



Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives

Ellen Cole, Judith Ochshorn

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This enlightening book examines how the feminist spirituality movement contributes to the establishment of new paradigms of mental health for women. *Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives* examines possible psychotherapeutic implications for women engaged in feminist spirituality and stimulates much-needed conversation between feminist therapists and feminist theologians/ritualists. Feminist spirituality is part of the current broad challenge to accepted ways of knowing and being. This book argues that as women tell their own stories, they create rituals that enable them to feel a sense of control over the future and to move toward a kind of authority, agency, and autonomy associated with mental health and psychological well-being. Women from many cultural backgrounds and religious perspectives have embraced alternative forms of spiritual expression, based on profound theoretical challenges to mainstream religious beliefs, ranging from calls for the radical reclamation and reconstruction of religious traditions to personal involvement in goddess worship and Wicca. *Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives* presents theoretical, conceptual, and experiential chapters that analyze the extent to which these proliferating women's groups represent the beginnings of new norms of mental health for women. *Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives* presents a variety of voices, including Native American, Christian, Jewish, and Wiccan. Chapters are divided into three sections--Laying the Groundwork, Theoretical Challenges, and Living It Out--and explore a diverse array of topics such as:

- the "shouting" church and Black women's mental health
 - a traditionalist Native American challenge to New Age cooptation
 - a feminist group and Jewish women's self-identity
 - lesbian altar-making and mental health
 - feminist Wicca in the U.S. and Germany
 - the martial arts and women's mental health
 - the use of feminist rituals in therapy and as therapy
- Feminist therapists and theologians, as well as other individuals interested in feminist spirituality or alternative spirituality, will find this book a fascinating exploration of the various aspects of the spirituality of women. *Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives* is also an excellent reader to expand the thinking of students in classes in women's studies and religious studies.

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