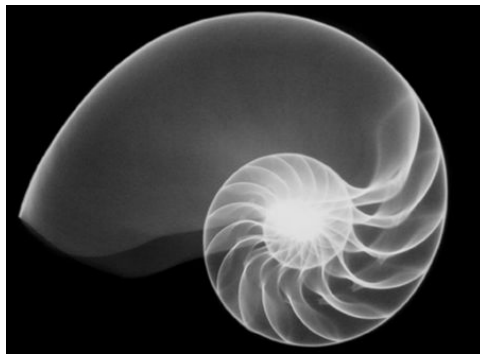


BUILDING SELF-RESPECT AND
LOVINGKINDNESS

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AN EXCERPT FROM



HUMAN BECOMING

PRACTICAL STEPS TO
SELF-RESPECT AND
COMPASSIONATE RELATIONSHIPS

DAVID RICHO, PHD

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT BOOKS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

2008



*We are put on earth a little space
That we may learn to bear the beams of love.*

–William Blake

BUILDING SELF-RESPECT AND LOVINGKINDNESS

The practice of loving-kindness recommends sending/giving/wishing love, compassion, joy, and equanimity to ourselves and others. We beam each of the four in turn, first to ourselves, then to those we love, those toward whom we are indifferent, those with whom we have difficulties or who are enemies, and finally toward all people everywhere.

Loving-kindness also grows in us through action as we practice virtues: the habits of wholesomeness, the building blocks of self-respect, character, and integrity. We begin by taking steps, however small, that lead toward virtue. Interior shifts may follow, and then we are acting virtuously without having to think about it or plan it. The Roman philosopher Seneca wrote of this result: “My goodness now requires no thought but has become habit and I cannot act but rightly.”

A spiritual practice of fine-tuning our virtues focuses on them as specific affirmations and commitments to action. They are not meant to be “shoulds” but gentle invitations that stir and steer us to new possibilities in our way of living. The virtues that equip us to grow in loving-kindness are challenges and opportunities not demands or obligations.

The list that follows may be inspiring but also intimidating. Very few of us can achieve all of these ideals to the fullest. But nonetheless, we can set our bar high and then try making some strides and leaps. Any advance we make, however small, frees us from our familiar fear-based, ego-centeredness and we begin building new habits of healthy love for ourselves and others.

These practices are not strategies by which we seek to gain perfection or happiness but simply what we do and who we are at the heart level. Our destiny is to display in our lifetime the timeless design of goodness that has

always been inside us. Virtuous choices that open us to spontaneous honesty and loving-kindness help us do that. We will even feel the results in our bodies. We lengthen and expand to take our rightful space in the world. We feel a warmth coming through us to others in a physical way. Virginia Woolf expressed it best: “Things are losing their hardness. Even my body now lets the light through.”

There are many ways to use the list that follows:

- Ponder one virtue each day or each week and look for ways to design your behavior accordingly.
 - Use the listings for meditation on your own ethical choices.
 - Say them aloud as daily aspirations or affirmations, one each day or a few at a time.
 - Consider them to be a checklist on your progress in virtuous living and keep coming back to them.
 - Ask someone you love and trust to give you feedback on how you reflect or do not fully reflect the virtues listed.
-
- More and more, I say yes to the givens of human life: Everything will change and end; things will not always go according to my plans; life will not always be fair or pain-free; and people will not always be loving, honest, generous, or loyal.
 - No matter what happens to me, I am looking for ways to remain personally grounded, i.e., no longer swayed by fear or desire.
 - The events in life and the actions of others impact me, but they no longer have to impinge upon me. I can find ways to remain secure within myself and, at the same time, connected to others.

- I try my best to keep my word, to honor my commitments, and to follow through on the tasks I agree to do. Accepting my limits and skills is helping me set sane boundaries on how much I offer to do for others, rather than simply be accommodating in order to please or appease others.
- I want to have an unwavering sense of myself as a person of conviction while still remaining flexible. I am more able each day to drop outmoded beliefs and to become more open and inclusive, the most appropriate stance in this wonderfully various world.
- I am thankful for the set of values that I received in the course of my life from so many sources. At the same time, I am examining the scaffoldings of beliefs, biases, assumptions, and myths I inherited from family, school, religion, and society. One by one, I seek to dismantle and discard those not in keeping with healthy and virtuous living and to cherish those that are.
- I can now measure my success by how much steadfast love I have, not by how much I have in the bank, how much I achieve in business, nor by how much power I have over others. Expressing my full and unique capacity to love is becoming the central focus of my life.
- I am less and less under the blinding influence of the four main streets that direct so many attitudes and lifestyles: Madison Avenue, Tin Pan Alley, Wall Street, and Hollywood Boulevard.
- I am enthusiastically seeking, or have found, meaningful work and projects, and that is the source of my bliss. I keep discovering my deepest needs, wishes, values, and potentials and living more and more, in accord with them.
- I have reason to be proud of some accomplishments. Thoreau wrote in his journal: “A man looks with pride at his woodpile.” My serious commitment to the practices on these pages is my “woodpile.”
- I ask this question as I embark upon any relationship or project: Is this a suitable context for me to fulfill my life purpose? My life purpose is to live

out the unique and exuberant potential that is inside me, to love with all my might, and to share my personal gifts in any way and everywhere I can.

- I appreciate how much I benefit from others who share their gifts with me.
- I am willing to work indefatigably to fulfill my life purpose but not to stress my health to acquire standing, status, fame, or fortune, which are the central and often the only values in the ego's always uneasy world. My focus in life is simply on becoming a good person.
- I am letting go of the need to keep up appearances or to project an impressive self-image. I notice that I am more willing to appear as I am, without pretense and no matter how unflattering. As I settle into the reality of who I am, with pride in my gifts and unabashed awareness of my limits, I notice myself being happier.
- I notice that my behavior and choices no longer have to be quite so determined by what others may think of me. I am giving up my attempts to get others to accept or love me. I do not want to have to change myself in order to fit in. I am gradually becoming committed to portraying myself just as I am, no matter what the reaction of others.
- I no longer let myself be manipulated by flattery, but I do show my thanks when others appreciate me.
- I am not perfect, but I am sincerely committed to working on myself. I am noticing that the more I engage in my personal work, the more do I find myself caring about the world and the part I am privileged to play in its co-creation.
- As I struggle with regret or self-reproach because of the mistakes I have made in life, I am no longer ashamed of my ongoing fallibility. I take it all as a learning experience so I can do better in the future. I make amends wherever I can. My mistakes are becoming a valuable passport to humility and to compassion toward myself and others.

- I keep examining my conscience with honesty but not with shame. I am taking searching inventories not only about how I may have hurt others, but also about how I may not have activated or shared my gifts and potentials, how I may still be holding on to prejudices or the will to retaliate, how I may still not be as loving as I can be.
- I am less and less afraid of free speech, my own or that of others. I am learning to listen carefully to others' feedback rather than becoming defensive or ego-aroused by it. I even want to welcome feedback that shows me where I am less caring than I can be, where I am less tolerant, where less open. When I am shown up as a pretender or called on being inauthentic, I take it as information about what I have to work on.
- More and more, I blow the whistle on myself when I notice myself being phony, untruthful, passive-aggressive, or manipulative. I notice it is possible to come clean right then and there by admitting that I am acting falsely.
- I am becoming more willing to express and to receive feelings, including fear, joy, grief, and tenderness. I am practicing ways to show anger nonviolently, not in abusive, threatening, blaming, or out-of-control ways.
- I can become stronger in asking for what I want without demand, manipulation, or expectation. As I remain respectful of the timing, wishes, and limits of others, I can take no for an answer.
- I forego taking advantage of anyone because of his ignorance, status, position, or financial straits.
- I do not want to use any charms of body, word, or mind to trick or seduce others.
- I am less and less competitive in relationships and find an uplifting joy in cooperation and community. I especially shun situations in which my winning means that others have to lose.

- I am choosing not to push others aside so that I can get ahead. I choose neither to exalt myself nor to abase myself. Instead, I take my turn without complaint at being first, last, or midway in the long series of line-ups that life has in store for all of us.
- I do not knowingly hurt others. If they hurt me, I do not have to retaliate, only open a dialogue and ask for amends. No matter what, I do not choose to hate anyone or hold grudges.
- I act kindly toward others not to impress or obligate them but because I really am kind—or working on it. If others fail to thank me or to return my kindness, that does not have to stop me from being loving nonetheless.
- I never give up on others. I believe that everyone has an innate goodness and that being loved can release it.
- I have a sense of humor but not at the expense of others. I am less and less apt to engage in ridicule, teasing, or sarcasm, or to use “comebacks” when others are sarcastic toward me. I seek simply to feel the pain in both of us and look for ways to bring more mutual respect into our communication.
- I notice how in some groups there are people who are humiliated or excluded. Rather than be comforted that I am still an insider, I want to sense the pain in being an outsider. Then I can reach out, speak up, and include everyone in my circle of love and respect.
- More and more, I look at other people and their choices without censure. I still notice the shortcomings of others and of myself, but now I am beginning to see them as facts to deal with rather than flaws to be ashamed of. I do not laugh at people’s mistakes, distresses, or misfortunes. I feel compassion arising instead.
- I avoid Criticizing, Interfering, or giving Advice that is not specifically asked for. I take care of myself by staying away from those who use this CIA approach toward me.

- I am becoming more able to say “Ouch!” to pain and abuse in jobs, relationships, and interactions with others. I want to take action to change what can be changed and to move on when things remain abusive. I do this without self-pity or the need to make others wrong. When I stand up for my rights, I do not have to gloat if I am vindicated nor do I have to seek revenge if I am not vindicated.
- I am making sincere attempts to abide by standards of rigorous honesty and truthfulness in all my dealings no matter how others act toward me. My question is not “What can I get away with?” but “What is the right thing to do?” If I fall down in this, I can admit it, make amends, and resolve to act differently next time. Now I more easily and willingly apologize when necessary.
- I am learning not to be swayed by opportunities for gain, by sweet talk or rhetoric, or by any other seductions to transgress my boundaries or to act immorally.
- I cherish the joy of a good conscience more than what I may gain or what I can get away with.
- I am focusing on becoming consistent: At home or in relationship I want to be the same person I am at work. I choose to show the same respect and sincerity toward strangers as I show toward those close to me.
- In intimate relationships, I put effort into honoring equality, keeping agreements, working through problems, and acting in loving ways. My goal is not to use my relationship to gratify my ego but to dispossess myself of ego to gratify the relationship.
- More and more, my sexuality expresses love, passion, and joyful playfulness. I am letting go of the guilt and phobias of childhood in favor of a responsible adult style of relating and enjoying.

- I am learning to keep better tabs on my use of food, alcohol, drugs, sex, etc., knowing they can be vehicles of addiction. I am always looking for ways to commit myself to moderation without self-inhibition.
- I am aware of the pain and poverty of those less fortunate than myself. I keep finding ways to respond generously with time, attention, money, and myself.
- Confronted with the suffering in the world, I do not turn my eyes away, nor do I get stuck in blaming God or humanity but simply ask: “What then shall I do?” I respond to pain in others with a plan to help, even if it has to be minimal: “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”
- My work on myself is making me more conscious of the political issues of the world. I am learning to question authority. I am looking for ways to work for an end to war, retaliation, greed, hate, and ignorance. I have not given up on believing in the possibility of a transformation of the world and of every political and religious leader.
- I am committing myself to resisting evil and fighting injustice in nonviolent ways. This is how I focus on restorative justice, not retributive justice.
- I am distressed and feel myself called to action by the disasters of pollution, global warming, economic oppression, nuclear armaments, and the violations of human rights. I keep thinking globally and acting locally in any ways I can.
- My love of nature makes me tread gently on the earth with what Saint Bonaventure called “a courtesy toward natural things.”
- Though I am not always successful in virtuous living, these are the ideals I am shooting for, the values I am placing an intention to live by.

- I appreciate a spiritual energy in whatever love, wisdom, or healing power I may have or show. What is in me is not from me but through me. I say thanks for these encouraging graces and yes to the stirring call to live up to them.

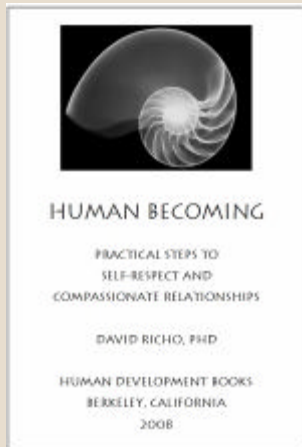
To be human is to be born into the world with something to achieve, namely, the fullness of one's human nature, and it is through the virtues that one does so. . . . The virtues are the only guarantee against a wasted life. –Paul Wadell, C.P.

From: *The Five Things We Cannot Change and the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them* (Shambhala, 2005)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Richo, Ph.D., M.F.T., is a psychotherapist, teacher, and writer in Santa Barbara and San Francisco California who emphasizes Jungian, transpersonal, and spiritual perspectives in his work. He is the author of many books about personal unfoldment and spiritual development. A list of his books, with links to purchase them around the world, is presented on the pages that follow in cooperation with Human Development Books' *Global Find-A-Book* Service.

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BY DAVID RICHIO, PHD
BRINGING TOGETHER CATHOLIC, JUNGIAN, BUDDHIST
AND POETIC APPROACHES TO PERSONAL GROWTH,
HEALING AND INTEGRATION

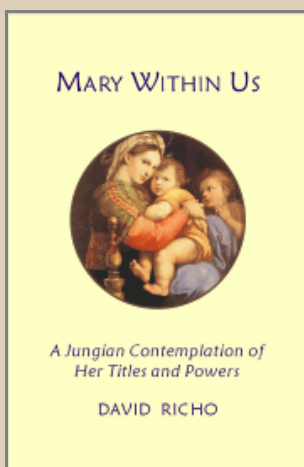


DAVID RICHIO, PHD

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Mary Within Us

A Jungian Contemplation of Her Titles and Powers
Human Development Books, 2007



In *Mary Within Us*, the Jungian archetype of the feminine aspect of God as personified by Mary is shown to be built into the design of every human psyche. This book is about the archetypal and mystical meanings in the titles of Mary in the universal Church since medieval times. My book shows how we have always venerated not the literal Mary but the feminine dimension of the divine that she represents and enriches. The book explores the threefold image of Mary as virgin, mother, and queen and shows how these are motifs in the human psyche. (This is the revised, new edition: 2007)

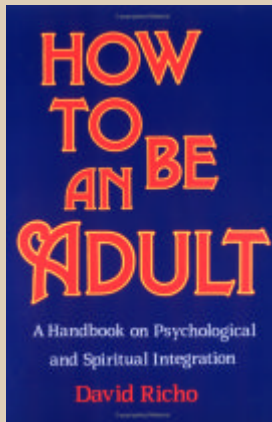
“What a brilliant confluence of images and energies! David Richio has made a very useful set of connections between Mary and the deepest archetypes of the human psyche. This is how theology and psychology should come together. Good scholarship that could lead to good prayer.”
– FR. RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M. Center for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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How To Be An Adult

A Handbook on Psychological and Spiritual Integration

Paulist Press, 1991



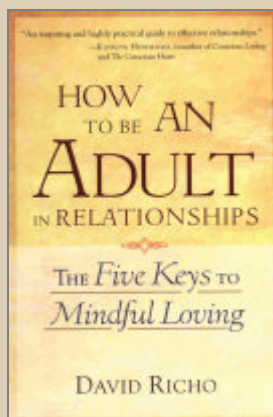
This is a handbook on how to become an adult who is actualizing a strong adult ego and going beyond it to release the spiritual powers of the Self. It is the heroic journey of exploring our personal issues and finding ways to deal with our childhood wounds, our need to be more assertive, our fear, anger, and guilt. We then explore relationships and how to be happier in them: what intimacy is and how to increase it, the setting of boundaries, and our fears of closeness. Finally we look at our spirituality, unconditional love, and affirmations of wholeness.

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How To Be An Adult in Relationships

The Five Keys to Mindful Loving

Shambhala, 2000



This book provides ideas and practices that help us as individuals and couples to build intimacy. We learn to address, process, and resolve relationship issues such as fears of abandonment or engulfment, anger, jealousy, infidelity, disillusionment, endings. We learn how to be intelligent about choosing partners and how to handle the phases we go through: romance, struggle, and commitment. We find out how mindfulness can help us be compassionate and no longer held back by the past. We discover the spiritual potential of loving.

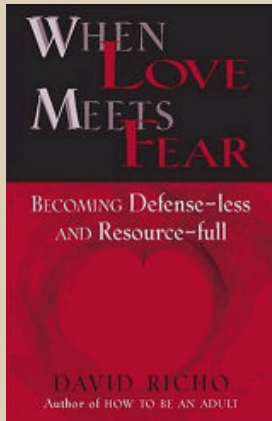
In Spanish: *Como mantener relaciones estables y duraderas* (Amat: Barcelona)

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When Love Meets Fear

How to Become Defense-Less and Resource-Full

Paulist Press, 1997



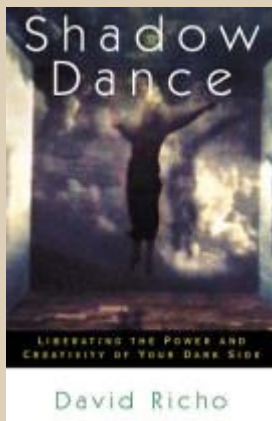
We all construct walls so that people will not get too close or love us too much. We can learn ways to let love through or in, and to approach someone who fears our love. There are techniques that can release the scared ego's hold-outs and hide-outs. We enter gently into the jungle of fear about love, loss, aloneness, abandonment, engulfment, etc. We become heroically defenseless enough to find inner resources so fear can no longer stop us.

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Shadow Dance

Liberating the Power and Creativity of Your Dark Side

Shambhala, 1999



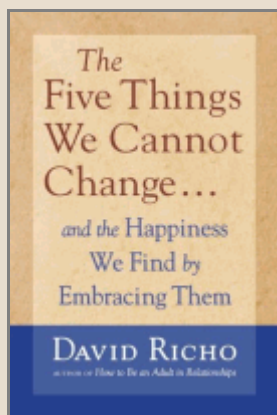
We contain creative qualities and powers that we have kept hidden out of fear and self-doubt. Our shadow includes all that we find repugnant in ourselves and all the wonderful attributes that we have discarded or denied. We project our negativities onto others as strong dislike. We project our own positive potential onto others as awe and admiration. This book combines text and practices to help us befriend our shadow.

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The Five Things We Cannot Change

And the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them

Shambhala, 2005



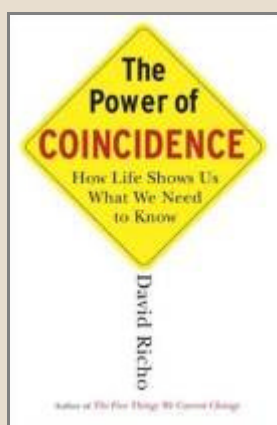
We notice unavoidable "givens" of human life and especially of relationships: 1) Everything changes and ends, 2) Things do not always go according to plan, 3) Life is not always fair, 4) Pain is part of life, 5) People are not loving and loyal all the time. We cultivate an "unconditional yes" to these conditions of existence, and we learn to embrace our predicaments without trying to control the outcomes. We trust the givens as gifts of grace that help us grow in character, depth, and compassion.

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The Power of Coincidence

How Life Shows Us What We Need to Know

Shambhala, 2007



Synchronicity, "meaningful coincidence," happens so that we can find our unique personal destiny. We learn how to remember dreams and we see how they figure into our life purpose. Synchronicity is one way the universe/Higher Power grants hospitality to us on our human pilgrimage and makes everything work for the best. Just the right people and events have come along so that we can be all we were meant to be.

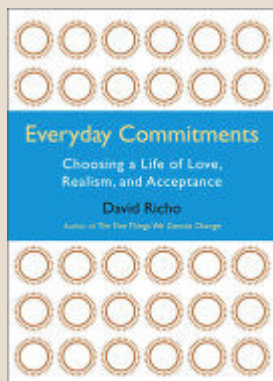
In Italian: *Quando le Cose Non Accadono Per Caso* (Armenia, Milano)

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Everyday Commitments

Choosing a Life of Love, Realism, and Acceptance

Shambhala, 2007



To set our lives on a positive course, many spiritual traditions encourage us to live in upright ways and to show loving-kindness toward ourselves and others. In this book, we consider fifty-two commitments we can make to ourselves in order to set our lives on a new and healthier course, one characterized by greater kindness, compassion, joy, and composure. We begin by taking small steps that lead to the expression of wholesomeness and loving-kindness. Interior shifts follow and soon we find that we are acting with greater love and virtue without having to put so much effort into it. We are living our lives at the heart level. Our destiny is to display in our lifetime the timeless design of love and wholeness that has always been inside us. Choices and attitudes that show integrity and loving-kindness help us do that.

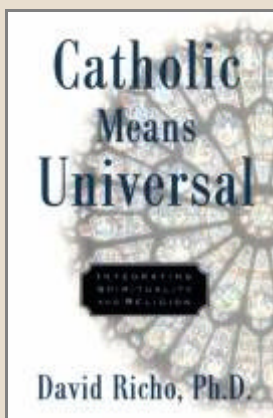
This book is in hardcover and has a gift look.

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Catholic Means Universal

Integrating Spirituality and Religion

Crossroad, 2000



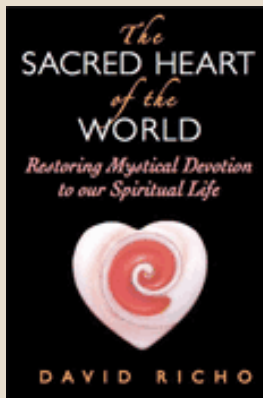
For Catholics who want to recover from their past and at the same time reclaim the archetypal riches of their religious heritage so that it can figure in the design of their adult spirituality. For anyone seeking the meaning of adult faith and anyone interested in how religion can be integrated into personal growth and spirituality. Here is a more expansive way of seeing the Higher Power so that we can have a fuller vision of divine life. Catholic means universal consciousness, universal humanity, and universal love.

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The Sacred Heart of the World

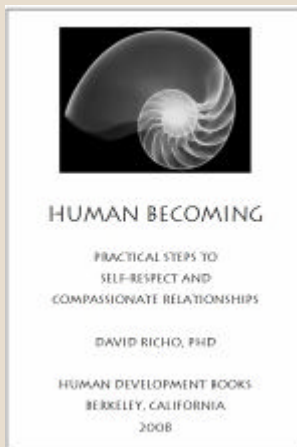
Restoring Mystical Devotion to Our Spiritual Life

Paulist Press, 2007



This book presents a spirituality of heart based on the metaphor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We explore the symbolism of the heart in world religious traditions. We then trace the historical thread of Christian devotion into modern times with a focus on the theology of Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner to design a devotion that respects the new cosmology. This book may appeal both to Catholics and to people from other religious traditions.

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