

## Questions for Neta

Yada Yada Prayer Group Series – The responses in blue are not quotes from Neta...just my notes and recollection of her responses. Respectfully, Jennifer Black

1. Are the places you write about real? Could we find them if we went to Chicago? Jodi's school, the bagel shop, the churches, etc Heartland Café is real. Bethune Elementary is not. Most places are not, but are inspired by places I've been. Some are combinations of places.
2. Where do you get the inspiration for the themes of your stories? The ideas grow out of what God is teaching me in my life. The stories are a testimony of what God has done in my life.
3. Are the characters modeled after real people you know? Yes and no. My very dear friend Pam is what I thought Jodi needed so I modeled Avis after her, but they aren't directly like in real life...Pam is not a principal, she's not a widow, etc. But I felt Jodi needed someone to ground her and support her. Florida is inspired by a friend of mine. The trouble with this is that they are just 'inspired' so when I take literary liberties that don't put the character in a good light...my friend gets offended. One even wanted me to write her out of the book. I had another friend who was disappointed when I didn't use her to model a character...I just couldn't win. And Stu...well everybody knows someone like Stu, so she isn't one particular person, but a person that everyone can relate to. Yo-yo is a composite of two friends.
4. Were some of the storylines more difficult to write than others, like the Ma Dear, hate group, Becky Wallace, or the final story with Hakeem? The story of Ma Dear was the Holy Spirit prompting me to write about it. Becky Wallace was something that Dave and I experienced first hand. Dave interrupted her robbery and held her until the police came. Book 4 was dedicated to a dear friend, his story hit close to home for us.
5. How often do you write? Everyday! I give myself goals for each day. My goals are word count based...about 2 chapters
6. Do you have a specific place that you prefer to work? I work at home in my office.
7. What do you do to work through a writing block? Once you get the idea it flows...I do brainstorm together with my hubby.
8. How realistic do you think the merging of the two churches is in real life? This is more of what I hope it will be...a vision of how I think God wants us to be.
9. What book are you reading right now? Quaker Town by Lee Martin. I read mostly Christian Fiction
10. Do you have a favorite author? Not really. There are so many that I enjoy...Sharon Ewell Foster, Claudia Mair Burney, Angela Hunt, James Scott Bell, Francine Rivers, "Fallen Angel" by Patricia Hickman, "A Summer of Light" & "Levi's Will" by William Dale Cramer,
11. How far ahead to you mentally think out your characters? For example, when you were writing book 3 did you know that Ruth was going to get pregnant in book 5? My first contract was only for 3 books, so I thought 3 was going to be the last...then I got 3 more, then they asked me to write a novella for Christmas. At first I wasn't that excited about writing the novella, but then I got excited about it. I realized that I would have an opportunity to tie up a lot of loose ends with the characters. I was so thankful that I was given that opportunity.

12. How do your characters affect your daily life? Do you seem someone on the street or in the grocery store and think, “She reminds me of Chanda.” Or “that is something that Adele would do.” Or even your actions...I know that I do that...”oh that was such a Jodi thing to say”. Do you feel like they are a part of you? [Didn't have time to ask this question.](#)
13. How much time do you spend mentoring people in prisons? How has that experience changed you? [Didn't have time to ask this question.](#)

House of Hope [These answers were more of a conversation...nothing that directly discussed the questions, so I didn't take any notes. Sorry. But the second book is due out in September 2009.](#)

1. I think it is great that you are including former Yada Yada characters and you've done a nice job of just sliding them in...they aren't taking a front seat. Was it difficult to write a new story but connect it to the Yada Yada series?
2. Are you planning to go forward with Gabby and her husband or will he fade out and the story will focus on Gabby's growth and new life? Obviously the latter will happen regardless, but I'm just wondering if the husband will play a significant role in the 2<sup>nd</sup> book?