

# Dark Nights of the Soul: A Guide to Finding Your Way Through Life's Ordeals

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Every human life is made up of the light and the dark, the happy and the sad, the vital and the deadening. How you think about this rhythm of moods makes all the difference.

Our lives are filled with emotional tunnels: the loss of a loved one or end of a relationship, aging and illness, career disappointments or just an ongoing sense of dissatisfaction with life. Society tends to view these "dark nights" in clinical terms as obstacles to be overcome as quickly as possible. But Moore shows how honoring these periods of fragility as periods of incubation and positive opportunities to delve the soul's deepest needs can provide healing and a new understanding of life's meaning. Dark Nights of the Soul presents these metaphoric dark nights not as the enemy, but as times of transition, occasions to restore yourself, and transforming rites of passage, revealing an uplifting and inspiring new outlook on such topics as:

- ❑ The healing power of melancholy
- ❑ The sexual dark night and the mysteries of matrimony
- ❑ Finding solace during illness and in aging
- ❑ Anxiety, anger, and temporary insanities
- ❑ Linking creativity, spirituality, and emotional struggles
- ❑ Finding meaning and beauty in the darkness

When it comes to spiritual growth, we humans are solar-seeking beings; eager for the bright lights of clarity and the bliss of illumination. Paradoxically, we all need to walk through the shadow of the dark night in order to discover a life worth living, according to psychotherapist and spiritual commentator Thomas Moore. Unlike depression, which is more of an emotional state, Moore calls the dark night a slow transformation process, which is fueled by a profound period of doubt, disorientation and questioning. Ultimately, a journey into the dark night will reshape the very meaning of your life. As a self-proclaimed "lunar type," Moore is comfortable leading his clients and readers into the shadows, where ambiguities and mysteries lurk around every corner. He describes the dark night journey in stages, starting with feeling distant from your life even as you continue to go through the motions. The second phase is "liminality," meaning living on the threshold between the known self and the unknown self. This is perhaps the most uncomfortable phase as the dark night may "take you away from the cultivation and persona you have developed in your education and from family learning," he explains. After dwelling in this murky darkness, there's a stage of "re-incorporation," in which one integrates the profound inner transitions into daily life. Like a tour guide to the underworld, Moore leads readers through all these phases, offering tools and rituals for making the journey more tolerable or at least more meaningful. He also speaks to the many arenas and stages of life in which we might find ourselves stumbling through the dark, with chapters on marriage, parenting, sexuality, creativity and health. The scope is ambitious, and at times the structure seems disjointed—but this is perhaps Moore's best contribution since *Care of the Soul*, proving once again that he is a wise and formidable spiritual teacher. --Gail Hudson

Thomas Moore, Ph.D., wrote the phenomenal #1 bestsellers *Care of the Soul* and *SoulMates* as well as many other successful books. Moore was a Catholic monk for twelve years and later became a psychotherapist, earning degrees in theology, musicology, and religion. Moore now lectures extensively throughout North America.

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