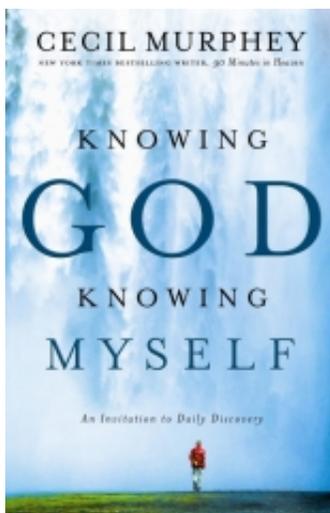


Relationship issues. Health problems. Bad economy. Messy life. In this new book, Cec shares the secrets of thriving in tough times.



Knowing God, Knowing Myself is an invitation to daily

"I Love You, but..."

Back in high school English I learned that when the word *and* begins the second part of a sentence it adds to the meaning. When the clause starts with *but*, it implies a statement of contrast and usually of rebuttal. Often the *but* begins the real meaning. Any prior words set the person up for what we want to say.

"You have so much talent, but..."

"You are beautiful, but..."

"You have a brilliant mind, but..."

I'm trying to avoid those statements. Especially not to say them to the people I love. If I want to add anything other than a period after "I love you," I need to rethink what I want to say.

To add words, I'm discounting, judging, belittling, or perhaps simply not accepting. "I love you, *but* your voice is too loud." "I love you, *but* you need to dress better." Those words imply rejection.

The people I like aren't perfect. If I accept people, I also accept their imperfections. "I like you." "I love you." Both times I want that to be the end of the sentence unless I add, "*and* you're a good friend."

This became clear to me a few years ago when, with a dozen couples, Shirley and I played a game at a church social. Each of us who didn't know the game went into a room one at a time. When I came out, I was asked, "What does Shirley consider your worst fault?"

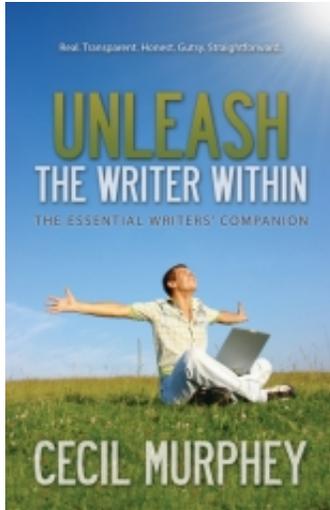
"She doesn't think I have any."

They laughed.

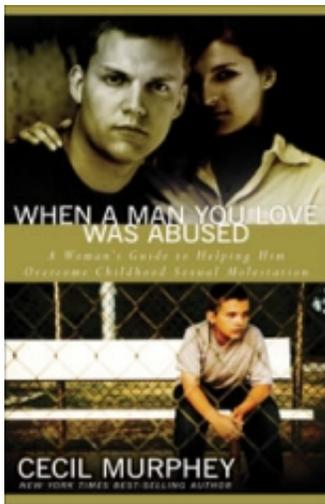
When Shirley came in, they asked, "What's Cec's worst fault?"

"He doesn't have any."

discovery. Full of nuggets of wisdom, it makes a nice gift for graduates.



Billed as bold, transparent, honest, gutsy, and straightforward, *Unleash the Writer Within* is the essential writers' companion.



New doors continue to open for Cec to minister to survivors of sexual abuse. [To view a short clip of Cec talking about the topic, click here.](#)

This time they didn't laugh.

What they didn't understand was that Shirley and I accept each other as *we are*, not for what we can make the other into or for the potential we see. We love the person who now is.

I wish I could say that I never add *but* in talking to others, but I'm not there—oops. I'll revise that sentence: I wish I could say that I never add *but* in talking to others, and I'm working on it.

Personal News

I've agreed to write occasional blog entries for the Joyful Heart Foundation created by Mariska Hargitay of *Law and Order SVU*.

In April I conducted my first retreat for 10 writers, based on my book, [Unleash the Writer Within](#). I did a few things right and have figured out ways to improve for the next retreat.

May 16, I'll fly into Fairfax, VA, and speak at the Arden Courts Memory Care Community where they care for those with dementia.

On May 19, I'll speak at the annual event to honor Carolyn Driver as the founding pastor of Christ Discipleship Ministries.

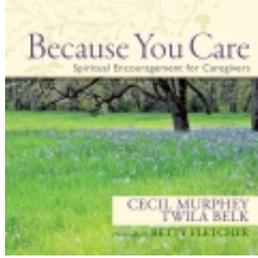
June 20–23, I'll teach and do a keynote for the [SpeakUp Conference](#) in Grand Rapids. (This will be their first year to include a writers' track.)

The Twila Zone—Words from My Assistant, Twila Belk

Do you or someone you know have a physical healing testimony? Contact me at twilabelk@mchsi.com with the details. Cec and I might be able to use it in *I Believe in Healing*, our upcoming book with Regal Books.

Cec has had numerous opportunities to talk to groups about sexual abuse recently. We're hearing more and more about the need for churches and those in ministry to learn how to handle this topic. Because of his desire to help as many people as possible, Cec is available to speak to seminary students and ministerial organizations. Contact me if this interests you.

Graduation season is upon us and that often creates the need for gifts. I recommend two of Cec's newer books because they are full of wisdom and have short, easy-to-read chapters: [Making Sense When Life Doesn't](#); [The Secrets of Thriving in Tough Times](#) and [Knowing God, Knowing Myself](#). To make the gift better yet, insert dollar bills within the pages.



***Because You Care* offers spiritual encouragement for caregivers. The warm writing, coupled with beautiful photography, makes this book a nice gift for those who care for loved ones.**

If you're a Facebook user, you might like to know that my assistant, Gail Smith, has set up several Cec-related pages: (1) [Cec and Me, with Cecil Murphey and Twila Belk](#), (2) [Because You Care: Spiritual Encouragement for Caregivers](#), (3) [When Someone You Love No Longer Remembers](#), (4) [When Someone You Love Has Cancer](#), (5) [Christmas Miracles](#), and (6) [Men Shattering the Silence](#).

During the week of April 16-20, www.encouragementcafe.com features five devotions I wrote and a [radio podcast interview](#) with Cec and me based on our book, [Because You Care: Spiritual Encouragement for Caregivers](#).

Links of Interest:

[Cec's website](#)

[Cec's blog for writers](#)

[Cec's blog for male survivors of sexual abuse](#)

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