

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

KAREN EHMAN

When Making
Others *Happy*
Is Making You
Miserable

**HOW TO BREAK THE PATTERN
OF PEOPLE PLEASING AND
CONFIDENTLY LIVE YOUR LIFE**

FOREWORD BY LYSA TERKEURST

New York Times Bestselling Author



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ISBN 978-0-310-34758-3 (softcover)

ISBN 978-0-310-34763-7 (audio)

ISBN 978-0-310-34759-0 (ebook)

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The author is represented by Meredith Brock, Proverbs 31 Ministries.

Cover design: Alison Fargason Design

Cover photo: Jamie Grill Atlas / Stocksy

Interior design: Denise Froehlich

Printed in the United States of America

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Chapter 1

The Prison of People Pleasing

Spotted on a sweatshirt:

“You can’t please everyone. You’re not pizza.”

Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

—GALATIANS 1:10

I grabbed a handful of tissues and dashed out the sliding glass door that leads to our back deck. It was a muggy, Midwest afternoon in late May. My body would have much rather been inside in the frosty air conditioning, however my mind desperately needed to escape. To somewhere. Anywhere. And since my son was using my vehicle to go to work that day, I couldn’t go very far.

I plopped myself down in a lawn chair at the wooded portion of our back property near our fire pit. I’d sat in that bright blue

chair through hundreds of baseball games, cheering my sons on as they were stepping up to the plate to bat or perched on pitcher's mound ready to hurl a curveball. Perhaps now I could cheer *myself* up. But I doubted it. Nothing about my situation—or my near future—looked even remotely cheery to me.

My best friend from college and I had just wrapped up a phone call. We've been in each other's lives for over a quarter century, and she continually has my best interests at heart. A chat with her is a delight in my day, a major pick-me-up. In fact, once we finish, I'll hang up and think, Man. *Talking to her is almost better than church.* We've processed life together since we were both teenagers. We've prayed for each other's marriages, shared our mothering mishaps, and navigated how best to help our aging parents. We offer each other encouragement and advice or simply listen to the other share something trivial, laughing while on speaker phone as we each frantically try to get supper on the table.

But this phone call was different. Although my friend didn't know it, when we ended the call, I wasn't feeling cheered-up or church-ed-up at all. I was feeling utterly defeated and emotionally exhausted. Oh, it wasn't something she'd said that sent me to this dismal place. Not at all. Well, then what *had* sent me over the edge, threatening to drain the happiness from my heart and send fretfulness filling my soul? It was something I had done dozens . . . maybe hundreds . . . oh come on let's be honest, probably thousands of times . . .

I had said yes.

Our family had moved to a tiny town just outside Lansing, capital of my home state of Michigan. Her college-aged son was in the process of interviewing for a summer internship at an organization in the city. She'd called to inform me that he'd just accepted a position and would soon be working just down the interstate,

about fifteen minutes from our new home. The job description fit him to a T, and he was pumped about starting soon.

However, this job was going to require more than an hour commute each way from his home near Detroit. Most days it wouldn't be a problem, as he'd be working a typical nine-to-five-ish day. However, some days he would be responsible for staying late and closing up, getting home near midnight—yet he would still need to be up for work at o'dark o'clock the next morning. Knowing this would be the occasional situation for him—maybe a day or two a week—she asked if he could spend the night with us on those nights, sleeping in our guestroom.

Now, this guy was no trouble at all. We've known him his entire life. He was loads of fun, utterly respectful, and kind. So, who he was had exactly zero to do with a little conversation that commenced inside my mind. This convo was between “outward” me and “inward” me. It is a discussion that my brain has hosted gazillions of times. Here's how it went that day:

Inward me: Oh no. I'm not sure about this. I think we have too much going on this summer to have an overnight guest stay a couple days each week. I should say no.

Outward me: But if you say no, you'll disappoint your friend who is just wanting a little help for her son.

Inward me: I know, but it just doesn't feel right. I have so much on my plate both at home and in my ministry. I should say no.

Outward me: But if you say no, you're also going to let down your friend's son as well. That is *two* people you will disappoint. Besides, he's such a great guy. You should help him out. He won't be any trouble at all.

Inward me: I know how I am. I'll want to make sure his room has clean sheets and fresh towels and I'll stay up at night until he gets here and make him something to eat before he goes to bed. Although I usually love being hospitable, this is going to stress me right out.

Outward me: Oh, come on! You are the master multitasker. You can juggle a myriad of things at once. This one little addition won't be a big deal. Just shuffle some things around on that big ole' plate of yours. You can make it all fit.

Inward me: Oh dear. My mind is starting to race and my heart's beating faster. I'm still dealing with the death of my dad. And my stepmom, mother-in-law, and mother—who are all getting up there in age—sometimes need my help. And we have a new house that we still are remodeling. In fact, the guest room is piled high with wood planks for the new floors that won't get installed for weeks. And I'm a brand-new mother-in-law. I need to carve out time to spend with my new daughter. Oh, and I almost forgot! A family friend just texted a few days ago to ask if they can stay at our house some weekends to help jump-start a new career as a personal shopper by picking up some clients in the city. I'd already answered yes to that request. Oh, *what* was I thinking? How am I ever going to manage all of this?

Outward me: Girlfriend, chill out! You can totally handle it. What you *cannot* handle is failing to accommodate your friend. That will feel way worse than being stressed. Now listen, you have a choice:

It's either disappoint her or slightly inconvenience yourself. You know the right answer. Just say yes.

Inward me: I shouldn't.

Outward me: You must.

Inward me: I really shouldn't.

Outward me: Oh, but you must.

Inward me: No, I'm pretty certain I shouldn't.

Outward me: Oh, stopping kidding yourself, you know that you will!

And then outward me opened wide her big mouth, and let out a resounding, "Sure. No problem!"

Meanwhile, inwardly, my spirit deflated just as quickly as my stress level skyrocketed. And so I ended the call, mumbling something about needing to switch over the laundry. Instead, I left the laundry untouched, reached for some antacids to remedy my ever-growing ulcer, and headed outside to BAWL. MY. FREAKIN'. EYES. OUT.

How Did I Get Here?

Few people are completely immune from people pleasing. The majority of us have said something we didn't really mean, just because we didn't want to hurt someone else's feelings. You know, when your friend asked you what you thought of her new trendy, neon-blue jumpsuit that she was simply crazy about, but that you thought was about two sizes too small and made her look like an overstuffed Smurf? Inwardly you may have thought it was closer to awful than awesome, but you summoned a smile and out of your mouth tumbled a counterfeit compliment, "Wow! It looks so great!"

Why do we say things we don't really mean? It isn't limited

to our desire to avoid hurting someone's feelings. On many occasions, it is wound up in our longing to be liked. Who among us, if we were still in high school and faced with a choice between being an outstanding athlete yet having zero friends or an utter klutz on the field but the recipient of the homecoming crown, would go for the star-athlete status? (Excuse me please while I straighten my tiara.)

Most of us have adopted the practice of saying or doing that which placates others in order to keep conflict at bay. Or we may not speak honestly due to a suspicion that we might be challenged. And how about this one? We simply don't feel like being bothered right now and, if we just agree with them, maybe they will go delightfully away.

All legit reasons, for sure. However, sometimes it goes much deeper.

We might fib just a tad to a superior at work so that they will have a favorable view of us—especially if our potential rise in the company is something on which they have input. Or maybe it is birthed out of earnest sympathy. When someone has experienced repeated disappointments or walked through a dire tragedy, to avoid adding to their sadness, we don't say anything that might upset them. Perhaps the most serious scenario is this: someone caught in a domestic abuse situation. Such an individual will say what their abuser wants to hear, regardless of what they really think or feel. They cannot risk upsetting the abusive person, so they take the brunt of their anger.¹

When you drill down to unearth the causes of people pleasing, you discover that it isn't just the response of the person we're hoping to make happy that causes us to give in and placate. For some of us, it is a result of how we are hardwired—a product of our particular personality. Although I won't go deep into specific personality tests and theories since there are oodles of

great works available (see my favorites in the resource section on page 191), I do think some commonalities exist when it comes to the type of person who is in danger of becoming addicted to the approval of others.

She may be the helpful sort, with kindness in her heart and the most patient of personalities. She truly enjoys assisting others. It's second nature for such a woman to step over a line and help beyond what is healthy or needful.

Another category of persons that may make themselves quite miserable while making others happy are the overachievers among us. Being universally liked and admired can seem like an accomplishment that we—yes, I am talking in plural here because I am 100 percent this type—simply must achieve.

Let's not leave out the perfectionists. These people can feel the tug toward appeasing and satisfying others because they view doing so as the right thing to do. They can rack up a long streak of making others smile without ever missing a beat.

And while we're at it, let's toss all the peacemakers into the mix. (Gently now, for they are sensitive and tenderhearted souls.) Peacemakers can't bear to see anyone upset. They hate the feeling of conflict or the unease of tension hanging in the air. If saying something they really don't mean—or doing something they really don't want to do—will help to keep the peace and pacify someone else, then that is how they'll roll.

Though our reasons and our personalities may vary, there is one universal result that we see from our constant stream of yeses. It is this: trying to make (or keep) others happy often results in making us miserable.

You know the feeling. You said yes to the responsibility, agreed to the task, feigned excitement when you really felt dread, and now your mind races with regret and wishes it could rewind time, going back to the day when your lips said yes when they should

have uttered a big fat no! But would revisiting the situation, with a chance for a do-over, really make any difference? After all, you've grown so accustomed to pleasing others that you've stitched a perpetual pattern of pleasing into the very fabric of your life. Smile and say yes when you'd rather say no; totally agree when what you really believe is quite the opposite. Don't ruffle feathers. Don't make them drop their smile. Behave as they desire, regardless of what you really want—or even what you desperately need.

The Longing to Be Liked

The gymnasium at the big brick elementary school in my neighborhood was the site of many activities. We not only marched there for Friday afternoon physical education class, it doubled as our school cafeteria and tripled as our auditorium. (It should have been dubbed the “caf-e-gym-a-torium!”) One day I might be up against the wall hoping to get picked early for a dodgeball team. Another day, I might be standing on a riser, singing alongside classmates at a school Christmas concert or spring recital. But most often, it was the place where I munched on my lunch five times a week.

Who among us doesn't remember standing nervously with our lunch tray scanning the room for a place to sit? Such a mental flashback can still stir a sense of anxiety. There's no greater setup for a feeling of rejection or, at the very least, a sense of loneliness. But I didn't fret about sitting alone because I had a secret weapon in my back pocket. Well actually, she was behind the serving table, scooping up mashed potatoes and gravy with a smile. It was my mother, the beloved Delta Center Elementary School lunch lady.

In the cafeteria, if I wanted to win friends—and influence enemies—Mom was just the ticket. In addition to our basic scoops and mounds of food piled high on our rectangular pastel

plastic trays, we had the option of purchasing an ice cream sandwich for a mere fifteen cents. My mom would often treat me to one, along with whatever friend I happened to be sitting with that day. Naturally, lots of people wanted to be my friend. I mean, who doesn't love a chocolate-cookie-covered slab of icy vanilla creaminess? (Grabs phone to add "ice cream sandwiches" to her app grocery list.)

It was this kind gesture by my mother that taught me an important life lesson: make someone happy and then they will like you. And since my single-digit-year-old self didn't relish the feeling of not being liked, I resolved to never let that happen, if it were within my power. Gifting a fellow classmate with a frozen dairy confection wasn't my only tool for maintaining friendships. My behavior in other areas ensured that I would feel wanted and loved. I dished out compliments I really didn't mean, nodded in agreement just so as not to bring any tension or create any conflict, and, of course, I joined forces with mean girls who didn't like someone else in our class. I had to. What if I didn't and the mean girls all turned on me?

I soon became an approval junkie—longing for belonging, addicted to acceptance, craving the calm of no tension in a conversation, and the security that being liked seemed to bring my young soul. But here is the thing about living like this . . .

To keep it up, you have to become a skillful liar.

Yes, you heard me. People pleasers are also deceivers. We do not always speak the truth. We shade it. Skirt it. Dress it up just a tad before taking it for a spin. Or—worst of all—we leave truth completely out of the picture.

When asked what we think of lying, we "yes girls" will assert that lying is wrong. After all, isn't the Bible bursting with warnings about the sin of shading the truth? But take a good look at our lives and a different reality materializes. Often, on occasions

of people pleasing, we do not tell the truth. It was a colossal wake-up call for me the day I admitted this reality. That aha moment helped to put me on the path to becoming a recovering people pleaser. Notice I said *recovering*, as in present tense. I have not arrived, nor will I ever. Learning to deal with this relational issue is a tension to manage. It's not a problem that can suddenly be solved with a snap of the fingers. (But oh sister, do I ever wish it were!)

Guess what else people pleasing does to us? Although it may gain us a reputation for being helpful and competent, it also creates a ton more work for us. Is that not totally true?

In what ways has appeasing others made more work for you? Did you stay up late to bake a ton of brownies for your child's soccer team, even though you were low on sleep and had an extremely busy week, when there were tons of other soccer moms who hadn't made a solitary sweet yet this season? Did you agree to go mow the yard for your aging grandparents nearly every week in the summer, even though you have a half-dozen cousins who could easily have taken a turn? (But you didn't want to speak up and suggest that they give you a break.) Are you the only one who ever cleans out the coffee maker at work and—now that you have been doing it so long—people expect it of you even though they themselves are perfectly capable? And so, you just keep on serving as the designated breakroom butler.

The work we create for ourselves isn't limited to physical work. We also make more emotional work for ourselves—draining, exhaustive, and exasperating emotional work. I've had feelings of regret for the things I agreed to do that I really didn't want to do, or that I even strongly felt God would *not* have me to do. I deal with anger at times when I get a sneaking feeling that I am being used or taken advantage of. I experience deep despondency when I feel powerless to break the habit of taking on tasks that others

could easily do themselves. But most of all, it's the overall feeling of emotional exhaustion that blankets my mind as I juggle the responsibilities and tasks I have added to my own plate simply to be liked and approved of. And I replay the scenarios of these draining decisions over and over in my mind, imagining what I could have—and should have—done differently.

Our inward selves—deep in the secret conversations of our minds—really are able to come up with all sorts of ways to say no. To politely decline. To not volunteer once again. To let the person who is pouting just keep on pouting, rather than agreeing to something they want us to do. Yes, in our minds we may have riveting reasons and logical explanations that could finally result in some straightforward and honest living. The trouble is, our approval-addicted outward selves just can't seem to send the proper message.

People pleasing brings such detriment to our lives. We make ourselves miserable. We lie. We create more work for ourselves—both physical and emotional work. We lose grasp of our joy. We offer a standing invitation to regret. This is all so profoundly discouraging. But do you know what is the absolute worst of all?

When we behave this way, we are putting people in the place of God.

OUCH!

My Summer of Necessary and No

A few days later, I found myself again in a lawn chair at our fire pit on an early evening. The heaving of my chest slowly subsided as I began to calm down and finish up my latest spontaneous crying session. As I stared up at the slices of sunlight slashing through the dancing branches of the towering maple trees, I poured my heart out to the Lord about the phone call with my college best

friend. Of course, he already knew the whole story, including the predictable outcome of my saying yes when I should have said no. Still, it felt good to verbalize my inner thoughts to God. I just hoped no one else heard me, except for the half dozen or so black squirrels that reside in the trees and pass time by stealing the birdseed from our feeders. After all, the neighbors, who were simply trying to eat their supper in peace, didn't need both dinner *and* a show.

My phone was next to me on a small table. I reached for it and logged on to an app for reading the Bible and locating passages. I swiped my way to the passage look-up page and then tapped away, placing two words in the search bar: *please people*. Just a millisecond after clicking the little magnifying glass that set the search in motion, twenty-three verses appeared before my eyes. I read them. Some didn't apply to my situation, although they had both words in the passage. But when I spied entry number twenty-two, it was as if it were flashing in neon pink, its words penetrating straight to my soul.

The apostle Paul wrote a New Testament letter to the early church in Galatia, an area that is part of modern-day Turkey. Though it was composed between 53 and 57 AD, its message still has great relevance today. A good chunk of Galatians deals with the pressure the early Christians there felt from a group known as the Judaizers. Members of this group were insisting that converts to Christianity still follow some practices in the Old Testament law, asserting that it was necessary to do so to be a true believer and obtain salvation. Paul corrected this notion, reminding everybody of the true gospel of Christ that offers us salvation by trusting him alone, the one who paved the way to heaven through his death on the cross in our place (Galatians 1:6-7; 3:26).

At the onset of this message to the Galatians, Paul tosses out an important question. It's a question I've learned to ask myself

often. I so wish I could say I always give the right answer. Sadly, I don't. But I am getting better, and I know you can too!

What is this question? Here it goes: "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

Hold up! Pause the video! Wait—what! People in Bible days struggled with people pleasing? I mean weren't they all perfect, running around donning halos that would rival the most glorious Instagram filter and singing the latest worship songs they'd just downloaded from their Spiritual Spotify app?

Nope. They dealt with this interpersonal tension in their life just like we do. And we would do well to ponder Paul's question today when we are trapped in a tug of war between following God and succumbing to pressure from people.

I scanned the verse over and over again, committing its convicting question and relevant phrases to memory. "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."

However, I knew that rote memorization was not the entire key. I needed not only to sear the words in my mind, but I needed to take them to heart; to allow them to alter my behavior and—although I didn't know it at the time—revolutionize my relationships.

Over the next few days, I talked to God and dug into his Word. It was then that I sensed him leading me to do something quite out of the ordinary, something I had never done before. I ran the idea by my husband, and he was beyond supportive. In fact, he'd been wanting me to do something like this for years. What was the idea? It was really very simple. I sensed God telling me this: "*Sweetheart, I'm calling you to have a summer of 'necessary' and 'no.'*"

Here was the idea: For the next three months, until Labor Day,

I was to do only the things necessary for my work, my home, and my family. Nothing else. No outside guests. No offering to watch someone's children. No solving other people's problems. No signing up for even simple things like making treats for the childcare kids to snack on during church worship services. No saying yes to even wonderfully good things, like attending a Bible study with a friend. I was to do only what was necessary and say no to the rest.

I know that might sound rather severe. However, it was to be my first real break in over twenty-five years of my adult life. Twenty. Five. Years. Yikes! Even way back in late high school when I first met Jesus and began to follow him, I was guilty not only of people pleasing, but also of over-serving. You could count on me to be the first one to raise my hand to help. To offer to set up or clean up—or sometimes, if needed, to do both! To prepare the food or watch the kiddos in the church nursery. To run the errand and lighten the load. To look oh-so-capable and really quite wonderful. But after a quarter century, I needed a break—something fierce.

I then knew what was next on this new assignment. Make a few phone calls. Send some text messages. I needed to cancel some things. Drop out of some things. To take back some things I'd said. Basically, I needed to bulldoze my calendar for the glorious fourteen weeks that comprised the summer ahead, leaving only the important stuff standing. I knew it was going to be excruciatingly painful for this “what-does-it-look-like-to-everyone-regardless-of-what-it-is-doing-to-me” kind of gal. Still, I swallowed hard and grabbed my phone.

I wish I could say everyone on the other end of the line took it fantastically; that they understood how much I needed a break and insinuated that it was well deserved. But this just wasn't so. Some were simply cordial but slightly hard to read. I wasn't sure if they were upset with me or just bummed because they then had to implement a back-up plan. A few did cheerfully declare,

“No problem!” and were supportive of my decision. Others guilt-bombed me, albeit stealthily, implying that they were going to be inconvenienced by my no longer agreeing to cheerfully meet one of their needs.

And then there was my last call to make—to my college best friend. I knew calling her would be the hardest since I was the closest to her, with years and years of friendship behind—and before—us. My saying yes to her request would have really helped out her son, who needed an occasional place to stay during his internship. I was sorry I was about to disappoint her.

I hauled myself back out to the fire pit, confident in the fact that the squirrels were now quite accustomed to my incessant sobbing, so it wouldn't bother them any if I blubbered again. (I half expected them to summon the cardinals and blue jays, who would fly through the air and gently float me down a hanky held between their beaks. You know, like Cinderella or Snow White's little forest friends would do?) I swiped my phone screen on and dialed her number. (Yes, I said, “dialed.” She's had the same number for a couple decades, and I know it by heart. That is how close we are.)

I mostly held it together as I relayed my dilemma to her, apologizing for saying yes when I knew in my heart the answer should have been no. My friend loves me, and I was confident she would be understanding, although probably a bit disappointed. However, I was not fully prepared for the onslaught of love—and the clear reflection of Jesus—that materialized as I heard her voice coming through my phone.

This normally soft-spoken and quiet woman piped up, “Listen, Kit” (my college nickname, in case you didn't know), “it's totally okay. Don't even think another thing about it. We'll figure something out. What I'm more concerned about is you, and your health. Get some rest and we can talk in a week or so. I'm going to be checking in on you throughout the summer.”

As we continued talking, the twisted-up tension began to slowly unknot from my shoulders. My soul simmered down, and my emotions quieted. Her genuine concern for me was what was most evident. There wasn't even a hint of disappointment in her voice.

She herself had recently been through a stretch of a few years when she dealt with a loved one who was suffering from stress, anxiety, and near burnout, sometimes leaving them unable to work. Her experience watching this person navigate an emotionally tumultuous time packed her heart with empathy and understanding. Her gracious response to me enabled me to sleep deeply and soundly for the first time in over a week. And it assured me that those in my life who love me—and want me to follow God—will understand when I make a decision that is not the most advantageous for them. Her kindness that day was the greatest of gifts.

How about you? Have your people-pleasing tendencies landed you in a heap of heartache, at least a time or two? Are you tired of outwardly agreeing to something that inwardly you're certain you shouldn't? Does trying to keep everyone happy end up making you quite the opposite? Are you in desperate need of your own season of necessary and no? And—if you're completely honest—would you admit that sometimes you put people in the place of God?

If any of these questions spark even a slight yes in your heart, I invite you to join me on this pathway I am still learning to walk. I'm just a few steps up ahead, navigating my way but finding the hike less scary—and less difficult—as it becomes more and more familiar. Like a muscle that must be exercised but grows stronger over time, your ability to discern and decide what pleases God, rather than people, will sharpen as you move forward in your own walk with Jesus.

Head out with me now to my little maple grove. There we will sit together by the fire as we also learn to sit at his feet. A black

squirrel or two may join us. Maybe even some of our colorful, feathered friends. But soon the sun will slice through the shade of the leaves as the Son helps disperse the darkness that we experience due to our people-pleasing ways.

Together we will learn to walk closely—and confidently—with our loving Creator, despite the opinions and expectations of others.

Quiz: What Is Your Approval Rating?

Often, we may catch a news report that gives a politician’s approval rating. This is the result of a poll taken to determine what percentage of the people surveyed are satisfied with the job the person is doing. Time for us to take our own poll. However, this one has a slightly different twist.

Read through the following statements and note the number that best describes you, using the key below. Then, total up the numbers to see where you fall on the approval rating scale.

5	4	3	2	1
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<p>1. I have trouble expressing my honest opinion when someone asks me what I think of their outfit, hair, new shoes, etc. . . . _____</p> <p>2. If I’m in a group deciding where to eat and the majority of people have already weighed in wanting restaurant A but I want restaurant B, I will just go along with their choice rather than tell them the truth. _____</p>				

3. In a group setting where a leader is asking for volunteers for a task, I will make sure to be one of the people to sign up to do a job or provide food. _____
4. I am hypersensitive to being corrected by others. _____
5. I second-guess myself when I start to wonder what someone else might think of my decision. _____
6. When people, especially strangers, are talking about politics—and are on the opposite side of what I feel is an important moral issue—I will just keep my opinions to myself rather than tell them what I believe. _____
7. I get uncomfortable even with the illusion of dissatisfaction from others. _____
8. When in a group setting and asked to give my opinion, when I'm finished talking, I hope others will chime in and agree with me. _____
9. If you looked at my life, you would characterize me as someone who is overcommitted. _____
10. When I meet someone new, I hope that after our encounter they like me. _____
11. I fear being exposed for my real thoughts because I might be considered an imposter. _____
12. If I am being totally honest, I have to admit that there are times I lie because I fear getting a negative reaction from someone else, and so I say what I know they want to hear. _____
13. I might want to speak up and say something that does not please a person with whom I am talking, but I am afraid of losing them as a friend. _____

14. I don't have trouble expressing my honest opinions with my immediate family members, who already love me, but I do have trouble expressing opinions to someone outside my family who has the option of liking me or not. _____
15. If I sense that someone does not like me, it bothers me. _____
16. A person who knows me on a surface level would say I am an extremely reliable and helpful person. _____
17. I have a strong desire for verbal praise, whether spoken or written digitally in an email, text message, or on social media. _____
18. I say yes to some things that create more work for me rather than say no and risk disappointing or upsetting the person doing the asking. _____
19. I give compliments I do not really mean. _____
20. My desire to make others happy ends up making me at least slightly miserable. _____

Grand Total: _____

Alright. How did you do? Let's see where your grand total places you.

81–100: You really don't sabotage your life by being an immense people pleaser. Good for you! You will still benefit from this book; however, you might want to pass it on to a major people pleaser when you're finished reading, because you most likely won't have to refer to it again—but they might need to read it yearly!

61–80: You are probably about average on the people-pleasing scale. Sometimes you fall into this tendency, but other times you are completely comfortable expressing your honest opinion and not being overcommitted. Bravo! Although you definitely have room for improvement, more of us need to be like you.

41–60: People pleasing and being addicted to the approval of others is a minor problem in your life. You probably struggle with it when it comes to certain people but not when it comes to others. You can learn to make progress, fearing less and less what certain people think.

31–40: Yep. Approval addiction is definitely an issue for you. Most likely it has caused you grief and sadness, but you can't seem to stop doing it. Buckle up, honey. We've got some changes to make.

21–30: Welcome to the "Make Them Happy!" club, of which I am a charter member. People like us. They really like us! They think we're capable. And so helpful. Our schedules are full, but our hearts are often empty. Time to stop seeking the approval of others and start trusting God instead.

20: Sweet sister, call me immediately! We need to stage an intervention! You have an even lower score than this people-pleasing pro! (I was once about a 27 but when I retook the assessment just now, I'd improved to a 53. *Progress!*)