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Excerpts
from

HOW DO

*Inspiring Responses from Religious Leaders, Spiritual
Guides, Healers, Activists & Other Lovers of Humanity*

YOU PRAY?

Celeste Yacoboni
editor

Mirabai Starr
foreword

Dear Friend,

Thank you so much for downloading these excerpts of essays from my book.

How Do You Pray? is intended to offer guidance, support and inspiration. Imagine as you read the prayers of the 129 people in this book that we are all part of a "prayerfield", an energetic flow of love for each other, for our earth, and for the Divine.

In addition to these excerpts, you'll find my introduction to the book as well as a link to find more information about it.

Enjoy your reading! Be sure to stop by our site at <http://howdoyoupray.com> and let us know how YOU pray.

With love and blessings,

Celeste



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Introduction

As darkness turned to light early one morning in 2008, it dawned on me that the question “How do you pray?” was to determine the direction of my life. A compelling inner voice asked me if I was prepared to bring this question to the world. When I arose, I awakened to a profound sense that deep contemplation of this simple question was a means to both celebrate diversity and highlight our unity.

The way we pray provides a mirror to our soul. It reflects our most fundamental values and beliefs, hopes and dreams, fears and doubts. Prayer unifies us with ourselves and with each other by putting us in touch with the divine essence within.

The contributions in this book come from many different spiritual paths, including no path at all, but as you read them you’ll experience a sense of resonance and alignment.

Whether the essays were written by people who are religious, or ‘spiritual but not religious’, or some other category altogether, they all share the common thread of a love for humanity.

— Celeste Yacoboni, April 2014

Short Excerpts from Submitted Essays

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shlomi

Begin prayer with gratefulness, because that's the easiest one. We have lots to be grateful for - the fact we can see with our eyes, and we can hear, and so on. After you begin with gratitude, then comes the other stuff, the concerns: "I want to share with you my concerns, dear God. These are the people I'm concerned about. A friend of mine had an operation today. I hope she heals well."

Kim Rosen

I've never had a relationship to prayer. Until recently I couldn't fathom what people got out of reciting in Hebrew at dusk or bowing down to Allah 5 times a day, or repeating the Lord's Prayer or the rosary. Then, in a moment of extreme darkness, almost by accident, I discovered the power of speaking a poem that I love, and suddenly I understood.... And, when you speak the poem aloud, the sound vibrates the crystals in your bones and fascia the way your voice vibrates in the nave of a Cathedral, creating a special resonance that invites revelation.

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

Whatever moment of the day, whatever outer activities, when I look within I see this mystery that is praying, the silence and wonder of how the heart is a place of prayer, an altar of love. I feel the tenderness, the sweetness, the power of this prayer. This prayer is the essence of my being, a covenant of love, a remembrance, a meeting and a merging. It is a living oneness within me that belongs to every moment of the day and night. This prayer is my practice, an offering of my self, my own most intimate way of being with my Beloved. What else can I do in this world but pray? We are love's prayer.

Lama Surya Das

Praying almost always has an exquisitely salutary effect on my mind and nervous system; helping me relax, get straight, centered, attuned, and honest with myself and my circumstances. Now, in my mature years, sometimes I recite to myself prayers learned in my teens and twenties, while lying in bed at night or sitting in the many airports and planes, which take me around the world. Developing and strengthening your daily, as well as year-round, prayer life is an important part of many spiritual paths, on good days as well as when encountering difficulties. My Benedictine friend Brother David Steindl-Rast often says that "Gratefulness is the heart of prayer."

Katherine Woodward Thomas

The holiest moments of our lives are when we make the choice to turn towards Life, rather than away, in the face of all of life's topplings and shocking losses. To say a prayer that aligns us with all that is good, loving, beautiful and true in the midst of the rubble and despair, and rather than ask God to make this better for us, to declare instead who we will be in the face of it. It is in this sacred instant that we awaken to ourselves as the generators of life and love, and begin to understand prayer as the holy act of co-creation.

Andrew Harvey

"How do I pray?" How beautiful. It's such an important thing to do, because I think many people are scared of prayer and frightened of prayer and don't do it nearly enough. There should be an undercurrent of prayer in everything because everything is potentially a prayer, every reaction, every gesture, every movement, every inner thought.

Regina Sara Ryan

Prayer at specific times and in specific places is a part of daily practice. But prayer also spontaneously arises when, for instance, one hears in the news that there are fires raging in New Mexico, or wars in Afghanistan. What can I do from my desk in the office, or my post at the kitchen sink, except to hold my intention for those afflicted, and to breathe and to repeat an internal prayer in the Name of God to bless those who need courage in this particular time and energy to work that. I generally don't find myself praying for things like, "Oh God, please make the fire stop." I've never been oriented toward praying to ask for some kind of divine intervention. That always seemed really presumptuous. However, just holding in compassion and blessing the whole situation – the situation of the Earth, the situation of the individuals involved - is important because we all need courage and strength and joy in any kind of challenging situation.

HankWesselman

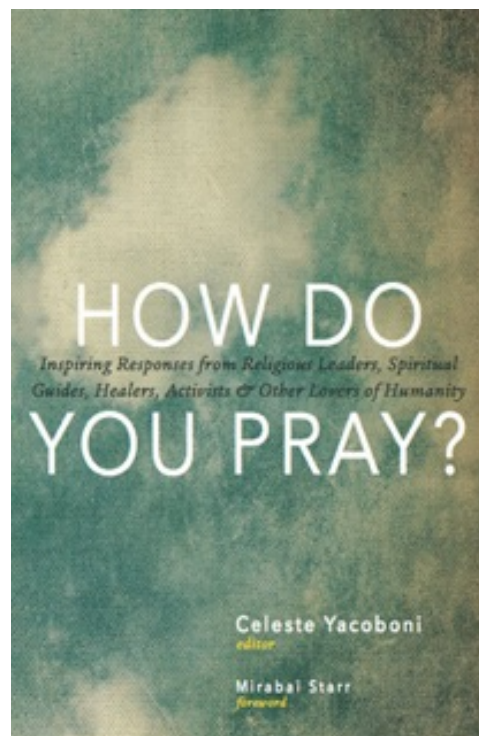
...Makua looked me over with satisfaction. My life has never been quite the same, and every breath is now a prayer... and every moment of every day. The chief then shared this thought with me.

“Know that when you offer prayer, you find love within its pure form and you are no longer finite. In those moments, you have found your eternity. When we are able to let our love free to ride the wind of spirit, and this is our breath that carries our prayers, we are now following the blueprint we have laid out for our own growth. And it is precisely then that we may choose how we shall serve that mystery that created us and all that is...”

Byron Katie

This very moment is when all prayers are already answered. There are no wants necessary in it, no needs, no shoulds or shouldn'ts, so of course we are perfectly fulfilled, though we may not know it. Prayers can only be answered in the moment. Nothing else is necessary; nothing else is possible, or ever has been, or ever will be. It's where we always are. And how wonderful the moment is when the mind finally becomes still enough to recognize that!

Prayer evokes that power within us that is capable of everything... I often say that if I had a prayer, it would be this: God, spare me from the desire for love, approval, or appreciation. Amen. I don't have a prayer, in fact, because I don't want anything but what I have. I know the benevolence of life. Why would I pray for something different, which would always be less than what comes? God is another name for reality. It's complete, it's perfect, it fills me with the utmost joy. The thought of asking for what isn't never even arises.



Learn more about the book and order your copy by visiting <http://howdoyoupray.com> or by visiting these sites:



This groundbreaking and moving book gathers responses from leaders of diverse spiritual and religious traditions ranging from Buddhism to Islam to Christianity to Judaism, as well as those who do not claim one or any particular walk of faith.

Contributors include Brother David Steindl-Rast, Matthew Fox, James O'Dea, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Tessa Bielecki, Lama Surya Das, Hank Wesselman, Father Bede Griffiths, Byron Katie, Joan Halifax, Normandi Ellis, Andrew Harvey, Dan Millman, Kristena Prater, Nicki Scully, Mirabai Starr, and more.

This book in hard cover with matte laminate cover and book mark ribbon is a beautiful gift package.

Advance Praise for How Do You Pray?

“How Do You Pray is a rich tapestry of the ways in which people communicate with the Absolute, however it is named. It beautifully portrays humankind’s eternal desire for transcendence. This book is a loving accomplishment—more like a prayer than a book.”

— Larry Dossey, MD, *One Mind: How Our Individual Mind is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why it Matters*

“This is a book that many will be putting into their pockets and carrying with them to inspire them on a daily basis. This is a book that not only inspires, but reminds us to come back to ourselves. This is a book that reminds us of the inner connection that powers this world of reality. This is a book that is a gift of hope during a time of great change on the planet. Celeste Yacoboni has planted a seed to awaken our memory! Let our hearts unify as we celebrate our diversity and the spiritual nature we walk with.”

— Jyoti, Spiritual Director for the Center for Sacred Studies and Ambassador to the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers

“In this dazzling collection of praises to the One, an array of spiritual practitioners share intimate glimpses into their inner lives. What a privilege! What stunning beauty, naked humility, startling insight. This is no standard collection of established devotions; it is a fullbodied, broken-openhearted love song to the Great Mystery.”

— Mirabai Starr, *God of Love: A Guide to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity & Islam*

“Celeste Yacononi is the curator of the world’s greatest spiritual practices and prayers, all put together in one beautiful, holy book and place, where anybody who believes in anything or nothing can reconnect to themselves, to God, and to why they are really here.”

— Marcia Wieder, CEO/Founder of Dream University

“If you want to enrich your inner life, immerse yourself in the beautiful examples of prayer from spiritual teachers, visionaries and thought leaders in this exquisite volume. *How Do You Pray?* offers creative inspiration and rich nourishment for all seekers.”

—Michael J. Gelb, *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci* and *Innovate Like Edison*

“In this feast of a book, Celeste Yacononi presents us with dozens of invitations to stop, to listen, to let go, to wonder, to shout in praise, to cry with longing. Here is a gift for all lovers of God, whatsoever Name is assigned to that One.”

— Regina Sara Ryan, *Praying Dangerously* and *Igniting the Inner Life*

“Celeste’s book is not just entertaining, or interesting, or inspiring. It’s positively revolutionary.”

— Arjuna Ardagh, *The Translucent Revolution*