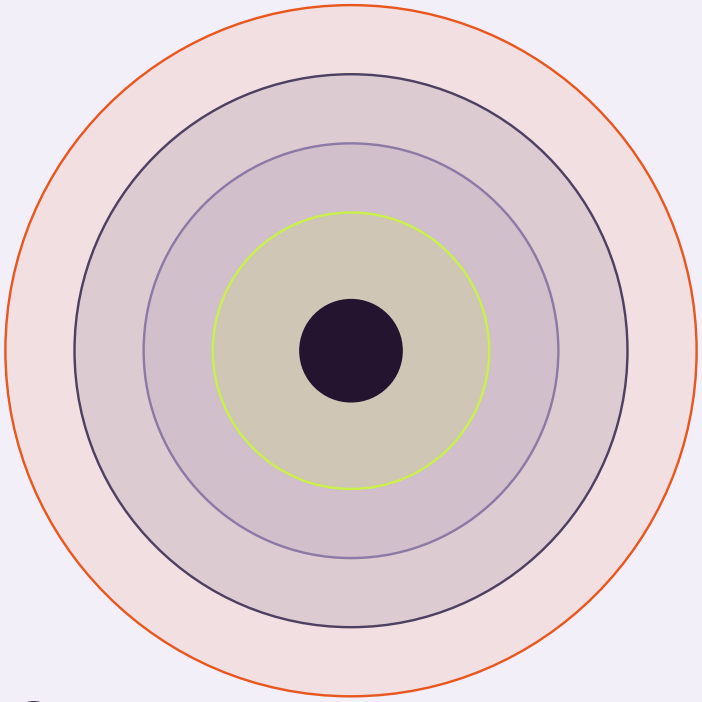


Making Peace with What I Can't Control: Find Relief from the Exhaustion of Overthinking, Trying

to Fix Others, and Wanting to Figure It All Out

A reading of the book by Lysa TerKeurst (2026)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Making Peace with What I Can't Control: Find Relief from the Exhaustion of Overthinking, Trying to Fix Others, and Wanting to Figure It All Out, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Lysa TerKeurst is the president of Proverbs 31 Ministries and the author of Christian books including It's Not Supposed to Be This Way and Forgiving What You Can't Forget. Here she argues that much of our exhaustion comes from trying to change people who don't want to change, prevent outcomes we fear and manage things that were never ours to hold. She separates healthy responsibility from fear-driven control, and pairs surrender, trusting God with what only He can do, with stewardship of the part He has given us. She traces control back to the urge to prevent pain, which shows up as protecting, pretending, preparing, perfecting, performing and predicting. The stories come from her own hard seasons, including a loved one's addiction, the end of her marriage and health scares, read alongside Scripture. Each chapter closes with a short summary, key verses, reflection questions and a prayer.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Control is often fear dressed up as strength.

The urge to manage everything can look like competence, even to us. TerKeurst argues that underneath it there is usually a fear of what might happen if we let go. Naming that fear is the first step, because you cannot set down a weight you keep calling a virtue.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Being responsible and being controlling can feel exactly the same from the inside.

The book draws a line between the two. Responsibility tends to the part that is yours to do. Control needs a particular outcome from someone else, and keeps pushing until it gets it or burns out.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

You can love someone with everything you have and still not be able to make their choices for them.

TerKeurst writes openly about a loved one's addiction and the late-night checking and worrying it led to. Her point is not that love should stop caring. It is that care which tries to steer another adult's decisions wears out the carer and rarely changes the other person.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Most control is an attempt to prevent pain, and it takes six familiar shapes.

Readers of the book describe its list as protect, pretend, prepare, perfect, perform and predict. Each one promises to keep the bad thing away. Spotting which one you reach for first makes the habit visible enough to change.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Surrender is not the same as doing nothing.

The book pairs surrender with stewardship. You still tend what has been entrusted to you: your words, your boundaries, your own next step. What you hand over is the part only God can do, which is the outcome and the other person's heart.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Other people's decisions do not have to set the level of your peace.

A large part of the book is about what to do when you are tempted to intervene, rescue or manage the story for someone else. You can respond to their choices without letting each one decide how you sleep that night.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Asking God hard questions is part of trusting Him, not the opposite of it.

TerKeurst makes room for the question of why God is not doing more to change a person or a situation. She admits she still finds trust hard. The book treats that honesty as a way in to peace rather than a sign that faith has failed.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Rescuing someone over and over can take away the very consequence that might help them change.

Stepping in feels like love, and sometimes it is. When it becomes a pattern, it can also shield a person from the weight of their own choices. A boundary lets you keep caring without carrying what is theirs.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Peace comes from staying close to God, not from getting the outcome you wanted.

If peace only arrives when everything turns out right, it is always one phone call away from being lost. The book locates a steadier peace in trust that holds even while the ending is still unknown.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] List everything you are trying to manage
- [ ] Name the P you reach for first
- [ ] Draw the line for one situation
- [ ] Write one honest prayer
- [ ] Decide your rescue rule in advance

KEEP UP DAILY

- [ ] Ask whose it is before you step in
- [ ] Interrupt the night-time forecast
- [ ] Open your hands once a day

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

List everything you are trying to manage

Write down every person and situation you are currently trying to fix, steer or prevent.

Circle the two that keep you awake at night.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Name the P you reach for first

For one circled item, ask which shape your control takes: protect, pretend, prepare, perfect, perform or predict.

Then write one sentence about the fear underneath it.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Draw the line for one situation

Fold a page into two columns: mine to steward, and not mine to carry.

Sort every piece of that situation into one column, including the outcome.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Write one honest prayer

Tell God plainly what you have been trying to control, what you are afraid of and the question you have not dared to ask.

Keep it to five sentences so you can pray it again.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Decide your rescue rule in advance

Pick the next request you usually can't refuse, such as money, a cover story or a late-night drive.

Decide now what you will and won't do, and write it down while you are calm.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Ask whose it is before you step in

Before you fix, remind or intervene, pause and ask whether this is your part or someone else's.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Interrupt the night-time forecast

When you catch yourself predicting in bed, write the fear in one line and one thing that is true today.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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						1
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Open your hands once a day

At one fixed time each day, name the part you did and the outcome you are handing over.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
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December 2026

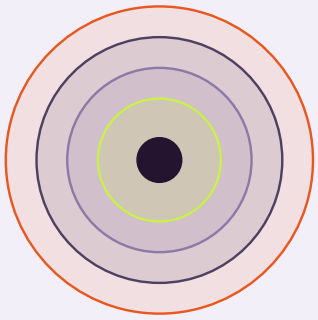
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Do your part with open hands, then give the outcome to the One who can carry it.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER LYSA TERKEURST

Read it online, and vote on the take-aways: hourlife.com/books/making-peace-with-what-i-cant-control

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