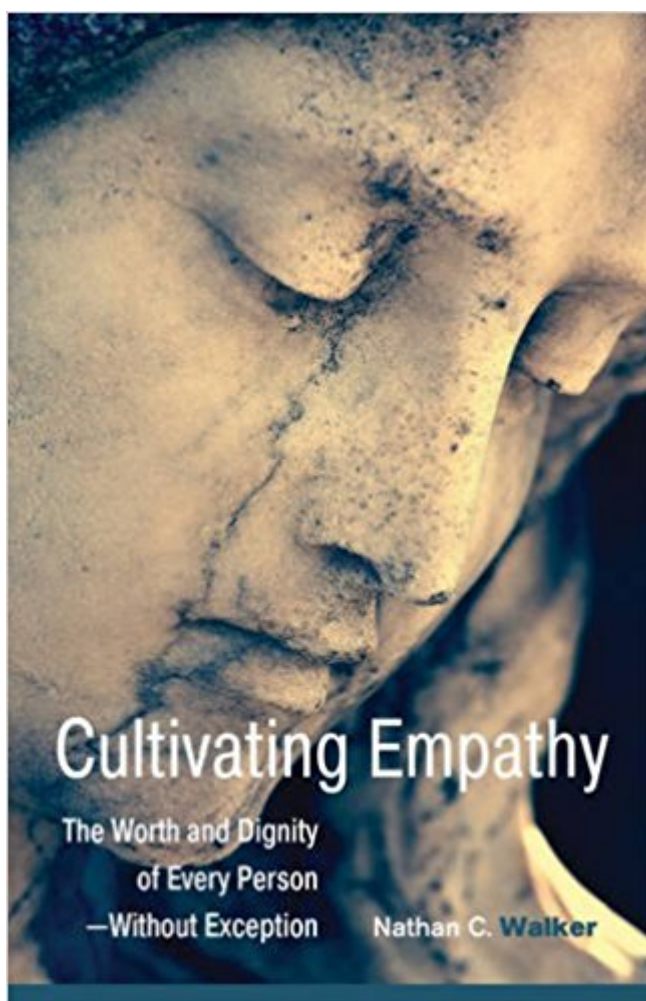


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# Cultivating Empathy: The Worth And Dignity Of Every Person--Without Exception



## Synopsis

In this personal and emotionally honest exploration of conflict, the Reverend Nathan C. Walker introduces a creative and compassionate way to develop empathetic responses. He introduces the concept of the moral imagination—a vital character trait used by those who have the courage to project themselves into a conflict and understand all the perspectives, aware that understanding need not imply agreement. *Cultivating Empathy* presents a collection of essays about the author's wrestlings with personal and cultural conflicts and his commitment to stop "otherizing"—which occurs when we either demonize people or romanticize them. Walker's remedy for these kinds of projections is to employ the moral imagination as an everyday spiritual practice. He shows that through this approach, we can save ourselves from irresponsibly using our imaginations by cultivating genuine empathy for those we previously held in contempt. We can visualize ourselves playing various characters within a conflict and choose not to play a lead role in the drama. Throughout the book he endeavors to find connection with skinheads, murderers, homophobic preachers, privileged 1 percenters, and Monsanto executives. An online companion workbook will help readers to hone these skills through a variety of exercises.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Picked by Publishers Weekly as One of the Top Six Books for a Post-Election Spiritual Detox—Reverend Walker introduces the concept of a moral imagination, or an ability to project oneself into a conflict and understand all the perspectives, as a daily spiritual practice that can lead to developing empathetic responses to those held in contempt. —Emma Koonse, Publishers

Weekly

Nathan C. Walker is the executive director of the Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute in Washington, D.C., where he teaches about the guiding principles of the First Amendment that enable Americans to negotiate religious and philosophical differences in the public square with civility and respect. A Unitarian Universalist minister, he spent 15 years serving congregations in Boston and New York and, for the last 7 of those years, Philadelphia, where he was the senior minister and executive director of the First Unitarian Church.

The concept of moral imagination is a powerful antidote for the hard-line dualism of many of the public and private conversations taking place in this country during the last 25 years. Fear of a different "other" closes our ears and our hearts, resulting in rigid fundamentalism - both liberal and conservative. I was deeply moved by the author's intimacy and sharing. I highly recommend this book for all who want to grow emotionally and spiritually, as well as those interested in the practice of "civil discourse".

We will be discussing this tonight as part of Social Justice Ministry. It's not often that I take notes when I am reading, but I gave myself some tips and bookmarks to return to.

I recommend this book to everyone, no matter what you believe. I found as I read the book, read the stories and reflected upon the "experiment" in the use of moral imagination, I began too see myself and my own bigotries, biases, and limited thinkings. This is a clarion call to all of us...Injoy-Edna

Interesting concept and development

Good read!

As a child of the Anti Vietnam era I am very aware and sorry for all the anger and hurt caused by my friends and my militant advocacy for Peace. Nate Walker is suggesting a path that allows us to communicate and find common ground rather than the winner take all mentality we gravitate to so easily. This book definitely addresses the concerns I have

I consider this a superb and inspiring piece of writing. It is brief and readable and very much to the

point. He speaks from experience -- not all laudable -- thus helping us to acknowledge our own empathic failures, but suggests practical ways of finding support for doing the right thing.

Reverend Nate walks the fine line between preaching and testifying brilliantly. The moral imagination may be the most important spiritual practice for 21st century living. Constantly bombarded by opinions, fear and hate via mass media, Walker shows us how he walks, balancing on the edge, offering a hand to those who have yet to see life lived with empathy and compassion. He also admits that he's missed a few opportunities, and spent time down there himself. But the constant application of the moral imagination makes us all stronger.

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