

# Sisters in arms

by Katie Kyle



I RECENTLY FOUND MYSELF at an awards' ceremony in London, far from my home in the Middle East. It was such a contrast to my current life, where I must now cover my cross and hide my faith. This was Premier's Digital Awards, a refreshingly open celebration of Christian talent, full of believers encouraging and supporting one another's efforts online.

I couldn't quite believe I was there. As I sat taking it all in, I looked across at my sister, one of my best friends, whom I rarely see because of the current distance between us. We had both been invited to the ceremony as finalists for the same award! To give some context, I write a Christian blog and so does my sister. Over the summer, I nominated my sister for an award and my husband nominated me for the same award, never imagining we would both be shortlisted.

My excitement was dented as people highlighted the tricky situation I had created - one bound to cause upset for someone. I brushed off their comments, confident that I would be happy if my sister won and vice versa, but sitting at the awards ceremony, waiting for the results, my friends' warnings rang in my ears. How would it work if one of us was the winner in our category of five finalists?

I didn't have long to wait. As I was named runner-up and my sister was invited onto the stage to give her winning speech, I felt horribly conflicted. Whilst desperately trying to be pleased for my sister, I was so disappointed as I processed what it all meant. Was she better than me? Did people prefer her to me?

It was such an odd situation because even as I had these thoughts, I realised how spoilt this made me. My sister and I were the only ones in our category to win something and I was internally bemoaning the outcome. And the winner was my sister, the person I should be most pleased had won.

I was cross with myself, my sister and God, none of which I could have predicted on my hopeful outbound trip. I felt bruised and empty by this ranking of our abilities. From a faith point of view, I knew this was wrong. I know that my identity comes from my faith, not awards. I know we shouldn't be seeking the praise of others. But the human part of me struggled to be shaped by any of these ideals.

I'm open about most things in life but if I have an issue with someone, I bury it. I hate confrontation. The times I struggle most to be transparent are when I am feeling hurt. For a decade, I allowed one of my relationships to become damaged by upset that I wouldn't voice. It is only this year that the friendship has started to heal.

I couldn't allow that to happen with my sister. Until I told her how I felt, I could only be superficial with her. Until I told her how upset I was, I was play-acting. So I said to her, right there at the awards, 'I am so happy for you, but I am sad for me.' And as we left the awards, she linked her arm through mine.

I still felt sore as I travelled home. I still felt jealous of my sister. But I decided the way out of this emotional confusion was to keep being honest - to tell God and others how I felt. I had to be real

and within a week, the sadness passed. A week versus a decade. I am happy to report that I am now whole-heartedly happy for my sister!

It's been an uncomfortable process of self-discovery, like having a mirror held up to reveal that I don't quite look the way I imagined. But the reactionary emotions we experience to life's journey aren't our fault; they are a very human response. It's what we do with them that determines the future.

When life judges us, what do we do? When we seem to be the only ones not going out for champagne after a promotion board or awards' committee has sat and when we make our way home to nurse broken hopes, do we push down our disappointment and allow resentment and bitterness a way in? Do we allow ourselves to be shaped by the sadness of learning someone has superseded us? Or do we lay it all out before our Father? All the difficult, ugly feelings?

I am a novice at this second way and I can confirm that it's exceptionally hard. But I can also confirm that the results can be miraculous, healing, beautiful even. As beautiful as sisters walking away from rivalry, arms linked, 'sisters in arms'.

• **Katie Kyle is married to Jack, a Chinook helicopter pilot. They are currently posted abroad with their three children.**

**You can read more from Katie on her blog: [www.eagletswings.co.uk](http://www.eagletswings.co.uk)**

**Her sister's blog can be viewed here: [www.letsruntherace.com](http://www.letsruntherace.com)**