

12. *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*

Richard Rohr, Jossey-Bass 2011

Father Rohr, a Franciscan priest, teaches that myths and symbols help express what is hard to express with language. He invites those who believe in the supremacy of the rational mind to learn more about the symbolic language of the soul. For example, “Western rationalism no longer understands myths, and their importance, although almost all historic cultures did.” (p. xxix.) And, “Because the rational mind cannot process love or suffering, for example, it tends to either avoid them, deny them, or blame somebody for them...” (p. xxxi.)

Myths (such as those of Greek mythology, including the Hero’s Journey) connect us to our developmental



journey through life, and show us the kinds of milestones that each of us will meet along the way – a journey that we all share in concept, though the details will be different. Rohr states that myths share a common imagery, or symbolism, which is present in all cultures and is expressed in dreams, ancient myths, and the beliefs of tribal societies.

Falling Upward, the title, means that we cannot achieve our destiny without a fall, or failure. Only this can free us to see our own truth, and discover the (upward) spiritual path for which we were born.

Each of us has a purpose, which will be revealed in time, as long as we are connected to our own inner truth, and through it, to a collective or universal truth. We could call this perspective imaginary (see also the discussion of book 9) – “all in the mind” – but its impact will likely be real!

“Falling Upward”

Respectable modern physics (i.e., quantum entanglement) is aligned with the position that everything is inter-related. We cannot rationally respond to each of mega-trillions of events occurring around us in any one moment. But, if indeed everything is entangled, then we may connect with everything via our intuitive souls.

The next book suggests the costs of maintaining an external focus, ignoring the inner world of mind and spirit.