits? (If you want to know more about mental practice, go to Anna's blogs at www.annayork.com.)
11. What are "I AM identifications?"
12. Anna says that the "Manifesto for Living" earlier in the book is based on I AM identifications. Highlight some of the benefits.
13. Highlight how Anna gets the body involved in I AM identifications.
14. Highlight Anna's practice of "I AM the Resurrection and the Life!" What is the benefit?
14. Highlight ways that body prayer supports prayer for other people as well as for self.
15. Highlight how Anna resolves her "doing-being" dilemma after so many years of swinging back and forth like a pendulum.
16. Quote for meditation: "I must understand that I am and I AM incarnate, just as Christ was incarnate—that the body is the temple, the house, the home, the fully infused habitation of the Spirit. Nothing I do in this world for God or with God will be done to us. Perhaps, indeed, we are all " incurable" and need to engage this search."
without my body. When my body is gone, my work in this life will be finished. I must cherish this body, heal it, love it, care for it, so that my body itself is a prayer expressing the fullness of who I AM."

**Detoxing the Emotions**

In this mini-chapter Anna describes emotional healing from long years of painful disease.

1. Highlight Anna's description of the neurological connection between physical and emotional healing?

2. Highlight what happens when Anna activates muscles that have been dormant for a long time because of her disease.

3. Highlight feelings connected with old medications.

4. This kind of emotional purging requires a great deal of sensitivity and objective self-evaluation. One often needs the help of another person for this kind of deep work. Who was helping Anna? What kind of person is more frequently called on to do this type of work? Can you identify someone who can help you?

5. Highlight the role Tai Chi plays in the emotional healing.

6. Highlight the role bodywork plays in the emotional healing.

7. Anna says: "Those feelings were not easy to deal with. It was like talking out my problems in deep psychoanalysis, except that it was my body doing the talking in a language too deep for words. It is unfortunate that I did not learn this language much earlier in life, because my body was wiser than my intellect."

8. How do you think the body can be wiser than the intellect?

9. Highlight several ways that the healing of emotions is integrally related to Anna's physical healing.

10. Previously, Anna had a tendency to squelch or repress her emotions. Highlight how she needs to change the way she handles her emotions.

11. Don is the first and most convenient person for Anna to practice her new emotional honesty. Highlight why she turns her "emotional guns" on Don.

12. How do Anna's and Don's friends respond to the conflict they observe? Highlight a practical principle to follow when friends are struggling in their marriage.

13. Anna's emotional expressions initially seem to make the situation much worse between her and Don. Find and highlight how long it takes for healing to occur and for confidence to be restored in their relationship.

14. What observations do you have about the complexity of healing? Can there just be a physical healing, or does emotional, mental, spiritual and social healing also have to come along with it? (Do you wish you could just take a pill?)
Roaring and Forgiving

In this mini-chapter Anna is trying to find words to express the way extremely deep cultural structures and archetypes have impacted her life.

1. Highlight some effects of patriarchalism?
2. Highlight the impact of religion on Anna's emotional struggles.
3. Highlight is the impact of language on sexual stereotypes.
4. What benefit is there in learning about the lives of women in history?
5. Anna enters into imagination and collective unconscious and says: "It seemed I was each of these women. It seemed, in a sense, that I was Woman." What do you think that means?
6. Why is Anna's rage helpless?
7. Of what value is Anna's disease a metaphor?
8. Highlight some ways Anna finds that the hurt of the centuries has been redeemed in her own life.
9. Anna says: "I was not just Woman, I was also Man." What does she mean?
10. Anna says she needs to forgive the world. What do you think that means? Why is that necessary for her healing?
11. Reflect on your own experience and see what needs to be forgiven in order for you to be healed.
12. Anna knows that oppression and hurt will not go away. Nevertheless, she makes a commitment. She says: "I would commit myself to a new dimension in that struggle, one of healing instead of hurt, forgiveness instead of anger, hope instead of hate." How will this contribute to her healing?
13. Now that you have read the chapter, what is the "roaring of the centuries?" In what way are the centuries roaring in your life? Reflect on what you might do about it.

"Chi" and Other Dilemmas

1. Anna says healing occurs at all levels of her being. What are some of the levels?
2. Highlight why Anna feels the need to get her experience of Tai Chi into conversation with her own Western scientific context and her own Christian spiritual experience?
3. Highlight why Don was put off by Anna's usage of the terms like "energy" and "meridians."
4. Highlight the variety of types of reading in which Anna seeks answers,
5. What does "Tai Chi" mean?
6. Highlight what it means philosophically to practice the "way" of Tai Chi. Do you
think that is compatible with Christianity?

7. Anna gets help from Shanta, who has a doctorate in world religions. How does he help her?

8. Where does Anna find the first Biblical expression of chi in the Bible? Where does chi come from and who has it?

9. Highlight what breath has to do with chi.

10. Highlight what determines the quality of chi that goes out from each person.

11. How is chi like "heat" and "fire?"

12. What does food have to do with chi?

13. Over and over again, Anna emphasizes the neutrality of chi. She finds the idea of chi has many names in many cultures. Why is neutrality of chi so important? Highlight what it is that can give chi a negative or positive quality.

14. Highlight a reference to Jesus that shows he had an energy field.

15. Can objects carry chi?

16. What does the ancient practice of laying-on-of hands have to do with chi?

17. How do Anna and Dorothy share the healing power of chi? What mutual feelings make it a powerful healing session?

18. Dorothy has her own language for healing chi. Highlight how she describes it.

19. Highlight why Anna does not share her experiences of chi with her church.

20. Highlight the length of time it took for Anna to sort out the philosophical issues and begin to articulate them as part of her healing.

21. Do miracles only happen instantly? Or do some require time, perhaps even years? Reflect on the variety and depth of the issues connected to Anna's healing and why her healing needed a lot of time. Is what happened to her a miracle? (Look back at her definitions of miracle in the Introduction.)

Clearing Out, Moving On

In this mini-chapter Anna uses houses and housecleaning as metaphors for deep emotional and psychological work.

1. What do houses represent for Anna? Highlight what different types of houses symbolize.

2. Do you have any psychological or emotional "rooms" that you need to clear of junk? How would you describe those rooms?

3. When Anna says she needs to restructure the whole house, what does she mean metaphorically?

4. Highlight some lifestyle changes Anna makes? What lifestyle changes do you know
you need to make?

5. While she was physically weak, Anna was often somewhat passive/submissive in conflicted relationships. What happens as she gets stronger?

6. If you have some kind of chronic condition or disability, how does it affect the way you deal with conflict?

7. In order to make room for healing, Anna changes jobs and moves from her large home at the same time. What attitude does she have as all of this is happening?

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**Cutting the Strings**

In this mini-chapter Anna struggles with the way her healing changes her ministry and her relationships within her church.

1. Highlight a sentence that describes how Anna's healing is a "sword that cuts two ways" in regard to doing ministry?

2. In what ways do church members learn that Anna has "feet of clay"?

3. Think back to the "role" and "person" models for ministry that Shanta and Anna discussed before her ordination. Which seems to become the dominant expectation as she gains strength?

4. Why do you think there was a "Saint Anna" image of Anna while she was disabled?

5. Highlight how Anna is an anomaly to the ideal Biblical healing story. How does that affect people in her congregation?

6. What does Anna mean when she says that Jesus can do drugs but not Tai Chi?

7. In order to address stereotypes and misinformation about her mode of healing, Anna goes to talk with people she has known for a long time. Even though she shares love and a long and intimate friendship with them, these qualities are not enough to salvage their relationship. Highlight why Anna does not go farther in explaining the enormous changes she has been experiencing.

8. Anna faces the conundrum that she must part from the friends who have prayed so hard for her healing. Do you think the end result will be worth all the changes and suffering required to achieve healing? Would it be worth it to you?

9. Highlight the factor that ultimately determines that these long-time friends will go their separate ways.

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**The Falling Icon**

In this mini-chapter Anna uses a painful fall as a metaphor for the changes that are occurring in every part of her life as a result of her healing.

1. Look at the following quote and think about how it describes Anna's healing journey:
"I suddenly went into a dizzying space warp in which the normal physics of time and gravity were spinning crazily out of control." In what ways is she "flying out into new territory?"

2. Considering the fact that Anna's friends are compassionate, caring people, what kind of internal conflicts do you think they are having that cause such a cold response after her injury?

**Adventures and Vistas**

1. Anna's Tai Chi healing began in 1996, and now it is October of 2000. She has gone from an electric scooter to traveling the world in only a few years. Recall whether you have ever had a dream--perhaps an impossible dream--that was fulfilled. What emotions did you experience? How might these be similar or different from Anna's?

2. How is the Chinese plum blossom painting a metaphor for Anna's life?

3. The trip is a landmark event for both Don and Anna. Recall that earlier in the book Anna describes how she feels that Don's job was so intense that it was damaging his health and their relationship. How is the telescope dedication a turning point for Don?

4. Highlight what happens at the dedication dinner that helps Don and Anna heal and turn toward a new future.

5. Anna has used many references to telescopes, satellites, stars and the Universe in her book. How is this imagery suitable for her story?

**Rising Costs**

In this mini-chapter Anna describes the culmination of tensions that have gradually been rising in her church from various issues, including her unusual mode of healing and the changes that occur as she becomes stronger.

1. Highlight how people's perceptions of Anna change as she gains strength.

2. Why do you think some people thought Anna was a better minister when she was seriously disabled?

3. Do you think it is true that disabled people are sometimes an opportunity for "heroic Christian endeavor?" What is wrong with that view of Christian ministry?

4. On the other hand, what are some ways that churches fail to meet the needs of the disabled?

5. Highlight the powerful spiritual underpinnings of Karen's anger and frustration with Anna and her mode of healing.

6. Karen also expresses a deep and profound sorrow for the loss of a beloved relationship. She uses the strong term of "abandonment" to describe her feelings. In what ways has Anna "abandoned" her and her other friends?
7. Highlight why Karen says Anna has "betrayed" them.

8. The people who leave the church had been some of the most ardent in praying for Anna's healing. Why does her mode of healing produce disillusionment and hurt? What does this say about inserting our own preconceptions into our prayers for others?

9. Highlight what Anna calls the "cruelest cut" for her friends.

10. Is it possible to heal such deep hurt? Why do you think Anna's friends decided to leave?

11. What personal responsibility does Anna take for the fracture in her church? What, if anything, do you think she could have done differently?

12. How do you think this painful event helps motivate Anna to write her book?

13. The church undergoes dramatic change after the departure of key people.

14. Highlight why it is likely that people who experience massive changes in their lives will also experience rifts in their relationships.

15. Why does Don say Anna is "threatening" to some people?

16. Don and Anna have an intimate exchange at the end of the book. What does it suggest about what Anna's future life will be like? What does it suggest about their relationship?

17. Quote for meditation: "Transformation has a high price tag." Is this true in your own life? Why do you think it is important to Anna to convey this powerful principle?

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**EPILOGUE: NEW YEAR 2010**

At the New of 2010 it is ten years since the end of the book and fourteen years since Anna's healing began. She has had multiple sclerosis for 45 years.

1. How would the impact of Anna's story be different if she had published it ten years earlier, right after the events of the last chapter?

2. How would it be different if Anna had had her disease for five or ten years instead of 45?

3. What purpose does it serve in the story that the Epilogue takes Anna back to her church?

4. What is the miracle Anna experiences in regard to her old friends who departed?

5. Highlight how Anna puts her Tai Chi and Qigong experience to work for other people.

6. What information about Anna's current life do you find to be the most interesting to you?

7. Highlight the ways in which Anna has been a bridge builder.
Note from Anna: Thank you so much for sharing this journey with me. I hope and pray that this study guide will ignite insights that you will be able to put into practice in your own life--or share with others you love. Keep on Rising!

Share comments and questions: You can interact with the author and other readers by posting your questions and comments on Anna's Blog or on Anna's Facebook page.


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