



## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bernie S. Siegel. *365 Prescriptions for the Soul: Daily Messages of Inspiration, Hope, and Love*. New World Library, 2009. 384 pp. \$17.95**

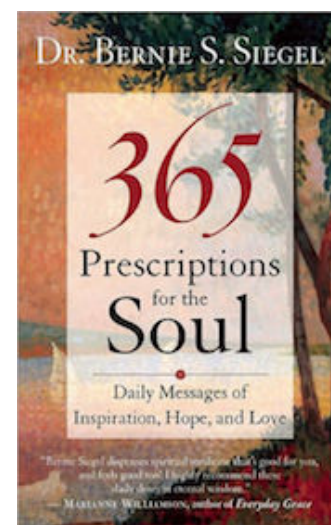
Bernie Siegel is one of my favorite authors. He helps people deal with their problems not only as a surgeon but also as one human being to another, connecting with their hearts and souls. His warm, caring, loving presence is felt in this lovely collection of thoughtful and heart-felt observations.

Here is an example of his wisdom:

### PRESCRIPTION #43 HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

*And the time came when the risk to remain tight in a bud  
was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.*

— Anaïs Nin



EACH CELL WITHIN US is like a wise seed capable of growth and blossoming. In nature seeds show their wisdom. Even when they are paved over, they know which direction is up. They intuitively grow up toward the light and life. They push their way through obstructions, deal with adverse weather, and cope with pests and poison in order to complete their mission here on earth.

Plants know that sometimes they must give up a part, be it by pruning or natural loss, to manifest their true beauty. They are not critical of their growth, nor do they compare themselves to others. While seeds don't have to think and worry about all the things we do, we must understand that like them sometimes we too have to fight our way through darkness to survive.

We have the wisdom to nourish our potential and reach for the light. We are capable of growth and have the ability to get through life's adversities. Even the "compost" in our lives could be better used if we would let it stimulate our growth rather than be buried beneath it. If we pay attention to our inner wisdom and nourish the seed within, there is no telling what we can blossom into during the seasons of our life.

### *Soulution of the Day*

*Don't forget that seeds and plants also have quiet times in which they restore and nourish themselves. How often do you take the time to nourish, restore, and revel in your growth and to remember that sometimes loss may lead to life-enhancing changes?*

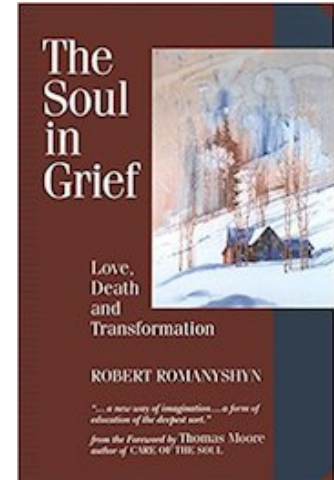
This book is warmly recommended to anyone interested in wholistic healing.

Book review by Daniel Benor, MD, ABIHM  
Editor-in-Chief, International J. of Healing and Caring

**Romanyshyn, Robert. (1999). *The Soul in Grief: Love, Death and Transformation*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. Out of print, used copies on Amazon.com. 184 pp**

Robert Romanyshyn's wife died suddenly of a heart attack at age 45. They had been wonderfully close as a couple, and Robert was thrown into a devastating abyss of grief that he describes in exquisitely poetic prose.

For anyone experiencing grief of someone with whom you've been very close, this is both a validation of your suffering as a natural path of mourning, sorting through your past relationships, riding the waves of grief, letting go of the past, and of ever so gradually finding your way back into life without your loved one.



In the second week after my wife's death, I was awakened by the sound of her voice. She spoke only my name, but her voice seemed to fill the entire room, and what I noticed most of all was the tone with which she called me. Only once before in my life had I heard that tone in her voice, and that was on the occasion when she had gently awakened me from a long sleep shortly after I had been told that my father had died. Her voice on this occasion after her own death had the same qualities of love, tenderness, and compassion and the same soft feel of an embrace, as if the sound itself had a texture to it. And just as I had known that she had died when she passed through the veil, I knew on that night that the tone itself was her message. She had loved and warmed me through my father's death, and had awakened me from sleep and called me back into life, and now again she was warming and loving me through her own death, summoning me to awake.... (p. 13)

Robert Romanyshyn has wonderful gifts of observation of his inner worlds of perceptions and feelings, and a broad and deep connection with authors and poets who have travelled similar paths to his own. He enriches the exquisitely poignant beauty of his own experiences of travelling the paths of grief with observations and quotes from many others who have visited these realms and who share their ways of digesting and absorbing and assimilating such challenging and painful experiences. And he feels himself to be an agent for processing his feelings and sharing them with us, his readers.

Most importantly, he points out that grief stops us from our daily diversions into thinking and doing, and forces us back into deep states of being and feeling. This is often a major aspect of what leads people to feel in their grief that their lives have been derailed. This is a far more accurate description of the process of grief than most people realize. Much of our lives tends to be routinized and we often live through daily plans that schedule various pursuits for the blocks of time with which we build our routines. Losing someone who was an intimate part of our lives forces us to abandon much, if not all of the familiar structures of times and activities in our lives.

...Grief blew apart my familiar world and forced me to recognize that I am not as much the author of meaning as I had believed myself to be. Rather, I am more like an agent of meaning, the means by which the dusty dreams of the things of the world are realized. (p. 47)

Reverie put me in touch with these moments, with these yearnings to let go of my mind and all that I had placed between myself and life. And grief, a kind of uninvited but enforced reverie, threw me into these same moments when its terrible storms ripped apart my mind and I fell,

uncontrollably, into a kind of vegetative state, where all movement stopped and I simply endured the storms. (p. 48-49)

Robert Romanyshyn goes on to ponder various aspects and nuances of sadness in his grieving.

I do not know why in melancholy I was calmed by the presence of animals... Perhaps...the appeal which animals have for us in our moments of sorrow is that they call us back to some earlier sense of home. In their presence, they seem to remind us that while we have lost our way the rest of creation waits our return. (p. 79-80)

...Compared with the animal, we truly are not so securely at home in our constructed world, especially when the winds of some deep sorrow whistle through the cracks in the walls of meaning we build to deal with suffering, pain, absence, loss, grief... (p. 77)

And he wanted to create a memorial from her writings and photos, a way to let people know who she had been and what she had done in the world. But the memory of his mother's death welled up as well, and in the end he abandoned this project, returning these memorabilia to storage.

And gradually, he returns from his grieving to live again and love again.

This book is most warmly recommended for anyone who has been deeply touched by grief and is someone who is moved by prose poems that are woven of deeply felt and beautifully shared feelings and consciousness.

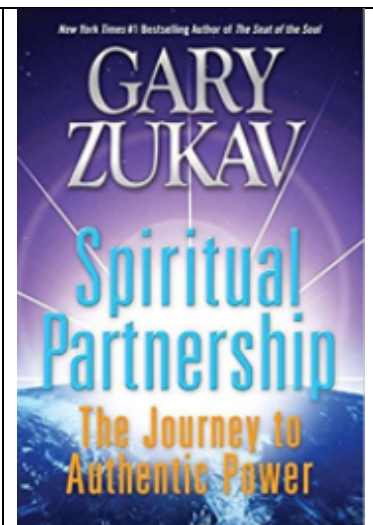
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**Gary Zukav. (2011). *Spiritual Partnership: The Journey to Authentic Power*. HarperOne. 278 pp. \$14.99. Index**

Gary Zukav brings us excellent discussions of many aspects of deep integrity in living our lives. With many examples from his life and experiences of others, he weaves a clear tapestry of ways we can live our lives with integration of every level of our being.

*The tools that are necessary to pull the weeds and cultivate the flowers in your garden are emotional awareness, responsible choice, intuition, and trust in the universe. The more you use them, the more you create authentic power. When creating authentic power is your highest priority, you use them continually.*

Zukav shares as well the evolution and deepening of his relationship with his wife, as but one of many examples of how our relationships can help us to see ourselves more clearly and learn to be present with ourselves and with others.



*Five sensory humans believe that actions create consequences. That is a small part of the story. Multisensory humans know that the intention behind an action creates the consequences of the action. An intention is a quality of consciousness. It is the reason for the action, the motivation for acting. The intention to support a friend by giving him information that he needs and does not know, for example, produces constructive consequences. The intention to prove that you are smarter than a friend produces destructive consequences. The former open you to others. The latter closes your heart.*

Extending these awarenesses further, he points out that there are Universal Laws of Attraction. When you hold selfish intentions, you draw experiences with other selfish people to you. When you learn to hold loving intentions, you draw loving people and loving interactions to you. And there is a deeper level yet, of authentic power, which is “alignment of the personality with the soul (with harmony, cooperation, sharing, and reverence for Life).” At this level we connect with our life lessons.

Life is a series of lessons in opening our awarenesses to our authentic power. Zukav continues with excellent discussions for individuals and couples working on developing and maintaining authentic power. Having a life partner who is also working at these levels is a tremendous boost to your individual and spiritual growth and advancements.

This book is warmly recommended to anyone interested in wholistic healing and personal development.

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