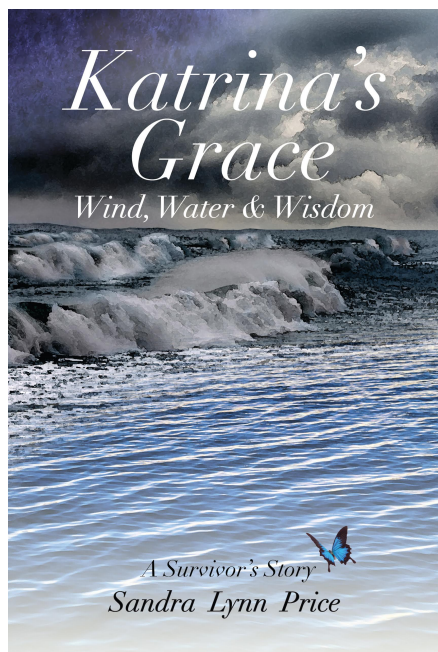


Media Information



Title:	Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water and Wisdom
Author:	Sandra Lynn Price
Genre:	Memoir
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About Heart Wisdom Press

Heart Wisdom Press's purpose is to foster wisdom, wonder, and wholeness by publishing books and other media that touch the soul. This is our first book.

Synopsis

Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water and Wisdom takes us on Sandra's journey of recovery from Hurricane Katrina. Join her from a pre-hurricane fall that left her helpless and found her at her daughter's home waiting and wondering what was happening in Gulfport, to first sight of her destroyed home, car, and treasures. The journey continues through a lifetime of memories as lost treasures were unearthed, to the streams of volunteers who came to help her wade through the upheaval, build a temporary living space, and care for her neighbors and others in the community.

As we read Sandra's story, we remember our own grief and loss after Katrina or similar disaster experiences. This story speaks not only to the survivors, but to disaster responders who come to pick up the pieces yet don't hear the rest of the story of those with whom they shared an hour or a week, and finally they and all readers are able to feel the pain around the disasters where they served. Additionally, it provides insight for volunteers going into disaster work.

A powerful yet sensitive story of dwelling in Grace and the incredible gifts of Grace from nature; from those who prayed, sent gifts, and came; and from living memories.

Weaving reflections on lost treasures with journal excerpts, poetry, stories of those who came to help, sent needed materials and supplies, and also prayed, Sandra Price presents stories from a heart-breaking disaster. *Katrina's Grace* invites us into the depth of Sandra's soul and on into the depth of our own souls. As we read her story, we remember our own disasters and weep, laugh and ponder.

Praise for Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water and Wisdom

Praise for Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water and Wisdom

“This is the book on Katrina **you will want to buy**. In fact, **purchase one for your church library and mission's committee!** In poetic detail Sandra majestically describes moving accounts of loss and turmoil... but the story doesn't dwell on loss. I was moved to tears by Sandra's testimony of a God who cares and the generosity of many souls filled by God's Grace... what a gift of Spirit-led writing.”

- Kevin King, Executive Director, Mennonite Disaster Service

“...**a book of loss, a book of hope, a book of joy, a book of life's memories, a book of pain, a book of love, a book of grace found in the midst of devastation.** There are many stories, stories within stories, reflecting Sandra's **courage to mourn, laugh, reveal heartache, celebrate happiness and find Grace in the depths of tragedy.** Purple Birkenstocks carried Sandra on a life-changing adventure.... They lay dead on the floor in her damaged house. Many stories are about simple items, but they are not simplistic... but told with eloquence and extraordinary remembrance, each a continuing piece of history. *Katrina's Grace* is anyone's story who is seeking **love and Grace in the turmoil of grief.**” Sandra's stories are hauntingly familiar, for I, too, am a Katrina survivor.

- Mary Kay Deen, Katrina Survivor, Retired Teacher, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

"*Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water and Wisdom*, is a revelation of the profound difference between compassion and 'pity.' Sandra Lynn Price may not be 'a voice crying in the wilderness,' but she certainly is voice speaking clearly and passionately of the spirit amidst the ruins of individual lives and whole communities.”

– Reverend Dr. Jeremy Taylor, D.Min., S.Th.D. (hon.)

Author, *The Wisdom of Your Dreams: Using Dreams to Tap into Your Unconscious & Transform Your Life*
and several other books

“...a true Southern voice full of pathos and wonder and angst...and yet also full of joy...”

- Lucy Hansford, Public Relations Professional

“**I lived through Katrina.**’ Most Mississippians can make that statement. I responded to ‘bring help, healing, and hope’ to those who lost so much. I worked for years in the relief efforts... I didn’t really experience Katrina, not the way Sandra Price did. I was an outsider trying to come along beside those who lost so much. **This book gave me more closure on Katrina; it helped me feel it.** Tears came... I had that lump in my throat when Sandra’s pictures were mostly un-restorable. I felt such loss over her treasured books... I needed to feel, and Sandra helped me. I also needed to be reminded that Grace comes over and over — sometimes in small, practical ways; sometimes in sunrises, sometimes in ‘a need filled just in time.’ ...Sandra Price peeled back the outer part and showed her soul. *Katrina’s Grace* doesn’t give sugar-coated platitudes but soul felt truth of grief and the hope that comes in the midst of life.”

- Don Gann, Director of Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief

“**Written with the pouring out of the passion that developed from personal experiences as a survivor of the devastation** caused by Hurricane Katrina. Subsequently, it woke up a unique spirit of service that others affected by disaster now benefit from with her compassion through the VOAD movement.”

- Warren Miller, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. Past President,
Mississippi VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

“As a grief counselor, **I highly recommend this book to anyone who is living with the grief process.** View the rich, vivid verbal images and experience the visceral, gut-wrenching awareness of the healing process

that follows human tragedy. **Sandra is a healer and those who read this book will catch a glimpse of the Master Healer's Grace.** For someone who visited the Gulf Coast after Katrina, witnessed the residents try to cope with loss, destruction, invasion of privacy, hopelessness, fear, uncertainty, etc., **this book is a reminder of the human struggle for survival, meaning, and hope.** I was reminded of the vast array of emotions I witnessed in the eyes of those who remained. Sandra has **recaptured the essence of that struggle through the images, emotions, recollections, and memoirs of her own journey to wholeness. Sandra is a visual artist. She paints vivid word memories of the devastation, aftermath, and healing process that she experienced with Hurricane Katrina.**”

- Joe Ray Underwood, Ph.D., Professor of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Mississippi State University

“Sandra invites readers into her spiritual center in which she **contemplates the role and symbolism of water, its role in sustaining life and its counter role played out by Hurricane Katrina.** She thinks about the wind that provides power and is the source of breath. **Readers will appreciate her wise insights.** She **dives deep into the devastation** of a once-in-a-lifetime storm – the **hurt, the loss, the destruction – emerging throughout the story with glimmers of hope and wonder.** [Experience] the struggle to keep on living through the rebuilding of the *stuff* of life. Sandra recounts the agony of parting with possessions that held priceless memories. She discovers her babies’ photographs, soggy and stuck together, agonizes over a dead sewing machine, mourns a once-vibrant pair of magnolia trees that have to be cut down, wrestles with the destruction of her personal library, rapidly molding in the September heat, and the treasured piano on which she learned to play hymns as a child. **Throughout the account of loss, Sandra finds herself surrounded by hope and love.**”

- Sherry Swain, Senior Research Associate, National Writing Project

“From the first words I was captivated... I was reading this book with the eyes of a person who has responded to many disasters including hurricane Katrina. With this awareness came the realization that **the author has given a great gift to those who wonder how a person journeys through a disaster.** A disaster responder is left to wonder what life was like before the storm and left to ponder the fate of those putting the pieces back together. *Katrina’s Grace* is **a gift of Grace to anyone who has longed to know the whole story.** [The book] **taught this reader that people develop resilience throughout life’s journey and that even in the face of great loss that resilience will emerge as new leaves on a battered tree.** The responder’s job is to help that resilience find the warmth of the sun. Perhaps the most meaningful moment of Grace was the opportunity to walk with the author through the pain, tears and loss to the growth, renewal and newness that occurs when one is willing to walk through the wilderness with faith as a companion. ...**a must read for anyone wishing to respond to a disaster.** As I continue to respond to people and communities impacted by a disaster I will take *Katrina’s Grace* with me as a constant reminder that when one discovers God’s Amazing Grace all things are possible.”

- Jim Kirk, Past Chair, Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee,
National VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

“...a memoir, **personal and interwoven with an event that has truly entered the annals of American history,** the likes of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and the great Mississippi River flood of 1927. This book moves to a **deeper level of grappling with catastrophic events’ truly disorienting effect,** not only in one’s personal psyche but also the national psyche at the deepest psychological, spiritual level, and takes the sensitive reader on an adventure into the realm of the soul/psyche where persons of reflective spirit can experience deep meaning, facilitate life-altering growth, gain deep insight, and develop a better understanding of finding meaning in the tragedies of life. A beautifully woven personal tale of the healing power of grace experienced, as well as a tale meaningfully imaging the capacity of what theology has traditionally called **Grace’s power to transcend differences, heal**

wounds and create a better world.”

- Ben Toole, Jungian Analyst

“As I read... I found I could not put it down... I carried her story with me day and night... I would weep as my heart broke, and I would soar as I experienced God’s Grace through her words. The story of the vicissitudes of Sandra’s journey with family, FEMA, friends, inspectors, insurance and volunteers is filled with meaning and love. As the top executive for US Disaster Response in the United Methodist Church, I spent a great amount of time along the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. I observed **miles upon miles of roads and streets that were just blown to pieces**. Very quickly those roads and streets became deep valleys, which were **lined by mountains of debris**. For the normal eye to observe, the whole coast of Mississippi looked exactly the same. Yet **behind every mountain of *stuff* was a unique story of lives that had been forever changed by wind and water.**”

- Rev. Tom Hazelwood, Assistant General Secretary U.S. Disaster Response, 1998 -2013, United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR)

“...the pathway toward wholeness involves connecting those severed strands of a survivor’s story, helping them in the context of a supportive relationship to learn to tell that story in a full and connected way that supports healing and lessens the pain of trauma. We see that work demonstrated as Sandra Price with **painstaking detail lovingly weaves the narratives of her Southern childhood, her experience of the trauma of Hurricane Katrina’s damage to her beloved home and community, with the healing graces of her faith and friendships into an intimate portrait of a life disrupted, remembered, and renewed**. It is shaped by her theological sensibility, framed by her respect for the communion of the saints, and richly revelatory of her experience and personality as it is refined by the fires of disaster.”

- The Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, Coordinator, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

“An engaging memoir written in the authentic voice of a thoughtful, deeply spiritual Mississippi woman. As a disaster volunteer who spent weeks in the Gulf during the first years of the Katrina recovery, I saw some of what Sandra describes in the landscape of Biloxi and Gulfport. Yet the continuing barrage of losses was shocking to me. As a clinical psychotherapist who confronts traumatic grief in the lives of individuals regularly, I could hear the truth of Sandra’s disbelief, fury, and deep sadness for important connections broken and beloved memories ruined. The powerful message of hope in this book is born in the writer’s capacity to live in her fearful emptiness and to receive and absorb the goodness that blew her way.”

- Helen Robinson, LCSW, Clinical Psychotherapist, Winchester,
Virginia

Q&A with Sandra Lynn Price

Q. What inspired you to emphasize Grace in your book? Why did you choose to focus on it?

A. Actually, Grace chose me. I kept experiencing Grace and the awe and wonder that always accompanies it. The many forms in which Grace was manifest included the generosity of people who were the bearers of Grace through their acts of kindness and inspiration from Nature's resilience. Leaves continued to spring from trees declared dead, and vines crept from between the bricks on what looked like barren ground. I also kept experiencing Grace through memories of lost treasures. I was called to write about those experiences.

Q. Why did you write this book?

A. A combination of wanting to say thank-you to all who came, sent gifts, and prayed with my need to reflect on my losses for the healing I needed. For me writing has always been a healing process, and some of my losses were very painful. The discoveries I made while writing were additional gifts of Grace. I also wrote it to foster healing for others who face life disasters.

Q. When did your writing life begin?

A. All my life I've been a writer. I remember when I was in high school, sitting in my comfy bedroom chair in front of my upstairs window writing, writing, writing. Then after my divorce my anguish took me more into writing in no organized manner and certainly never for publication. Then I was given a journal for Christmas 1977, a journal with quotations from Kahlil Gibran and blank pages for my writing. Ever since, my growing numbers of journals have been my most treasured spiritual tool, my trusted healing place, the place where I discover who I am and what I think.

I've written big sections of several books before but never published one.

The Grace after Katrina the impetus to finish this book to say thank-you to all who helped us.

Q. How long did this book take you from start to finish?

A. Nearly a decade. After Katrina struck August 29, 2005, for a time I had no words, but gradually I began to write in my journal and reflect on my losses. I wrote a lot of thank-you letters; then on the first anniversary, I wrote a thank-you poem. By October 2006 I knew I wanted to write a book about all the Graces I/we had experienced since Katrina, and I went to Gulf Shores for a month to get started. Progress was slow, and it was a little over two years before I returned to my favorite cabin at Gulf Shores to continue to write this book.

From New Year's till Valentine's of 2009 I pondered pictures of destruction, lost treasures, and memories of those who restored, sent gifts, and prayed. My disaster work has taken my top priority since August of 2008, so times for writing have been sparse. Finally, I knew I wanted to finish before the tenth anniversary of Katrina, so here is it.

Q. What aspect of writing this book did you find particularly challenging?

A. The greatest difficult was leaving anyone or any Grace-filled experience out. So many came, sent gifts, and prayed that I wish I could have named every one, told every story, but I could not. The other difficult thing was weaving reflections, poetry, journal entries, stories of helpers, together in a meaningful whole.

Q. What surprised you the most about response to this book?

A. I had always thought this book was for those who had suffered major losses. I had never considered that it might also be for those who serve them. My editor suggested that I ask disaster organization leaders to review my book. Though I was not quite sure why, I did as she suggested. Their response was profoundly moving. Several said *Katrina's Grace* allowed them to feel their feelings around Katrina, feelings that had gotten suppressed so they could do their vital work.

We know those who serve, who listen to stories, who experience the destruction, have secondary trauma, and my book helped these reviewers to remember and grieve. Another disaster responder said it was the first time he had gotten to know the rest of the story. Usually he works with someone for an hour or a week and never knows the whole story.

Q. Did you have any notable experiences when writing your book?

A. I had many. When friends read segments, their responses gave me new perspectives on how this book could serve healing. As I reflected on lost treasures, I was surprised and relieved to remember joy and love in a relationship for which I had only remembered pain and to discover Grace where I had only experienced loss.

Q. What do you hope your readers will gain from reading your book?

A. I hope readers who have suffered any kind of loss – maybe natural disaster, but maybe the illness or death of a loved one, a job or relationship loss, loss of a dream or hope, diagnosis with a serious illness – may be able to heal. As they read my stories, I hope they can remember their own, release the pain, and become even more aware of the Grace they have experienced.

I also hope those who serve disaster/loss survivors will see the profound value of their work and have a chance to feel their own feelings associated with serving.

Q. What books changed your life?

My book mentions several given me epiphanies, encouragement, a new turn in my path. Others include Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the Very First Time*; Sandra Schneider, *The Revelatory Text*; Sam Keen, *An Apology for Wonder*; Milton Mayeroff, *On Caring*. And the Bible continues to transform me through both ancient sacred wisdom and fresh revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What other projects are you currently working on?

A. I'm working on two projects – *In the Forever Way*, a little book about lotus children whose grandmother dies. It looks like a children's book but is for children of any age who have lost a parent or grandparent. The other is *Beach Meditations*, a collection of meditations I've written on the beach through the years.

Q. Is writing your sole career? If not, what else do you do?

A. I am a spiritual director and retreat leader as well as a volunteer on the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Response Team. In that role, I am immediate Past President of Mississippi VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). I am also Coordinator of Emotional and Spiritual Care Curriculum for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. I had a full career as Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Mississippi State University, where I lead the development of the Mississippi Writing/Thinking Institute, my most treasured role for my first career. I also am a retired pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water & Wisdom

Contact: Sandra Price 601-955-8275 sandralprice@comcast.net

The Rev. Dr. Sandra Lynn Price returned to her home in Gulf Port, Mississippi, only ten days after Hurricane Katrina hit the Coast Aug. 29, 2005.

Her leg in a full brace after surgery, Price watched as her son-in-law drove slowly to the end of the street where her house was located. Wind had picked up her house and dropped it and had covered her house with trees. The tidal surge had floated many of her possessions away and saturated the rest. It had also floated her storage room and hot tub deck to the front of her lot.

Her car was filled with water. Her life was in a seawater-soaked heap covered up by the trunks of more than a dozen trees. Price surveyed the damage with her neighbors and her family.

Then the miracles began. *Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water & Wisdom* is the story of how the total destruction of her house and most of her possessions led Price on a journey in Grace from those who prayed, sent gifts, and came to help; from nature; and from memories.

As she recovered her life, Price used her experiences and her faith to help the neighbors on her street. Then her unlikely ministry crossed the railroad tracks in Gulfport where the damage from Katrina was so severe. From Gulfport, to Pass Christian, to Biloxi, and eventually across the United States, Price became a volunteer in disaster assistance.

As survivor, as organizer, as minister of the faith, Price understood what people go through after all disasters—natural and personal. She has compiled her story into a 198-page book just released by Heart Wisdom Press.

The book will be available through bookstores on the Gulf Coast, in Jackson, and other communities in Mississippi. It is for sale on Amazon.

If you would like a copy to review or if you would like to schedule an interview with Sandra Price, please contact her at sandralprice4@gmail.com. Additional information is available at the web site: sandrallynnprice.com.

Sandra is Professor Emerita of Curriculum, Mississippi State University, and retired clergy in the Presbyterian Church USA. She is also a spiritual director and retreat leader as well as member of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Response Team.

About Sandra Lynn Price

Sandra Lynn Price is a voice of hope and healing in the aftermath of Katrina. She tells her story in a way that all who have ever experienced personal or wide-scale disaster can know her anguish and joy, her moments of despair and confusion as well as wonder and hope.

Through her sensitive story telling she takes her readers to a place where it is safe to remember their own difficult times and realize the Grace in which they dwelt, even when it was not apparent. While her story is deeply spiritual, it is not religious in the sense of the church dogma, but rather focuses on a deep connection to the Divine through all of life's relationships with friends, family, nature, books, and her truest self.



Because of a fall and knee surgery, I was virtually helpless to take care of myself after Katrina. My house, my car, my lot, my treasures, and my stuff lay in ruins all around me. For the first time in my life, I was not the one taking care of others but resting into others' care.

From my first few days after the storm and the day back, I was filled with wonder and awe at the outpourings of generosity of friends and strangers, or people who came and sent and prayed. I was amazed at the resilience of nature – trees sprouting new leaves out of season, even ones that were supposedly dead, vines growing from concrete. I was deeply moved when my church families from the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley in Alabama and Trinity Presbyterian Church in Starkville, Mississippi, and other churches from far away, came to take care of me, to build me a cabin, to demolish my damaged house, to carry me forward when I could not carry myself. I was humbled by the gifts and prayers I received. I was moved by the sense of being carried by the Spirit and friends and strangers.

I've been a writer all my life, have actually started several other books that I did not finish, but an avid writer in my journal. My natural way to tell the story of all this Grace was through writing, but it felt so overwhelming, such a big story to tell. Then I attended Resiliency Training in Bay St. Louis. There in the group was a woman who had published a book of her poems in the immediate aftermath of Katrina – poems of loss, poems of faith, poems of hope. It was a little book, only 24 pages. When I read that book, I was moved. I knew that I did not have to make this an overwhelming task but just to tell my story. So I began to write. When I shared a few of those stories with my friends Mary Kay, Sherry, and Mary Ann, they encouraged me.

Then I read a lot of other books about Katrina, none of which was the solo story of one person's journey in Grace. Because of the profound Grace I had experienced, I wanted to share my story.

Most of all, I wanted to invite readers to remember their own pains and hope and Grace through reading my story and thus to continue to be healed.

- Sandra Lynn Price, on what inspired her to write *Katrina's Grace: Wind, Water, and Wisdom*.

Contact Information

Sandra Lynn Price, Author
sandralprice4@gmail.com
www.sandralynnprice.com

Heart Wisdom Press
heartwisdompress.com