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## Renowned Spiritual Teacher Richard Rohr Shows How to Unearth an *Immortal Diamond: The True Self*

Richard Rohr, one of the most influential spiritual teachers in the world, has often addressed the challenges of ego, or the False Self, in his work. Now, he turns his attention to the True Self. Taking its title from a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem, his new book *Immortal Diamond: The Search Our True Self* (Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Company, January 2013), explores the deepest questions of identity, spirituality and meaning.

The True Self is that part of you that knows who you are, and whose you are. Like a diamond, buried deep within, this authentic self must be searched for, uncovered, and separated from all the debris of ego that surrounds it.

The False Self—a term first suggested by Thomas Merton—is a mental and cultural construct that’s more bogus than bad. It’s the self we create to find our identity in the world, external and passing, while the True Self is who we are in God and is therefore eternal. Rohr seeks to help readers overcome four splits from reality that bar the way to uncovering True Self:

- We split from our shadow self and pretend to be our idealized self.
- We split our mind from our body and soul and live in our minds.
- We split life from death and try to live our life without any “death.”
- We split ourselves from other selves and try to live apart, superior and separate.

“Spirituality pure and simple is overcoming these four splits,” Rohr says. “Anything less than the death of the False Self is useless religion. The False Self must die for the True Self to live.”

Rohr builds the book around the theme of resurrection, the universal pattern of the undoing of death. “God appears to be resurrecting everything all the time,” he says. Any deep spiritual teaching must aim for this path of dying and rising, yet humans prefer the status quo, rather than the unknown and scary future. We’re not comfortable with it, Rohr says, “despite a yearly springtime, healing in our bodies, the ten thousand forms of newness in every life.”

Rohr illustrates how Jesus is the archetypal True Self, “divine and human held in one container.” The life and resurrection of Jesus point to the discovery of our own divine DNA. This, Rohr says, is the final meaning of being human.

A Franciscan priest for more than forty years, Rohr does not hold with atonement theology, which views the death of Jesus as a sacrifice required to reconcile God and humans. Franciscans have always held an alternative, yet still orthodox, view, he says: “For us, Jesus did not come to change the mind of God about humanity but to change the mind of humanity about God. Jesus death was not solving any cosmic problem whatsoever, but revealing to us our own human problem: that we fear, and we kill what we should love.”

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The True Self is at its core, love itself. “Love is both who you are, and who you are becoming,” Rohr says. The meaning of the Resurrection is that love is stronger than death—as the popular slogan has it, “Love Wins!” “Love is all that remains, love and life are finally the same thing,” Rohr writes.

Writing for secular seekers, thinkers, believers and nonbelievers alike, Rohr uses a three-pronged method: Scripture (all of the New Testament Gospel accounts, along with the letters of Paul and John, and the Acts of the Apostles), tradition, and inner experience. He is standing on the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, he notes, “I can no longer wait for or give false comfort to, the many Christians who are forever deepening their personal relationship with a very tiny American Jesus—who looks an awful lot like them.”

**Richard Rohr** is a Franciscan priest and popular author and speaker who addresses thousands of people around the world each year at retreats, conferences, and via webcasts. He is known for his teachings on contemplative spirituality, social justice, men’s spirituality, and elder wisdom. Rohr’s previous best-selling book, *Falling Upward*, was called “a spiritual survival guide for hard times” by CNN.

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