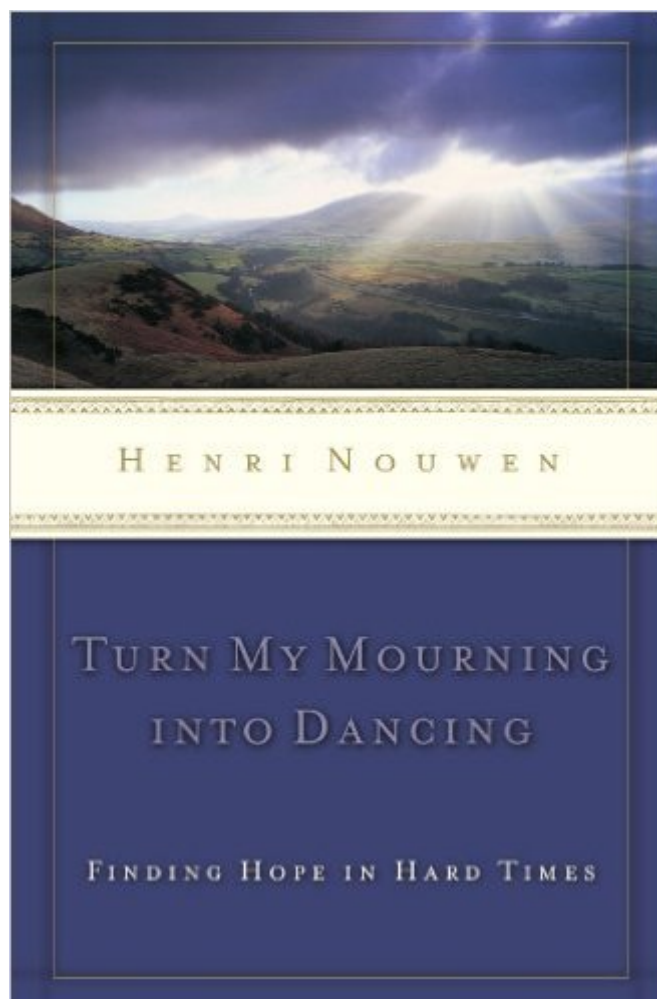


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# Turn My Mourning Into Dancing



## Synopsis

In times of suffering, simplistic answers ring empty and hollow. But Henri Nouwen, beloved spiritual thinker and author, offers real comfort in the concrete truth of God's constancy. Nouwen suggests that by greeting life's pains with something other than despair, we can find surprising joy in our suffering. He suggests that the way through suffering is not in denial, but rather in living fully in the midst of the trials life brings our way. Hardcover ISBN 0-8499-1711-5

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Thomas Nelson (June 29, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0849945097

ISBN-13: 978-0849945090

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.4 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (49 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #112,038 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #119 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Death & Grief](#) #975 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Catholicism](#) #1677 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects](#)

## Customer Reviews

Timothy Jones did an excellent job compiling and editing this Henri Nouwen book. I highly recommend this book to everyone - whether you're going through a time of mourning or helping a friend through a difficult time. This is a book that helps one recognize a deeper relationship with God - making Him known even in the most difficult times when you think He is nowhere near. Nouwen is on point when he says not to bury yourself in busy-ness. You don't learn anything from this time of mourning if you don't experience it. Don't dwell in it - but learn from it. I'm a Stephen Leader at my church and will be recommending it to all of our Stephen Ministers to help them in their caring relationships.

This is a powerful book for anyone, but it is especially powerful for those of us who are suffering loss or see ourselves in difficult circumstances wondering if God really cares about us. I had been given this book several years ago by a family member, but had never read it. Recently, while my wife and I were doing some home library reshuffling, I came across it and read a few pages and was gripped

by its authenticity and clarity. The idea of inviting Jesus into my wounds and suffering so that He could heal me was especially liberating. And it became abundantly clear that God did, indeed, care about those of us who suffer loss when I gave away my copy of Nouwen's book to a friend who had suffered a recent loss through a miscarriage. Shortly thereafter, I ordered four copies from . One copy to finish reading the book for myself and three others to share. In just over a month, all of my copies are gone! And the response from friends and family who have received copies of "Turn My Mourning into Dancing" has been equally amazing. Through this book, you will see a framework for a biblical doctrine of suffering, you will see that suffering is not about judgement, but is about the Father's great love for us. Nouwen shares the secrets that were life-changing to him as he sojourned here on earth. Every page reveals another layer of God's methodical work of grace and mercy in our lives as He conforms us into the image of His Son Jesus. I have given to friends at funerals, at their homes, and sent it through the mail. So, my suggestion stands, read this book and give it away. Mourn with Jesus over your sin and watch as he heals your woundedness.

This is an amazing book. I found it to be very validating to my life experience. The best part is that it gives a beautiful and enlightening look at suffering and puts it in perspective in the larger picture. Living in a culture that doesn't like to acknowledge suffering (or that considers it to be 'I didn't get the color of BMW that I wanted') this helps one process his/her deeply felt grief. I highly recommend it.

Henri Nouwen was a Catholic Priest. He was Dutch born and was a child during Hitler's occupation of his country. He was a student at Aloysius College in The Hague, a Yale/Harvard lecturer and scholar. He also studied psychology at The University of Chicago. This book is a collection of writings taken from his archives. His last vocation was at a place called Daybreak L'Arche community in Toronto Canada. This was a community for severely physically and mentally handicapped people. Here he left his books and his lectures behind to become a cup of living water as Christ shows us how. Now. The title of the book comes from Psalm 30:11 "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent." Also, the book echoes along these lines from Isaiah 61 "To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." Then Matthew 5:4 from the beatitudes where Jesus blesses those who mourn

“For they shall be comforted,” speaks to Nouwen’s discourse in this book too. It was while he was at Daybreak, surrounded by an onslaught of suffering humanity that he began to form a new thought about suffering and healing. I realized that healing begins with our taking our pain out of its diabolic isolation and seeing that whatever we suffer, we suffer in communion with all of humanity, and yes, all of creation. In so doing we become participants in the great battle against the powers of darkness. Our little lives participate in something larger. The thought of our little lives participating in something larger resonated with me. When some personal pain bears down at times, when it is difficult to rouse myself to look beyond my own confusion or heart ache (or stubbed toe!), then by that one reflection it is easy to look out and around and to enter into a larger battle that foists itself upon everyone at one time or another. I see my job as observer, hugger, listener, praying person, wide open to others as I take stock and my gaze shifts from my belly button upward toward God’s Greatness. Nouwen talks about how we want so badly to shake away our pain, to just simply hurry to get rid of it. But the better question he asks is, “how can I make it an occasion for growth and insight?” And Nouwen speaks of the necessity of grief, which works through, our very experience to a healing that constitutes divine mercy. Otherwise, he notes, that we attempt to avoid the experience of grief and end up being the judges of our own past. This judgment most often leaves a residue of denial, shame and guilt. Mercy is the healing spot. Nouwen also suggests that community is our place of learning the grace of embracing the largeness of pain. In other words, as we live with and for others our suffering takes on a meaning beyond our immediate hurt, or sorrow or conflict. We learn to truly enter into one another’s needs and respond out of grace rather than manipulation (we don’t much like to see or hear or experience the suffering of others “we try to fix it or come up with platitudes”) Anyhow, he says this and so much more. I am mostly inspired to see my little life as participating in something larger. And I need to read the book from time to time to remember what I believe.

I recently lost 5 people I have known and loved. Too many for one year. This book offered a good perspective and healing from the pain. I could read it several times and believe I would get something new each time.

I discovered this book at a very low point in my life. I believe it was God’s way of pulling me back to sanity and stability. Nouwen’s “spirituality of brokenness” speaks to everyone who feels hopeless, alone, and lost. I have since given the book to others who are going through painful times. I can’t

recommend it highly enough.

I lost my wife to leukemia last year and have been struggling. This little book has been very helpful to me to get by from day to day. Henri Nouwen writes so beautifully and with a skill that I feel is talking directly to me and my situation.

This book was a small price to pay for the great amount of comfort it provided. I didn't put it down until I was finished. With the loss of my soul mate, this book has kept me stepping forward out of the past and into a fulfilling future.

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