



HUG

YOUR

CACTUS



Embracing the Ugly Parts of Your Soul.

Pastor Chris Holder

ROBERT DOWNEY JR.



Telegraph.co.uk/video



Cactus Hugging Defined

“When life is in a self-imposed crisis, embracing the ugly part(s) of one’s soul long enough to become a person of some humility and life to take on new a meaning.”

From Speech by Robert Downey Jr.



Hypothesis

The cactus hugging metaphor works as an approach to soul care; more specifically when one's life, or a significant part of their life is not working due to a self-imposed crisis.



Soul Care Defined

“We can define soul care as the support and restoration of the well-being of persons in their depth and totality, with special concern for their inner life... The goal of such care can be described as fostering the psycho-spiritual growth of this inner-person.”

David G. Benner, *Care of Souls*, 23



Brokenness

Can one actually find healing by leaning into their own brokenness & ugly parts of their soul?

Or can one find real and lasting healing without leaning into their own brokenness & ugly parts of their soul?



Invitation

Cactus Hugging or to Hug Your
Cactus is an invitation to deny
or (die to) self or ego.

It's a journey from the false,
shadow, or wounded self to
discover truer self or essence.



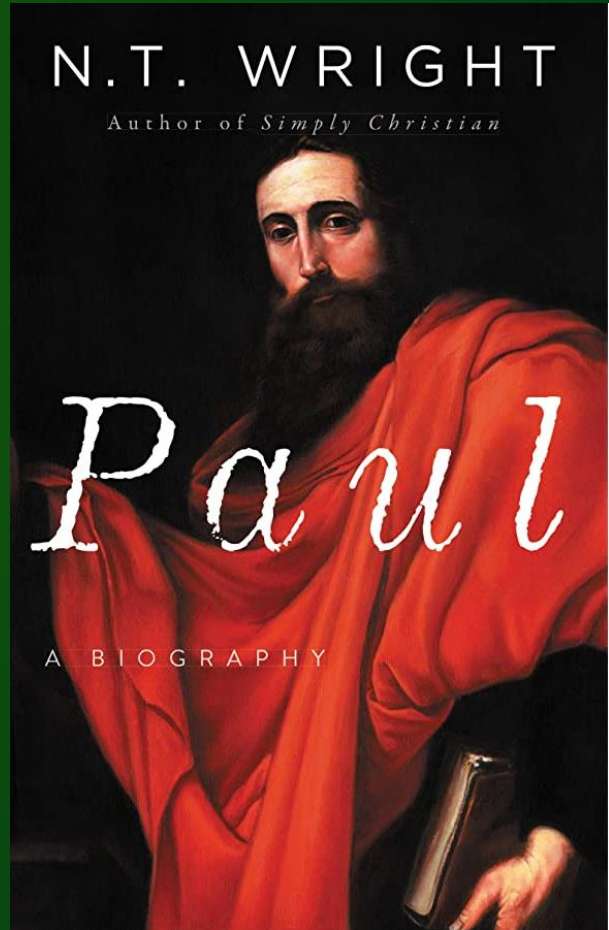
Ego in Psychoanalysis

“the part of a person's mind that tries to match the hidden desires (= wishes) of the id (= part of the unconscious mind) with the demands of the real world.”

dictionary.cambridge.org

Biblical Example

Saul the
zealous
persecutor
becomes
Paul the
zealous
Apostle





Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

So, to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

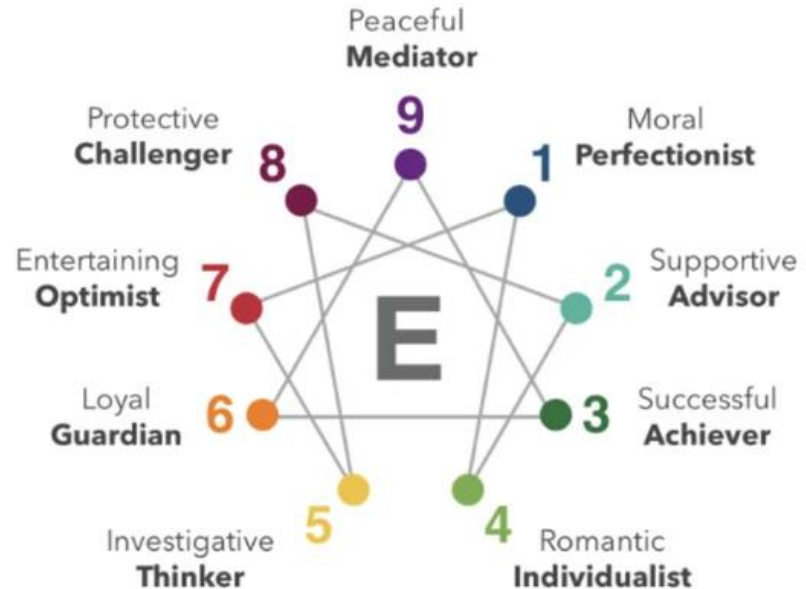


Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Integration of 3 Traditions

The Enneagram of Personality





The Enneagram

The Enneagram and other personality profiles help one discover their cactus through the learning the negative or shadow traits of their tendency or type.

Integration of 3 Traditions

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The 12 Steps of Recovery

The background of the slide features a close-up of a green cactus with several bright red, round fruits. The cactus is set against a blurred green landscape under a clear sky. A dark green, curved banner is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text.

The 12 Steps

The 12 Steps of recovery, expressed in groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, show how certain addictive behaviors lead to one's crisis and help them work through and integrate their brokenness (cactus) in telling their story.



The 12 Steps

“The ‘language of recovery’ works not because those telling their stories describe experiences of Release, Gratitude, and so on, but because in the very telling of their stories, they actually experience those realities.”

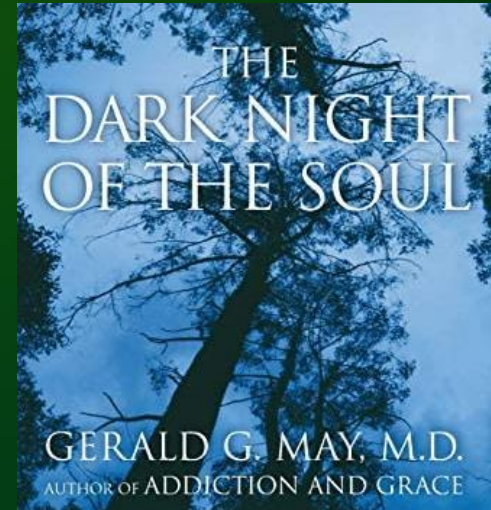
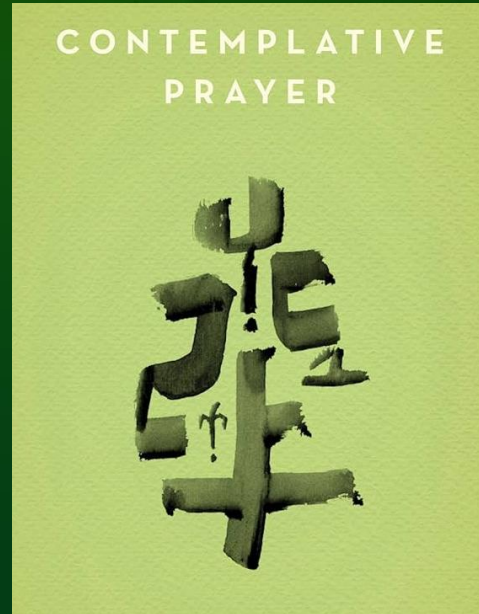
Kurtz & Ketchum, *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, 160.



THE
VALLEY

Integration of 3 Traditions

Contemplative Prayer Practices & Meditation



A background image showing a close-up of a green cactus with several red, round fruits. The cactus is set against a blurred green landscape with hills under a blue sky. A dark green curved shape is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text.

Contemplative Prayer

Contemplative Prayer through engaging disciplines and practices like prayer, meditation, stillness, silence, and solitude; can help create the time and space one needs to process and unpack the parts of the cactus hugging journey.

Two Approaches to Prayer and Meditation



Lectio Divina
(Divine Reading)
Ladder of
Four Rungs
Guigo II

Two Approaches to Prayer and Meditation



Prayer
(oratio)

Meditation
(meditatio)

Trials
(tentatio)





Embracing Paradox

“Simul iustus et Peccator”

Simultaneously Saint & Sinner

“The saints in being righteous are at the same time sinners; they are righteous because they believe in Christ whose righteousness covers them and is imputed to them, but they are sinners because they do not fulfill the law and are not without sinful desires.”


Martin Luther, *Romans Commentary*



Embracing Paradox

“I too, wanted to make music capable of carrying its own weight, even the weight of our own contradictions. To be ‘in the world but not of it’ was the challenge in the scripture that would take a lifetime to figure out. As artists we were slowly uncovering paradox and the idea that we are not compelled to resolve every contradictory impulse.”

Bono, Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story, 143.



Hug Your Cactus!!
As upward growth



Long Enough

Humility & New Meaning

Embrace the Ugly

Personal Responsibility

Faith - Forgiveness

Don't give up Hope

Self Imposed Crisis



**Remember
You are
Both
Prickly &
Beautiful**









THANK YOU

And Keep Hugging your Cactus



Additional Resources

- hugyourcactus.com – My blog and link to YouTube page
- Robert Downey Jr. speech – youtube.com/watch?v=_AAJuynxnTQ
- *Paul, A Biography* – Book by N.T. Wright
- cac.org - Center for Action & Contemplation (Richard Rohr)
- enneagraminstitute.com – Great website full of information
- Enneagram Mapmakers – Podcast by Christopher Heuertz
- Dr. Tom LaHue – Enneagram YouTube Channel
- *Dark Night of the Soul* – Original Book by St. John of the Cross
- aa.org/the-twelve-steps - Alcoholics Anonymous website
- *The Spirituality of Imperfection* – Kurtz & Ketcham: Power of Storytelling