

Authors: Shelby Spear & Lisa Leshaw
Category: Family Relationships/Parenting/Motherhood
Print ISBN: 978-0578424187
eBook ISBN: 978-0578449074
Publisher: Shelby Spear

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Author Bios

A self-described “sappy soul whisperer and sarcasm aficionado”, Shelby Spear is a wife of 25 years and a mom of three 20-something kiddos who has a deep love for Jesus and storytelling. Most days she muses in rhetorical wonder over what God was thinking when He put her in charge of three humans. Although God’s quick to remind her how capable she is, apparently He sometimes does so while crossing His fingers behind His back.

Now that she and her husband, John, are in a season of empty nest, Shelby spends her days writing about all the ways motherhood has shaped, transformed, inspired, and aged her. You’ll find her stories all over the web at places like *Her View From Home*, *For Every Mom*, *Today*, *Love What Matters*, and others. She has several stories in print at *Guideposts* magazine as well, the most recent in the January 2019 issue called, *Our 40 Day Soul Fast*. She is the loving and goofball hostess of a growing family of friends on her blog at shelbyspear.com and across social media outlets.

While John and her children graffiti her soul, all things chocolate melt her heart. Music stirs her like no other, crying fulfills her, and a love of sports keeps her competitive streak alive. Some of her favorite things in life are books, yoga, *This Is Us*, and a comfy pair of jeans—most notably the stretchy kind. Denim defines her in a bluesy kind of way.



Shelby Spear



Lisa Leshaw

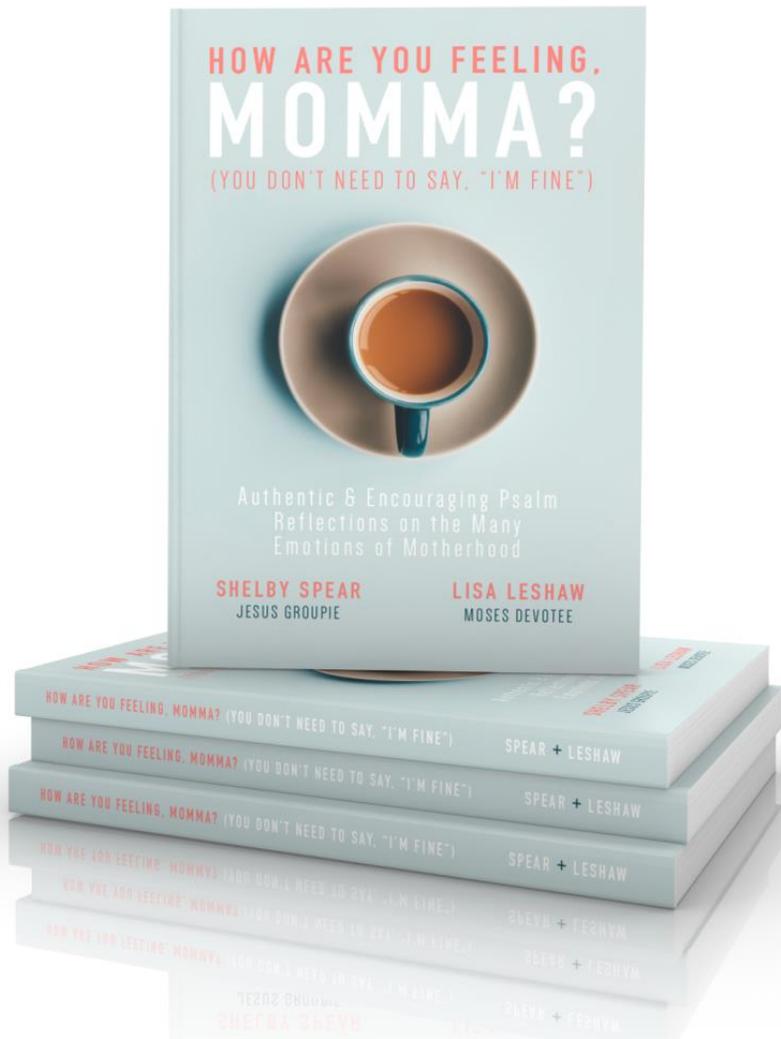
Lisa is excited to be entering a new frontier in her life: meeting the eligibility requirement for Dunkin' Donuts senior discount. Because she's now a 'biddy,' she lives in the same attire as new mommas: t-shirts and sweats for daily living and extravagant affairs.

She is an avid storyteller with plenty of material to pull from in her role as wife of 40+ years to Stu, step-mom to a son and daughter, both in their early forties, and a grandma to six grandbabies: five boys and one girl, ages 6-16. You can find her words online and in print at places like *Her View From Home, Grown and Flown, Guideposts,* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul.*

Her decades of experience as a mental health professional along with her weekly empowerment circles give mommas of every age a place to celebrate themselves and one another. She prays every day that the world becomes a more tolerant and accepting place—hoping that each one of us will work towards making a lasting contribution to ensure this outcome.

Lisa also loves children's theater and is ready to pursue a career in stand-up comedy if someone discovers she's funny. Her children's book, *A Royal Mistake*, is ready to be published if someone discovers she's written it.

When it's all said and done, Lisa's wish is that everyone walk with lightness, giggle easily, and land softly someday in the arms God.



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Book Bio

As Moms, gobs of emotions churn inside us on any given day. But when someone asks, “How are you?” we often withhold an honest answer. A trite, “I’m fine,” keeps the heaviness of authenticity from mucking up our everyday living. Yet beneath our facade of contentment are countless felt needs just begging for healing and resolve.

How Are You Feeling, Momma? is a collection of personal and candid reflections on 31 motherhood emotions we all feel on any given day, each tied to encouragement from a specific Psalm. The Psalms depict the real and raw of how the Hebrews felt, which correlates to the hopes, sorrows, joys, and doubts tucked inside a momma’s heart.

With vulnerability and a hefty dose of wit, Shelby and Lisa will:

- Inspire you to lean into and get real about your feelings
- Give you both a Christian and Jewish perspective on each emotion
- Encourage you to find comfort in knowing you aren’t alone in how you feel
- Help you connect the pleadings in the Psalms to the pleadings in your soul

These moms have been through the trenches, a combined 66 years of parenting/step-parenting/grandparenting between them. Their words draw from deep wells of experience in hopes of bringing relief and encouragement to moms everywhere.

TESTIMONIALS



“It’s in this book where you will find freedom from hiding, from holding in those true emotions, from having to keep it all together with a perfectly coined, “I’m fine.” You can be real here. You can be you. You can reveal those sensitive parts and secret struggles as you realize you are not alone.”

Christine Carter, mom of two teens ages 13 and 15, and author of, *Help and Hope While You're Healing: A woman's guide toward wellness while recovering from injury, surgery, or illness* Blogs at Themomcafe.com



“As a mother of six, reading, *How Are You Feeling, Momma?* is like sitting on my front porch with a couple of friends and having a much-needed conversation.”

Laura Wolf, mom of six, ages 10 and under



“However you’re feeling at the moment, Momma—from afraid to worshipful to something in between—you’re not alone, and this reassuring resource offers proof of that from two beautiful moms who aren’t willing to settle for “I’m fine” and don’t think you should either.”

Elizabeth Spencer, mom of one teen and one 20-something daughter. Blogs at guiltychocoholicmama.blogspot.com



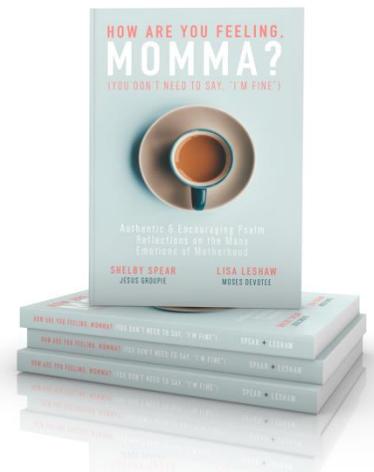
“This book is a delightful guide for mothers and grandmothers to reflect on the spiritual joys & challenges of motherhood”

Sandy McLeod, mom of two and grandmother of three



“Whether we identify as Jewish or Christian, as moms, when we open Scripture, we’re reading the same Psalms. It’s a beautiful thing to realize, as these women did, the way we apply the truths we read, in our home lives, our communities, and in our places of worship, are remarkably similar too.”

Traci Rhoades, mom of one 11 year-old. Blogs at tracesoffaith.com



“*How Are You Feeling, Momma?* is helpful, but it is so much more. Eloquently written, fresh, and dear. I felt seen and heard. Perfect.”

Jami Amerine, mom of 6 and author of *Sacred Ground, Sticky Floors and Stolen Jesus*

Target Audience



WHO SHOULD READ

- **mothers**
- grandmothers
- **fathers (to understand their wives)**
- soon-to-be moms

BOOK BENEFITS

- **inspires moms to get real about their feelings**
- helps moms find comfort in knowing they are not alone
- **encourages moms to be vulnerable**
- helps moms see the value in communicating
- **gives moms two perspectives from a Christian and Jewish lens**
- helps moms connect the pleadings in their soul to the pleadings in the Psalms



Book Excerpt



Two

PSALMS FOR ALONE MOMS

Shelby's Reflection

Perhaps one of the greatest oxymorons of all time is a 'lonely mother' when you consider the 24/7 demands of little people. But loneliness is real and hits all of us up for many reasons. Sometimes we feel alone because we've lost our identity in motherhood. Other times we're lonely because we've reached the empty nest stage. One of the worst feelings of isolation is when we pay admission to the I'm the only one who club. The only mom who screams at her kids, burns dinner, forgets the tooth fairy, or leaves a basement door open, resulting in a toddler plummeting down the stairs. (That'd be me. I might be the only one). Or we believe we are the only mom who fights neediness, depression, insecurity, resentment, frustration, anger. The only mom who has a child who is _____ or does _____. We run these scripts through our minds, isolating ourselves even further out of fear, shame, and remorse.

An even harder scenario is the single mom, or the mom who balances everything because her husband works seven days a week, or the Mom whose spouse is sick and needs constant medical care. All situations produce heavy and tangible loneliness.

But we're never the only one who anything. There are thousands of Moms out there struggling just like we are—feeling the same feelings, battling the same wars. When we dare to be authentic and vulnerable about our feelings, we'll find soul sisters ready to "me too" us into fullness and connection. I can't tell you the number of times I've gaped when finding out my experiences as a mom aren't unique. The ache of loneliness can evaporate in an instant when we find common ground with another.

Admitting our sense of isolation is no easy task. In fact, doing so can feel humiliating. This is where God comes in. If we cry out to Him first by saying, "*Look at me and help me! I'm all alone and in big trouble.*" (Psalm 25:16 MSG), we might find out God has the perfect friend or even a total stranger ready to meet us where we're at. He works wonders that way. All we need to do is be on the lookout.

Lisa's Reflection

Being a mom can sometimes be a lonely experience despite the beauty and glory of this role. It seems contradictory to logic that we can feel alone amidst our children and all the daily routines that consume us, mind, body, and soul.

Yet have we not all found ourselves sitting in the middle of the living room rug on the verge of tears or well past the floodgates bursting open and wondering why? What's wrong with me? I have everything! I should be grateful for these miracles.

We keep these feelings to ourselves for fear that we will be judged. We hold on to the shame and guilt and never realize that the mom next door is sitting on HER living room rug contemplating the same feelings.

The vastness of our responsibility as moms could break us if we gave it too much thought.

So when we feel alone there are ways to combat the aloneness and ones I am certain are God-approved:

- Take a walk outside with your little ones, and smile at a stranger; it humanizes everything and causes an immediate change in perspective. You might well bump into another lonely mom, and if you help her feel better, it helps you as well!

- Sing! God gave us a voice so we could rejoice, and there's no better way to lift your spirit than to burst out in song. Grab your childhood microphone (hairbrush) and let it rip! If the neighbor chooses to close her window to drown you out, even better.

- Look through a photo album, which is a scrapbook of your life and a glorious reminder of the miles you have walked to get here. It, too, brings perspective back into focus.

- Take a look in the mirror and say 'Thank You' to YOU for doing an extraordinary job under incredibly difficult and challenging circumstances every day. Isn't motherhood beautiful and so challenging simultaneously?

When you find yourself stuck in the muck of motherhood, in the trenches where we all have been, open your Bible and read Psalm 40:2 (NIV): "*He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.*"

Personal Reflection:

What is one action you can take today to feel connected?

Interview Questions

- 1 Can you tell us a bit about your mothering backgrounds?
- 2 How did the two of you meet?
- 3 What inspired you to write *How Are You Feeling, Momma?*
- 4 Why the Psalms?
- 5 What was the process of writing the book like since you live in different states?
- 6 As moms, what was the hardest season of your mothering journey?
- 7 What was the most important lesson you learned as moms?
- 8 How did each of you manage all the emotions you experienced along the way?
- 9 Lisa, what wisdom can you share with moms from your empowerment circles?
- 10 Shelby, what wisdom can you share from your time serving in various ministries?
- 11 Why do you think it is so difficult for moms to be real about their feelings?
- 12 How can moms encourage one another to embrace vulnerability?
- 13 Some moms feel very isolated. Where and how can they meet new friends?
- 14 Depression is a very real issue with countless moms. What is your experience?
- 15 What is the best moms advice you've been given?
- 16 What is one of your proudest mom moments?
- 17 What do you hope your children say about you?
- 18 Which part of this book was the most difficult to write and why?
- 19 How has this partnership evolved since the start of this project?
- 20 What is the most beneficial takeaway you hope moms get from reading your book?

STORY IDEAS FOR JOURNALISTS:

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, MOMMA? (YOU DON'T NEED TO SAY, "I'M FINE")



Authentic & Encouraging Psalm
Reflections on the Many
Emotions of Motherhood

SHELBY SPEAR
JESUS GROUPIE

LISA LESHAW
MOSES DEVOTEE

- 1. Two Moms, Two Faiths, Two Voices:** Why is this important/valuable?
- 2. Power of vulnerability:** Why were the two of you so willing to be transparent?
- 3. Moms need to know they're never alone:** How does your book encourage moms to find strength and comfort from "me too"?
- 4. Hiding our feelings hides our true self:** Why is it so important for moms to be authentic in dealing with their emotions?
- 5. God's love is constant:** What have you learned over the years of mothering about God's love in challenging times?
- 6. Nobody is really "fine":** What steps can moms take to do away with the 'fake it til you make it' mentality?
- 7. Be real, be you:** What have you learned about the healing power of embracing motherhood emotions?
- 8. It's okay to have a million emotions:** How can moms learn to accept all their emotions, even the negative ones like impatience and jealousy?
- 9. Get help when necessary:** Why is it vital for moms to seek professional help when they are really hurting, depressed, etc.?
- 10. Take good care of yourself:** What ways can a mom insure self-care in the midst of the chaos?
- 11. Continue to work on self-growth:** How can a mom focus on her own needs while nurturing everyone else?
- 12. Honor and celebrate your child's uniqueness:** What tools can a mom utilize that will allow her to accept her child as he/she is?
- 13. Celebrate what you do right:** Why should a mom take time to focus on all she is doing right as opposed to feeling guilty about the failures?
- 14. Find your tribe:** How can moms find other moms to bond with and build authentic relationships built on trust and encouragement?

DOWNLOADABLE PHOTOS

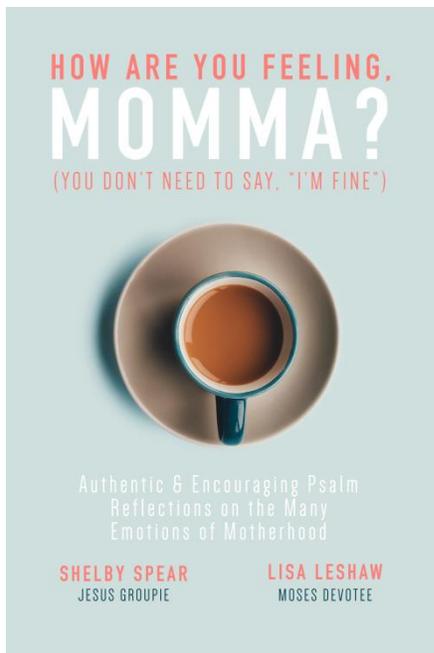
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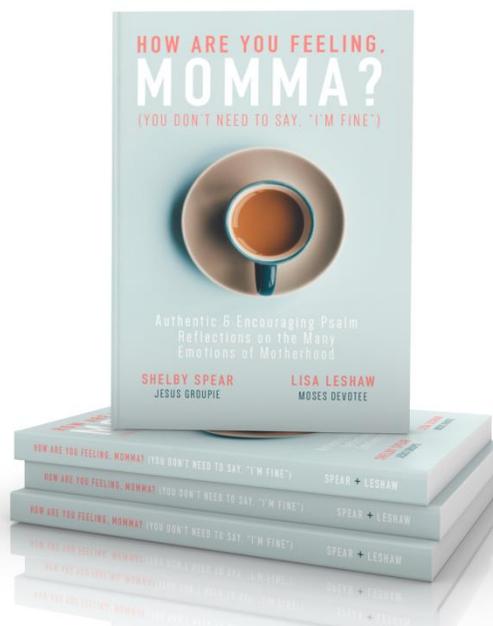
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