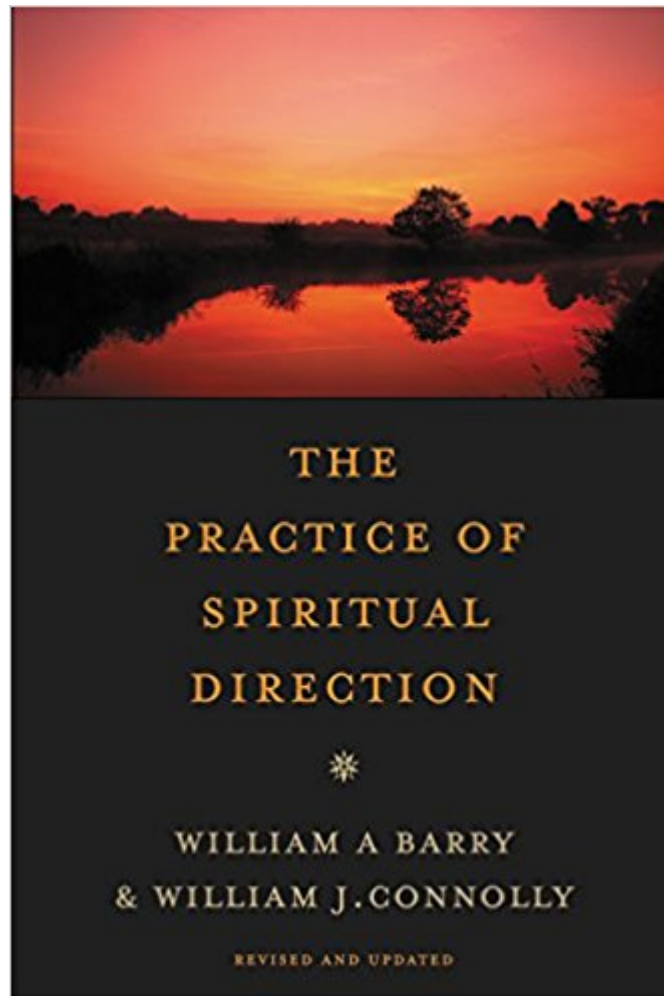




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# **The Practice Of Spiritual Direction**



## Synopsis

The Classic Work on Helping People Become Closer to God Fathers Barry and Connolly see the work of spiritual direction as helping people to develop their relationship with God. In thinking and practice they have absorbed the insights of modern psychotherapy, but have not been absorbed by them. This highly practical book reflects the authors' experience at the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where spiritual direction is available and where directors are trained.

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## Customer Reviews

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William A. Barry, S.J., & William J. Connolly, S.J., were two of the six co-founders of the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1971. The center was one of the first to offer year-long specialized training in spiritual direction. Both authors now reside at Campion Center, Weston, Massachusetts. William A. Barry, S.J., & William J. Connolly, S.J., were two of the six co-founders of the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1971.

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This book was "required reading" in a course on spiritual direction I took that was taught by the Lanteri Center for Ignatian Spirituality (centered in Denver). It is an excellent introduction to the ministry of spiritual direction, especially for people who are not priests, ministers, deacons, or religious. While these people have traditionally served as spiritual directors, there is growing acceptance that "non-professionals" may make gifted spiritual directors too. The book covers the basics from what spiritual direction is to the importance of developing the relationship between the Directee and God and the Director and Directee. It covers all the bases in a non-technical language. While I wouldn't call the book a "breeze" to read, it is well written by a master of the art of spiritual direction and thus "easy" to understand by the focused reader. Those interested in spiritual direction likely would have that focus. The ministry of spiritual direction does take training, and this book will likely help in that training or help a person discern if s/he would like to seek out training. I was fortunate to take direction through the Lanteri Center when they held a satellite program the Washington, DC area. There are a number of such programs across the U.S.

Each time I pick up *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, I am fed with another awareness of who God is with any of us. There is always a note I missed before. This "missed it the first time" parallels my experience of listening to others. Often a listening experience opens a message that's been communicated previously; what seems "new" was really said before in other words and only now is grasped. Barry and Connolly write with a wealth of experience making it unlikely anyone will catch all their wisdom in one reading.

I purchased *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* because it was a required book to read for my class. I really enjoyed reading and I feel that you can learn a lot on Spiritual Direction and how to use the technique of Spiritual Direction. This is one book I will keep handy and use it often as a reference book. I highly recommend this book to be added to your spiritual library.

A former spiritual director of mine sent me towards this book when I asked him whether I should accept directees who were coming to me. I have never had official training in spiritual direction so I was looking for something to give me at least an idea of what to look out for or to avoid. This book gave me exactly what I was looking for: how to bring people to a closer relationship with God. I gave

it four stars since I believe the authors could have been clearer on the traditional Christian and biblical understanding of God (...maybe that was not the goal of the book tho, after all the authors are trying to reach a broader audience). Recommended!!

This was the first book I read on spiritual direction almost 30 years ago. Having reread this revised edition I must conclude that it remains one of, if not the best, treatment of its topic available.

As a theologian, teacher and pastoral worker I have found this book helpful in recognizing more deeply the focus of all ministry: facilitating our relationship with God individually and in community. Through prayer and reflection of the person's experience of God in prayer we grow. Our feelings and even our resistance can help us in this reflection. Action, without reflection, can become soul-less and even wayward. Prayer that

"The Practice of Spiritual Direction" reveals a long experience in the ministry of spiritual direction. It is solidly rooted in the Christian and Catholic tradition of spiritual direction as well as drawing on insights from psychology and psycho analysis. It is balanced and stays true to its fundamental definition of spiritual direction as the spiritual director helping the directee to grow in his/her relationship with God. I would recommend this for anyone who wishes to serve in the ministry of spiritual direction.

Love it! A very insightful book and filled with lots of teachings and examples based on their experience. One of my favorite books during our spiritual formation course.

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