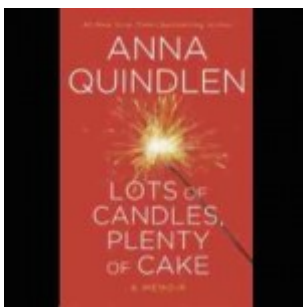


Quindlen book doesn't connect on all levels

By Kathryn Reed

There was a time when I couldn't wait to get my copy of *Newsweek* each month. It was all because of Anna Quindlen. She is one of the few columnists I have ever read with regularity.

The magazine was never the same after she left.



She had a way of connecting with readers about topics that ran from the mundane to the serious, from hysterical to tear-inducing sadness.

When her latest book – “Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake” – came out, Sue bought it. She raved about it. At times I would see her dabbing at her eyes. There goes, Anna, I would think.

That's the thing about Quindlen's writing, it makes you think of her as friend, to want to call her by her first name when you've never even met her.

And while, I, too, cried at times reading the book, this was far from my favorite of hers. I know a lot of it has to do with our age difference putting us in very different places in our lives. She's turned 60; I haven't turned 50. She talks of retirement; I'm still trying to make enough to put into savings.

But when she talks about friendships, that is a place most women can relate to.

“We trust our friends to tell us what we need to know, and to shield us from what we don't need to discover, and to have the

wisdom to know the difference. Real friends offer both hard truths and soft landings and realize that it's sometimes more important to be nice than to be honest," she writes.

Later she writes, "The women I know who are the happiest today are the ones who have close female friends." "In other words, friends are what we women have in addition to, or in lieu of, therapists."

Clearly, I liked parts of the book. Maybe I will connect to more of it down the road.

The difference with Quindlen's columns that didn't strike a cord with me is that they were shorter, nowhere close to a book chapter. So one week of not liking something is much different than a whole book.

The other problem is that I had high expectations for the book because of the author and Sue's recommendation.