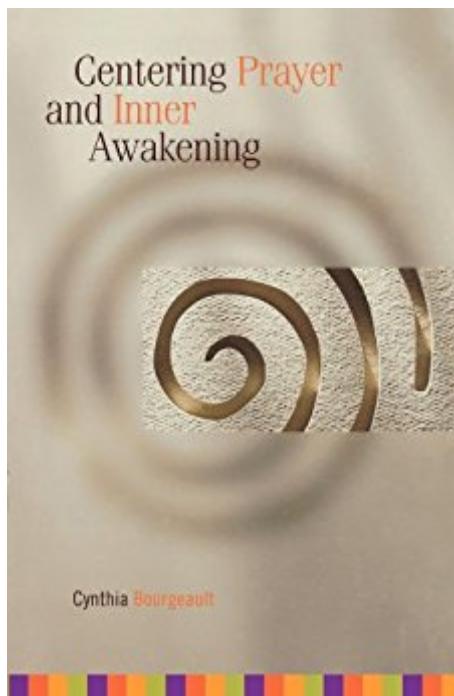


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Centering Prayer And Inner Awakening



Synopsis

Practitioners of Centering Prayer are known for the great enthusiasm they bring to the practice of this ancient discipline. Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening is a complete guidebook for all who wish to know the practice of Centering Prayer. Cynthia Bourgeault goes further than offering an introduction, however. She examines how the practice is related to the classic tradition of Christian contemplation, looks at the distinct nuances of its method, and explores its revolutionary potential to transform Christian life. The book encourages dialogue between Centering Prayer enthusiasts and those classic institutions of Christian nurture—churches, seminaries, and schools of theology—that have yet to accept real ownership of the practice and its potential.

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Customer Reviews

Coming from the school of concentrative methods (esoteric meditation), meditation usually proceeds from the cataphatic stage, using a seed thought or mantra, then into the climax, which the author

calls the "apophatic" stage - the state of complete surrender to the inner silence of the Soul. This is also the method I learned from my earlier training in the system of Christian meditation by Fr. Nicolas Caballero, CMF. However, Rev. Bourgeault, using the tradition of Fr Thomas Merton and T.Keating, teaches in this work that it is possible to directly jump into this surrendered or apophatic state through constant practice. I'm really struggling since all my life I've been moulded to make the mind to be in conscious control of the process. While in centering prayer, surrender is achieved using the purity of heart - "being like little children"- before the Great Presence. Theoretically, using Eastern mystical terminology, this is a Yin approach to our inner centre, whereas, energy cultivation practices and those that use concentrated attention is "Yang" approach. I believe this balance should be achieved if true inner awakening is to be achieved. This insightful manual will be a good guide for me to start this journey. I'm grateful to have bumped into this book. Thanks to the author.

This is one of the best books on spirituality I have ever read, I at this point I have read more than a hundred. I have also at time intensively practised Eastern forms of meditation and spirituality, and found them enormously helpful, but still my heart is time and time again pulled back to the West... In my opinion, this woman is brilliant, and the clarity that comes through this book is second to none. I am writing this freely. I would buy this book for any of my dear friends who are Christian, or even non-Christian. I could not recommend it any higher. Sorry that this review is sorely lacking in detail and perhaps not useful to you, but I just wanted to say that I doubt it's possible to find a better written book on the subject. Again, even if you are not a Christian, this book might help one resolve any confusion that may have formed around the different types of meditation and contemplative practices. I am buying all of Ms. Bourgeault's books "sight unseen." What a talent for writing, inspiring and clarifying ! Thank you very much.

I am Christian, but after studying Theravada Buddhist meditation and gaining so much from Buddhist teachings, I wanted a bridge to Christianity for my meditation. An Indian Catholic priest gave me this book as a gift not fully understanding that it was an answer to my searching. I have given copies to friends and continually refer to it in my practice. When one copy did not come back, I ordered this one. For me, it was a true bridge between Buddhist meditation practice and my Christian affirmation.

As a Christian journeying from a conservative background and looking to further open the depths of me to the life-giving Spirit, I found this book helpful and insightful. The author shares her wisdom on

Centering Prayer, its place in the Christian tradition of prayer, how it "works" psychologically and spiritually and in comparison to other forms of meditation or contemplation. Her approach is personal, positive, non-judgmental. It was the perfect teacher for me, less than two months into the practice and looking to deepen my understanding of what exactly it is that I'm doing as I engage in Centering Prayer. Wonderful book.

This book is a breakthrough classic on the high art of Centering Prayer... a book I return to again and again. I am re-reading Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening now. And I love the distinction Bourgeault makes in the book between apophatic and kataphatic prayer. It is the main distinction I return to again and again when describing the essence of Centering Prayer. I also love the articulation she makes about prayer time starting out as a place you go to or visit. Then in time it becomes a place you come from! Highly recommended! - Amos Smith (author of Healing The Divide: Recovering Christianity's Mystic Roots)

I'm new to the practice of centering prayer. I choose this book by Cynthia Bourgeault mainly because it came up in a search result. After reading a few of the reviews, I bought it. Let me just say that I'm an avid reader of books that focus on spirituality- or should I say starter. I tend to start a book and if for some reason it doesn't resonate with me, I quickly put it on a pile of other un-finished books that resides on my night stand. That didn't happen with Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening. I found the content to be very helpful in beginning a practice and also in explaining the underpinnings of Centering Prayer. It clearly defines the benefits as well as the pit falls of this esoteric practice. In that it far exceeded my expectations. Toward the end of the book, the author also throws in a freebie and introduces Welcoming Prayer - a wonderful practice that helps me to deal with the upsets that I experience daily. This is a great book and full of much knowledge and wisdom. I'm certain that I will return to it again and again.

This book will help people wake up in this world and move from ordinary awareness that helps us manage and order a myriad of useful things in our lives, into divine awareness that transforms and empowers us to change the world. A must read for our times.

Cynthia, in her gentle, clear, humble manner takes on the difficult task of explaining Centering Prayer and invites everyone to explore the mystery. "...rather than pulling you out of life, it (centering prayer) will deposit you back into it, with a soft, warm heart, and a deepening sense of

wonder." She insists that the mystery ever deepens, love becomes more wonderful, and that "...the goal has been the radical transformation of the human person in the service of the kingdom."

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