



*Four Ordinary Women*  
A GATHERING AT THE CEDAR ROE LIBRARY



**Cedar Roe Library is the setting.** Four women reveal their lives as they share through voice and paper.

4 Ordinary Women tells of difficulties in marriage, children, importance of friendship, conflict, facing death, balance, personal solitude, inspiration. This is a compelling account of four women who meet twice a month at Cedar Roe Library to share, through their writing, the stories of their lives. But this isn't just their story. It is all of our stories. You will identify. You will say, "I know just what you mean." Share the heartache, the joy, sadness and self-examination.

The honesty will make you flinch, but not move away. It is riveting and you will be drawn into not-so-ordinary perspectives of women who have taken off the game face.

Come share their lives.



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# Reader Profile

Our Reader is: 40-75 years old, female.

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**Audience:** predominately women.

**Income:** \$50,000 to \$150,000 per year

**Working:** in the marketplace and at home, volunteering mothers, retired women staying active through volunteer work, teachers, nurses, and lower management positions, social workers.

**Cars:** Vans, SUV, (some leased), older Volvo's, later model pre-owned cars, airbags, 4-wheel drive.

**Kids:** At least one child and women with several children.

**House:** Single family, middle income neighbors, suburbs (as contrasted with urban core apartments or multi-family dwellings)

**Neighborhood:** Lawns cared for, some flowers, cars in drives rather than on the street, some fenced back yards, probably a homes association, a neighborhood school available, easy drive to grocery store

**Marital Status:** Married, divorced, and divorced and remarried

**Shops:** Malls, Target, Costco, Sam's Club and some specialty stores

**Buys:** Groceries, toys, kids clothing, yarn, fabric, some antique 'finds' in furniture or home decorating, candles, books, costume jewelry. Most of their magazine are subscription, but a few impulse buys.

**Hobbies:** Jogging, working out, staying involved in children's activities, knitting, reading, coffee or lunch with friends

**Other:** Attend church on a fairly regular basis, politically interested but not necessarily involved, PTO/PTA members, might watch Oprah and/or Dr. Phil. Not regular TV viewers, but attend a movie about once a month. Enjoy Merrill Streep movies. Prefer Kevin Costner and George Clooney over Leonardo de Caprio and Nicholas Cage.  
Not inclined to browse in stores...tend to work from a list and time constraints.



# The How to Guide

# Paper and Voice

Reflect on your busy life. Consider what slips off the plate when time and stress demand a reduction.

Most often, women release self-time followed quickly by time nurturing friendships.

*4 Ordinary Women* emerged from our success in finding that combination of time, purpose, energy, and commitment that led to the creation of our book.

In this section, we offer suggestions for your *extraordinary new beginning*.

## Time

An invitation letter, accompanied by our stated promise of privacy was the first step. Pat and Patti sought women from our school community with whom we shared some history and background. At one time, we considered an invitation via local publications or email groups, but believed that fledglings needed a local nest.

Not everything shared in each gathering appears in our book. Because we opened our hearts so completely, we insisted on total privacy. What was said in the gathering stayed private.

From the beginning, our clear understanding was a carved-in-stone calendar date erased only in a family emergency. We pledged to honor the time, two-hour sessions every two weeks, starting and ending by the clock. Our neutral place was a room in a local library.

## Purpose

Journaling has long been a technique for gaining personal insight and many people choose this as a helpful way to handle stress. We wanted more than journaling. We wanted to be authors.

A publication, *4 Ordinary Women*, originally titled *Over The Back Fence*, was a clear and definite goal. Our group was always about writing, support though sharing and friendship. Before adjourning each session, our group would agree on a writing topic for the next chapter. Often we chose from a list of brainstormed possibilities. Just as often we chose from a member's personal need at the time.

## Energy

Writing is not an easy task. Nor is reading the hurtful things that might come through in the process of writing. Each of us expended great amounts of energy during the two weeks between gatherings, writing, exploring our feelings and reactions, and editing our work. More deeply felt energy was used during each gathering, listening, comforting, supporting and editing one another.

## Commitment

Before starting our group, we researched other women's groups; gleaning ideas and discarding what we believed to be counter productive to our purpose. There were drop-in groups, for which attendance was always optional. A few loosely structured writing groups encouraged members to attend 'whenever possible' and to contribute written work if convenient. These were the discarded ideas.

Every group researched had caring support of one another as a stated goal. This, plus the requirement to write, became our backbone.

We insisted that attendance was not to be casual and that writing on topic was a requirement. This was the proverbial blessing and curse as we enriched our purpose but lost some of our original members, reducing from ten to four persistent women. For some women, the idea of definite commitment to attendance was uncomfortable and to some women writing became a problem. The group would write and each member would attend. For four years, our group flourished.

And so we invite you to begin this process of introspection through a unity of purpose. As you proceed, a freedom grows as the level of honesty and openness increases. The fear of truth dissolves as we find the universal by examining the particular.

Our Table of Contents is a listing of our favorite topics and an expanded list of possibilities follows these pages. Should you wish to explore possibilities with us, please use the following email addresses or contact us through Seven locks Press.

Pat Antonopoulos  
[paarna@planetkc.com](mailto:paarna@planetkc.com)

Patti Dickinson  
[kcpattishea@mac.com](mailto:kcpattishea@mac.com)

## Additional Topics For Consideration

- ❖ Carving out time for your spouse
- ❖ To what and to whom are you committed
- ❖ Closeness and distance in marriage and friendship
- ❖ Maintaining personal identity
- ❖ Allowing our children to make mistakes.
- ❖ Three things hardly anyone knows about me
- ❖ My biggest fear
- ❖ After children---what then?
- ❖ Anger Aversion: How we handle anger.
- ❖ Behavior: intellectually or emotionally motivated?
- ❖ How would you change the way you have lived the last ten years?
- ❖ Is self image the determinant of our roles?
- ❖ Mind Set: Narrow or Wide
- ❖ Which Fork: Manners and Respect
- ❖ Food Fight: The place of Eating/Food in our lives.
- ❖ Social conscience: Difficult topics (Abortion, Stem Cell Research, Gay Marriage)
- ❖ Accepting the vision: Allowing Creativity
- ❖ Mentoring: For ourselves and for our children
- ❖ Read a favorite book and write a response
- ❖ Discovering Self: Who you are and where do you want to go?
- ❖ If my spouse could change one thing about me, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- ❖ If I could change one thing about my spouse, it would be\_\_\_\_\_.

As you write, you will discover that certain topics seem to flow—to write themselves while other topics are a struggle. Often the struggles are what the individual most needs to confront through writing. Our Table of Contents represents both sides of this dilemma. Through that T of C, we wanted to represent a depth of personal healing and understanding.

We invite you to share your ideas for future writing. Please contact us at:

[paarna@planetkc.com](mailto:paarna@planetkc.com)

Pat Antonopoulos

[kcpattishea@aol.com](mailto:kcpattishea@aol.com)

Patti Dickinson

# Overcoming Resistance

In the beginning, the mood to explore with depth may need prompting. We suggest you might find the following questions helpful as the desire to share develops. You might decide to use these as topics for writing, once your group achieves the desired comfort level.

Other sources for such opening kinds of questions are:  
The Ungame, Published by Talicor Inc., Anaheim, California

The Book of Questions by Gregory Stock, Published by Workman Publishing

## Easy to Share

1. Talk about something that you like about yourself.
2. Talk about something that will help us know you better.
3. What single thing would you change about yourself?
4. During the past week was any one person very significant in an unusual way?
5. What person would you name as the most significant in the last year? Why?
6. Talk about your fantasy perfect day...perfect evening...perfect vacation.
7. Have you ever taken a huge leap of faith, an unusual risk?
8. With whom do you share tears?
9. Name the people you most admire.

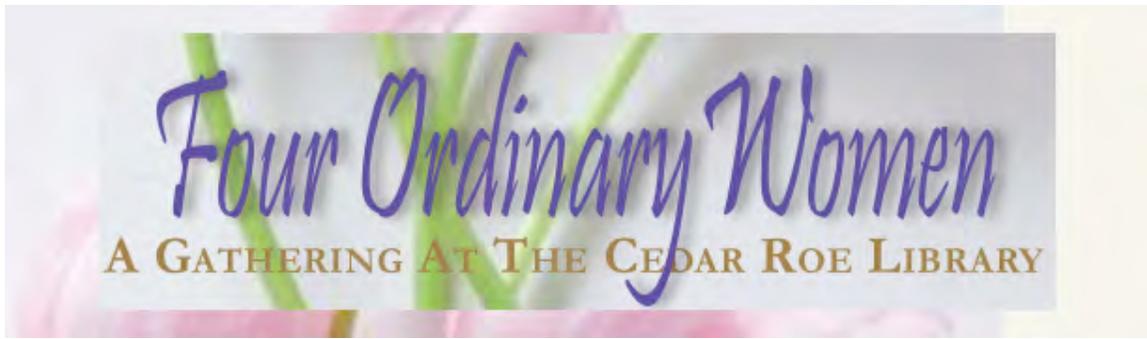
## Moving To A Different Level

1. What missed opportunity do you most regret?
2. Do you feel particularly close to any individual in this group?
3. What do you consider a significant failure that you would like to reverse?
4. What is your greatest success?
5. What makes you feel powerless?
6. Share a treasured memory.
7. When do you feel most protected?
8. To whom do you owe gratitude?
9. What do you value most in a relationship?

## Reaching The Depth

1. Talk about your relationship with your parents.

2. Talk about your most treasured and your most hurtful memory?
3. How much do you feel in control of your life?
4. Have you raised your voice to a loved one? Why? Regrets?
5. Do you have a dream that could actually be a reality if you took specific steps? Will you?
6. Do you understand hatred from experience? Can you change that feeling?
7. Since your teen years, what period has been most significant?
8. Who is the most important person in your life? Is this a loved one?
9. If you could be assured that you would get honest and complete answers, what three questions would you most want to ask?

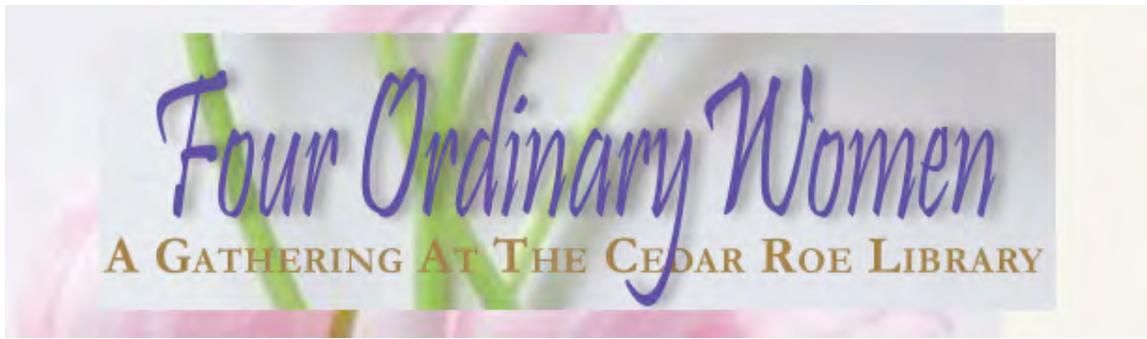


## Outlets

Where the book could be sold

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1. Airport bookstores
2. Starbucks and other coffee establishments
3. Eclectic shops like *STUFF* [www.pursuegoodstuff.com](http://www.pursuegoodstuff.com)
4. Specialty bookstores like *Rainy Day Books*  
[www.rainydaybooks.com](http://www.rainydaybooks.com) and *Strawberry Hill Museum*  
[www.heritageleaguekc.org/strawberryhill](http://www.heritageleaguekc.org/strawberryhill)
5. Scholastic book fairs in schools
6. Retreat house libraries and book stores like *House of Menuha* [www.menuha.org](http://www.menuha.org)
7. Borders and Barnes and Nobles
8. Blogs and related web sites including our own
9. Borders/Barnes and Noble *online*
10. Amazon.com



# Extending the Experience

Going beyond the book...

An interactive web site called [www.FourOrdinaryWomen.com](http://www.FourOrdinaryWomen.com) is being developed. This web site will contain links to the blog [www.fourordinarywomen.blogspot.com](http://www.fourordinarywomen.blogspot.com) Here new topics will be posted as well as additional writings. There will be a way to become a member of the *Four Ordinary Women* community and post writing and comments to help build a truly interactive experience at a social networking site. The book can be sold through the site as well as other items.

- Home
- Praise for book
- Buy the book
- For booksellers
- Blog
- Book an Event
- Upcoming Events
- Past Events
- Press
- Contact Us
- Important links
- Visit:

## Four Ordinary Women A Gathering At The Cedar Roe Library

Upcoming events at Borders, House of Menuha, Cedar Roe Library and more.

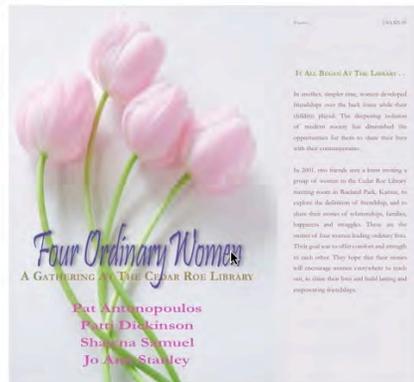
Don't miss out.

Check [Upcoming Events](#) to meet us and get your signed copy.

New from



SEVEN LOCKS PRESS welcome to our world of books



4 Ordinary Women exemplifies the resilience of the human spirit. These essays are forged of grit and honesty and speak to all of us. Stephen R. Covey, author, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*



Monday, August 31, 2009

### Desperate Housewife...Fairway, Kansas

by Patti Dickinson

Kids are all back in school. This morning, I began my annual kitchen clean up. After a summer of kids making everything from homemade salsa, Kraft mac and cheese, frozen pizzas and fruit punch Crystal Light around the clock, let's just say that the kitchen needed a little work. Admittedly I am a little OCD about my kitchen. I don't like dried dishwasher gunk on my plates, cups or bowls because they haven't been put in the dishwasher correctly. I mean we've got a good quality dishwasher, but the kids think that means that any cooking utensil goes in the dishwasher without so much as a quick rinse in the sink.

As I cleaned cabinets and rearranged some things, I realized just how tired some of my kitchen things were. I mean, I still have two Revere Ware antiques...one a frying pan, the other a double boiler (but I only have the lid and the pot because I sent soup down the street to an elderly couple years ago and they never brought the middle part back. I sent the kids down once to ask for it, but they didn't seem to have any idea what my kids were talking about....Note to self: Tupperware next time) I found a pathetic Rubbermaid strainer. It's sunshine yellow and somehow

Press

KC Star

To order the book

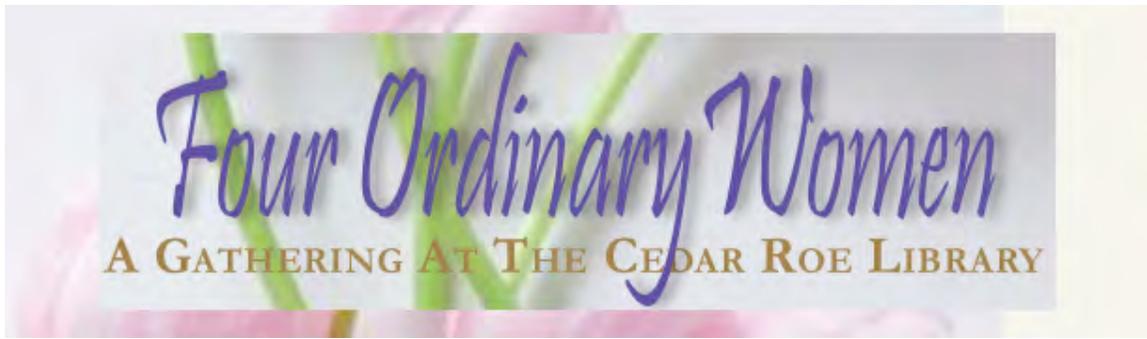


Four Ordinary Women

ORDER

For appearance information

Click [HERE](#).



## Endorsements

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*4 Ordinary Women exemplifies the resilience of the human spirit. These essays are forged of grit and honesty and speak to all of us.*

Stephen R. Covey, author, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*  
and *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*

*Just as there are no normal families, so there are no ordinary women, and, despite its engaging title, this book proves that. Each of the four women who participated in this intriguing project is unique and each, thus, resists being labeled as ordinary or labeled as anything other than endlessly interesting. What these women show is that we all have our stories to tell because we all have been both blessed and battered by life. Readers will find countless points of intersection with their thoughts and experiences because we all share a common humanity. But readers will not simply be looking in a mirror here at their own lives played out by another. Rather, they will find new insights into - common experiences.*

Bill Tammeus  
Faith Columnist  
The Kansas City Star  
wtammeusffl~kc.rr.com

Web log: <http://billtammeus.~pepad.com>

*These four ordinary women have given us a book that is both brave and inspiring. By turns funny and sad, serious and flippant, impassioned and reflective, this collection of short pieces on a variety of subjects provides a glimpse into the lives and experiences of these women. Their commitment to honesty is praiseworthy, and one hopes that their example will serve to inspire others throughout the country to come together to share their lives in writing.*

Brian Bowles, Ph.D.  
Philosopher and Counselor

*4 Ordinary Women is an extraordinary journey! What a gift to find not only one woman sharing her life in such a real and honest way but all four! I found myself relating to each woman at different times as I read this book and in different places of their lives and in mine. A wonderful and heartfelt work of love that is obvious on every unique and different page.*

Mary B. Lucas  
Author of *Lunchmeat & Life Lessons: Sharing a Butcher's Wisdom*

*4 Ordinary Women is beautifully written. Brutally honest. Funny. Powerful. Comforting. It's impossible to read this book without relating the stories to one's own life - and being moved to treasure some things and to change others.*

Patricia (Pat) Schudy  
former youth columnist, "Talk to Us,"  
Universal Press Syndicate

*These writers have engaged in a remarkable process of self-discovery and insight resulting in an enlightening peek into the human family and the far-reaching effects of the family's predictable patterns and repetitions.*

Dori Moore, Family Systems Therapist

*WOW...this was the most powerful, touching, and uplifting piece of reading I have ever read. There are hundreds of books under the heading "Spiritual Reading." This book gives a whole new meaning to the heading...*

Father Ed Lisson, S.J.