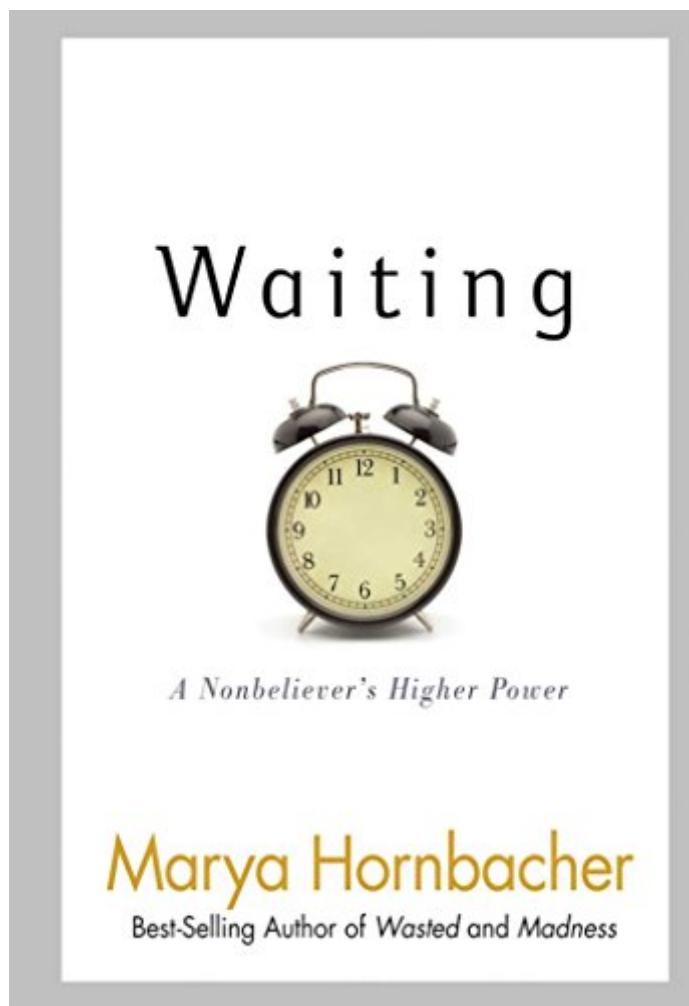


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# Waiting: A Nonbeliever's Higher Power



## **Synopsis**

For those who don't believe in Godâ "or don't know whether they believeâ " New York Times best-selling author Marya Hornbacher offers an insightful, moving approach to the concept of faith. For those who don't believe in God, feel disconnected from the ideas of God presented in organized religion, or are simply struggling to determine their own spiritual path, Marya Hornbacher, author of the New York Times best sellers *Madness* and *Wasted*, offers a down-to-earth exploration of the concept of faith. Many of us have been trained to think of spirituality as the sole provenance of religion; and if we have come to feel that the religious are not the only ones with access to a spiritual life, we may still be casting about for what, precisely, a spiritual life would be, without a God, a religion, or a solid set of spiritual beliefs. In *Waiting*, best-selling author Marya Hornbacher uses the story of her own journey beginning with her recovery from alcoholism to offer a fresh approach to cultivating a spiritual life. Relinquishing the concept of a universal "Spirit" that exists outside of us, Hornbacher gives us the framework to explore the human spirit in each of us--the very thing that sends us searching, that connects us with one another, the thing that "comes knocking at the door of our emotionally and intellectually closed lives and asks to be let in." When we let it in and only when we do, she says, we begin to be integrated people. And we begin to walk a spiritual path. And there are many points along the way where we stop, or we fumble, or we get tangled up or turned around. Those are the places where we wait. *Waiting*, you'll discover, can become a kind of spiritual practice in itself, requiring patience, acceptance, and stillness. Sometimes we do it because we know we need to, though we may not know why. In short, we do it on faith. Marya Hornbacher is the author of two best-selling nonfiction titles, *Madness: A Bipolar Life* and *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia*. She has also authored a recovery handbook, *Sane: Mental Illness, Addiction, and the 12 Steps*, and a critically acclaimed novel, *The Center of Winter*.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Written by someone who does not believe in God and has been through AA and the 12-steps, this book provides a working and grounded guide to spirituality. Reading this with an open mind, and not terribly concerned about the 12-steps themselves, I found Marya's viewpoint interesting, mostly different than mine, but informative. I pulled a few helpful pieces of information related to a daily practice and how to approach each day and other people. Her approach in breaking down the steps to follow one calendar year is refreshing and provides a nice landscape as each chapter begins with more personal prose on her own journey around the country at various times. Highly recommended for believers and nonbelievers, regardless if you are in or have been in AA. Update 06/09/11: After going through the notes I wrote during the first reading of this book, I realized that something was missing for me. Even though I try (key word) to live a spiritual life, something is off in the daily routine. And then I figured it out. I was not starting off each day in the right mindset. I am awake, and immediately think about the stress, what is not done, what is broken, what is wrong. The day has no chance to bring any good to myself or others with these thoughts clogging my mind. From reading this book, I know intellectually and spiritually, what I need to do each morning, and my work I must complete, to carry this through the day, and prepare for the next one.

I just finished reading "Waiting," and I KNOW I will be reading it again -- referring to it as an important resource in my life in many ways moving forward. I consider myself agnostic, and even the word "spirituality" has been off-putting to me. Marya Hombacher frames her own experience, strength and hope (and ideas) in ways that I was easily able to consume and that, I'm confident, will allow me to digest and work a 12-step program in a way that fits for me. This is EXACTLY the book I needed. Thank you Marya! :)

This is told from the perspective of an agnostic or atheist's perspective on traversing the 12 steps. The only part I was ambivalent about was the author's meandering at the beginning of each chapter, some I liked, some seemed like aimless filler. I loved it the rest of it. I felt a lot of similarities between her journey and my own. I agree that a path to emotional sobriety and a higher power is love and service to other beings on the planet. This does not require belief in a supernatural being. It does require becoming a part of the communities around us, stressful though it may be. Personally, I enjoy secular meditation and it's more than merely listening...depending on the type of meditation. You can cultivate compassion, serenity and healing. Insight timer app is a free resource to begin a bit of exposure.

I was skeptical, but I have come around to believing that Ms. Hornbacher's approach to spiritualism and step-work is one that an atheist such as myself can embrace and profit from. I think she is a fine writer, and though I generally have trouble reading guides of this type, I hope to read some of her other books as well. For anyone who finds that the religious terms and structure of a twelve-step program are more a barrier than a help, I highly recommend this book.

I share the authors feelings about God and religion. She's not the loud, harsh unbeliever that might first come to mind these days. Her critique is insightful and gentle and firm. I also share her concern for spiritual matters as an agnostic. Spirituality is a big tent. I have been helped greatly in my journey to have had Mrs. Hornbacher's prose running around my mind.

I have been in recovery from drug addiction for 25 years (in NA) and as an atheist have always been challenged by having to constantly do the translation of the "he god" into a practical spirituality. This book has allowed me to do so and to re-engage with 12 step recovery in a practical way. I rarely go anywhere without it and it inspires me daily. I can open to any page and find a gem to ponder, a new way of thinking, a new action I can take to help improve my spiritual life as well as being a positive influence for others. In due course it is books like this that will hopefully influence AA and NA into using more inclusive language as their literature evolves. People die from the disease of addiction because they can't stomach the religious pressure which leaps out from every page of the primary texts of NA and AA. Its all very well to say "the god of your understanding" but it still sounds like a god. By giving a book like "Waiting" to the new member who struggles with the religious style of language used in most 12 step literature you may save their life. This book has

certainly enhanced mine. Thank you Marya.

Very well done, the readings give me new insights that are encouraging which is good after "coming out of the closet" as an atheist/agnostic in AA after 43 years in the program. That was a scary move on my part and it's good to know I'm not alone. I would have liked it more if it had been written in the daily reading format.

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