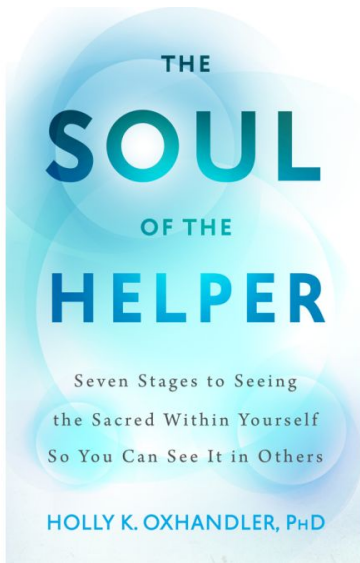




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The Soul of the Helper

Seven Stages to Seeing the Sacred within Yourself
So You Can See It in Others

by Holly K. Oxhandler

DESCRIPTION

There are many kinds of helpers in our world, the caregivers among us. They are the social workers who serve the vulnerable, the nurses and doctors who treat the ill, the teachers who instruct the young, the first responders who rescue the imperiled, the faith leaders who comfort the congregation, the volunteers who support the community. And whether or not it is our professional calling, each of us is likely to serve as a caregiver at some point in our lives, as a parent raising a child, for instance, or as a loved one caring for an aging relative. These and many other efforts to serve are among the most noble pursuits we can imagine, but they come with a danger worth recognizing.

In their devotion to the well-being of others, caregivers routinely put their own well-being last and can unintentionally burn themselves out physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Their self-neglect, paired alongside a deep desire to help others, has the potential to stir up feelings of anger and resentment, leading to a sense of guilt and shame. They often believe that if they were to grant themselves any rest or grace, they would be at risk of failing in their duty.

In *The Soul of the Helper*, Dr. Holly K. Oxhandler shows caregivers and fellow helpers a more self-compassionate way to cope with their overwhelming responsibilities and to attend to their own needs, particularly when it comes to their mental health and spiritual journey. She invites them to pause and realize that if they let their personal resources run dry, they cannot possibly care for others as fully as they wish. In fact, their efforts are likely to cause more harm than good.

With a background in spiritually-integrated mental health, Dr. Oxhandler teaches helpers a seven-step process to slow down and reconnect with the stillness within themselves. It is in this space of stillness that Oxhandler guides helpers to reconnect with the “sacred spark” within their soul. By allowing themselves to enter that stillness, caregivers will recognize that they, too, are worthy of care. And with that realization, they will see anew the sacred spark that dwells inside everyone else, especially within those they’re helping.

As a social worker, researcher, and person of faith, Dr. Oxhandler writes in a warm and welcoming style, shares many relatable stories, and widens her

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scope to include believers of all faiths and spiritual traditions. Her book is for caregivers everywhere who sense the sacred spark within them saying, in effect: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

Holly K. Oxhandler, PhD, LMSW, is an associate professor and associate dean for research and faculty development at Baylor University’s Diana R. Garland School of Social Work. For over a decade, Dr. Oxhandler has studied and developed tools to assess mental health care providers’ integration of clients’ spirituality in treatment, helping professionals’ infusion of their own faith in their work, and clients’ views toward discussing their spirituality in mental health care.

Dr. Oxhandler has written extensively for top professional journals within social work and psychology, and her research has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *Religion News Service*, and more. She also co-hosts the weekly podcast *CXMH: A Podcast on Faith and Mental Health*.

She lives in Waco, Texas, with her husband, Cory, and their two children, Callie and Oliver.

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