

## Readings for Health & Well-being

Education is an integral part of our treatment program here at Saint Luke Institute. Both women and men in our residential treatment programs, in our Half-Way House and those who return for Continuing Care are urged to continue their development by ongoing education. They frequently ask us for books that will assist them in their ongoing journey to wholeness.

We would like to share with our readers some of the books that we have found helpful and have recommended. We hope that you may find something of interest and help to you on your journey to spiritual and psychological health and well-being.

### Praying Our Experiences

Joseph F. Schmidt, FSC  
Word Among Us Press, 2008

This is a good text for learning and enhancing one's ability to bring past and current experiences to prayer, including feelings about the experiences, and then to listen for God's response. Praying our experiences is the practice of reflecting on the events of one's life with God and becoming aware of how God is working in one's life. One can be brought to deeper self-knowledge through this practice of prayer. It enables individuals to deepen their personal, intimate relationship with God, finding that no part of their life is off-limits in their communication with God.

*Meg Parrish, CSJ, MS, MA is a Spiritual Integrator at SLI.*

### Timeless Healing, the Power and Biology of Belief

Herbert Benson, MD  
Simon and Schuster, 1996

Herbert Benson is considered the "founder" of the "relaxation response" (another book in itself) or the opposite of "flight/fight". His theory is that when we train our body and mind to relax/recover from stress, certain things happen: decreased blood pressure/heart rate, decreased breathing rate and deeper breath, increased metabolism, digestion, immune and healing functions. This book takes another step in this direction by

describing how the placebo effect, or what he now terms "remembered wellness," is the body/mind's belief in its own healing abilities. He goes through much historical scientific research on treatments that were up to 70% effective until they were found to have no value, and then their effectiveness immediately dropped to 20-30%. He suggests that we can harness this ability in different ways, one of which is our spiritual beliefs.

*Dana Dowd, MSPT, is the Coordinator of Fitness and Physical Therapy at SLI.*

### Intuitive Eating

Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch  
St. Martin's Press, 2003

This is an excellent book for the person who has tried every restrictive diet without long-term success. Written by two registered dietitians, it begins the arduous task of dispelling many, strongly held myths that promote the diet industry. The book takes the reader through the stages of becoming an intuitive eater again, as we all were in infancy and early childhood. The authors describe in detail ten principles of an intuitive eater including understanding hunger and satisfaction, coping with your emotions without using food, and respecting your body. They present a balanced approach to eating for health and satisfaction.

*Ellen Griffiths, RD, MPH, is the Staff Nutritionist at SLI.*

### Holy Eros: Pathways to A Passionate God

James and Evelyn Whitehead  
Orbis Books, 2009

Evelyn and James Whitehead, spiritual writers, social scientists and theologians, urge their readers to reject the traditional biases against the body, sexuality and desire as they embrace *holy eros*, the source of passion, pleasure, justice and personal and communal transformation. They do not limit *eros* to sexual desire but describe *eros* as "an ebullient, eager, and sometimes disruptive energy that moves us again and again toward more life." The authors address the potencies of sexuality, sensuality, and pleasure as a pathway to

presence and gratitude, essential elements for healthy psychospiritual development. The Whiteheads also connect *eros* with suffering, anger, compassion and hope. As in previous publications, they provide questions for reflection and additional resources to continue exploration of the topics presented.

### A Life at Work: The Joy of Discovering What You Were Born To Do

Thomas Moore  
Broadway Books, 2008

Thomas Moore continues his focus on soulful living as he shifts the focus from jobs and careers to one's life work, *opus*, or *calling*. He challenges readers to be obedient to their calling, an invitation to new life that repeats and changes during one's life time. The author suggests ways to recognize one's calling and the necessity of taking risks and changing. He concludes with the benefits of following one's call: being in tune with life, knowing the security of meaning and value, and finding oneself in giving oneself to others and to life itself. For Moore, this is holiness.

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### The Psychology of the Body

Elliot Green & Barbara Goodrich-Dunn  
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2004

Although written for professional body workers, this guide explores the psychological life of the body, the body-mind connection, the client's emotional release, understanding mental health conditions and disorders and working with mental health professionals. The authors discuss the relationship between muscular tension and psychological defense and methods that would best meet specific clients' needs. Included are case studies together and suggestions and guidance on addressing conceptual and practical issues. This is a helpful book for any practitioner who works with the body and for those interested in the mind-body connection.

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