

The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection

By Richard Plass, James Cofield

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What does loneliness tell us? "Be it chronic or acute, slight or significant, loneliness is proof of our relational design. At the core of our being is this truth?we are *designed for* and *defined by* our relationships," former pastors Plass and Cofield write. "We were born with a relentless longing to participate in the lives of others. Fundamentally, we are relational souls." Our ability to make deep and emotionally satisfying connections rests on the capacity to trust, and we all know trust can be difficult. Early-life relational "programming" and patterns of attachment can serve as blueprints for relationships later in life, whether good or bad. But no matter our conditioning, God is out to reclaim and restructure the deepest terrain of the human soul by helping us shed our reactive "False Self" and put on our receptive "True Self." Through spiritual disciplines and a conscious participation in the love of the Father, Son and Spirit, we transform our self-awareness and our connection with other people. Authored by counselor Dr. Richard Plass and spiritual director James Cofield, *The Relational Soul* brings together concepts from psychology and spiritual formation. Each chapter includes introductory stories and practical "If this is true, what about you?" questions to help readers engage in relationships in more life-giving ways. When the presence of Christ and community connects with a soul that is open, we witness the miracle of transformation.

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
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Editorial Review

Review

"*Relational Soul* teaches us how to be present to God and present to others?in our marriages, in our homes, in our ministries and in our entire lives. Plass and Cofield blaze a trail, not only for pastors and leaders who are beat-up and burned out, but for all followers of Christ to rediscover their first love. This book is an effective tool to help guide and direct us back to the soul-changing good news found in Jesus Christ. I'm personally thankful for these two gospel wizards, Plass and Cofield, and the gospel magic that they perform. Their fresh insights and encouragements are hope for us all." (Daniel Montgomery, pastor, Sojourn Community Church)

"You are holding in your hands more than a book. Richard Plass and James Cofield have given us a roadmap to help us find the way to each other and to the heart of God. Beautifully written, masterfully developed and applicable for those who want true community but have not tasted it yet, this book helps us find our way to each other in an age of isolation, loneliness and existence in silos where we survive but we do not thrive. Here's to thriving!" (Stephen W. Smith, Potter's Inn Ministry, author of *The Lazarus Life*)

"Jim Cofield and Rich Plass are a gift to the church. These men and the content in this book were God's means to save my life and ministry after severe burnout. Drawing on the riches of God's common grace and special grace, *The Relational Soul* provides what is lacking in much of modern spiritual formation. Your soul will be better off if you take seriously the content of these pages." (Harvey Turner, Living Stones Church, and network director of Acts 29 West)

"Richard Plass and James Cofield's *The Relational Soul* is an engaging explication of the fact that as humans we are created in the image of a trinitarian God who exists in a loving, relational community. It is also a needed reminder of how people are both hurt and healed through the relational fabric of existence." (Gary W. Moon, executive director of the Dallas Willard Center, Westmont College, and author of *Apprenticeship with Jesus*)

"*The Relational Soul* provides real insight into why relationships are so essential, and yet often so aching. Coauthors Plass and Cofield provide practical helps for self-discovery and communion with God that will deepen your relationships with God and others. Hope and help for healing is here!" (Mindy Caliguire, Willow Creek Association)

"In a culture where keystrokes are being confused for relationships, Jim and Rich provide an insightful look at how God created us for real connection that begins with our souls. We have been the beneficiaries of wisdom, spiritual direction and relational clarity from a long friendship with Jim and Rich and are delighted to now have their wisdom captured in this book. If you long to grow in the art of self-care, deepened relationships with others and intimacy with God, this book is for you." (Jeff and Lora Helton, coauthors of *The Fifty Fridays Marriage Challenge*)

"I found Jim and Rich's work in *The Relational Soul* to be both provocative and encouraging. It elicited a deep longing to know myself better and connect in life-giving relationships with others, especially God. Jim and Rich have awakened a desire for this 'narrow way' of profound relational connection. I'm grateful! (Dave Rodriguez, senior pastor, Grace Church, Noblesville, Indiana)

"What a joy to read this distillation of the union of two lifetimes of journeying with Christ into greater communion with God and others. Whether we are aware of it or not, we spend the early phase of our adulthood seeking to conform our worlds to the template of our earliest attachments and the self we became in those relationships. Rich and Jim have engagingly described how relational renewal in Christ can change that template, as we learn how to trust him to make us the kind of people who can receive it." (Eric L. Johnson, Professor of Pastoral Care, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary)

"There are far too many books, both secular and spiritual, for 'coached' living. Finally, Plass and Cofield have penned the needed depth in who and what we are to face ourselves before God?thus allowing God's full, redemptive grace to be what it should in our relationships. The stories are real, the writing terse and piercing. My humble counsel is get it, read it, mark it up, use it and pass it on?if you can let it go?because you will want to refer to this time and time again. It's that good." (M. L. Hillard, senior vice president, Peter F. Drucker Academy, Beijing)

"Blending biblical and psychological insight, Plass and Cofield offer guidance on building (or rebuilding) our relational capacities, while sharing the good news that we worship an inherently relational God." (Christianity Today, September 2014)

"I am delighted that Rich has (at long last) put his considerable wisdom into a book. His understanding of relationships has brought me significant help. Rich and Jim call themselves 'wounded writers.' As such they are the best kind of guides for teaching us about vulnerability and connection. Their biblical and psychological integration creates hope for wholeness and health." (Adele Calhoun, author of *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* and *Invitations from God*)

"Our souls long for the help offered in these pages: learning how to connect the dots for developing an integrated and permeable soul based on our truest relationship with the triune God of love and a deeply trusting quality of relationships with others. I highly recommend reading and reflecting on this life-giving content offered by two trustworthy professionals. You will dog-ear many pages to reference in your personal journey toward genuine transformation." (Stephen Macchia, president of Leadership Transformations, author of *Crafting a Rule of Life*)

"*The Relational Soul* is a practical book on spirituality, counseling, community, the long, difficult road of personal transformation, all grounded in a compelling Trinitarian theology. That's a lot for anyone to accomplish in a single book, and the authors do it uncommonly well." (Peter Leithart, *First Things*, August 18, 2014)

"Plass and Cofield extend this insight to the church community, showing how it can be a source of spiritual healing. They also show how to be alone with God in a way that changes perspectives. . . . Recommended for pastoral counselors or anyone ministering to spiritually disconnected Christians." (Gerald Wisz, CBA Retailers + Resources, September 2014)

"This book is an informative, enjoyable, and motivating guide for readers who wish to experience deeper transformation. The authors are skillful story-tellers, describing real-life examples of people whose stories demonstrate the relational nature of the soul and how it is both wounded and healed in relationship with God and others. Plass and Cofield also earn readers' trust by offering personal vignettes that transparently reveal their own struggles and successes. Woven throughout the book, these stories are interesting and touching case studies that not only draw the reader into the exposition and serve to illustrate the main points, but that also inspire and persuade." (Brett Vaden, *Christian Psychology*, Vol 8-2 2016)

"*The Relational Soul* brings together concepts from psychology and spiritual formation to help readers engage in relationships in more life-giving ways." (Light Magazine Canada, September 2014)

"Most of us have only a vague understanding of false patterns of relating and how we might move to life giving, true-self patterns. This biblically sound, psychologically astute, and spiritually enriching book will challenge and inform those who intentionally commit to the challenging task of healthy relating. This is a book that should not be read once and set on a shelf to collect dust. Rather, it should be revisited as a reliable guide to the lifelong process of Christ-like ways of inter-personal connecting." (Bruce Demarest, Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care, Spring 2015, Vol. 8, No. 1)

"Richard Plass and James Cofield have written an excellent volume regarding how the soul is geared for greater communion with others. . . . This work is highly recommended for pastoral libraries and especially adult faith-sharing groups seeking to form greater communities." (Robert P. Russo, Catholic Library World, Volume 85, No. 4)

About the Author

Dr. Richard Plass is president of CrossPoint Ministry in Jeffersonville, Indiana, where he cultivates spiritual formation in the lives of leaders. After serving in pastoral ministry for twenty-five years, he obtained a PhD from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in counseling. Rich is married to Sallie, and they have six children.

James Cofield is director of CrossPoint Ministry. He holds a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary and taught communications at Tennessee Temple University and Greek at Dallas Theological Seminary. Jim served as a church planter and pastor for over fifteen years before joining CrossPoint where he offers spiritual direction and retreat leadership.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

George Cardenas:

Here thing why this kind of *The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection* are different and reliable to be yours. First of all studying a book is good however it depends in the content of it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. *The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection* giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no e-book that similar with *The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection*. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing this happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in playground, café, or even in your approach home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of *The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection* in e-book can be your option.

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Florence Ross:

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book especially book entitled The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely might be your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a e-book then become one web form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get prior to. The The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection giving you yet another experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful data for your better life with this era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind are going to be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a sport. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

Jeff Keenan:

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