

Meet the **New** **You**

A 21-Day Plan for Embracing
Fresh Attitudes and Focused Habits
for Real Life Change

ELISA
PULLIAM

Life Coach and Mentor

Praise for
Meet the New You

“With beautiful integrity and an open heart, Elisa Pulliam encourages women to embrace life. The attitude-focused lenses she recommends reveal vibrant color in daily living.”

—RACHEL WOJO, author of *One More Step*

“*Meet the New You* is a fresh road map for those who are really ready to carve out a new path for themselves in life. Pulliam holds your hand like a friend would as she walks you through the five key coaching phases that make this approach to real life change, well, real. Her words speak not only encouragement but also awareness and an ability to take action. *Meet the New You* is more than an enjoyable read; it is a transformational coaching experience offering true personal growth to all who enter into its pages.”

—TRISH BLACKWELL, Confidence Coach and author
of *Insecurity Detox*

“*Meet the New You* isn’t another quick fix or Band-Aid for my struggles. Instead, it’s an encouraging challenge to find the roots of what’s keeping me from living the life God has designed me for. I love the way Elisa gently gets to the reader’s heart—and then walks her through a transformation that results in real, life-giving, and life-improving change.”

—MARY CARVER, co-author of *Choose Joy*

“In *Meet the New You*, Elisa Pulliam beautifully crafts an authentic plan for real life transformation. With her conversational, caring tone, Pulliam reassures her readers that change is indeed possible; tackling obstacles is necessary; and by seeking God and his presence throughout this journey, genuine transformation will take place. This twenty-one day journey is a must-read for any woman longing for a fresh start—a do-over—and the spiritual makeover that makes it all possible.”

—JENNY LEE SULPIZIO, author of *For the Love of God*
and *Confessions of a Wonder Woman Wannabe*

“Elisa Pulliam is the coach I always wish I had. In her book *Meet the New You*, she uses her signature grace-filled and honest approach to help you uncover the person you were created to be. If you are ready for a change in direction or simply want to refresh your heart, walk through the pages of this book with Elisa. You will be so glad you did.”

—STACY THACKER, co-author of *Hope for the Weary Mom*

“In *Meet the New You*, Elisa Pulliam becomes the personal life coach we all wish we could have. With practical daily focus points, she comes alongside us, helping pinpoint the obstacles holding us back and providing the motivation to reach our fullest potential.”

—LYNN COWELL, Proverbs 31 Ministries national speaker
and author of *Magnetic: Becoming the Girl He Wants*

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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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Mr. Blue Eyes, you've seen me through the lens of Christ since day one, and you called out the new me before I was even interested in meeting her. Thank you for loving me as Christ loves His bride and turning me toward the fullness of life God offers. I wouldn't have wanted to find the new me with anyone other than you, and I am so grateful for the way this miracle of transformation radically impacts the next generation, especially our children, whom we so deeply love together.

But I wish it to be distinctly understood all through,
that, unless I believed with all my heart in God's
effectual working on His side, not one word of this
book would ever have been written.

—HANNAH WHITALL SMITH,
The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life

Let this be written for a future generation,
that a people not yet created may praise the LORD.

—PSALM 102:18

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It's Already Begun

He who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion.

—PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Right now I'm picturing you skimming through these words wondering,
Is this book for me?

You're looking for an answer. A solution. Maybe a way out. Possibly a step forward.

The idea of meeting the new you might sound pretty enticing, yet maybe you think real transformation is impossible. It's not as if you can step into a machine, then presto, emerge as a new person. Doesn't real change take time, focus, and concerted effort? Yes. But it doesn't have to be quite so daunting.

Real change happens when you start embracing fresh attitudes and focused habits, all in light of God's grace and truth.

Friend—if I may call you that already—I know authentic life change is possible, not only because of what I've witnessed in the lives of the women I coach, but also because I've lived it myself. Oh, if you had met me twenty years ago, you would have seen a hardhearted, reckless, and destined-for-devastation woman. Trust me when I say I was a train wreck whom God was merciful enough to rescue, using Christ-with-skin-on folks to show me a better way. I can't wait to give you the nitty-gritty of that story later on because, honestly, the core of who I am changed the day I came to believe in Jesus as my Savior.

But hear this too: God's transforming work in me hasn't been a once-and-done

experience. It is ongoing as He pours His love and truth into my heart and opens my eyes to see life from His perspective. That's also what I want for you! I want you to experience the presence of God and get to know Him more personally.

And when God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We're free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him. (2 Corinthians 3:17–18, MSG)

Isn't that the heart of real life transformation: to be changed from the inside out by the presence of God at work within us? But it's not only us that He changes. When God gets hold of you and me, He redeems the legacies we inherited and the ones we're passing on. He's turned the legacy I was given—one marred by physical and emotional abuse and all sorts of dysfunction—into a beautiful story depicting His grace, mercy, and redemptive power. In the pages ahead, I'll share how that story has unfolded in the context of what God accomplished in me and through me for His glory as my thinking and habits conformed to the truth found in Scripture.

While I am living life on the other side of being the new me, I'm still seeking God for continuous work in my heart, mind, and soul. Gone is the bitter, cranky, critical, and defensive woman who was always putting on a mask and pursuing perfection. In her place is one who is walking in the grace of God, overflowing with His hope and humbled by His provision. It's amazing how yielding my life to God and giving Him my issues enabled my temper to simmer down and grew my ability to love, laugh, and live life to the fullest. However, that doesn't mean I have it all together. I still battle insecurity and worry. I lose my cool. I veer away from my God-given priorities. There are areas in my life in which I feel stuck. But I'm not who I was, and I have hope of becoming more and more like that woman God intends.

Maybe that's what you desire—simply to become that woman you believe God always intended you to be . . . a woman who is brighter and more beautiful, inside and out. But how do you make that happen?

Maybe you are ready to get out of the cycle of being overwhelmed and worn

down, but you don't have the energy required to make progress. Maybe you feel stuck every time you look at your finances or those evil numbers staring back at you from the bathroom scale. But how do you get below the surface to deal with the real issues?

Maybe you have a dream you'd like to begin walking toward, but fear holds you back like an army of giants. Maybe you're simply craving a fresh start as you embrace your new normal, yet you don't know where to begin.

Whatever the reason for wanting to meet the new you, it is entirely valid, my friend. That thing you want to overcome, resolve, or push through may be different from my thing or someone else's (because let's face it, we're always comparing), yet we can lock arms and approach the process of transformation from the same starting point: the truth.

The truth is that you're not stuck permanently. You can change.

Imagine, for a moment, if you declared the end of an era—of being stuck. Maybe it's moving on from that habit of criticism, unforgiveness, and victim mentality. What if you finally pursued your God-given dreams while embracing your current responsibilities? How about if you learned how to carve out margin for rest and fun? What if you accepted your God-given wiring and embraced the life you've been given to live today?

I'm here to encourage you to take that brave next step, prayerfully, carefully, and thoughtfully, toward real life change, whatever that change may look like for you.

It's time to meet the new you through . . .

- uncovering the story God is writing through your life
- discovering your God-given identity and wiring
- facing the obstacles before you through the power of God at work in you
- seeking the Lord for relevant, biblically sound solutions
- carving out a vision for your future based on God's purposes for your life

You might be thinking, *But how can we accomplish all that in a twenty-one-day journey?* Good question! Let me suggest that you consider *Meet the New You* as your starting point. As a store owner might take an inventory of her goods to decide which products to order next, this journey will help you assess what your life looks like today while allowing you to gain clarity and vision about tomorrow. This

process works because each chapter has been purposefully and prayerfully put together using life-coaching techniques designed to help women like you, who desire to get unstuck and embrace change.

If this idea of life coaching is new to you, let me explain how it works. A life coach is like an architect who comes alongside clients to help them define what they want to build. In contrast, a counselor is more like an archaeologist who goes in for the dig, seeking to uncover what happened in the past and how that is influencing the present. While a client's whole life story is taken into consideration in the life-coaching process, the focus is on moving forward and strategizing a vision that is fully directed by the client. So, as life coach, I come to you with this mind-set, and as a Christian, I wholly believe that the God of the universe has the answer for you. I don't need to tell you what to do, but rather I get to co-labor with God through asking thought-provoking questions that challenge you to seek His best for your life.

The information I will share with you is a tool I wish I'd had twenty years ago. I've written this book because I'm passionate about authentic life transformation, not only because it's good for me and for you, but especially because of the impact our changed lives will have on the next generation. Every time I look at my family, I'm reminded that the way I live my life is of grave importance, because it is influencing the ones I love most. I think you'll glimpse this in the pages ahead, so I'd like to introduce my brood to you.

Leah, my oldest, is only sixteen, but it seems as though she's already got one foot out the door on the way to the rest of her life, which will likely involve her love of sports and family. Abby, my fourteen-year-old, is our strong leader, paving her way into her future and caring for every soul she meets. Luke, my ten-year-old deep thinker and creative builder, is full of wisdom beyond his years. And Kaitlyn, our bonus baby (yes, Luke's twin), is my big-idea girl who wishes she didn't have to wait to grow up in order to make her brilliant plans—such as owning a horse farm—a reality. Steadying our craziness is my incredibly loyal, totally dependable husband, Stephen, who also happens to be an amazing chemistry teacher (he's great to have around during homework time). He's guaranteed to be pushing from behind whenever I feel like quitting this journey of transformation, and he is really the reason it all began in the first place.

These five remember the old me—that sharp-tongued, fear-driven woman

who spent a great deal of time yelling. And every single day they motivate me to keep becoming that woman God intended.

What will be the source of your motivation?

Will it be your children, grandchildren, or spiritual children? Will it be the impact you'll have at work, in your ministry, with your extended family?

This life isn't just about you. It's about God using you in this world for His great and mighty purpose. Yes, you, because you matter that much!

Will you entertain the idea that experiencing real life change might be for the people around you as much as it is for you? Oh friend, God designed your life on purpose and for good purpose. No matter how you feel about yourself today, the truth is that He's not done with what He started on the day you were conceived.

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

You're not a hopeless case, and you won't be forever stuck. Real change is possible as God continues lifelong transformative work in your heart, mind, body, and soul.

Your heavenly Father longs for you to join Him in His work. He's patiently waiting for you to allow truth to become the foundation for how you live. He wants you to seek Him as you consider His ways afresh so that you can discover how to do life differently than what you have done in the past.

Real life change is a process built on a partnership between you and God.

Will you say yes to this divine invitation? Turn the page, and I'll show you how to begin.



How to Use *Meet the New You*

With each day tackling a different topic, *Meet the New You* is all about encountering God personally as you look at your life from a new perspective. Using the same approach I do with my life-coaching clients, I'll be asking you thought-provoking questions to get you thinking about solutions that are reasonable, biblical, and right for your life today. Each section of the book corresponds to one of the five key phases of coaching:

Phase 1: Awareness

Phase 2: Assessment

Phase 3: Obstacles

Phase 4: Solutions

Phase 5: Vision

These phases are designed to help you get a sense of where you are today and where you want to be in the future while figuring out what is standing in your way. That might sound like a lot to accomplish in one book, but it's a process that you can move through at your own pace. You might even decide to take more than twenty-one days, especially if you choose to take the weekends off. No one is keeping track of how long it takes you, so walk in grace.

In each day's reading, you'll find biblical application, an activity to work through, reflection questions, and a closing Scripture prayer designed to help you find the solutions that fit your life. Make the most of this opportunity by giving yourself evidence of your efforts—something to look back on when you're done. Use a journal or notebook to record your thoughts as you work through the exercises and questions. If you want to dig further into the Scriptures, look up the verses

listed at the end of the prayers. You may choose to read the verses in context and record in your journal any portions that stand out. If you choose to embrace this journey with friends or in a group (which would be a great experience and ideal for accountability), the questions lend themselves to group discussion.

APPROACHING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Did you know that embracing fresh attitudes and focused habits is actually a scientific process and not just a theological undertaking? That's because of *plasticity*, which simply means your brain remembers your actions like pathways, and those pathways can be changed.¹ Isn't that great news? Change is possible—although real change requires real work to carve out those new pathways in your brain. Here is how the process works:

Imagine there is a field in front of you. To the left is a beaten-down path leading to your neighbor's house, but it winds a couple of miles out of the way. You're tired of the time it takes to go in that direction, so you decide to carve a new path that could take you straight across the field in fewer than fifteen minutes as compared to the usual forty-five.

Grabbing a machete, you get to work. After hours of labor, you see progress, but you've got so much farther to go. The sun is beating down and scorching your back, so you quit for the day with plans to start again tomorrow.

The next morning you wake up with good intentions. However, the sound of raindrops tapping on the roof entices you to stay cozy inside. Days later, the rain hasn't quit. The work you did on the new path feels pointless as you see the new wildflowers sprouting, while the old path is still not yet overgrown. What would you do? Would you quit creating that new path and just use the old one?

It takes as much effort to leave that old path behind as it does to carve out the new one. Why? Because the old one is more comfortable and familiar and requires no work, while the new one demands dedication and focus.

Yes, sticking with old habits is easier than forming new ones.

So what should you do? You have to keep the cost in mind. Staying “as is” will add up over the long haul. Putting in the effort toward change may feel exhausting now, but you will reap so much later on. Plus, there’s a secret about change: once you begin to see results, you’ll be motivated to keep working toward that goal of real transformation. So how about putting into practice an approach that will enable you to embrace fresh attitudes and focused habits, one thought and one action step at a time? That’s where “Trap and Transform” comes in!

The Trap and Transform technique is an approach built from two key principles found in Scripture:

Principle 1: Trap Your Thoughts and Attitudes. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Principle 2: Transform Your Habits. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

The Trap and Transform process is simply an intentional way to consider how your thoughts and attitudes impact the way you’re living, especially your habits. It’s a concept sown into each chapter, but it’s really a process that can mark every single moment for the rest of your life. Picture it this way: Imagine using a butterfly net to catch all your thoughts. With them trapped, take each one before God and consider them in light of the Scriptures. Ask the Lord to help you discern the truth and demolish the lies—so that your habits conform to the way God intends for you to live.

If you are new to this idea of using the Bible as a tool for everyday living, take heart—*Meet the New You* will help you get started with foundational truths and plenty of suggestions on how to grow in your understanding of Scripture. If you’ve been living a life of faith for some time, this journey will enable you to intentionally consider how your thinking and living line up with God’s purposes.

So how about turning the page for a fresh encounter with God so that you can uncover the life He designed you to lead? But before we start, may I ask God to pour out His blessing on you?

Heavenly Father, please enter the heart and mind of this precious woman. Fill her with Your love and grace. Give her fresh attitudes and focused habits that are rooted deeply in Your Word. Most of all, give her a vision to see beyond today and get a glimpse of the woman she is becoming—the woman who delights in joining You in Your work as she embraces ongoing, real life change. In Jesus's name, amen.

Phase 1

A Fresh Awareness

Prayerfully consider what's happening in your life right now and then make a commitment to remain consistent in your conversation with and dependence on God. The courage, direction, and divine favor you'll receive from an ongoing fresh relationship with the Savior is exactly what you'll need to stay on track.

—PRISCILLA SHIRER





Day 1

Zoom Out

Sketch Your Life Map

Where God is making new life, not a day
goes by without his unfolding grace.

—2 CORINTHIANS 4:16, MSG

My natural tendency is to look at life from a bird's-eye view, which is probably a by-product of my creative side. I can't think clearly unless I see everything before me, which means you'll often find me making a diagram, fixing a spreadsheet, or creating a list anytime I feel the pressure to make a decision or push through an obstacle.

This big-picture way of thinking is something I learned to do in one of my first college art classes. We were tasked with spending more than two months sketching a curtain that never moved. (So boring!) I balked at the project . . . until the term came to a close and I saw all the skill I had gained. Surprisingly, not only did I learn how to draw, but I also discovered how to look at life differently. By studying the shadows, I began to see the interplay of darkness and light to define shape and depth. I discovered the importance of taking in the whole composition before planning where I should begin the drawing.

That, my friend, is why I think it's so important to step back and to see the big picture when it comes to approaching life change. While focusing on one area is necessary at times, looking at life from a broad perspective is an effective way to identify where to invest time and attention for real life change.

So, what would you think about stepping back to look at your whole life picture? Don't panic! I won't ask you to spend the next two months drawing a self-portrait (or a curtain!). But I will ask you to zoom out to see what's going on in your life before you zoom in. This process is much like what the Bible describes as shifting our focus from the seen to unseen:

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

The seen. That's what we humans like to focus on: The laundry piles in the den. The weeds in the garden. The dust on the bookshelf.

What parts of your life are you focusing on? Do you see what's left undone while missing what's accomplished? Or do you focus on what's accomplished and feel guilty about what's left undone?

As you begin to look at every aspect of your life from a fresh perspective, I encourage you to keep this one question in mind: What does God have to say about this?

Depending on what you think of God, that idea might be enticing . . . or a total turnoff. If He's a great big ogre in the sky who sends curses your way, you may not be inclined to see things from His perspective. I get that. I have not always seen the goodness of God—in fact, I still remember the days when I was afraid of ending up on His bad side. But the truth is that God doesn't operate this way. He is loving, kind, faithful, and merciful, just as the Bible describes (Psalm 100:5; 103:8; 145:17). He longs to meet our needs and pour His grace upon us. The Lord is on our side. He doesn't want us to give up and settle on life “as is,” no matter how hard it seems at the moment. He's got a bigger plan at work that He wants us to set our sights upon:

So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever. (2 Corinthians 4:16–18, MSG)

“These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times.” I love that. God’s grace is weaving its way into every detail of your life, even the parts that may seem overlooked, such as being passed over for a job promotion, having an offer on a house fall through, suffering through a difficult relationship, navigating singleness, hitting obstacles while trying to launch a ministry, or struggling to get a company off the ground.

No matter your situation, His grace is there.

That’s the unseen truth. That’s what I want you to start looking for as you shift your perspective from the earthly to the eternal. Friend, this planet is not your final destination—it’s simply the rest stop on the way to one that is far more magnificent, where a “lavish celebration” is being prepared for you. But while you wait to meet Jesus face to face, God has business for you to accomplish. The challenges you’re facing in your external life are designed to reshape your intentions to be more like His (2 Corinthians 3:16–18, MSG).

So how about bucking your human nature, which tends to focus on only what is seen, and beginning to look at life from a brand-new perspective? We’ll start by getting your life down on paper before going deeper to see what’s happening beneath the surface.

Trap and Transform

Map Your Life

What would you think about starting this journey at one of my favorite places? While a real-life tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met) would be absolutely fabulous, in the interest of time and money, let’s head over to the Met’s website and look at a beautiful Vincent van Gogh painting. If you’ve got your computer or smartphone handy, go to <http://bit.ly/1Gn2IML>.

If you visited the Met in person, you might have to push through the crowds to get a good look at Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers*. Maybe you’d find a spot on a bench where you could linger and study the whole painting. Your perspective will shift as you select the position from which you choose to focus. Try this out by clicking on the painting. A new window will open, and you’ll see Plus and Minus buttons. Click on these to zoom in or out. If you view the

painting up close, it looks like smudges of paint. Only when you zoom out can you discover the beauty of the whole composition: the sunflowers with that calming blue background.

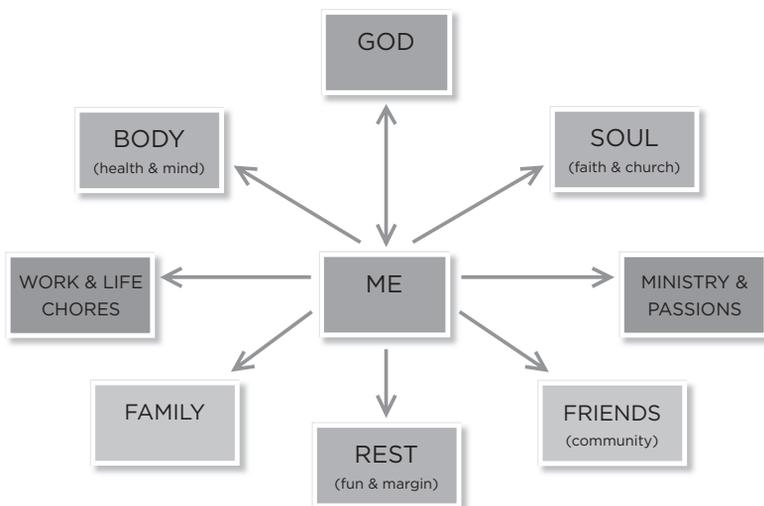
This is exactly the process we go through when it comes to focusing on our lives. The problem is that we usually get stuck on the Zoom-In button and obsess over a problem. Oftentimes we can find the solution when we zoom out to get the big-picture perspective . . . which is God's perspective.

God is the master Artist painting the picture of your life, and He sees the whole canvas.

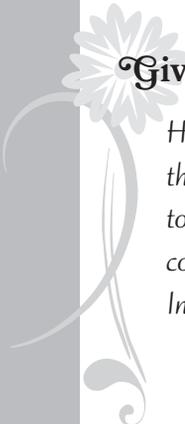
The smudge of color that looks like a mistake may very well become the focal point of the composition as God works it into His perfect creation. Your vantage point determines your perspective, which is why creating a life map is so helpful. By zooming out, you'll see the pieces of your life with new clarity as you make strides toward balance and purpose.

Sketch Your Life Map

Are you relieved that you don't need any artistic talent to accomplish this assignment? All you have to do is draw boxes and lines. So go grab a pencil and a blank sheet of paper, then sketch out the diagram below. Personalize your diagram by adding additional boxes for every aspect of your life. For example, you might have a line pointing to the left of the *Work and Life Chores* box for



3. Having zoomed out to create your life map, what issues or obstacles do you see? List your circumstances, relationships (use initials to keep this confidential), responsibilities, emotional or spiritual issues, physical challenges, and so on, and ask God for His perspective going forward.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, featuring a stylized flower with multiple petals and a long, flowing stem that curves downwards and to the right. The flower is light gray and the stem is a slightly darker shade of gray.

Give It Over

Heavenly Father, I want to become a woman who is passionate about the process of transformation. Show me how to cooperate with You to see Your purposes accomplished in my life. Give me the courage to consider life from a fresh perspective as I welcome Your unfolding grace. In Jesus's name, amen. (2 Corinthians 4:16–18, msc)



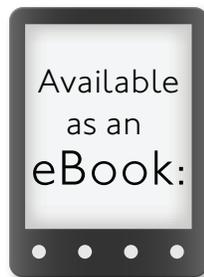
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