

Author Q & A

Chris Fabry on *Every Waking Moment*



1. What was your inspiration for this book, *Every Waking Moment*?

The question at the center of this story is “If this is as good as it gets, am I okay with life?” I find this is a universal question that hits at the heart of our outlook on life and our belief in God. The other question it raises is this: If you could bring someone back from dementia or Alzheimer’s and have a conversation, what would you ask? What would you say to that person?

2. Tell me about your main character Treha Langsam. Was this character based upon anyone in particular?

She was loosely based on my own children and what they’ve gone through the past five years. This is probably my most personal story to date. We were exposed to toxic mold. Most people think you can only get a rash or have respiratory damage, but it can attack the brain. Treha’s symptoms are similar to what I’ve seen in them and others who have been exposed.

3. What lessons or truths will your readers find in the pages of this novel?

I love the fact that God doesn’t look at the exterior; he looks at the heart. As humans, we have a tendency to judge on first impressions, but we miss so much by doing that. Those who are disabled, those who have some kind of struggle in life, those who are older—all are lumped into a category, and this is such a disservice to them and us.

4. How do you expect Treha’s story to resonate with your readers?

I think everyone feels a bit like Treha. She is the little engine that could, even if she isn’t given a chance. And it only takes one person giving someone else a chance. I’m hoping readers will give someone a chance—or maybe let someone else give them a chance.

5. As a writer, what did you particularly enjoy about crafting this story?

I loved getting to know Treha better because she's so mysterious to everyone around her. She's also a bit scary. To crawl into her skin and walk around and see what she sees is a heartbreaking, life-affirming journey. I also liked the discovery that came with other characters who encounter Treha and see how she changes their lives.

6. What is your hope for this story? How would you like it to impact readers?

My hope is that this force of nature, Treha, would empower readers to believe the truth about themselves and others. In Christ, you are stronger than you think you are. With God, you can do anything he calls you to do.

7. How has this novel helped you to grow as a storyteller?

Trying to tell a complex story in a simple way is always difficult, and people's lives are hugely complex. Trying to uncover the truth about Treha—why she is the way she is and where she might be able to go from here—helped me as a human being as well as a writer.

8. Your novels typically touch on a relevant and current topic in our culture. What topics do you weave into this novel?

One thread running deeply through this story is the reliance we have on drugs. It's much easier to take a pill than to make a lifestyle change. And this is affecting individuals, families, and our culture. It also means a great deal of money to institutions, so in tackling this, I know I'm not going to make friends in the pharmaceutical industry. I'm grateful for drugs—my son wouldn't be alive today without insulin. But every positive thing can have a negative side as well.

9. What big questions will this novel get your reader thinking about?

What is your backstory? What is the worth of an individual? Old, young, disabled, unsuccessful . . . several characters are faced with questions of their own worth as well as how they treat others. I've always heard that your faith is tested by how you treat someone who can't do anything for you. This story will get you thinking about some of those deep issues of the heart.

10. How do you manage your time with such a full life, including a writing career, a radio career, and a large family?

Everyone has the same amount of time each day. We simply make choices about what we invest in. Hence, I spend less time watching television than I used to. That's a huge time waster. I get up earlier and go to bed earlier. And when you begin your day centered on God's Word and ask him what your priorities should be, things generally fall into place. I haven't arrived at that balance, but I'm struggling as well as I can.