

*Neale Donald Walsch*

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD  
*for teens*



*with a foreword by*  
alanis morissette

# 1

## Finally, answers

Suppose you could ask God any questions you wanted.

Questions like:

*Why can't my parents stay in love and stay married?*

Or...

*How do you decide who gets to be Alanis or Michael Jordan and who gets to live regular lives?*

Or...

*Why can't I just have sex and have it be okay with everybody? What's the big deal???*

And suppose you received responses to your questions.

Responses like:

Your parents *can* stay in love and stay married, but it would require a shift in the things they believe for them to do so. You can also be very okay and live a happy life if your parents do not stay together, but that would require a shift in the things *you* believe.

I do not decide who gets to be Alanis and who gets to live regular lives. You do. You are making those choices right now. The problem is, you don't know that you're doing it—or how.

You can have as much sex as you want, every day of your life, and it will be very okay with everybody. But first you

must understand what sex is—and that may not be what you think.

Would you want to hear more?

You're about to.



This book contains questions just like that, from teenagers all over the world. The responses you'll find here have been placed here for your consideration only. This book has not come here to give you “the answers.” The last thing you need is someone else giving you “the answers.” The hope is that this book will place you in touch with your *own* answers.

When you are in touch with your own answers, the hopelessness that you may sometimes feel inside can be ended.

This book is the result of a conversation with God. Okay, okay, so you don't even know if there *is* a God, much less whether we can have a conversation, right? Don't worry about that right now. If you don't believe in God, consider this book a work of fiction. I won't mind. It'll still be a good read. Maybe the best book you've *ever* read.

I do think that God exists, and I do believe that God communicates with us. I have conversations with God all the time. How those conversations take place will be explained in just a few pages. For now, please consider the possibility that this book was brought into your life to change your life if you choose for it to, and to change the life of the world around you if that is also what you desire.

And don't think for a minute that it came to you by accident. *You called this book to you.*



You called this book to you because you live in an insane world, and you want to change it. Somewhere inside, somewhere deep inside, you know how life *could* be. You know that we are not supposed to be hurting each other here. You know that no one has the right to seek it all, to take it all, to hoard it all, while others have so little.

You know that might is not right. You know that truth is what matters, and openness and transparency and fairness, not hidden agendas and under the table dealings and behind the scenes maneuverings and getting the advantage. You know that when you get the advantage at the expense of someone else being *disadvantaged* that there is no advantage in that at all.

You know this, and you know more.

You know that so much of the stuff they teach in school is pointless. Where are the classes in Sharing Power, Cooperative Living, Accepting Differences and Celebrating Diversity, Shameless Sexuality, Understanding Unconditional Love?

Where are the courses in Sustainable Living, Responsible Economics, and Collective Consciousness? Where are the courses that are *relevant*? Cannot reading, writing and arithmetic be taught *through* relevant courses, rather than *instead of them*?

Of course they can, and you know they can.

You know this, and you know more.

You know that our political systems on this planet suck. *They don't work*. We can't even elect a president and have every vote count. We can't even find a way to have the election *process* work, much less the process of politics *after* the election.

You know this, and you know more.

You know that hypocrisy reigns supreme in the lives of too many people. Not all people, but too many people. They say one thing and do another. And they think you don't see it; they think you're not watching, or that you're not smart enough to know that what you're looking at, pure and simple, is hypocrisy.

You know this, and you know more.

You know what is rewarded in this society and what is not, and that in this we have it all backward. You know that we pay 30 million dollars for someone to play first base for the New York Yankees and 30 thousand dollars for someone to nurse our sick or teach our children or minister to our disheartened, and that this is crazy.

You know this, and you know more.

You know that you live in a society which keeps trying to use the energy which *created* a problem to *solve* the problem; which uses killing to stop people from killing, which uses violence to put an end to violence, which uses injustice in the name of justice, inequality in the name of equality, intolerance in the name of tolerance, wars in the name of peace, and insanity in the search for a sane tomorrow.

*What is wrong with this picture?*, you ask, and you *know* what is wrong. You don't need anyone to tell you. You only want someone to do something about it. You only want someone to be *able* to do something about it. Because until now, it's all looked pretty hopeless.

And why has it looked so hopeless? Basically, because everyone's lying about it. No one wants to tell it like it really is.

Well, all that's going to change.

Right here.

Right now.

With this book.

# 2

## Truth time

You tell the truth. That's what's cool about you.

I mean, you don't go around trying to kid yourself and trying to fool everybody else. You just *are*, and that's what it is, and if others don't like it, well, then that's what *that* is, and you're not going to change yourself because of something like that, right?

Okay, that means you're ready. Because people who *tell* the truth are usually ready to *hear* the truth. That's good, because we're going to do something really interesting here. We're going to have a conversation with God. But if you're not ready, it won't work.

Oh, the *conversation* part will work, because you can't stop that. All of us are having conversations with God, every minute of every day. What won't work is your ability to "get" it. You'll read it, but you won't get it. It's like a lot of things in life. You've got to be ready.

Right now most of the world is stuck. It's been stuck for half a century. Fifty-year-old ideas, half-century-old ways of doing things—that's what you see out there right now, *a lot*.

They're not ready. The people who live and breathe these ideas, I mean. The people who swear by them. They're not ready. Not for change, and not for the answers that would create change. Not most of them, anyway. Most of them aren't ready.

I think you are. So let me explain what's going on here.



I wrote a book called *Conversations with God* because I wanted to know why my life wasn't working, why it always seemed to have to be such a continuing struggle, what the rules were and how I could "play" and not lose all the time. I also wanted to know the point of it all.

What resulted from that call for help was a dialogue with God that I had in my mind and placed on paper. Other people found value in it and it wound up being translated into 27 languages.

My questions continued and more books followed. Then someone asked, "Why don't you do a book for teenagers?" And I said, "Because I wouldn't know what to ask about." And they replied, "why not let *them tell you*?"

That's when I started asking teenagers, in person and through the Internet, *If you could ask God any question, what would it be?*

I received hundreds of replies. Here are some of them:

***Why do You let children get abused sexually and physically? How come everyone wasn't born smart? Why is the world filled with hate?***

***What's the deal with the generation gap? Why can't parents just talk with us? And why is there so much pressure—from parents, from school, from everyone?***

***Is my life controlled by fate? Why are we taught facts, and not ideas, in school? Will I return to You, and will You be happy with me?***

***How come I have to pay adult ticket prices at the movies when I'm 13, but I can't see an 'R' movie? That's stupid. Why do we have to have three hours of homework after seven hours of school?***

***I'm confused and scared about what to make of my newly found sexual identity. How can I present that to the people I love?***

***How come people make such dumb laws? If You made us, then who made You?***

***How is that a God of mercy can be such an isolationist and so intolerant to other views? How can a God of infinite mercy condemn anyone for anything? Why***

*condemn magic that heals? Why condemn for eternity those transgressions that are momentary?*

*Why is it that my parents notice only the things that I do wrong? How come adults want respect but don't give it back?*

*Why do people die? What can't we live forever? What really is life after death?*

*Why is it that I can die for my country at 18, but I can't enjoy a cold beer on a hot day?*

*I feel like I need to be successful—at everything. My parents seem to desperately want that. But what is 'success'?*

*I don't know whether to hang with the popular "preppie" kids or the castoff "grungy" kids. Why does everyone have to separate?*

*Why do my parents freak out about sex? My God, they freak out.*



Now aren't those great questions? They'll all be addressed here, as will many others that were asked—questions about dealing with authority, about choosing the right career, about drugs, about marrying or living together, about how the experiences of our lives are created, and even about what God looks like.

Let's get to one of those questions now, so you can see how the process plays out, and then I want to explain to you how my method of "receiving" the responses works.

This question was given to me by a young woman named Varinia.

***Why do you let children get abused sexually and physically?***

Varinia, My lovely, lovely friend, I know that you wish deeply in your soul that cruelty of all kinds could be eliminated from the Earth. So many people wish that, and so many are working for that.

There is so much sexual abuse in the world because there is so much sexual repression in the world. Humans

have been taught from the time they are very young to be ashamed of their body parts and embarrassed or guilty about their sexuality. The result is that millions of people have sexual hang ups you wouldn't believe.

Later in this conversation we'll talk about how you can help change all that, and how you can deal with whatever hang-ups the people around you may have. But you did not ask me why there was sexual and physical abuse in the world, you asked me why I *allowed* it—and I'm aware that that's an entirely different question.

***Yes, it is. So why do You allow it?***

When I created life as you know it, I did so by simply separating myself into countless smaller parts of me. This is another way of saying that you were made "in the image and likeness of God."

Now because God is The Creator, that means that all of you are creators, too. You have free will, just as I have free will. If I had not given you free will, you could not create, but only react. If you could only do what I tell you to do, then you could not create, but only obey.

Obedience is not creation. It is an act of subservience, not an act of power. God is not subservient to anyone, and since you are a part of God, you are, by nature, not subservient to anyone, either.

That is why, when you are *made* to be subservient, you immediately revolt. It is against your very nature. It is a violation of Who You Are at the very core of your being.

Teenagers know this more than anyone.

***But what about those human beings who have done things with their free will that has been very hurtful to others?***

There have been many people like that, and it is true that I could have stopped this. I did not stop it because the Process of Life itself is the expression of free will. Anything less than that is not life, but death.

Even when the expression of free will does not serve the highest good, it must be allowed, or freedom itself is a mockery.

The word “freedom” and the word “God” are interchangeable. You cannot have one without the other. For God to exist, freedom must exist.

The beauty of freedom, however, is that it can be expressed by all beings, not just a few. This means that the people of the Earth are free to *eliminate* the experiences of sexual abuse and physical abuse from their collective experience forever.

They are also free to eliminate other conditions of cruelty and misery that they now endure.

***How?***

That is the question this book will answer.



Now that’s the kind of dialogue you’re going to find throughout the rest of this book. All of the “lead” questions—the questions that start off a portion of the dialogue—came from young people just like yourself. Some of the follow-up questions are questions that I asked, because I felt that those asking the *first* question would have asked the follow-ups if they had the chance to.

To understand more fully how this “conversation” process works it will help you to know that, as I’ve said, all of us are having conversations with God every day—and that includes you. You just may not have called them that.

God is talking to all of us, all the time. We are continually being communicated with by the universe. Life is constantly telling Life about Life. Life is always sending us messages.

True wisdom may be found in the chance utterance of a friend you meet on the street, the lyrics to the next song you hear the radio, the words that confront you, big as life, on the billboard around the next corner, the voice that you hear whispering inside your head—or this book...that “just happened” to come into your hands.

Now substitute the word “God” for the words “true wisdom” in the above sentence and you will understand how your conversation with God works. God has never, *ever* stopped inspiring the human race—and God inspires us by sending us *messages*—ideas, thoughts, song lyrics, words for a book...you name it.



In my own life God’s conversations most often take the form of thoughts that fill my head, especially when I am asking for help with a serious question—and when I am willing to be quiet enough to hear the answer. God “speaks” to me in a voice that doesn’t sound like anyone’s voice in particular. It is what I have called a “voiceless voice,” something like the voice of your own thoughts.

Now you might say, “well, they *are* your own thoughts! What makes you think this is the voice of God?” That’s a fair question. When I asked God that question, here’s the answer that I heard:

Neale, if I was going to communicate with you, how else would I do it? Wouldn’t “putting thoughts into your head” be one of the most effective ways?

When Thomas Aquinas had “thoughts in his head” about theology, wasn’t he said to have been “inspired by God”?

When Amadeus Mozart had “thoughts in his head” about music, wasn’t he said to have been “inspired by God”?

When Thomas Jefferson had “thoughts in his head” about freedom, wasn’t he said to have been “inspired by God” to write a declaration about “one nation, under God”?

How do you think that I communicate with people if it is not by putting “thoughts in their head”? Do you think that I show up at their doorstep in a long, white robe and hand them a scroll? Do you think that I appear in a cloud of mist over their bed and boom my wisdoms into the air? Would that be more believable to you?

Is this how you have it? That the more unbelievable something is, the more believable it is?

I’ll tell you this: I come to people *in the way that is most believable*. I do this for a very good reason. *I want to be believed*. Yet even then you do not believe me.

For most people, the most believable way for God to show up in their lives would be as an apparition, with me appearing in robes and handing over a tablet. I have done those things, yes. *But do you think I am limited to those things?*

More often—much more often—I come to people in a much more natural way, as a much more integral part of life itself. This could be as a thought, as a feeling, or as an inspiration, just as I’m coming to you now through the feelings you are having and the words you are hearing and the paragraph that is coming to you in this way.



Those are the words that came, and that’s how the process works.

Now it might sound good if I said that I ponder my questions for hours, meditating and praying and remaining in the stillness until I am brought to enlightenment and tremble with the energy of God flowing through my fingertips. But the truth is, I put down the first thing that comes to my head. There's no editing, no changing, no "toning down" or "fixing up." It's just a matter of "hearing" it and writing it down. It's just like taking dictation.

I've been doing this now for ten years, ever since the circumstances of my life caused me to reach out to God and beg for help. This latest book was written just for you, just for teenagers, not only because someone suggested it, but also because I've received hundreds of letters from teenagers all over the world telling me how impacted they were by the original *Conversations with God* books—and loaded with additional questions!

Some of the teenagers who asked these questions said that I could use their full identity, and others asked me not to. So what I've done, just to keep everything uniform, is use first names and ages only, and locations when they said it was all right, and even the word "anonymous" when they said they wanted it that way.

After two years of talking to young people like yourself and collecting questions, I asked a young person just like you to be my assistant and to put them all into categories so that I could approach them in some kind of sequence.

In a few cases I sent the response back to the teenager asking the question, to see if it brought up any reaction or further question from them. As I said, I've also added some questions of my own that I thought the original questioners would have asked if they could have been here to keep the conversation going. They are also questions that I wanted to ask, on my own. I put those in here, too. And so I mingled my voice with yours, and in this way I created a dialogue.

Sometimes the responses I received were directed right to me, and sometimes they were directed to the person asking the original question. *I believe that some might also be directed right to you, reading this book.*

It was very exciting for me to create this book, and I feel, in your reading it, there is a possible magic about to happen.



The first thing that will occur as you see the questions and read the responses is that you will either (a) agree with a response; (b) disagree with a response; (c) fall somewhere in between. Then will come the magic. This will be the moment when the responses cause you to notice what *you* think and how *you* feel. You'll be placed I touch with your own wisdom within. That's the wonder and the magic of every good conversation, and it is the purpose of all of your conversations with God.



# Excerpt

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