



A SHORT GUIDE

5 Phrases That Changed How I Think About Fear

From the author of The Tighter I Held

KRISTY SULLIVAN

Where these came from

I spent forty years learning how to be afraid. It was the most useful thing my childhood taught me. How to read a room before I even walked into it. How to stay small. How to brace for whatever came next.

Nobody called it fear back then. I called it being careful. Being responsible. Having good instincts. For a long time, so did everyone around me.

I didn't learn how to stop being afraid from one big moment. There wasn't a single day where it all fell away. I learned it from a handful of phrases instead. Some I said out loud myself, in moments I never planned for. Some other people handed to me, without knowing what they were handing me.

Each one changed the way I understood fear itself. Not as something to manage for the rest of my life. As something that could actually leave.

These are five of those phrases. I hope one of them does for you what it did for me.

“You're not invited here.”

At 3:30 in the morning, in a hotel room in Jerusalem, I said this out loud. To something I couldn't see. To something I didn't have words for yet.

It wasn't a calm sentence. It wasn't composed or thought through. It was the only sentence I had left.

It worked.

THE REFRAME

We treat fear like weather. Like something that just happens to us, and we wait it out. This phrase treats it like a guest instead.

Guests can be told to leave.

SIT WITH THIS

What's one fear in your life you've never actually spoken to directly?

“Trees that sway in storms don't break.”

I spent years trying to be a tree that never moved. Rigid. Controlled. Unshakeable, or at least that's what I called it.

It wasn't strength. It was exhaustion wearing strength's clothes.

THE REFRAME

The goal was never to stop swaying. The goal was to trust that swaying and breaking are two different things.

SIT WITH THIS

Where in your life have you mistaken rigidity for resilience?

“You cannot trace a wound you don't know exists.”

For most of my life, I lived inside patterns of fear I'd never actually named. I just knew the walls felt a certain way. I never asked why.

THE REFRAME

Naming a fear isn't the same as being consumed by it. Most of the time, it's the first step out of it.

SIT WITH THIS

Is there a wound you've been living inside without ever naming it?

*“I do not need the piano anymore.
God is my safe room now.”*

The piano I wrote my first song on, at four years old, was the one safe place in a house that wasn't always safe.

Last year, my family sold it. I expected only grief. I mostly felt peace.

THE REFRAME

Fear needs a safe room. The question is whether you're still depending on the one you built when you were four, or whether you've let it move somewhere sturdier.

SIT WITH THIS

What's your version of the piano? The safe room you built to survive something, that you might not need in the same way anymore?

“Allow Him to write yours.”

For most of my life, I tried to write my own plans. I tried to stay in control of every note.

It didn't hold.

THE REFRAME

A lot of fear is really just a fight for control. Letting go of the pen is terrifying. It's also usually where the actual freedom starts.

SIT WITH THIS

What would it look like to stop trying to write every note of your life yourself?

One more thing

These five phrases didn't fix everything overnight. Nothing did.

Each one was a hinge point. A place where I stopped managing the fear and started actually questioning whether it had to stay.

My book, *The Tighter I Held*, tells the full story behind all five of these. The night in Jerusalem. The piano. The twenty year road to the last one.

If any of these landed for you, I think you'll find yourself in it.

Kristy

Want to know the moment the book is available?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kristy Sullivan

Kristy is a musician, composer, and leader whose life's work is helping people grow in their craft, their character, and their faith. She lives near Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband, Dewayne.

Her memoir, *The Tighter I Held*, is a story about fear, faith, and the life God composes from broken material.

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