

breathing under water richard rohr

Breathing Under Water Richard Rohr: Exploring Spiritual Depths and Transformation

breathing under water richard rohr is a phrase that immediately evokes a sense of paradox and mystery. How can one breathe under water, a place designed to suffocate rather than sustain life? When linked to Richard Rohr, the renowned Franciscan friar and spiritual teacher, this phrase takes on a profound spiritual dimension. It points toward the possibility of thriving in seemingly impossible circumstances, embracing the depths of spiritual transformation, and finding new ways of being rooted in inner peace and divine presence.

In this article, we will explore the concept of "breathing under water" as Richard Rohr presents it, drawing from his teachings on spirituality, mysticism, and the human experience. We'll delve into how this metaphor relates to spiritual growth, the challenges of modern life, and the invitation to live beyond fear and separation. Along the way, we'll touch on related themes like contemplative prayer, spiritual resilience, and the transformative power of surrender.

Understanding "Breathing Under Water" in Richard Rohr's Teachings

The idea of "breathing under water" captures an essential paradox in spirituality: learning to live and even thrive in what feels like suffocating or overwhelming conditions. For Richard Rohr, this metaphor is a way to describe the spiritual capacity to find peace and freedom in the midst of chaos, uncertainty, or inner struggle.

Metaphor for Spiritual Resilience

Just as breathing underwater defies natural expectations, spiritual resilience requires us to adapt and find a new way to exist beyond conventional limits. Rohr often speaks about the necessity of moving beyond ego-based thinking—where fear, control, and separation rule—and entering into a deeper consciousness where unity, love, and acceptance prevail. This shift allows us to "breathe" even when life feels as though it's pressing down on us.

Embracing the Mystery of Transformation

Breathing under water also symbolizes the transformational process that often feels like a death and rebirth. Rohr uses this image to help people understand that spiritual growth is not about clinging to old identities or safe shores but about diving into the unknown depths of the soul. This kind of transformation can be challenging, but it is precisely where new life and true freedom arise.

Richard Rohr's Approach to Spiritual Depth and Contemplation

Richard Rohr is widely known for his deep engagement with contemplative spirituality and the mystical traditions of Christianity. His teachings encourage moving beyond superficial faith expressions into a lived experience of divine presence.

The Role of Contemplative Prayer

Central to Rohr's spiritual framework is contemplative prayer—a practice that quiets the mind and opens the heart to God's presence. In this stillness, one learns to "breathe under water," metaphorically speaking, by resting in the divine despite external turmoil. Contemplative prayer is less about asking and more about being, cultivating an inner atmosphere where transformation can take place.

The Invitation to Let Go and Surrender

Breathing under water, in Rohr's view, requires surrender—letting go of control and trusting in a larger reality. This relinquishment is often countercultural, especially in a world obsessed with certainty and achievement, but it is vital for spiritual maturation. Rohr's writings encourage embracing vulnerability as a pathway to greater strength and freedom.

Applications of the "Breathing Under Water" Concept in Daily Life

How can the metaphor of breathing under water influence our everyday living? Richard Rohr's insights offer practical wisdom for navigating personal challenges and cultivating spiritual well-being.

Developing Spiritual Resilience Amid Stress

Modern life is full of stressors: work pressure, relational difficulties, social unrest, and personal doubts. Rohr's teaching invites us to cultivate resilience—not by avoiding or denying these pressures but by learning to engage with them from a grounded spiritual center. Practices like mindfulness, meditation, and contemplative prayer can serve as tools to "breathe" through tough moments rather than drowning in them.

Transforming Fear into Trust

Fear is one of the primary obstacles to spiritual freedom. Rohr's metaphor encourages us to understand fear as a form of suffocation and to cultivate trust as a way to breathe freely. This transformation is not instantaneous but happens gradually through consistent spiritual practice and community support.

Building Community and Shared Spirituality

Another layer to breathing under water is the recognition that we are not alone in our struggles. Rohr emphasizes the importance of community in spiritual growth. Sharing experiences, supporting each other, and engaging in collective worship or prayer can create an environment where deeper spiritual breathing becomes possible.

Insights from Richard Rohr's Books and Talks on the Theme

Richard Rohr has written extensively about themes closely related to breathing under water, offering rich material for those seeking to dive deeper into this metaphor.

- **Falling Upward:** Rohr's bestselling book explores the spiritual journey of the "second half of life," a time when we learn to embrace paradox and uncertainty—very much like learning to breathe underwater.
- **The Universal Christ:** This work expands on the idea that the divine is present in all things, helping us to find sacredness even in difficult circumstances.
- **Everything Belongs:** Here, Rohr invites us to accept all parts of our experience, including pain and failure, as integral to spiritual growth.

Listening to Rohr's talks or reading his books can deepen one's understanding of how to live with open-heartedness and courage no matter what life throws at us.

Practical Tips to Cultivate Your Own "Breathing Under Water" Experience

Inspired by Richard Rohr's teachings, here are some practical ways to develop the ability to breathe under water spiritually:

1. **Practice Daily Contemplation:** Set aside time each day to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and open yourself to presence without agenda.
2. **Embrace Paradox:** Learn to hold tension and uncertainty without rushing for answers; paradox is often where spiritual growth happens.
3. **Engage with Community:** Seek out groups or friendships that support deep spiritual conversations and shared practices.
4. **Journal Your Journey:** Writing about your spiritual experiences can help clarify insights and track growth over time.
5. **Read and Reflect on Rohr's Work:** Books and sermons by Richard Rohr offer ongoing encouragement and guidance.

By integrating these habits, you can begin to experience the freedom Rohr describes—breathing with ease even in life's most challenging moments.

Richard Rohr's metaphor of breathing under water invites us into a radical way of living: one that trusts in the unseen, embraces transformation, and finds sacredness in the depths of life's trials. It reminds us that spiritual growth is not about avoiding difficulty but learning to exist fully and freely within it. As we open ourselves to this possibility, we may discover that the very thing we feared—the pressure, the unknown, the darkness—becomes the very place where we learn to breathe most deeply.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Richard Rohr and what is his connection to the concept of 'Breathing Under Water'?

Richard Rohr is a Franciscan friar, spiritual teacher, and author known for his work on contemplative spirituality. 'Breathing Under Water' is one of his books that explores themes of spiritual transformation and overcoming personal struggles.

What is the main theme of Richard Rohr's 'Breathing Under Water'?

'Breathing Under Water' focuses on the idea of facing and embracing our inner struggles and shadow self as part of spiritual growth and transformation.

How does Richard Rohr define 'breathing under water' in his teachings?

Rohr uses 'breathing under water' as a metaphor for learning to live peacefully and authentically amidst difficult, overwhelming, or 'underwater' experiences in life.

What spiritual practices does Richard Rohr suggest in 'Breathing Under Water' to handle personal challenges?

Rohr encourages contemplative prayer, mindfulness, and embracing vulnerability to confront and integrate the shadow self, leading to spiritual maturity.

Why is 'Breathing Under Water' considered relevant in modern spirituality?

The book addresses universal human struggles with addiction, shame, and denial, offering a path to healing that resonates with many seeking deeper spiritual understanding today.

Can 'Breathing Under Water' by Richard Rohr be applied outside of religious contexts?

Yes, Rohr's insights into personal transformation and shadow work can be applied broadly for psychological and emotional healing, beyond strictly religious settings.

What impact has 'Breathing Under Water' had on

readers and spiritual communities?

'Breathing Under Water' has been influential in encouraging honest self-reflection and acceptance, helping many readers and spiritual communities embrace growth through adversity.

Additional Resources

Breathing Under Water Richard Rohr: Exploring Spiritual Metaphors and Mystical Insights

breathing under water richard rohr is a phrase that encapsulates a profound spiritual metaphor often discussed in the works of Franciscan friar and spiritual teacher Richard Rohr. Known for his contemplative approach to Christian mysticism and interfaith dialogue, Rohr utilizes the concept of "breathing under water" as a powerful image of living through spiritual paradoxes and embracing the mystery of faith in everyday life. This article delves into the meaning behind this metaphor, its theological implications, and how it reflects Rohr's broader teachings on spirituality and transformation.

Understanding the Metaphor: Breathing Under Water

The idea of "breathing under water" might initially evoke a sense of impossibility or contradiction. Breathing is naturally associated with air and the atmosphere, while water is typically the element through which humans cannot survive unaided. In spiritual terms, Rohr uses this metaphor to describe the experience of enduring and thriving amid seemingly impossible or paradoxical situations – a hallmark of mature faith and spiritual growth.

By presenting "breathing under water," Rohr challenges believers to reconsider conventional notions of spirituality that prioritize comfort, certainty, or literal interpretations of religious teachings. Instead, he invites a deeper engagement with the paradoxes inherent in the Christian journey, such as life through death, strength through weakness, and surrender as a form of power.

Theological Roots and Influences

Richard Rohr's use of this metaphor is deeply rooted in Christian mystical traditions and contemplative theology. The notion resonates with biblical passages, such as Jesus walking on water or the Spirit descending like a dove upon baptism, which symbolize the transcendence of natural laws through divine presence. Rohr's emphasis on embracing paradox aligns with the

apophatic tradition – the idea that God is ultimately beyond human comprehension and that faith involves dwelling in mystery.

Moreover, Rohr's teachings often draw from the Desert Fathers and Mothers, early Christian hermits who practiced radical detachment and contemplation, living "under water" in a spiritual sense by surrendering ordinary attachments and entering states of profound inner transformation.

Richard Rohr's Broader Spiritual Framework

To fully appreciate the significance of "breathing under water" in Rohr's thought, it is essential to situate the metaphor within his wider spiritual framework. Rohr is widely known for advocating a non-dualistic vision of spirituality, where opposites are not enemies but complementary realities that co-exist in tension.

Non-Duality and Spiritual Paradox

Central to Rohr's message is the idea that spiritual maturity entails moving beyond dualistic thinking – the tendency to categorize experiences as good or bad, right or wrong, sacred or profane. Instead, Rohr encourages embracing the "both/and" perspective, which acknowledges complexity and ambiguity.

"Breathing under water" thus becomes a symbol for navigating life's uncertainties with faith and trust, recognizing that spiritual truth often emerges from living in the in-between spaces rather than in fixed certainties. This approach distinguishes Rohr's teachings from more dogmatic or literalist interpretations of religion, appealing to seekers who value depth and nuance.

Contemplative Practice and Transformation

Rohr emphasizes that the ability to "breathe under water" requires disciplined contemplative practice – intentional methods of prayer, meditation, and self-reflection that cultivate awareness and inner peace. Through practices such as centering prayer or silent meditation, individuals can learn to remain present amid difficulties and open to the transformative work of grace.

This contemplative dimension is crucial because it fosters resilience and spiritual adaptability. Rohr argues that true transformation is not about acquiring new information or external achievements but about interior conversion – a fundamental shift in perception and being that allows one to live authentically in the midst of paradox.

Practical Implications for Contemporary Spiritual Seekers

Richard Rohr's metaphor of "breathing under water" holds practical significance for those navigating modern spiritual challenges. In a world marked by rapid change, uncertainty, and conflicting values, Rohr's insights offer a framework for finding stability and meaning.

Embracing Uncertainty and Suffering

One of the key takeaways from Rohr's metaphor is the encouragement to embrace rather than avoid uncertainty and suffering. Just as breathing underwater requires adapting to an alien environment, spiritual growth often demands enduring discomfort and ambiguity without losing one's center.

This perspective can be particularly valuable in times of crisis, grief, or existential doubt, where traditional answers may fall short. Rohr invites individuals to trust the process of spiritual transformation even when the outcome is unclear.

Integration of Science and Spirituality

While Rohr's language is deeply spiritual, his metaphor also resonates with contemporary understandings of human resilience and adaptation found in psychology and neuroscience. The capacity to "breathe under water" can be seen as cultivating emotional regulation, mindfulness, and neuroplasticity – all of which support well-being amid stress.

This integration of spiritual metaphor with scientific insights broadens Rohr's appeal, making his teachings relevant beyond explicitly religious contexts and into the domains of mental health and holistic wellness.

Comparative Insights: Breathing Under Water in Other Traditions

Although Richard Rohr's articulation is distinctively Christian, the metaphor of "breathing under water" has parallels in various spiritual traditions around the world, underscoring a universal human quest for transcendence amid difficulty.

- **Buddhism:** Mindfulness practice involves "being with" discomfort and impermanence, akin to learning to "breathe" in challenging conditions

without resistance.

- **Stoicism:** Ancient Stoics taught the acceptance of fate and remaining calm amid adversity, echoing Rohr's call to navigate paradox with equanimity.
- **Indigenous Spiritualities:** Many indigenous teachings emphasize harmony with natural cycles and resilience through connection with the earth, akin to adapting to unfamiliar environments symbolized by underwater breathing.

These cross-cultural resonances highlight the metaphor's power to communicate the essence of spiritual endurance and transformation.

Pros and Cons of Rohr's Approach

Like any spiritual framework, Rohr's metaphor and teachings present strengths and potential limitations:

- **Pros:**

- Offers a compelling image that captures the paradoxical nature of spiritual growth.
- Encourages psychological resilience and openness to mystery, beneficial in complex modern contexts.
- Integrates contemplative practice with everyday life, making spirituality accessible.

- **Cons:**

- May be perceived as abstract or elusive for those seeking concrete doctrinal answers.
- Its non-dualistic emphasis might conflict with more traditional or orthodox religious perspectives.
- Requires commitment to contemplative practice, which can be challenging for some individuals.

Despite these challenges, Rohr's metaphor remains a valuable contribution to contemporary spiritual discourse.

The phrase "breathing under water richard rohr" encapsulates a powerful spiritual vision that invites deep reflection on how we live with paradox, uncertainty, and transformation. By analyzing this metaphor within Rohr's broader teachings, it becomes clear that learning to "breathe under water" is both a spiritual and psychological skill – one that calls for openness, resilience, and contemplative awareness in the face of life's mysteries. For those seeking a spirituality that embraces complexity rather than shying away from it, Rohr's insights continue to offer profound guidance.

Breathing Under Water Richard Rohr

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breathing under water richard rohr: *Theater as Liturgy in the Post-Christian Age* Matthew Yde, 2024-05-24 This is the first book-length study of one of the most talented and exciting American playwrights working today. Stephen Adly Guirgis has said that God is the starting point and the finish line of his work, and this book identifies him as a playwright with a distinctly Christian sensibility who uses the technique of inculturation to translate the gospel for a secular audience. Critics have noted that his plays are peopled with poor, suffering minority figures, but few have also noted that these figures bear a remarkable similarity to the dispossessed with whom Jesus identifies in Matthew 25. Beginning with his early play *Den of Thieves* and proceeding through each of his dramas, this work examines Guirgis's plays within a biblical context. While noting that Guirgis is a writer of the post-Christian age who staunchly resists identification as a Christian playwright, the book situates him within the tradition of the drama of ideas as a powerful writer employing a dialectical method to inculcate the New Testament ethos and transform the theater space into a place of sacrament.

breathing under water richard rohr: The Alchemy of Addiction Stephen J. Costello, 2024-08-01 Within this important book, Stephen J. Costello draws on Eastern philosophy, Western psychology, and wisdom traditions to offer an interpretation and answer to the multidimensional problem of addiction. The nature of pleasure, pain, and attachment are discussed, together with stress as a key source of our suffering. Justifying and grounding the work is C. G. Jung's central

insight that the solution to our disordered desires lies in cultivating a spiritual approach to life. As such, a detailed exploration of the Twelve Steps of recovery is elucidated from the threefold perspective of the philosophy of Advaita, the Enneagram system, and the Christian contemplations of Richard Rohr, John Main, and Thomas Keating, as well as St Ignatius of Loyola. The work concludes with a brief look at Platonic ethics, especially the virtue of temperance, St Benedict's spirituality of humility, and the law of dharma as a blueprint for purposeful non-addicted living. This book will appeal to a wide variety of readers such as mental health professionals in the counselling and psychotherapy professions, as well as students of depth psychology and philosophy.

breathing under water richard rohr: Why Can't Church Be More Like an AA Meeting?

Stephen R. Haynes, 2021-10-26 Do Christians need recovery? Or is recovery something needed by the church itself? Addiction—whether to a substance or to a behavior—is a problem within faith communities, just like it is everywhere else. But because churches are rarely experienced as safe places for dealing with addiction, co-addiction, or the legacy of family dysfunction, Christians tend to seek recovery from these conditions in Twelve-Step fellowships. Once they become accustomed to the ethos of vulnerability, acceptance, and healing that these fellowships provide, however, they are often left feeling that the church has failed them, with many asking: why can't church be more like an AA meeting? Inspired by his own quest to find in church the sort of mutual support and healing he discovered in Twelve-Step fellowships, Stephen Haynes explores the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and its relationship to American Christianity. He shows that, while AA eventually separated from the Christian parachurch movement out of which it emerged, it retained aspects of Christian experience that the church itself has largely lost: comfort with brokenness and vulnerability, an emphasis on honesty and transparency, and suspicion toward claims to piety and respectability. Haynes encourages Christians to reclaim these distinctive elements of the Twelve-Step movement in the process of "recovering church." He argues that this process must begin with he calls "Step 0," which, as he knows from personal experience, can be the hardest step: the admission that, despite appearances, we are not fine.

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Gerri Harvill, 2018-06-26 Are you done with church? Do the rules, rituals, and traditions of organized religion leave you cold? Do you consider yourself spiritual, but not religious. Millions of people in North America and Europe have abandoned the church, but not God. Stan Norman and Gerri Harvill are on a journey to recover from the institutional church with its buildings and membership requirements, and discover the real Jesus who challenged the rules and rituals of the church in his day, and calls us to follow his lead today. Calling on their experience as pastors and using the twelve steps of addiction recovery as their guide, Gerri and Stan are gradually leaving behind lifetimes of accumulated rules and rituals and finding daily joy in actually following Jesus instead of just worshipping him. Join them on this journey as they leave their comfort zones and go where God is leading them! Connect with Stan and Gerri at www.followcommunity.org and/or on Facebook at follow: a community, and begin a conversation.

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People -- frustrating, confusing, disappointing, complicated -- are the most difficult part of leadership, and they challenge leaders everywhere, from leaders of many to managers of a few. In this book Chuck DeGroat addresses the flawed nature of people and offers wisdom for leaders of all types in dealing with just about anyone who is difficult to lead and to love. *Toughest People to Love* explores the basics of how people tick, encouraging leaders to examine and take care of themselves so that they can better understand and care for others. Based on DeGroat's wealth of experience as a pastor, professor, and therapist, this book -- both wise and practical -- is one that countless leaders will go back to time and again for valuable insights and renewed vision.

breathing under water richard rohr: Skinny or Not, Here I Come Margaret Cupit-Link,

2020-11-26 *Skinny or Not, Here I Come* is part memoir, part self-help book. It is a true story detailing the inner thoughts of a young girl with an eating disorder and how these thoughts evolved into her adulthood. The author describes all of her many different experiences with counseling and

the life events that fueled her eating disorder. She outlines the strategies, belief systems (including Christian faith), and motivating factors that helped her to finally begin a journey of recovery.

breathing under water richard rohr: Preparing for Christmas Richard Rohr, 2013-11-22 Advent is not about a sentimental waiting for the Baby Jesus --Richard Rohr Advent is a time to focus our expectation and anticipation on the adult Christ, the Cosmic Christ, who challenges us to empty ourselves, to lose ourselves, to surrender. Preparing for Christmas offers daily meditations, prayers, Scripture readings, and questions for reflection for each day of Advent.

breathing under water richard rohr: The Storied Church Matthew Gorkos, 2021 The Storied Church focuses on church renewal that is born of the restorative, transformative, life-giving function that stories have for us as individuals and that can serve communities of faithful people. If stories help us survive as human creatures, why can't they help churches survive? This book is a tool to empower pastors and lay leaders to effect revitalizing change in their faith communities. Book jacket.

breathing under water richard rohr: Eager to Love Richard Rohr, 2024-10-01 The loving, inclusive life and preaching of Francis of Assisi make him a recognizable and beloved saint across many faith traditions. In the ten-year-anniversary edition of *Eager to Love*, globally recognized spiritual teacher Richard Rohr, OFM, provides for spiritual seekers a pathway to the inclusivity, freedom, and beauty found in the Christian mystical tradition. As an integrative thinker, Rohr expertly weaves psychological insights and literary and artistic references with Franciscan theology, showing that the rich theological contributions of St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Bonaventure, and John Duns Scotus are guiding lights for sincere spiritual seekers.

breathing under water richard rohr: Spiritual Healing for Trauma and Addiction Allyson Kelley, Dolores Subia BigFoot, 2023-07-07 Through stories and conversations, Drs. Dolores BigFoot and Allyson Kelley reflect on research, clinical work, faith-based topics, spirituality, and recovery. They invite readers to reflect on what it means to walk on a healing path. Beginning with a brief history of broken spirits and a broken world, the book then discusses the causes of brokenness, vulnerability to brokenness, and healing as a construct of social justice and advocacy. The following chapters cover current aspects of healing from the lens of mental health and substance use, addiction, trauma, and recovery. As much of the world struggles with some aspect of brokenness and healing, stories of enduring well provide examples from all relations and walks of life about healing. Theories and research presented throughout the text support stories and concepts presented. Stories about families, coping, grief, loss, and boundaries give readers resources and exercises to help them become whole. Special consideration is given to healing practices and rituals from Native American communities and families. This text is a must-have for mental health practitioners, faith-based organizations, communities, individuals and families, programs, and policymakers interested in healing.

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aspects. **Helping Families Recover from Addiction: Coping, Growing, and Healing through 12-Step Practices and Ignatian Spirituality** retells Jean Heaton's journey "working the steps" as a family member of people with addictions. Heaton draws on personal stories and research, including examples from Father Ed Dowling, SJ, spiritual advisor to Bill W., a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, and others to illustrate the connections between this life-saving program and Ignatian Spirituality. Each chapter ends with reflection points based on Scripture that can help readers as they begin the work of each of the Twelve Steps. Story-driven, integrative, and practical, this book can help families heal from the effects of a loved one's addiction and move into a healthy and promising future.

breathing under water richard rohr: Spherical Philosophy™ Eric Malley, 2025-07-22 Spherical Philosophy™ isn't just for those recovering from addiction, it's for anyone ready to come home to themselves, whatever they're recovering from. Born at the intersection of collapse and renewal, Eric Malley's multidimensional framework is a compass for clarity, courage, and reinvention, for moving through life's roundabouts, discovering new pathways, and transforming setbacks into launch points for growth. At its heart is a simple, radical invitation: "Recovery is for everyone, not just those in addiction. Recovery is a human experience, universal, stigma-free, and available to anyone who wants a life that works. Everyone is recovering from something: loss, burnout, heartbreak, perfectionism, anxiety, trauma, or simply the wear and tear of modern life. If you're human, you're eligible." —Eric Malley Within these pages, you'll find hard-won wisdom, practical tools, and hopeful stories to shape a life that radiates. "One of the hardest things was learning that I was worth recovery." —Demi Lovato "Being in recovery has given me everything of value that I have in my life. Integrity, honesty, fearlessness, faith, a relationship with God, and most of all gratitude." —Rob Lowe No matter your starting point, you are not alone, and you don't have to wait for permission to begin again. Spherical Philosophy™ invites you to circle forward, build resilience, and create both meaning and momentum on your journey. Welcome to your next turning point

breathing under water richard rohr: Recovering (Pastoring for Life: Theological Wisdom for Ministering Well) Aaron White, 2020-09-01 This book provides a theologically rich commentary on the challenge of addiction and the long road to recovery. Written by a minister with extensive experience working with people who struggle with addictions, this book helps pastors understand the roots and realities of our universal human struggle with addictions and attachments while showing that together we have great hope for freedom, wholeness, and recovery. Readers will learn how to create and foster a Beatitude Community, the kind of environment Jesus prescribed for his people, to help addicts and those who love them heal from brokenness. Foreword by Bob Ekblad. About the Series Pastors are called to help people navigate the profound mysteries of being human, from birth to death and everything in between. This series, edited by leading pastoral theologian Jason Byassee, provides pastors and pastors-in-training with rich theological reflection on the various seasons that make up a human life, helping them minister with greater wisdom and joy.

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