FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Body, Mind & Spirit

Ways of the Desert: Becoming Holy Through Difficult Times
William F. Kraft
Haworth Pastoral Press
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Who hasn't read a modern self-help or spiritual-awareness book that suggests contentment, security and happiness are just around the corner—if one only knows the secret? Try this or that technique and self-fulfillment is but a page away.

Kraft begs to differ. People will always be somewhat discontent, insecure and unhappy as they travel through life. "This is the nature of being on earth," he writes early on in his discourse. Such struggles are not necessarily bad. They are part of being perpetual pilgrims, which is what being human is all about.

Depression, anger, grief, boredom, disenchantment—viewed and responded to as negative forces—can stunt spiritual development. There is another way, however, through times that seem barren of joy. This other way can, according to Kraft, "can give birth to new growth." Instead of trying to skip over these parts of life's journey, or ignore them, it is those who accept them as normal experiences and chances for new understanding that are most likely to deepen their spirituality.

Kraft incorporates real words from real pilgrims of all ages to underscore his point. A variety of people share their wounds—and their ways of accepting and thus gaining from them. The honest reader will no doubt recognize many of the thoughts expressed. The brave reader will join these pilgrims on the journey through, rather than around, the desert.

Ultimately, it is an individual choice what to do with those feelings most people would rather suppress. Those unafraid, however, to cross the desert, will understand life is not a goal, but a journey with both peaks and valleys. A journey to a more holy state of "being."
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