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Body, Mind & Spirit

New Self New World: Recovering Our Senses in the Twenty-first Century
Philip Shepherd
North Atlantic Books
978-1-55643-911-7
(July 31, 2010)

Over the course of centuries people have relied on tradition and the often literal interpretation of sacred documents to restore contentment and stability in their lives. With no alternatives available, an individual would seek solace in a socially acceptable manner to alleviate physical and psychological pain. Though customary religion has done an excellent job of reassuring and calming the troubled soul, the consequences of adhering to fundamentalism are not always ideal in a contemporary world facing transition into the New Age. This global movement is without barriers and does not exclude anyone with an open mind.

New Self, New World is an exciting investigation of the human psyche, which is commonly male-oriented, and the deep-seated problems that result when deprived of its female counterpart. Using conventional spiritual concepts, such as the Holy Trinity, Shepherd provides a workable guide to achieving inner fulfillment by accepting the so-called “weak” elements of our dual nature. With a decidedly feminist slant, he explains why attempts to control and analyze can backfire in well-intended endeavors that should have brought positive, not negative, outcomes. His goal is to keep a person rooted in the present, not wallowing in the acknowledged past or floundering in an unknown future. He encourages the intuitive, emotional side in everyone to reach out and be heard in a changing environment that once stifled any thought process that allowed the feminine to integrate with the masculine.

Shepherd's book is divided into five parts, such as "The Exchanges of Being" and "Recovering Our Senses," with the underlying thirteen chapters each exploring a specific theme. Enhancing his work are physical exercises that clarify and demonstrate the messages behind his theories. Included are extensive endnotes and credits to back his research. This author's intellectual, yet complex style will appeal to readers with a spiritual, as opposed to a clerical, approach toward life. Though not flaunted, his exhaustive efforts clearly rely on the concepts of Carl Jung.

A resident of Toronto and a worldwide traveler, Philip Shepherd is on the faculty at the Institute for Sacred Activism in Chicago and the cofounder of an interdisciplinary theater company. He edited and wrote for an arts periodical known as *Onion* and later edited *The Compleat Art Critic*, based on essays published in the magazine. In addition to theater and film acting credits, he's a corporate coach and teaches workshops on "embodied thinking and spontaneous creativity."

Perhaps the most important observation in Shepherd's *New Self, New World*, a book he began writing in 2001, is our Western society's tendency to separate mental consciousness from the body, leading to disorientation and unhappiness. He proposes that an enlightened comprehension of the simple state of *being* will reconnect us to our sense of self.

Julia Ann Charpentier