



EXCERPT



Everything Is (Not) Fine

Finding Strength When Life Gets Annoyingly Difficult

September 26, 2023 | \$18, 192 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0614-6

We pretend that everything is fine, even though it's not. Even in the hardest times, strength from God rises from deep in our soul to keep us going. In this honest, inspirational, and humorous book, Katie Schnack goes deep into the hard stuff of life with no sugarcoating or toxic positivity to find sustenance she could not imagine. Schnack's plucky authenticity shows us how when life is complicated, self-compassion and humor can bring healing and life.

Changing What it Means to Be Inspirational

Have you ever found yourself in a situation that really sucked, but you had to keep walking through it anyway? Cool, me too. This book is going to talk about times like that. And other stuff that isn't so depressing, like being strong and kicking life's butt like a vintage Rocky Balboa in his best moment. Because with seasons of hard come seasons of conquering. It isn't all just doom and gloom, even though it may feel that way for some time.

There was one time of my life where this was very clearly the theme—things were really difficult and not fun, but I had to do them anyway. Even though everything in my mind and body would have preferred to hide in my bed for a concerning amount of time and numb my feelings by zoning out on a never-ending TikTok scroll.

My son, Shepherd, was born with medical complexities. A solid handful of them, on very important parts like heart, spinal cord, spine, and kidneys, darn it. It began by identifying he had a heart defect in the womb. Eventually, we would discover the rest. Come to find out, he has what is considered a rare condition called VACTERL. It is an acronym for vertebral defects, anal atresia, cardiac defects, tracheo-esophageal fistula, renal anomalies, and limb abnormalities. Life sometimes throws curveballs.

When Shepherd was only six months old, still a sweet, squishy, drooling bundle of joy, we had to get a sedated MRI so we could fully identify all of his body's differences and decide a care plan for him. No parent should ever have to walk into a children's hospital and hand their tiny, precious, fragile child over to an anesthesiologist and just "hope and pray for the best" they bring him back to you.

But of course, it didn't end there. At the time, that first MRI and handing him over to a nurse was the hardest moment of my life. But what would follow would be a string of others, each one equally as painful on my mom heart. Tests and diagnoses and months of worry and waiting. More MRI, more anesthesia, a really weird test where they had to inject him with radiation, and then, surgery. It was all more than a lot.

After that very first MRI, we were scheduled for another one to see how things had progressed and try to further identify treatment options. This meant we would go back to the same hospital and do it all over. We would again hand over our precious boy to a team of strangers, watch as they wheeled him into a room alone, and sit, wait, and worry separated from him for the next three hours. Because reliving trauma is so fun.

Having to fully trust in God when it comes to your kids, with something that has your whole heart, can be hard. A true test of faith. Yes, I fully believe God is good and is with us at every step, but also, that doesn't guarantee outcomes . . . so yeah. That is not an easy little tidbit to accept. And sometimes, it even scares me—the lack of control we have. I think it is okay to admit that even though we trust the Lord, it can sometimes be hard to not be horrified about what is going to happen.



Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media



EXCERPT



Everything Is (Not) Fine Finding Strength When Life Gets Annoyingly Difficult

September 26, 2023 | \$18, 192 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0614-6

Katie Schnack is a writer and book publicist. Her articles have appeared in *Relevant*, Today.com, Hello Giggles, Romper, and Scary Mommy. Katie and her family live in West Palm Beach, Florida, and she is the author of *The Gap Decade: When You're Technically an Adult but Really Don't Feel Like it Yet*.

A few days before the second MRI, I was texting with my friend Kelsey. I said to her how I wish I was stronger. I wish I could be more of a “pillar of faith”—an example of a strong, brave parent—during this moment. I sure didn’t feel that way. I felt more like a useless wet blanket of fear and worry, desperately begging everyone in my circle and all the faceless strangers on the internet to pray for Shepherd and us, because that is all I knew to do. Worry and asking for prayer.

And what Kelsey texted back was something I will never forget.

Honestly, I don’t think anyone is actually that inspirational until they come out to the other side of the hard things. You are FAITHFUL because you are asking for prayer and running to God for HELP. We should change what we think it means to be inspirational.

It isn’t about doing everything “perfectly,” but about being true to yourself. Being honest with the hard feelings. It is like what they say about courage. Courage doesn’t mean you are not scared. It means you are scared and do it anyway.

Did you hear that? *We should change what it means to be inspirational.* It isn’t about walking through the hard stuff perfectly, posting smiling Instagram pics along the way. *Look, universe! Look how brave and strong I am! I am doing this all on my own because I am THAT amazing! Why are you not as amazing as me? Ugh.* We don’t need that.

Maybe being honest and open and prayerful as you walk through the hard thing is also an example of strength. Admitting you are scared of the thing and doing it anyway, relying fully on God, might be more of the example we all need to see. So then when the next person goes through the hard thing, they don’t feel isolated in their pain.

—adaptated from the prologue



Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media