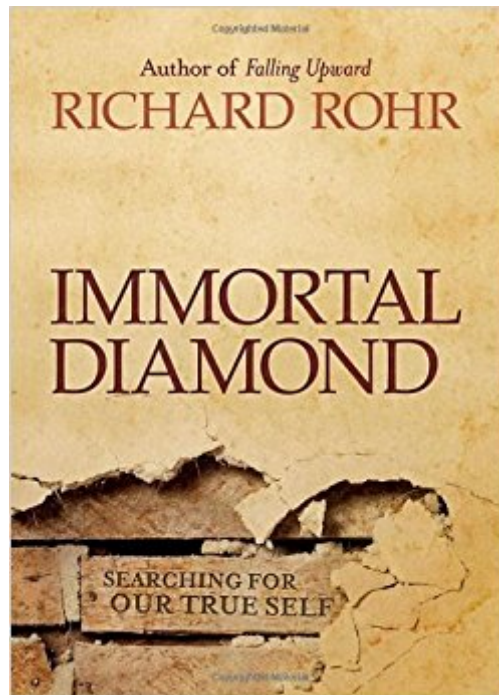




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# Immortal Diamond: The Search For Our True Self



## Synopsis

Dissolve the distractions of ego to find our authentic selves in God In his bestselling book *Falling Upward*, Richard Rohr talked about ego (or the False Self) and how it gets in the way of spiritual maturity. But if there's a False Self, is there also a True Self? What is it? How is it found? Why does it matter? And what does it have to do with the spiritual journey? This book likens True Self to a diamond, buried deep within us, formed under the intense pressure of our lives, that must be searched for, uncovered, separated from all the debris of ego that surrounds it. In a sense True Self must, like Jesus, be resurrected, and that process is not resuscitation but transformation. Shows how to navigate spiritually difficult terrain with clear vision and tools to uncover our True Selves

Written by Father Richard Rohr, the bestselling author of *Falling Upward* Examines the fundamental issues of who we are and helps us on our path of spiritual maturity *Immortal Diamond* (whose title is taken from a line in a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem) explores the deepest questions of identity, spirituality, and meaning in Richard Rohr's inimitable style.

## Book Information

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Q&A with Robert Rohr, author of *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self* Q. What do you mean by False Self and True Self? A. When I use the term False Self, I mean that it is the self we manufacture and adopt to find our identity in the world—our jobs, our occupations, our religion, our culture, our sources of status. False doesn't mean that it's bad; it simply means that it's external, passing, that it changes. Everyone has a False Self—you need it to function in the world. True Self is who you are objectively in God. Most religious and

spiritual traditions would call it the soul, although it is also mysteriously more than that. You do not create True Self by your own personality or choices or, or experiences. It's nothing that you manufacture or do. It's your innermost, essential being.

Q. How do the concepts of True Self and False Self relate to the questions you explored in *Falling Upward*? A. In my book *Falling Upward*, I try to talk about the journey, the transitioning from the first half of life, the necessary suffering in the middle of life, and the liberation of the second half of life. In talking about True Self/False Self in *Immortal Diamond*, I'm trying to actually explain what it is we're finding in the second half of life--our True Self. If you don't find or recover your True Self, you remain in the first half of life forever, as many people do. They think they are their occupation, their family, their culture, their religion; without the falling apart of what Thomas Merton called our "private salvation project," without that falling there is no upward. In *Immortal Diamond* I'm calling the upward the True Self and I'm trying to explain what the True Self is.

Q. Why is finding True Self so important to the spiritual journey? A. In many ways this quest for the True Self is the foundational issue. Your True Self is the only part of you that really has access to the big questions, things like love, suffering, death, God. Your False Self just entertains itself. But once you make contact with your True Self, there's a natural correspondence between who you are and who God is. Let me put it this way. When you discover your True Self, it's very easy to recognize the presence of God. When you're living out of your False Self, you tend to be more attracted to externals--external beliefs, external rituals--but you are never really touched at any deep level because it's not really YOU that's making contact. It's your temperament, your personality, your culture, all of which are okay, but your True Self is that part of you that already knows God, already loves God at some unconscious level. When you can connect with your True Self, the whole spiritual life opens up.

Q. What is the connection between finding True Self and facing death? A. The phrase "you must die before you die" in one form or another is found in most of the world religions. Jesus would say, "Unless the grain of wheat die it remains just a single grain." This means that this concocted False Self, this manufactured identity that is who we all think we are, has to go. That's what the language of being "born again" really means. It's not some kind of magical transaction that takes place between you and God, but the death of the passing self, the one you have created for yourself. That's what has to die. Until that False Self dies you don't really know who you are. Once you let go of your passing self, as St. Francis said, "The second death can do you no harm." In other words, once you have experienced the little losses and failings or falling upwards, you know at a deep level that you've been there before and none of it is going to kill you. You've already learned how to die. If you don't learn how to die early, ahead of time, you

spend your life avoiding all failure, humiliation, loss, and you're not ready for the last death. Your True Self, your soul knows spiritual things, and knows God. So if you don't awaken it, you really don't know God. You can be religious, but you don't encounter God at any depth. It's just spinning the necessary prayer wheels, whatever your tradition tells you is the appropriate prayer wheel. It isn't really transformative religion. Q. How can we make contact with our True Self? A. It is hard work to remain in contact with your True Self. That's why daily prayer is important. Somehow we have to reestablish our foundational ground over and over because we lose it every day. I surely do. I get caught up in letters, emails, what people want of me, what I need to be, the little dance I have to do today for this person or that person. It may be necessary, but if you are living in that world, that revolving hall of mirrors, you so get enchanted with these reflections of what everybody thinks you are or wants you to be that you forget or you never discover who you really are before you did anything right or anything wrong, before you had your name, your reputation, your education, your family, your culture. That's how we get caught up in what some call our "survival dance." Finding True Self is about finding your sacred dance, who you are forever and who you always will be. That's the self that can go to Heaven, if you want to put it that way, because it's already in Heaven. It's already there. So you're returning home. Q. Where did the title, Immortal Diamond, come from? A. The metaphor immortal diamond came from a poem by the Jesuit Englishman, Gerard Manley Hopkins. The last lines of this beautiful poem say, "I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and/ This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,/ Is immortal diamond." When I first wanted to clarify this notion of True Self/False Self, I immediately said that's going to be the, the metaphor. I think it names what I'm talking about, something that's strong, true, clear, but hidden within us.

How well do we know ourselves? So many roles and identities shape individual lives that it's easy to be confused about what is authentically "us." Rohr, a Franciscan priest and founding director of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.Mex., leads a narrative excursion to the "True Self," the core of character that lies like a diamond buried within. Writing for secular seekers, the author claims that individuals need to allow the false self to fall away in order to get in touch with the true self, allowing it to breathe and flourish. Grasping onto the superficial identities of the false self, such as job, class, race, or accomplishments, can keep people from being the loving and generous conduits of the Divine that they are meant to be. God is always communicating with humans, but those who cling to ego and social position can't hear these divine messages. The author makes clear that it is not easy to shed this falseness for truth in the inner life, but it is a

spiritual path well worth the effort. (Jan.) (Publishers Weekly, February 2013)

This book changed my life-the soul is larger than the ego- much larger- we are ALREADY successful!the resurrection says it all-Quit building your life around your obsession with victimhood and GET in the present-You can LOVE! Like Mary waiting at the tomb, hoping emotionally spiritually that Christ is alive, while knowing cognitively (she saw him die) that Christ was DEAD- yet she had faith in the the unknown, that which can not be seen with our senses. If you want prosperity/fame/love in your life, visualize abundance - it is not as elusive as you imagined. With FAITH and belief- like Mary- you will witness the resurrection (of the thing that REALLY matters- love)! I had been stuck in unsuccessful relationships after my husband died- after I read this book, myself identity evolved past fear and blossomed into something all-encompassing, illuminating and larger- touched upon the DIVINE me. No longer am I desperate for a man's comfort- I am comfortable all by myself. LOVED the quote from the Brothers Karamozov- I read that book maybe 20 years ago and Rohr's use of this (butterfly effect) quote crystallizes his thesis succinctly! LOVE LOVE LOVE!!!!

Richard Rohr is the preeminent Catholic author of our time. He is somehow able to sustain his contemplative approach to Christianity while many others succumb to the institutional pressures of advancing the party line. In this book Rohr discusses the concept of the true and false selves - concepts that were admittedly made popular by Thomas Merton many years ago - but Rohr's lucid writing style dispels any ambiguities that may have remained from Merton's efforts to address the same subject. On page 12 the author asks "Could human life's central task be a matter of consciously discovering and becoming who we already are and what we somehow unconsciously know?" I would answer with a resounding YES! Rohr's gift is the ability to bring to the surface simple truths that have been buried by the trivialities of modern Christian thinking. Read this book.

This book changed my life. I love the theology of Richard Rohr. His writing about the small self, the ego and dualistic thinking put me in touch with my small self and opened my consciousness to a new way of being. He leads the reader on a path to an ever-evolving experience in non-dualistic thinking, and a whole new and greater understanding and appreciation of God.

Fr. Richard Rohr does it again, this time with a beautiful and brilliant meditation on our true nature. The book is a treasure trove of wisdom, and the kind of insight that leads to peace. At the core of

our being is our true self, the identity we all have in sharing being with the ground of all being, namely God. This shy, elusive truth at our core hides from falsity, arrogance, violence, and cluelessness. You can't find the immortal diamond through the lens of ego consciousness. Our egos, useful and necessary to define our identity boundaries, especially in the first half of our lives, become, over time, burdensome encrustations of inauthenticity and irresponsibility the longer we hold onto them. Most of us make the crucial mistake of equating our ego with our true self, our identity. But the ego is the false self, the mask of personality and selfishness we present to the world to protect and project what we think is "us." Rohr leads the reader through all this deep material, and then suggests the ways we might practice "letting go" of all pretense and neediness through contemplative prayer and practices of selflessness, truth, authenticity, and responsible learning and growth. The casual reader won't make it very far with anything written by Fr. Rohr, so be prepared to think and ponder and practice the incredible wisdom he serves up. Since first becoming aware of his works, I personally have grown tremendously, and have benefited from a more peaceful, purposeful, and joyful life. Those around me have, too!

This helped me in my evolving understanding of who I really am and that God and relationship are love. Pure and simple, but can only be grasped through silence and practice of the soul.

Rohr continues to write from sincere reflection and deep scholarship. This book is valuable to all spiritual seekers, especially those who come from a faith tradition and are trying to reconcile all aspects of their faith tradition with lessons from science and insights from the humanities. The language is straightforward.

Immortal is a difficult read, but Rohr's way of thinking about things really shines a light on religion, religious practice and church doctrine in a way that I have not considered before. I need to read it slowly and almost every sentence requires some reflection. The manner in which Rohr centralises the notion of contemplation throughout his discussion, further embellishes this form of religious practice as a powerful means to experience Christ, to understand religion in a very rich and meaningful way and to grow immeasurable in one's understanding and experience of the Trinity. Reading this book has been similar to embarking on a journey of inspiration and enlightenment containing many moments of spiritual epiphany. Although the content requires some intellectual engagement, it is primarily an experience of God. Remarkable!

Richard Rohr's writings have pivoted my worldview over the last few years - I can't say enough good things about him and am grateful that friends introduced me to his books and talks. I've read this book and will be doing a re-read of it as there is so much to absorb. "Eager to Love" and "Breathing Under Water" are two of his other books I'd highly recommend...

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