



Laurie Polich Short, author of *When Changing Nothing Changes Everything: The Power of Reframing Your Life*
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Laurie Polich Short offers a simple but revolutionary idea: change nothing that is around you yet still change everything about your life. With the help of four different lenses, Polich Short shows how the way you see can have an impact on how you live. If you put on the right lenses, you can reframe whatever comes your way and embrace both the good and the bad, recognizing that every detail of your life is fully in God's sovereign hands.

The Power of Reframing Your Life

How exactly does changing nothing change everything?

Laurie Polich Short: You can change nothing that is around you and still change everything by the way you see what is around you!

How have you personally learned the importance of changing perspective through the stages of life?

Laurie: I learn the importance of changing my perspective every day! I think it's particularly important when you face a challenging season but also important for living fully each moment you are here. In the big story, our challenging chapters can be the most important.

How are babies a good example of learning the big view of our lives?

Laurie: When we are born and first learn to focus we only see what is directly in our view. As we grow we learn that things exist, and are happening, outside of our immediate view. In a very real sense we need to "grow up" in our perspective, to realize we are part of a bigger story and that we are touching and influencing other people's stories for better or worse every day.

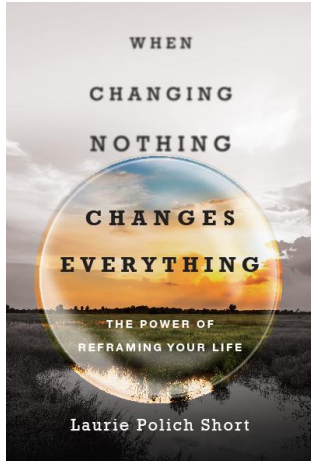
What does it mean that your view of your circumstances shapes what your circumstances become?

Laurie: We look at our circumstances with a certain angle that affects the way we respond to them. If we believe what we see is part of a larger story, it can infuse us with hope when things look bleak because we realize it could be doing something IN us and TO us to position us for the larger story. Nelson Mandela and Joseph from the Bible are two great examples of how our response to our circumstances impacts the outcome of our stories.

What are some simple ways to begin changing the lenses through which we see our lives?

Laurie: Every day calls for help from one of the four lenses explained in the book. We need to reframe constantly. The real-life stories in every chapter show how life changing these lenses can be! There are several tools I suggest:

- The Lord's Prayer for seeing the big view
- Paying attention to what's happening around you to see the present view
- Educating yourself on your past and genealogy for the rear view
- Pausing to reflect on what you might be missing for the higher view



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“Laurie Short has offered us a concise, accessible guidebook that provides not only helpful instruction but – more importantly – hope for how a proper vision of the life we have can lead to the very world of goodness and beauty for which we long so deeply. Read this book – and see your life change before your very eyes.”

– Curt Thompson, M.D.,
author of *The Soul of Shame*
and *Anatomy of the Soul*

View Your Life Through Different Lenses

I remember the morning well. It was a few months after I had moved to Santa Barbara, California, and the pastor I was working for invited me to give the sermon at my church. People were still getting to know me, so I decided to start by sharing a typical scene from my life. Here’s how I began:

I got up this morning in my apartment, and I was all alone. I have no husband, so there are no kids. The owner recently put a “For Sale” sign in the front yard, so I probably won’t be able to stay in my place much longer. The rent will go up, and I’ll have to find something else. Dating at my age is not easy, because everyone you meet has baggage. It’s just a matter of choosing what luggage you can live with. Whether it’s a divorce, shared kids, or the reasons that accompany prolonged singleness, it’s been impossible to find anyone I am interested in. I love it here, but working at a church is one of the hardest jobs a single person can have. You feel your singleness everywhere you go.

I paused, and an awkward silence fell across the crowd. Noticing the pastor staring at me with a look of wonderment (not the good kind), I took a deep breath and started again:

I got up this morning and I had the whole place to myself. It was quiet, and I could do whatever I wanted. The “For Sale” sign is still in front of my place, so I’ll be able to live there another month. If it sells, there’s a chance I might find something even better. Dating is much easier at my age because you know yourself more. You are better equipped to make a good choice. You also have a lot more grace for the people you date because you realize that circumstances make life complicated. And my job? Working at a church is such a gift! What a blessing to have an extended family in the place where you work when there isn’t one at home.

I should have stopped my sermon right there. Because this was the only part of the talk people remembered. It’s been ten years since I gave that illustration, and there are still some people who remember it. Somehow it struck a chord and may have even planted the seed that caused me to write this book.

Seventeenth-century philosopher Blaise Pascal accurately observed, “There is enough light for those who choose to see, and enough darkness for those who are of a contrary disposition.” He wrote these words to describe a journey toward faith, but they are also true about life. Where we choose to focus makes all the difference in what we see.

I should pause here and tell you that this is not a book about putting on “rose-colored glasses” in your circumstances. It’s about reframing what you see. In the chapters that

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BOOK EXCERPT

"I used to think changing perspective was a cop-out for not changing, but what Laurie is proposing – reframing the drama of your life – is actually the way to live fully in God's reality, which is something far bigger than our seasonal drama. I've seen how that really does change everything!"

– John Burke, pastor of Gateway Church, author of *Imagine Heaven*

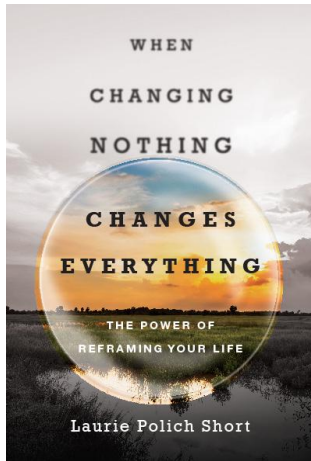
follow, you will be introduced to four different lenses that will open up a multidimensional view of your life.

The *big view* lens will help you view your life from a broader perspective. The *present view* lens will help you see what you may be missing right now. The *rear view* lens will give you insight about the way you are wired. And the *higher view* lens will reveal more of what God wants you to see. Looking through these lenses, you will discover some different perspectives that could open up some uncharted vistas of your life.

As the title of my book suggests, these lenses won't change anything that is in front of you. They will simply expand the dimensions of what you see. But using them could change what happens from this point forward.

My hope is that through these lenses, you will learn to embrace your life – the good, the bad, the hard, and the spectacular. And with the ability to reframe your life and see all that it already is, you may start to live it differently. That's when changing nothing can change everything.

– Adapted from the introduction, *"The Things You May Not See"*



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"Dallas Willard used to say that eternity is already in session.

Laurie Short has written an elegant invitation to live life from inside eternity rather than on the outside."

—John Ortberg, senior pastor,
Menlo Church

Social Media and the Need for a New View

Before the dawn of social media, we only dreamed of how the other half lived. Now we get to see it. And I have wondered about the effect this is having on our souls. Through the lens of select images and soundbites, everyone looks happier, prettier, thinner, and more fulfilled than they really are. Comparing these images to the unedited version of our own lives, it's not hard to imagine why many of us feel slightly depressed. A friend of mine used to say, "Don't compare what you know about yourself to what you don't know about someone else." Social media has turned his warning into an art.

In the olden days, we used to feel that way when we picked up a magazine or turned on the TV and saw people we could later convince ourselves "weren't really real." Now we see people we *know* are real. And they look like they are living a much better life than the one we have.

Because we are confronted with an endless barrage of images bombarding us with what we need to be happy, seeing all that we have in front of us is a skill we need. That is what this book will help you do. I believe more of your life is determined by the way you see than you can imagine. The reframing principles in this book will help you see your life in new ways and may keep you from making a decision that takes you somewhere you don't want to go.

Considering the long view keeps you from being led by your longings to a place that is worse than where you are — especially since "where you are" is never a fixed point. The truth is, "where you are" may be leading you to a goodness that you cannot yet see. The difficulty you may want to escape could be part of your journey in getting there.

The ability to reframe and view yourself in the middle of your story enables you to rest in *what is*, knowing that it is part of what is taking you to *what we will be*. Things are happening in you — and to you — and if you attempt to escape your circumstances, rather than live them, you may actually abort a process that could be bringing something wonderful into your life. Considering the fullness of your story strengthens your resolve to live your current chapter well, and in doing so you may discover you are on a road to getting more than you ever could have dreamed.

The secret to living your best life lies largely in your ability to see all that is in front of you. That is what this book is about.

— Adapted from the introduction, *"The Things You May Not See"*

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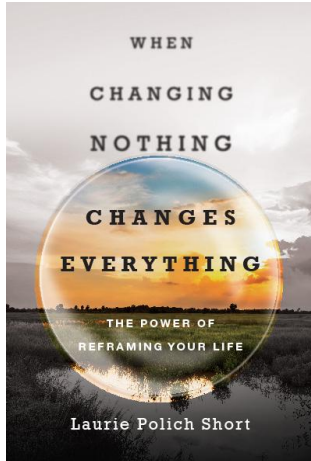


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"The true stories Laurie uses throughout this book make its message impossible to ignore. If you need your world rocked by new eyes for your current circumstances, then you need this book."

—Lisa Anderson, director of Boundless, author of *The Dating Manifesto*

How the Big Picture Changes the Small Picture

The setting was World War II. The place was Berlin, Germany. After countless horrific deaths, the Allies finally began to gain ground to claim their victory. During the final months of the war, the British conducted daily bombing raids over Berlin. British Bombers would take off from an airstrip in England and fly into Germany, surrounded by smaller fighter planes whose job was to keep German planes from attacking.

One night, after a successful bombing raid, the British planes were heading back to England when they were suddenly attacked by a group of German fighter planes. One bomber found itself flying alone with no protection, and at the same time a German fighter plane appeared out of nowhere. The crew watched helplessly as the German plane moved closer and closer, until finally it was in shooting range. They heard "Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud!" as five bullets slammed into fuselage of the bomber, right in the direction of the gas tank. The crew braced itself for an explosion, but after a moment of silence, they found nothing happened. Fuel was seeping from the holes in the gas tank that the bullets had made, but they were able to fly back to their base and get safely off the plane.

After the plane had landed, one of the mechanics came on board to examine what had happened. He handed the recovered bullets to the pilots, and they carefully opened each shell. To their amazement they found four of the bullets were empty, no gunpowder inside. Inside the fifth shell they found a piece of crumpled paper wrapped into a tiny wad, which read, "We are Polish POWs—forced to make bullets in factory. When guards do not look, we do not fill with powder. It's not much but it's the best we can do."

When we reduce our life to our individual actions, it's easy to believe we are small and insignificant. But our small life quickly becomes a big life when we see the effect of our actions from a wider view. Every role we have, every circumstance we are in, every relationship we are a part of is affected by how we play our part. Suddenly your actions matter—not only for how they will affect you but how they will affect other people. So the real question becomes, Am I willing to expand my view outside of my own story, where I am the focus, to see my part in someone else's story? To have faith that even if I cannot see the impact of my actions, time will eventually reveal their effect?

Seeing the big picture changes the small picture. But sometimes you need a reminder to look through the big view lens to see your part.

— Taken from chapter one, *"The Big Picture Changes the Small Picture"*