



## Therapists by Day Book Club Reviews

*In the Meantime: Finding Yourself and the Love You Want*

by Iyanla Vanzant



Iyanla Vanzant is a survivor and is authentic in sharing her childhood injuries – her father was married to a woman a few blocks away from her mother (who was his mistress) who bore his three children, she was one of them. Her mother was an alcoholic and had survived breast cancer before Iyanla was born.

*In the Meantime* is a raw and powerful book. She discloses “I must admit that my earliest relationships were strangely similar to the kind of dysfunction my parents displayed. My first love was emotionally unavailable... (with) verbal and physical abuse.” She equates some of her struggle to her “birth pattern in that her journey continued from the moment her ashamed, inebriated mother had her and her father wasn’t there to even help her. Her perceptions of herself as a result made her devalue men, not trust, be ashamed and blame herself for many problems.

Perhaps her greatest offering in the book is about forgiveness – of self and others. “Do not point your finger outward! Do not blame anyone including you! Do not accuse: instead accept responsibility.” Good advice for all of us! –  
Dr. Michele Winchester-Vega, DSW, LCSW-R



An oldie but goody book written for those who tend to be in serial love relationships. Iyanla Vanzant is a well-known motivational speaker, minister, former lawyer, TV celebrity and a frequent flyer on the OWN network “Iyanla Fix My Life” where she offers her in your face strategies with lots of love and lots of hugs addressing attachment wounds and relationship failures. I love watching her work, love reading her books and truly appreciate her words of wisdom and have followed her career. She has survived the fall from stability in the public view and has risen up from that. I have heard her talk about and affirm the well-known IMAGO theory of keeping and getting the love you want. An approach she prescribed to which was introduced by Hartville Hendrix, Ph.D. a couple of decades ago. She is fearless, provocative, brutally honest in her own personal disclosure of her journey from her “love counselor” who introduced her to her internalized IMAGO image of love. – Diane Light-Spiro, LCSWR



In this empowering read Vanzant focuses on dispelling storybook fantasies about love and relationships in order to discover one's self. Her premise is that until you know and love yourself you cannot fully love someone else. "We have been taught that it is our job in life to go out and find the perfect partner, when in fact our job is to find the perfection in ourselves."

Vanzant's advice about feelings is spot on. She reminds us that "all feelings are appropriate" and that it is often our "response to or expression of the feelings that gets us into trouble." Vanzant urges the reader to "allow yourself to feel what you are feeling, and know you don't have to (immediately) do anything about it." "At the precise moment of an emotional response, you can train yourself to stop and take a deep breath." Along with the breath she suggests a quick inventory of the body: what do I feel and where do I feel it?

At all times, the author reminds us to be gentle with ourselves on the journey of self-discovery. "Resist the urge to judge what you feel and question your learned emotional responses. Learn to detach from what you think might happen when you express yourself." Vanzant's message is a good one, "before you reach out to avoid pain, reach in and feel it." It is only when we acknowledge our vulnerability without self-criticism that we can express our feelings instead of suppressing, denying or ignoring them. – Bonna Lynn Horovitz, LMSW



Iyanla Vanzant explores creating meaningful and fulfilling relationships with others and with ourselves. She helps the reader understand how intertwined our perspective is with our past. She encourages the reader to be honest in how we communicate both with ourselves and others, in order to avoid being "in the meantime." The author utilizes the metaphor of cleaning house to address the importance of facing our truths and expectations in order to prepare for the love and happiness we want and deserve. Vanzant is clear that love and happiness is ultimately derived from ourselves and not from our partners. Thus, providing each of us the power to help create the relationships we want. While the book can be repetitive, I found it interesting and the messages worthy of hearing. – Katie Helpley, LMFT