



The Happy Heretic: Seven Spiritual Insights for Healing Religious Codependency

Leo Booth

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Religion can be source of comfort when facing struggles both personal and universal. But clinging to religion as a codependent fix for all problems can cultivate excessive fear, shame, guilt and low self-esteem.

Acclaimed author Reverend Leo Booth, a Unity minister and former Episcopal priest, warns that a belief in tenets like "Everything happens for a reason" and "This is in God's hands" can be the first step in developing religious codependency.

Rev. Leo turns traditional thinking and spirituality upside down by suggesting that many toxic messages emanate from core religious beliefs. In *The Happy Heretic*, he challenges beliefs like original sin; a dogmatic, one-way path to God; the shaming of human sexuality, religious codependency; and the exclusiveness of Jesus' perfection within the human race. The arguments he presents are derived from Pelagius, a fourth-century monk who challenged the teachings of St. Augustine; and Rumi, a revolutionary thirteenth-century poet and philosopher. In his confessions, St. Augustine's states, "It is only by Your grace and mercy that You have melted away the ice of my evil." Pelagius felt this idea lacked balance. It affirmed only God's role and didn't speak to our involvement. Likewise, Rumi believed that God's spirit exists *within* all human beings and enables divine creativity in life.

The theology, philosophy, and recited prayers we learned through organized religion often emphasize the idea that we are sinful people who are dependent upon a powerful and punishing God. *The Happy Heretic* provides an escape from this shadow by encouraging readers to enter into a partnership with God, affirming personal dignity alongside responsibility; in other words, "free will" and the choices we make determine much of the success or failure we encounter. Real-life examples of the core issues surrounding religious codependency, along with Seven Spiritual Insights, help readers rethink their religious beliefs—including the prayers they grew up with—to form a deeper, more spiritual understanding of who they are and their connection with God.

In this thought-provoking read, Reverend Leo calls himself a heretic, a person who is willing to think differently, and he invites readers to discover an alternative explanation for how we experience God's grace. *The Happy Heretic* explains this divine relationship in ways that make us feel alive, empowered, and still true to who we are.

The Happy Heretic confronts toxic religious messages and brings a spiritual awareness that affirms human possibility and responsibility. . . . This book is not for the fainthearted. –John Bradshaw, author of *Homecoming*

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