Spirituality for Extroverts (And Tips for Those Who Love Them)

By Nancy Reeves

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw

It was good news for my discipleship when my spiritual director said I was “allowed” to use bushwalks and gardening as spiritual practices. I love conversation, the outdoors and activity. Being quiet, staying indoors and doing nothing has never particularly appealed to me as a life-giving activity. For morning prayer, I prefer a jog and a chat with God than a sit and a read. I understand that quiet contemplation and slowing down can be a helpful corrective to my driven and workaholic tendencies. But I also appreciate that God can speak to me and be with me as I am. Quiet introverted ways are not the only way to encounter God – “Hallelujah” says my extroverted soul.

Spirituality for Extroverts gives me permission to cultivate my discipleship with active and “extroverted” practices as well as quiet devotional practices. Nancy’s book helps me think broadly about encountering God, not just through practices that sometimes feel more like torture than blessing, but through:

- talking about faith with others, including seekers, spiritual friends, my spiritual director and small group buddies
- seeing the sacred in people and nature, for me especially when I am rock climbing
- singing, dancing and playing with my kids
- prayer-walking, jogging, swimming and gardening
- pilgrimage, inter-faith dialogue, reading and writing
- reflecting on God in church and with worship music, but also in the coffee shop where I read this book and heard the longing for a better world in the background music lyrics.

It offers numerous examples of extroverted believers, challenges to beware of, activities, discussion points and journal questions, and tips for friends and spiritual directors (especially introverts trying to keep up with our comparatively impulsive, energetic ways).

As I grow in my discipleship I don’t want to be stuck in just “extroverted” ways. I long to engage in outer and inner, loud and quiet, active and slow ways to encounter God. I celebrate encountering God in ministry and in retreat. Spirituality for Extroverts is among the most positive news for my discipleship that I have read in recent years; right up there with a spiritual direction session that sent me outside to nurture my fruit trees, and up to Warburton for a bushwalk, coffee and mutual spiritual direction retreat with my wife Jenni.


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