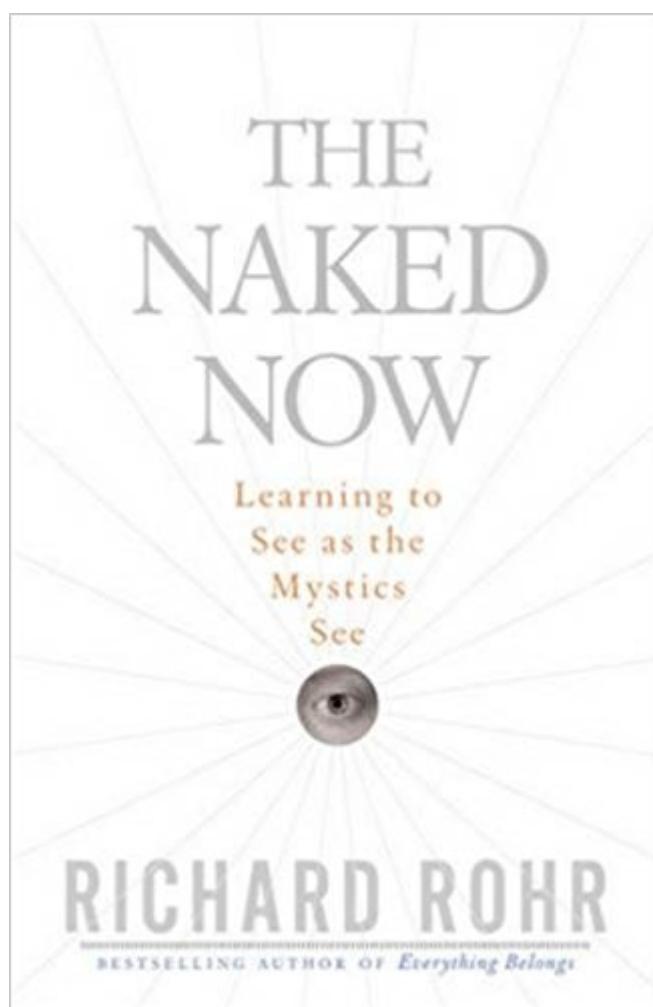


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# The Naked Now: Learning To See As The Mystics See



## Synopsis

For Christians seeking a way of thinking outside of strict dualities, this guide explores methods for letting go of division and living in the present. Drawn from the Gospels, Jesus, Paul, and the great Christian contemplatives, this examination reveals how many of the hidden truths of Christianity have been misunderstood or lost and how to read them with the eyes of the mystics rather than interpreting them through rational thought. Filled with sayings, stories, quotations, and appeals to the heart, specific methods for identifying dualistic thinking are presented with simple practices for stripping away ego and the fear of dwelling in the present.

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## Customer Reviews

Franciscan priest and spirituality author Rohr (Everything Belongs) again brings his energy to the reclamation of the Christian mystical tradition. He has a lot of scripture on his side, with many citations from the gospels and epistles. He also offers a distinctive definition of prayer as a nondualistic way of seeing the moment. To see as a mystic sees is to pray continually, as scripture enjoins. Some of his criticisms of institutional forms of religiosity as a barrier to seeing with insight are familiar. Yet his understanding of prayer as a tool for contemplation and transformation is forcefully argued. The somewhat theoretical re-reading of Catholic Christian tradition is brought down to earth by a series of appendixes that contain practices for those who want to know what to do; attaining insight is not self-evident nor is it easy. Rohr is enriched by other world religious traditions, but clearly knows his own. Those interested in contemplative Christianity, and particularly

Catholics interested in their own tradition, will benefit from this book. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Rohr is enriched by other world religious traditions, but clearly knows his own. Those interested in contemplative Christianity, and particularly Catholics interested in their own tradition, will benefit from this book." © Publishers Weekly

This is the sort of book that you want to give to all of your family members who have reached the age of 45. The author captures the way Western society works, with its focus on the first half of people's lives. This perceptive sociological analysis is just a starting point for his exploration of the second half of life. As an aside, our obsession on the first half of life is growing stronger -- we care about courtship, career choice, finding a mate, establishing ourselves, and this is the subject that too many 60 year old people worry at, fantasize over, concentrate on, well past the day that they should let this half of their lives go... and think about the second half. In this second half, people know they will suffer, that they will enter the "shadowlands", that this part of life can be about suffering and diminution. This author outlines how this half of life can be about joy, about falling upward in a spiritual sense, about the second half of life being about opening yourself. A book like this can help center a reader on the need to get past embarrassment, get past a concern for the material, and begin to understand what faces you, and what you are... There is God in this book, and the book is frank about being a guidebook, a road map, towards salvation. That is inherent in the entire theme, the idea that a second half of life, with travails, can open to something more. So many people I know are concerned with retirement, but not what to do in retirement, about a lake home, but not a better self... There is a sense that an obsession with retirement, in this second half, will then relegate health problems, money problems, pain, the death of friends.. into painful shocks. This book tells you that these painful days can be something more, a new journey. Well written, with a gentle, funny, and open style, this is a book that actually can change your life.

I am a little over half way through this book. First off, regarding the copy I received, it was in good condition, shipped fast, had no issues there. Second... The book does read rather philosophically. It was penned by a Franciscan monk after all. So the reading style is not as artistic or endearing. It's more meditative with deep thinking or deep thought provoking points, examples and citations. And a number of things that may result in numerous "rabbit trails" making this read take longer to finish if you choose to explore them before finishing the book. Now perhaps I should have waited till I was

done with the book to write this but at the rate I'm going and with how far along I am, I doubt what I have to say would change very much.

As a senior and finally able to stand back from my work identity reading this book helped me understand better why so many retired and older people are so angry. At a time when we can finally look back at our lives and decide to just move on and enjoy the time we have left there are so many of us still trying to live in the first half of life. Such a shame to see so many people, who could actually make a positive impact on our deeply divided society, are just so angry and unhappy with things and simply unable to show the least bit of compassion and understanding toward others. I recommend this book (and other Rohr books) if you are trying to move into a productive second half of life.

Powerful book that has opened my eyes to depths, power, grace and love within my own being. To do anything of value in this broken world requires I take a journey to get in touch with my true self, overcoming my false self and living with courage as the powers of the world keep most people blind, comfortable and complacent to stay in place. This book is a wonderful tool, a roadmap to help us on this journey that more people need to take.

Falling Upward tells the story of the spiritual maturation across the life span. The spirituality of the first half of life is about constructing our spiritual container while the second half is concerned with filling it. Put another way, the spirituality of "the first half of life is about writing the text and the second half is writing commentary on that text" (p. 143). While the two halves always occur in order, they are not tied to any specific chronological age range: some people may remain in the first half throughout life while others may progress to the latter at a relatively young age. Since we live in a culture dominated by first half of life issues and that struggles to live with paradox, it is difficult for people to make the transition. The first half of one's spiritual life is dominated by rules and regulations, marked by considerable attentiveness to correct rituals that guide one in the quest to know and do that which is right. The second is far freer, similar to Ricouer's second naÃfÂ vetÃ©. One cannot will one's way forward, but rather finds the way down that path through falling and failing. In short, people tend to "grow spiritually much more by doing it wrong than by doing it right" (p.xxii). In the second half of life, both-and thinking dominates and it becomes possible to understand the richness of multiple meanings. A book about how to progress from the first to the second half of one's spiritual life misses what the journey of faith is all about. Rohr succeeds in his

attempt to familiarize those residing on both halves with the relative strengths of their spiritual life stage while also generating awareness of the second stage for those now in the first. Careful not to construct an artificial path joining the two, he instead shows what the terrain is on either end of the path and suggests the path itself is one that must be experienced in full, including many falls and failures. Readers in the first half of their spiritual lives won't find the second attractive, but will gain an awareness for just how different it is. Readers in the second half of their spiritual lives will be reminded of what they already experienced in the first half, encouraged not seek to return to it, and empowered to more fully experience the possibilities of the both-and perspective.

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