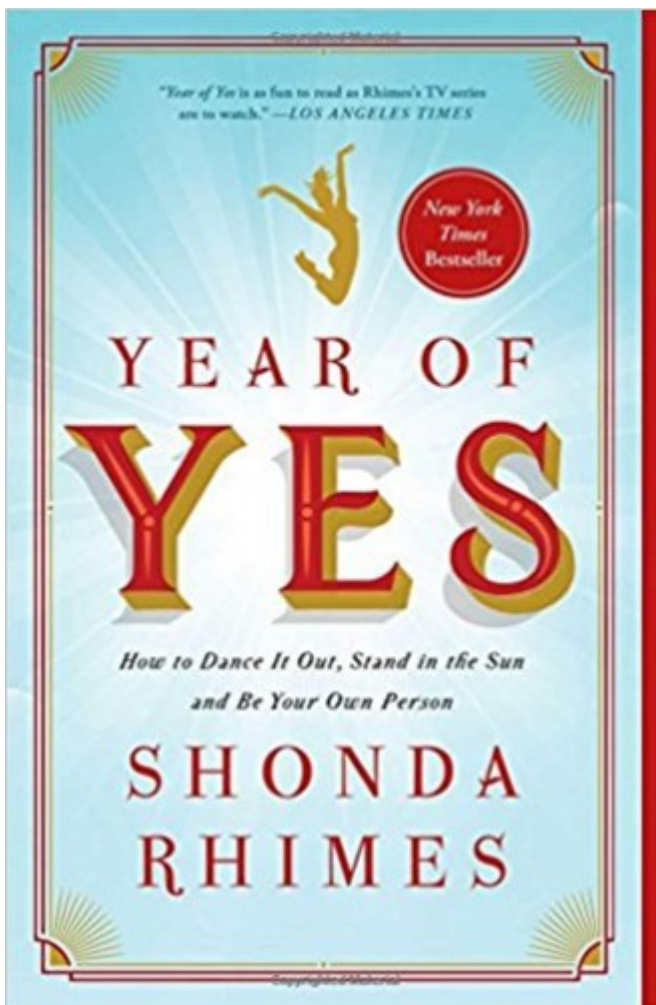


Lifting the spirit

**I've been inspired this year by Shonda Rhimes, the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Paul Angone.**

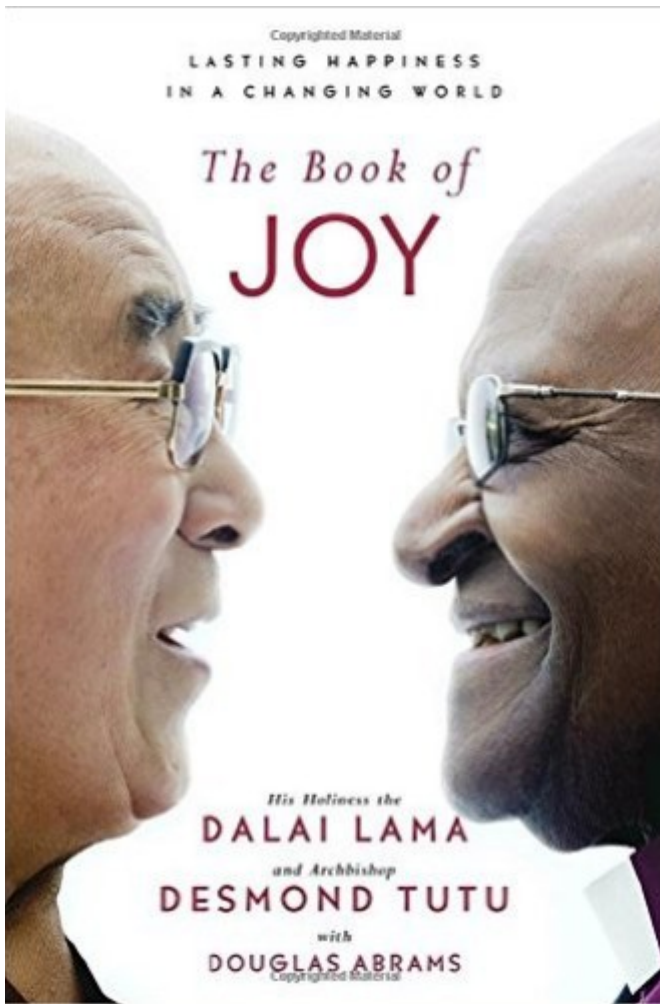
by [Ulysses W. Burley III](#) in the [December 6, 2017](#) issue

## In Review



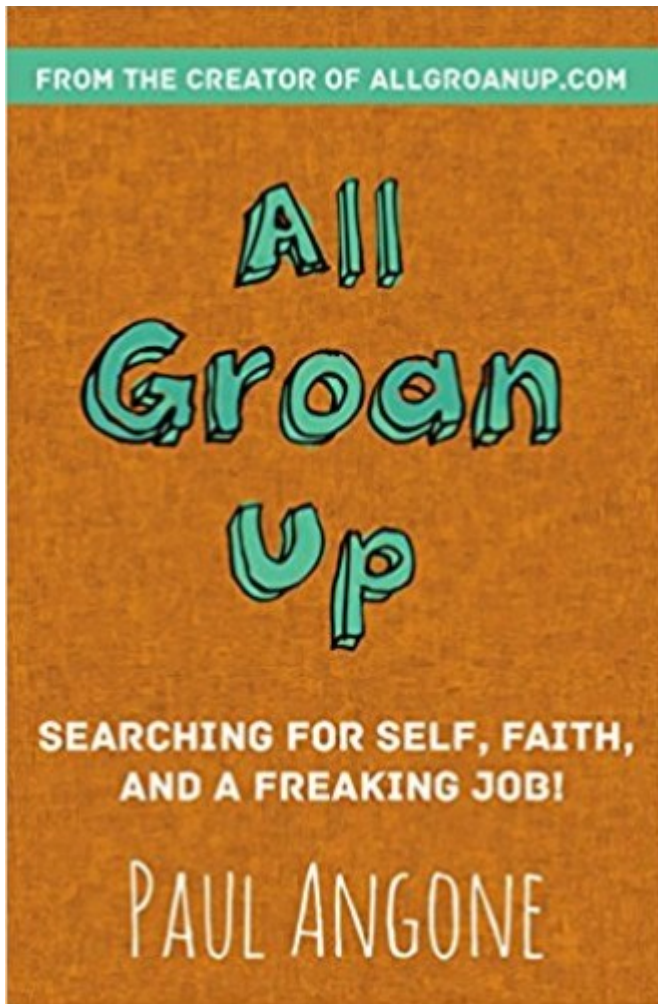
### Year of Yes

by Shonda Rhimes  
Simon & Schuster



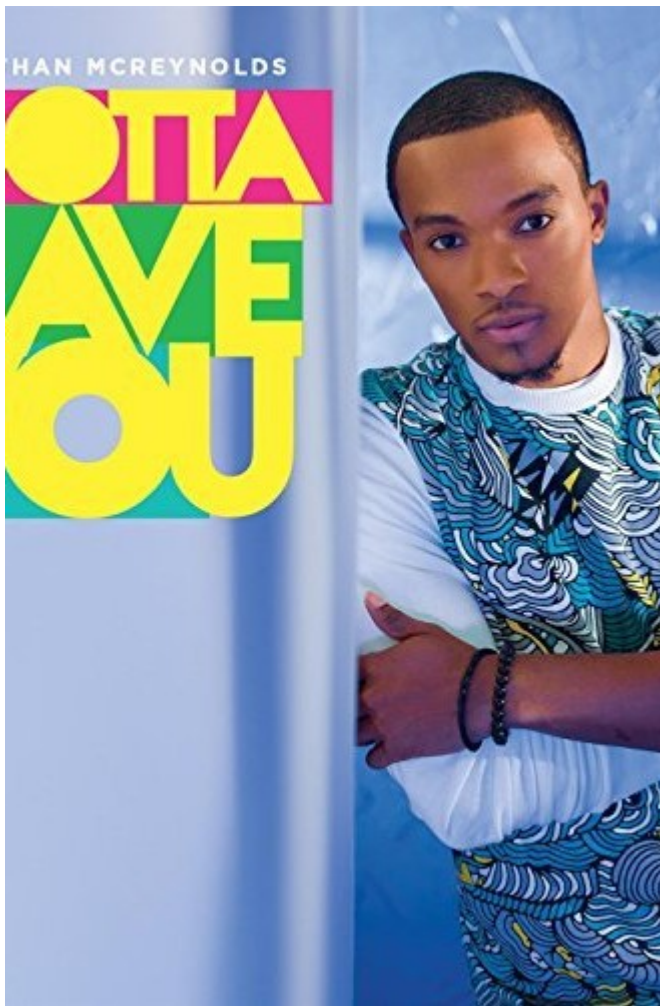
## **The Book of Joy**

by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu  
Avery



## **All Groan Up**

by Paul Angone  
Zondervan



## **“Gotta Have You”**

by Jonathan McReynolds  
Light Records

This has been a challenging year. From the toxic political climate to the growing racial divide in this country, from the string of natural disasters to the mass shooting in Las Vegas, it's easy to despair and lose hope. Thankfully, there are still enclaves of joy and encouragement hidden between the pages of books. Over the past few years, I've found life in three books that have inspired me to be my best during moments of doubt, depression, and despair.

*Year of Yes* is a glorious memoir by Shonda Rhimes, the gifted creator of the hit TV shows *Grey's Anatomy* and *Scandal*. Rhimes details her life before and after accepting a challenge from her sister to “say yes” to things that she would normally reject. This book is about stepping outside of our comfort zones to explore what can

happen if we say yes to the opportunities before us. It's a particularly good read for introverts, but Rhimes provides great motivation for all her readers to break the mundanity of everyday life. Say yes to dancing in the rain, yes to dinner with friends, yes to penning that book you've wanted to write but didn't have the courage to begin, yes to that vacation you never took, yes to your own happiness when so much of the world tells you no.

*The Book of Joy* was written collaboratively by his Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. These men of deep faith explore together the relationship between profound sadness and transcendent joy by utilizing eight pillars: humility, perspective, humor, forgiveness, compassion, acceptance, gratitude, and generosity. Both authors experienced great suffering in exile, and yet both learned how to attain joy—sometimes creating joy when it did not exist. For those who struggle to grasp joy, this work offers practical wisdom about extending grace to ourselves and others, finding purpose not in material things but in our inner values, and the dangers of isolation.

Paul Angone is a GenY/millennial whisperer. In *All Groan Up* he hilariously packages his own misfortunes as a twentysomething fresh out of college. The book is a manual for anyone asking, "What now?" or "What's next?" Angone offers insight through self-deprecating humor that lifts our spirits, makes us think hard and laugh out loud, and challenges us to focus on who God wants us to be rather than what God wants us to do. Even readers who aren't millennials or people of faith will enjoy this honest and witty book.

For those who prefer to listen to inspiration, I offer Jonathan McReynolds's song "Gotta Have You." With lyrics like "you make me / as happy as I can be / your love is a guarantee / in a world of changes," this song has been a bright spot in dark times for me.

Read the other 2017 Christmas picks [here](#).