

The Commercial Appeal ... Faith & Value

Her message: Let go & live

Simply accept change, be a channel of love

By James Dowd

[Contact](#)

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Nestled in a comfy chair in her cozy, artistic bungalow, Linda Douty radiates warmth, wit and wisdom, with just enough sassiness to keep things from getting treacly.

She's like a favorite aunt, the one who'll keep secrets and give advice, but only if asked. Here's a woman who's made peace with where she's been and is excited about the journey ahead.

Now she's inviting others to share what she's learned along the way. The Memphis resident has released a new book, "How Can I Let Go If I Don't Know I'm Holding On? -- Setting Our Souls Free" (\$15.95 paperback/Morehouse Publishing).

"I don't want to merely survive life, I want to live it and live it fully," says Douty, 65. "For me, that means finding ways I can be the most productive -- spiritually and physically and emotionally -- and to do that means letting go of some old ideas."

Douty didn't arrive at this mindset overnight. It took years of fumbling and faltering, searching and striving to achieve serenity and acceptance.

And release.

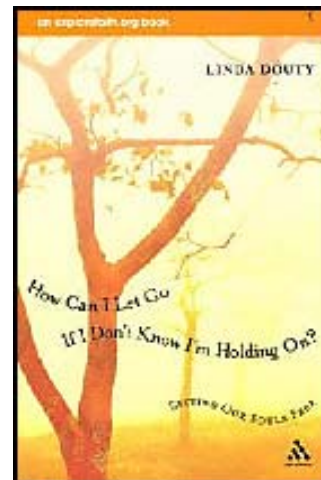
"All my work has been an evolution of sorts, to learn and make sense of it and communicate to someone else," Douty says. "I've learned the most when I've been challenged, but that's nothing extraordinary, really. But I think everyone can relate to that and it's what resonates the most with people."

Douty has tested the principles she advocates. After her marriage ended and she found herself a single mother of two small boys, she didn't realize her sons could see behind the facade she tried to present.



Photo by Matthew Craig

Local author Linda Douty recently published her first book "How Can I Let Go If I Don't Know I'm Holding On? -- Setting Our Souls Free." It's a collection of ways to let go of old personas, perceptions and behavior patterns. Behind her is a portrait of Douty in her 30s.



"I thought I was doing a good job of hiding my emotions, but one day my sons told me that sometimes my moods just poisoned the atmosphere," Douty says. "I realized I was carrying a lot of baggage that I needed to get rid of and get on with my life."

During this period her faith in God deepened, Douty says. She took courses in theology and realized her calling as a spiritual director and teacher. Her belief served as an anchor and a source of strength.

As she turned more of her life over to God, Douty began to let go. Of old ways of thinking and acting, of bitter feelings and fear.

The more she grew, the more she realized the idea of dumping excess baggage that weighs us down is one that people of any age can relate to. Life constantly presents opportunities for release, from beginning to end.

"We are constantly letting go and we need to realize it's OK and deal with it and move on to become better and more fulfilled," Douty says. "It may mean letting go of a loved one who's died or a relationship that's ended. For a young person it could mean letting go of high school friends and parental control and making a new life in college.

"And for those of us who are older, it may mean coming to terms with the ultimate letting go -- letting go of our own lives."

Ultimately, letting go means acceptance, Douty says. Too often, how we perceive ourselves is tied to the opinions of others.

"There's so much energy spent trying to fight the aging process, which is something that comes naturally and that we need to value fully," Douty says. "It would be better if we weren't so preoccupied by what other people think and fully experienced every moment and age in our lives."

Already, the early buzz on her book has Douty's calendar filled well into next year. She'll crisscross the country for a series of retreats and seminars, offering tips for making the most of life's journey.

"There's a lot of value in being able to wake up every morning and realize there's so much beauty around us," Douty says. "We just have to learn to let go of things that cloud our vision and be a channel of love in the world."

-- James Dowd: 529-2737

More info:

Appearance/book signing

Who: Linda Douty

What: Rector's Forum

When: 10:15 a.m. Sunday

Where: Church of the Holy Communion, 4645 Walnut Grove

Why: Reflections from her recent book, "How Can I Let Go If I Don't Know I'm Holding On? Setting Our Souls Free," available at lindadouty.com and area bookstores

How much: Admission is free; books will be available for purchase at the event.