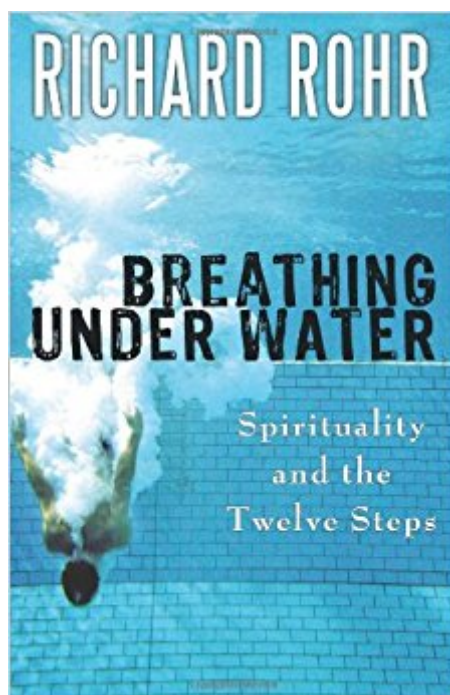


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# Breathing Under Water: Spirituality And The Twelve Steps



## Synopsis

We are all addicted in some way. When we learn to identify our addiction, embrace our brokenness, and surrender to God, we begin to bring healing to ourselves and our world. In *Breathing Under Water*, Richard Rohr shows how the gospel principles in the Twelve Steps can free anyone from any addiction—from an obvious dependence on alcohol or drugs to the more common but less visible addiction that we all have to sin.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Richard Rohr continues to guide us to greater wholeness. The latest example is his new book, *Breathing Under Water*. A prolific writer, his books have helped countless souls, especially those who struggle with issues of brokenness and seek transformation. -- NCR (read full review: [ncronline.org/node/26677](http://ncronline.org/node/26677)) "Spirituality is perhaps an ill-chosen word in this book's subtitle, given that Rohr's characterization of Christianity is (and always has been) relentlessly incarnational. Here his identification of the gospel with the core tenets of Alcoholics Anonymous underscores how redemption comes to us in and through the messes we make of our lives, not despite them. Anyone with first- or even secondhand knowledge of the Twelve Steps can attest to the unsettling challenges they present to safe, respectable, middle-class Christianity: 'When the churches forget their own gospel message, the Holy Spirit sneaks in through the ducts and air vents. AA meetings have been very good ductwork, allowing fresh air both in and out of many musty and mildewed churches.'" -- *The Christian Century* | *Breathing Under Water* is a

must-read for any person who recognizes the need to go inward on their soul's journey to question what their relationship is with God, themselves, and others. The author guides us on a journey that begins with a powerlessness or being shipwrecked on a deserted island. It is God's greatest surprise and constant disguise. We always want to be the manager of our lives. But God makes sure that several things will come our way that we cannot manage on our own. What Breathing Under Water comes to be is an understanding that those people who have undergone suffering and pain come up to be a compassionate people, loved by God, to be there for others experiencing a similar challenge in life. Rohr summarizes that a graced moment from God is when the suffering people can love and trust a suffering God, and through this deep transformation, will save and be there for one another. Paula J. Scraba, PhD., The Cord

Richard Rohr continues to guide us to greater wholeness. The latest example is his new book, Breathing Under Water. A prolific writer, his books have helped countless souls, especially those who struggle with issues of brokenness and seek transformation. National Catholic Reporter (Read the full review.)

Fr. Richard Rohr is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within Christian mysticism and the Perennial Tradition. He is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Fr. Richard's teaching is grounded in the Franciscan alternative orthodoxy's practices of contemplation and lived kenosis (self-emptying), expressing itself in radical compassion, particularly for the socially marginalized. Fr. Richard is the author of numerous books, including Everything Belongs, Adam's Return, The Naked Now, Breathing Under Water, Falling Upward, Immortal Diamond, and Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi. Fr. Richard is academic Dean of the Living School for Action and Contemplation. Drawing upon Christianity's place within the Perennial Tradition, the mission of the Living School is to produce compassionate and powerfully learned individuals who will work for positive change in the world based on awareness of our common union with God and all beings. Visit [cac.org](http://cac.org) for more information.

I have been in a twelve step program for more than 20 years. I have read, spoken about, shared about and been extremely familiar with the steps during that period. But, nevertheless, this book contains new and wonderful insights about the spirituality of the steps that I never considered before. It is a fabulous guide to enhanced spirituality for anyone, whether you are a twelve stepper or not. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

I think the best part of the book is his analysis of why twelve step groups are able to meet the needs and struggles of where addicts (and most other struggles really) as they sit in the basements drinking bad coffee much more than the organized church with their sophisticated worship arenas and capachino bars. Somehow the twelve steps (influenced by but separated out of a Christian Oxford group movement) have captured the gospel of heart and action (orthopraxy) much more than the church's route of mere doctrine and knowledge (orthodoxy). I related because I have sat through many a sermon where I would agree that what was said was 100% accurate yet 100% useless. On the other hand, fellow members in the 12 step world seemed to have a way of getting the heart of my issue even if we are miles apart in our view of theology. While Fundamentalists/Evangelicals come from a vantage point where the Bible is to be taken as literally as possible (and those in these camp do understand that things like poetry can't always be taken literally), Liberal/Progressives come from a vantage point where the historicity and accuracy of the Bible is always to be brought under what they consider the greater guide of reason, science, and historical analysis. The former group tend to emphasize doctrine and belief in the Biblical precepts. The latter group, who often concludes much of the gospel claims are not historical anyway, tend to find comfort in a kind of inner spirituality and exercise seeing doctrine and belief as less important and often a hindrance. Rohr comes more from the latter perspective. He is a world of spiritual ideas that he have developed over the years and tends to attach them on to twelve step and the Bible assuming that "This is what Bill W and Jesus were thinking". I'm not sure that is always the case. Nevertheless, you are left with a good deal of helpful, practical spiritual perspectives that you may find helpful. I would say the best thing to do is read it, take what seems helpful, but don't be afraid to leave the rest and say, "That's not for me." It is not a definitive work on the meaning of the gospel or the twelve steps. But there are some good topics that may push you along in your journey.

This is helping me to understand my son's recovery journey in AA- and how it relates to my higher power, God

This is a decent enough book and gave me some good food for thought. I guess I was just looking for more direct info. On dealing with addictive behaviors and less of a critique of Catholicism in general. The author seems to have a bit of an axe to grind although mostly with good reason.

Richard Rohr is a detailed, in-depth, comprehensive writer, who I had never heard of until I found

this book on . Rohr is literally one of the greatest writers I have found in today's society. i would like to mention that this book is not an easy read. Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps is an extraordinary book that is very well written. While reading this book, I paused several times throughout the book's chapters to really devour the meaning of Rohr's words contained within the book and to reflect on my experiences over my thirty years of life. I feel that much of the book's content would have been overlooked if I had not read it in the manner in which I did. I read the book during silent periods I had to myself throughout the days. I took my time in reading this book. This is a wonderful tool for one's recovery, yet I think that I will obtain the most knowledge by reading the book a second time. Rohr's book is relatively new, however, I purchased my copy of the book for not even half of retail price. The book only took nine days to show up in my mailbox and the book was in such great condition that it looked brand new.

A good book for understanding that we are all addicted to a selfish behavior of doing what we want to do and how the 12 step program can help lead us through a life free from the addiction to love those around us.

I found this book to be difficult reading. It tells me things I really don't want to hear and things I have always agreed with at the same time. I don't want to hear that I have weaknesses, but I know I do. I really don't want to hear that healing requires opening myself to others and to God, but I know I do. It tells me I will struggle, but I don't want to. I am very glad I did read it. Highly recommended.

Being a member of Alcoholics Anonymous for just over 37 years & since I was 16 years old I have known to my core that I have a loving God who has given me grace throughout my life even when I have sabotaged it along the way. I have always believed in the wisdom and truth of the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book and the Bible. I just understand the teachings of the Big Book better (they have saved my life more than once). Showing the direct correlation between the teachings of these two great and powerful books I believe may be the Spiritual focus that Jesus/God/My Higher Power wants me (and others) to have. To perhaps show us they are not mutually exclusive but mutually inclusive. They do not need to be thought of as "different and/or unique". Isn't that what got us Alcoholics into trouble in the first place? A suggested read for a person wanting to grow their spiritual understanding and acceptance of what Jesus was really put on this earth for...to find out more...read it, see what you think. Carla H. Sob. 06/02/76

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