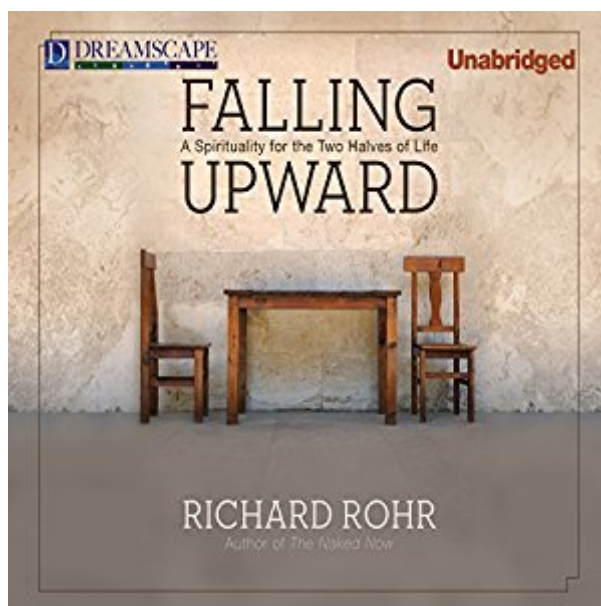


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Falling Upward: A Spirituality For The Two Halves Of Life



Synopsis

In the first half of life, we are naturally preoccupied with establishing ourselves; climbing, achieving, and performing. But as we grow older and encounter challenges and mistakes, we need to see ourselves in a different and more life-giving way. This message of falling down - that is in fact moving upward - is the most resisted and counterintuitive of messages in the world's religions. Falling Upward offers a new paradigm for understanding one of the most profound of life's mysteries: how those who have fallen down are the only ones who understand "up". We grow spiritually more by doing it wrong than by doing it right, and the disappointments of life are actually stepping stones to the spiritual joys in the second half of life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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.

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 Ricoeur's second naÃfÆ'Ã Â vetÃfÂ©. 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.

Why did we not learn about falling upward in the first place? Rohr explains it in this work stating that the first half of life is a necessary step to establish a sense of self. What is established as a sense of self (identity) during one's first half of life is filled with "boundary" (from Everything Belongs) or ego defensiveness. The second-half-of-life work is what makes life matter, rewarding, and spiritual. If you haven't already read this work, I highly recommend it. My congregation used this work as a basis for one of our annual retreats.

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