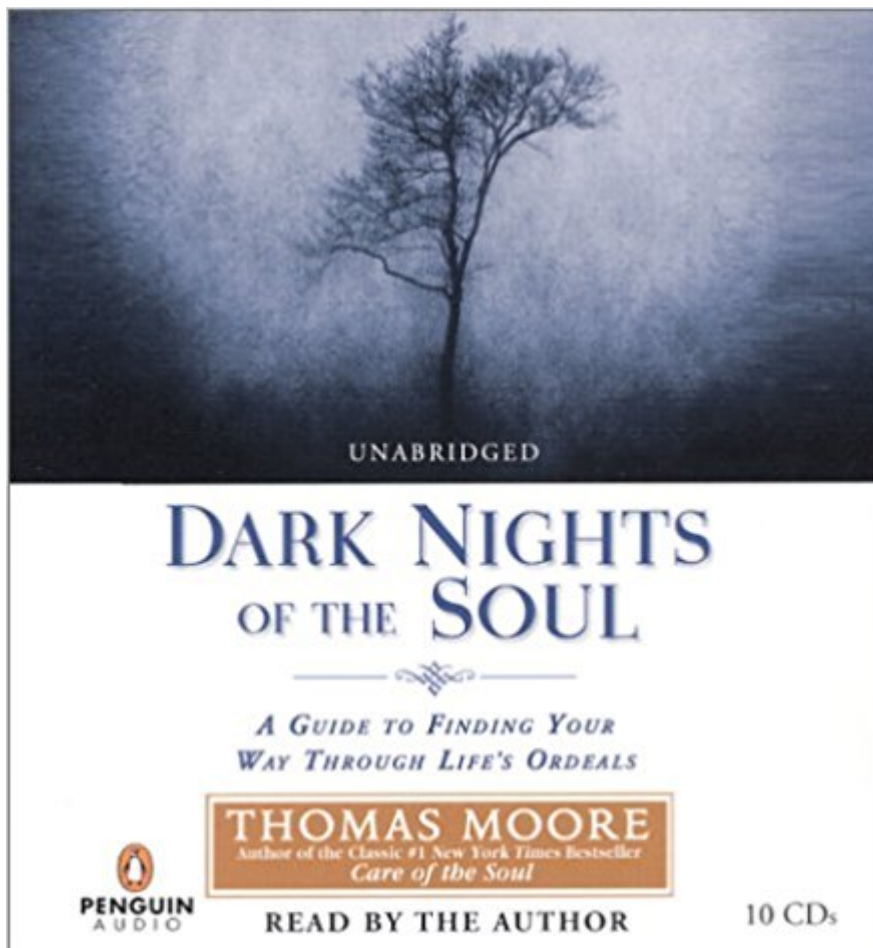


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Dark Nights Of The Soul



Synopsis

A 'dark night of the soul' is not a psychological syndrome, but a quest for meaning during life's darkest hours: the loss of a loved one, the end of a relationship, ageing and illness, career disappointments or just an ongoing dissatisfaction with life. Thomas Moore's extensive experience as a psychologist and theologian has taught him that the dark night is a challenge to restore ourselves and to become someone of substance, depth and soul. By using these trying times as an opportunity to reflect and delve into the soul's deepest needs, we can find a new understanding of life's meaning. *Dark Nights of the Soul* has its roots in a favourite chapter in Thomas Moore's million copy bestseller, *Care of the Soul*. In this beautifully-written and thought-provoking work he explores our contemporary anxieties and insecurities and shows how these metaphoric dark nights can become transforming rites of passage. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Penguin Audio; Unabridged edition (May 3, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142800538

ISBN-13: 978-0142800539

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.6 x 5.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 121 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,077,168 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 in [Books > Books on CD](#) > Religion & Spirituality > Inspiration #313 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction](#) > Religious #314 in [Books > Books on CD > Religion & Spirituality > Fiction](#)

Customer Reviews

When it comes to spiritual growth, we humans are solar-seeking beings; eager for the bright lights of clarity and the bliss of illumination. Paradoxically, we all need to walk through the shadow of the dark night in order to discover a life worth living, according to psychotherapist and spiritual commentator Thomas Moore. Unlike depression, which is more of an emotional state, Moore calls the dark night a slow transformation process, which is fueled by a profound period of doubt, disorientation and questioning. Ultimately, a journey into the dark night will reshape the very meaning of your life. As a self-proclaimed "lunar type," Moore is comfortable leading his clients and

readers into the shadows, where ambiguities and mysteries lurk around every corner. He describes the dark night journey in stages, starting with feeling distant from your life even as you continue to go through the motions. The second phase is "liminality," meaning living on the threshold between the known self and the unknown self. This is perhaps the most uncomfortable phase as the dark night may "take you away from the cultivation and persona you have developed in your education and from family learning," he explains. After dwelling in this murky darkness, there's a stage of "re-incorporation," in which one integrates the profound inner transitions into daily life. Like a tour guide to the underworld, Moore leads readers through all these phases, offering tools and rituals for making the journey more tolerable or at least more meaningful. He also speaks to the many arenas and stages of life in which we might find ourselves stumbling through the dark, with chapters on marriage, parenting, sexuality, creativity and health. The scope is ambitious, and at times the structure seems disjointed—but this is perhaps Moore's best contribution since *Care of the Soul*, proving once again that he is a wise and formidable spiritual teacher. --Gail Hudson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

There's an old saying that a devil is appealing at first but leaves you in despair, while an angel appears terrifying at first but leaves you refreshed and hopeful. This eighth book since Moore's extraordinarily successful *Care of the Soul* considers loss, pain, conflict, confusion, anger, excess, deviance and other disturbing feelings and behaviors not as devils to be exorcised but as angelic opportunities for deepening and altering the self. Derived from a chapter of the first book titled "The Gifts of Depression," the idea is not that suffering per se is good for the soul, but that to regard such visitations merely as suffering is to miss their point and meaning. Art and religion feature more prominently here than psychology, which Moore, a Catholic monk turned therapist, finds too mechanical and fix-it oriented to serve the soul. He adopts F. Scott Fitzgerald's phrase "the real dark night of the soul" to refer to anything from a short episode to an entire marriage and sees it as an invitation to spiritual cultivation, work that can be intellectual, creative or even physical, but which the monastically trained Moore tends to depict as quiet, solitary reflection. All this is set forth in a fluent, unflaggingly earnest style. Moore, who has an exceptional arsenal of literary and religious lore at his disposal, scatters allusions to figures as various as Madame Bovary, Gandhi, Thomas More and Glenn Gould (no Luther or Malcolm X, though) with dexterity. Short on detail, long on evocation, this book conveys the important if familiar message that spiritual growth entails darkness as well as light. While not exactly a substitute for reading Dostoyevski or Keats, this is perhaps an inducement to give them a chance. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed

Dark Nights of the Soul isn't a how-to book for getting oneself out of "depression;" instead, Moore's focus is on giving readers new perspectives for self-compassion and endurance to help them through the journey and learn from their most painful personal experiences. What I like most about Moore's books in the context of "self-help" is they don't provide steps and exercises; they are "guides for meditation" as he says, and as such, are far more effective than some regimented fix-yourself-now plan that probably have success-rates similar to fad diets. Thus, Dark Nights of the Soul is not a guide for overcoming low periods in our lives as fast as possible as though they are infections we need to kill off and recover from as quickly as possible. He talks about making a place in our life for them, and welcoming whatever there is to learn from them. I read it during some serious life transitions, including the death of one of my favorite relatives, and a lot of health difficulties, and it was far more helpful than several sessions of beating-the-dead-horse in talk-therapy would have been. If Moore didn't directly say what his spiritual and cultural background is in his books, I would not easily be able to identify his religious affiliation because he draws inspiration and wisdom from several different religions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, paganism, and religions that now only exist in mythology. I would highly recommend Thomas Moore's books to people I know regardless of their spiritual practice, and if that practice is humanistic or God-centered. I highlighted so many passages from Dark Nights that I could use it as a daily inspiration book. One of my favorites is this one (from page 266): "You can let the people you trust know a little about what is happening. Just don't expect any brilliant revelations or resolutions. It is the friendship, not the help you get from friends, that is important."

Book Review: Dark Nights of the Soul, Thomas Moore. This is a really Great Book, for anyone who is fed up with the Rubbish that some of the people in the Feel Good, Think Positive Industry, try to force on us and Psychiatrists who try to heal with a steady dose of Medication and psychotherapy, all to no avail. The point being that we are like the weather, we go through our moods, and each one should be appreciated for all its worth. There is an expression in Gym work that goes, No Pain No Gain, and I couldn't agree more. Thomas Moore gives up deep insights into the Modern Soul, suffering in an indifferent and at times cynical world. Beyond depression there is a place that is very personal very real and full of pain, and full of Truth, Beauty and Wisdom. Thomas, lets us in to this silent, still place, offering both a map and a compass to navigate its varied terrain. Thomas Moore

also lets us have a glimpse into the lives of individual people, people very much like us, who have gone through, periods of suffering and grief, and explores Important Phases of Life such as Melancholia, Matrimony, Aging, Illness and Mental Health Issues such as Anger, Anxiety and Acute Periods of Instability. For me, I found the most value in his treatment of people who suffer from "Weltschmerz" or World Weariness, and I guess it is best explained via music. If you check out the song, "The World I Know" by Collective Soul, a band from Atlanta, Georgia, then you will know what I am talking about. There are places deeper and darker than depression, and it takes Courage to endure it, and only Grace can really save you. So if you are getting nowhere fast, with a continued diet of psycho-therapy in the form of pills, positive thinking and bearing your Soul to an Indifferent Shrink, consider this Book very seriously. With Deep Respect to the Suffering of All. PDR.

I was looking forward to this book after reading an interview with Thomas Moore in a spiritually oriented book about the subject of depression in which he observed that a lot of Americans have a habit of faking cheerfulness, a habit that bothers me to no end. But I did not get much out of this book. My interest in depression is primarily in the emotions that it carries like grief, despair, and anger, emotions that Americans often despise. Moore did offer some interesting points about the necessity of anger, but as someone who entered theology school at age 13 and who is part of the hyper-educated class possessing multiple graduate degrees, Moore seems more inclined to focus on matters of the spirit and intellect than on emotions.

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