



# Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage

*Ronald L. Grimes*

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Over the past two decades, North Americans have become increasingly interested in understanding and reclaiming the rites that mark significant life passages. In the absence of meaningful rites of passage, we speed through the dangerous intersections of life and often come to regret missing an opportunity to contemplate a child's birth, mark the arrival of maturity, or meditate on the loss of a loved one. Providing a highly personal, thoroughly informed, and cross-cultural perspective on rites of passage for general readers, this book illustrates the power of rites to help us navigate life's troublesome transitions.

The work of a major scholar who has spent years writing and teaching about ritual, *Deeply into the Bone* instigates a conversation in which readers can fruitfully reflect on their own experiences of passage. Covering the significant life events of birth, initiation, marriage, and death, chapters include first-person stories told by individuals who have undergone rites of passage, accounts of practices from around the world, brief histories of selected ritual traditions, and critical reflections probing popular assumptions about ritual. The book also explores innovative rites for other important events such as beginning school, same-sex commitment ceremonies, abortion, serious illness, divorce, and retirement.

Taking us confidently into the abyss separating the spiritual from the social scientific, the personal from the scholarly, and the narrative from the analytical, Grimes synthesizes an impressive amount of information to help us find more insightful ways of comprehending life's great transitions. As we face our increasingly complex society, *Deeply into the Bone* will help us reclaim the power of rites and understand their effect on our lives.

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