



Adapted from the book, *Holy Crap: Spirituality Within the Muck of Everyday Life*, www.holycrapway.com/mainsite,
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A Lucky Bat Book



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Table of Contents

[Dedication](#)

[Preface](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1: When the Crap Hits the Fan](#)

[Part 1: Our Main Arenas](#)

[Chapter 2: Spirituality in the Workplace — Offering My Neck Like a Thanksgiving Turkey](#)

[Chapter 3: Love Includes Getting Your Own Crap Mirrored Back](#)

[Chapter 4: Spiritual Parenting — What a Concept](#)

[Part 2: Fundamentals to Swimming Upstream](#)

[Chapter 5: Accountability — The Key to Unlocking the Holy](#)

[Chapter 6: Diving Deep Under the Stormy Waves of Life](#)

[Part 3: Walking Smack into the Miracle of Life](#)

[Chapter 7: Waiting For a Miracle](#)

[Chapter 8: The Miracle of the Ordinary](#)

[Chapter 9: The Cosmic Game of Trust](#)

[Part 4: What If God Really Were One of Us?](#)

[Chapter 10: What is God?](#)

[Chapter 11: God in a Fast-Food World](#)

[Chapter 12: Truth is Weird](#)

[Part 5: Circuit Training For the Ultimate Journey](#)

[Chapter 13: Jesus Didn't Watch TV](#)

[Chapter 14: When You Die, Will it Really Matter How Many Tasks You Were Able to Check Off?](#)

[Chapter 15: OMG! I Forgot to Meditate](#)

[Chapter 16: Riding the Currents of Music](#)

[Chapter 17: The Saint that Bled Sap](#)

[Part 6: Confronting Fear, Anger, and Hopelessness](#)

[Chapter 18: Self-Compassion — Carrying our Best Friend Around in our Back Pocket](#)

[Chapter 19: Why Does God Allow Suffering? \(And What Can We Do About it?\)](#)

[Chapter 20: The Cross](#)

[Part 7: Our Souls Wide Awake](#)

[Chapter 21: Joyously Melting Into God](#)

[Chapter 22: Conclusion — Keep Your Eyes on the Prize](#)

[Epilogue: You](#)

[Comments and Endnotes](#)

Chapter 1: When the Crap Hits the Fan

When my son, Bear, was about 5, we were playing football at the local park. We were both excited to be outside on such a gorgeous day. We were having so much fun that I didn't worry about him missing his mid-afternoon snack. It hardly seemed to matter as we tore up the field, sprinting to catch touchdown after touchdown.

Even at this age, Bear could throw hard spirals with his unusually strong arm. He loved our time together so much that he never wanted to stop. When the time came to leave, he didn't want to go.

Soon Bear was painfully tired from our prolonged play, but he insisted on staying. I told him we needed to leave but he was firm in his resolve. His emotions started to rise. His face was *already* beet red from our game. He began to clench his body, determined to stand his ground.

I tried to explain why we needed to go home, but he was adamant. He was not leaving. We were standing about a yard and a half away from each other when he lost his temper. He cocked back his rocket arm and threw the football at my face as hard as he could — and scored a direct hit.

I was stunned.

A tempest of emotions whirled inside me as the sting of the ball started to emanate through my face.

I could have...

I could have done a lot of things at that moment to get rid of my rage, hurt feelings, and physical pain.

But the only responsible thing I could really do at that point was to collapse right there on the blacktop and just breathe.

There were other families scattered around playing basketball or skipping rope, but my only focus was on my breath.

Bear ran.

I breathed slowly and deeply for five or ten minutes. Every so often I caught a glimpse of Bear peeking around a corner at me.

The slower and more deeply I breathed, the more calm I became, and I was eventually able to have clear thoughts.

I eventually stood up, brushed myself off, and sought out Bear. After several attempts, he came to me like a frightened puppy.

I got down to his level and looked at him. Without intimidation. Without condescension. Without punishment, shame, or guilt. I was just purely present with him. Because he sensed this and didn't feel afraid, he sincerely and completely apologized.

We embraced, allowing our leftover emotions to drip off our beings like rainwater.

I grabbed the football and scooped Bear up in my arms. As we sluggishly made our way toward our car, exhausted and emotionally worn out, our hearts were connected.

Life is chock full of opportunities to “be spiritual”. Spirituality is not about escaping the difficulties of life. It is remembering the Big Picture within the everyday muck. It is developing

our spiritual muscle through adversity, pain, and injustice. **Spirituality is recognizing and actualizing the holy within the crap of life.**

If crap is the foundation of our spiritual growth, we sure have loads of it. Every day it is piled at our door. Being cut off by a jacked-up morning driver, receiving a wicked email from a coworker, fending off fake smiles while someone spreads gossip.

There is often so much crap that we can't breathe for the stink. Our instinct is to escape it, get as far away from it as possible. But this brings us no spiritual growth. And we ultimately find that there *is* no escape from it. Crap will find us wherever we hide.

If we want spiritual growth, we need to dive head-first into the muck of everyday life.

Unfortunately, crap gets a bad rap. And why not? It stinks. It sticks to the bottom of our shoes. Yet it is a part of everyday life and crucial to life's cycles. Have you fertilized your garden recently? Have you eaten any vegetables lately? You know what that fertilizer is made of? Bat crap. That's right — crap from a whole mess of bats.

Crap is necessary for growth.

Spirituality Within the Muck of Everyday Life

How can we focus on both our survival and our spiritual evolution at the same time? Financially surviving in our rapid-firing and impersonal world commands a slew of responsibilities and actions that need to be carried out. How can we attain our most cherished spiritual goals while enslaved to the necessity of the dollar? How can we seek enlightenment while paying the bills and possibly supporting a family?

The demands of life are endless. Drive to work. Work all day. Make money. Drive home from work. Clean the house. Pick up the drycleaning. Bring the kid to soccer practice. Make dinner. Clean the dishes. Talk parenting with the partner. Pay the bills. Discuss finances with the partner. Do laundry. And so on and so on and so on...

Attempt to be spiritual on top of our normal grinds and begin to Freak Out!

Meditate daily. Calm self before yelling at partner or kid. Remember the Big Picture. Resist habit of drinking alcohol to relax. Exercise body. Breathe during traffic. Restrain self from escaping in TV. Forgive those who are shoving a knife through our heart. And so on and so on and so on...

Life keeps getting faster and faster, and caffeine has become our drug of choice as we try to achieve three times more than what our parents accomplished a generation ago. The nine-to-five job is a distant dream. Faxing is now too slow, while Blackberries and iPhones keep us chained to our jobs 24/7. Can you even remember what it was like to leave work before the turn of the millennium — with no emails, text messages, or cell phone calls chasing you into every corner of your personal life?

There's a speed limit for driving too fast. There should be a speed limit for *doing* too fast. Our bodies and our minds just can't handle it. Instead of human beings, we have been forced to become human doings just to keep up and survive.

Never before has it been so difficult to find spiritual serenity and tranquility in such a frenzied and muddled mess.

This is the spiritual challenge of today: To find true inner peace and stillness in the middle of chaos. To find the holy within the crap. A noble and gargantuan task indeed.

([Click here](#) to listen to "[So Far Away](#)," about how distant fulfillment and inner peace can sometimes feel)

Take the spiritual challenge a notch further: **To welcome all obstacles and stressful events as spiritual opportunities to bring us closer to the Source and our Deepest Self.**

How do we attempt that? *By recognizing and actualizing the holy within the muck of life.* How do we play Rumpelstiltskin and alchemize crap into the holy? **By integrating spiritual principles into every aspect of our lives.**

Spiritual principles ("Love everyone as yourself," etc.) are handholds to climb up the mountain to enlightenment. They are no mere slogans or warm-fuzzy concepts. They are psychological in

nature and powerfully affect our consciousness in very specific ways to help us achieve self-realization.

However, spiritual principles only work if we put them into action. If we just read them and think they're interesting — but don't live them, integrate them, and embody them — they don't help us. We actually have to *do* something with them. It's like going to a four-star restaurant, ordering an assortment of gourmet meals, and just looking at the dishes. We have to sink our teeth into them if we want to experience their delights.

Spiritual principles are the keys to unlocking doors of consciousness and perspective. But we not only have to turn the keys, we have to walk through the doors. Growing up in the psychoanalytical '70s, I believed that simply understanding something intellectually frees us. However, understanding just leads us to the starting gate. Only by putting our comprehension into action will we grow.

We can actualize the power of spiritual principles in every area of our lives to achieve our divine goals. My goal is to spiritually grow until I attain what the saints and mystics have called a state of oneness or enlightenment.

What is your spiritual goal?

Let us walk this eternal path together along the following pages. Let us tear through the illusions of our muck. Let us discover how to be in this world without losing ourselves in it. Instead of being weighed down by our worldly responsibilities, let us use them as springboards to propel us into God's bosom. Let us walk the trail to self-realization while changing diapers, doing our taxes, and surviving in this often-times bullying world.

Are you up for the journey?

Self-Reflection

1. What spiritual principles (“Love everyone as yourself,” etc.) do you want to remember during your day?

([Click here](#) to post your principles and read others’ responses.)

2. How have you previously used a spiritual principle in an everyday situation?

([Click here](#) to post your answer and read others’ responses.)

3. What is your greatest spiritual goal? Oneness with God? Heaven? To be “saved”? To live in absolute integrity? To be able to fully embody love? To live like Jesus, Buddha, or Mohammed? *Keep your spiritual goal in mind as you walk through the following pages.*

([Click here](#) to post your goal and read others’ responses.)

Share your thoughts and gain the support of others. If you haven’t already, [click here](#) or visit www.holycrapway.com to post your answers to the above questions and read others’ responses.