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Spirituality and the Two Halves of Life

Discussion Guide or Journal Questions
A video workshop with Ron Rolheiser

PART ONE

1. Do you find yourself wrestling with the devil? How does that look in your life?
2. What are some examples of ways that you have experienced the "eros" or "sheer pulse for life"?
3. How does our sexuality "color" our lives? How do we come to an "ease" with our sexuality?
4. What does it mean to live "inside ourselves"? What are some ways you have chosen to do this?
5. Do you agree with Father when he says that it can be more difficult to find a friend than a lover when you are young? Why do you think this is?
6. What things has success taught you in your life?
7. How do we help those who seemingly experience little success in their lives?
8. In what ways do pleasure, comfort, affluence, and power been temptations in your life?
9. An infinite desire for moral rectitude can cause many conflicts in relationships. How are you outgrowing this chaotic energy?
10. How does someone find a soul mate, a moral companion? Do you agree that having a soul mate lets you "come home"? In what ways?



PART TWO

1. How have the “householding” years generated energy in your life?
2. If the “householding” years typically end when we become grandparents, when do they end when we are committed to a vowed religious life?
3. At what point did you notice yourself being motivated by something other than selfishness? How do we move those for whom we are responsible to a higher motivation of life?
4. Having an identity that is connected by what we do rather than who we are is part of this society. When we retire, others still ask us, “Well, what did you do before you retired?” It is a major part of the loss we feel at retirement time. How do you respond to that conflict to be content with who you are and to continue to need to be defined by what you do?
5. The opposite of faith is anxiety or the fear that we don’t mean anything to God. What has caused anxiety in your life? How did you overcome it?
6. What does “integrated” sexuality look like for your lifestyle?
7. What are some of the temptations that still surface in your desire to be eternally young? Do you have any regrets that you are getting older? Our society does not value “the wisdom of the elder”. How does this impact us as we age? What does it cause you to do differently?
8. It is very difficult not to celebrate our successes and add to the danger of acting egotistical. How have you avoided this temptation in your life? What does the Gospel story of the Pharisee and the publican teach us about this?
9. How do you know you are becoming more at ease with being “at home”?
10. How do you fight the temptations of boredom, lack of fervor, and disillusionment in your own life?
11. What would be some ways to increase our discursive abilities if we find them failing in our relationships?
12. How do you fight the desire to be angry, bitter, or cynical about what has happened in your life and in the world around you?

PART THREE

1. Which of the two Scriptural characters most mirrors your own spiritual journey up to now—the older son or the young rich man?
2. Whom have you know to be an example of each of Richard Rohr’s “old fools”—the pathetic, the embittered, the holy? Can you find moments in your own life when you have been like each of them? Is there a pattern of one type developing more often in your life than the others? Which one?
3. The first struggle in our Midlife and beyond is that of the need to forgive and be forgiven. To what experiences in your life are you still holding on in anger and woundedness? Are there ways to begin to move into forgiveness?
4. We feel a need to move away from possessiveness and de-throne ourselves as the center of attention. How can you actively work on this need?
5. We need to simplify our language, to find the simplest things as the deepest experiences of our lives. We are now invited to become Mary instead of Martha. What are some occasions when you have fulfilled this need in your life?
6. We need to say goodbye to the earth and our loved ones, to rid ourselves of all of our attachments. How can you begin to do this?
7. We experience a renewed sense of sexual energy. How does this integrate into our lives? What can you do with this energy?
8. We need to learn the language of silence. How does the practice of Eucharistic adoration help us fulfill this need? What are other ways we can practice being ‘silent’?
9. If we are to achieve Radical Discipleship, we have a need to take the words of Scripture literally. We are called to respond the way the young man was invited by Jesus. Does this seem too radical to you in your life? Do you ever think God will invite you to discipleship in this way?
10. At the end of the other discipleship stages, we experience a degree of ease. At the end of Radical discipleship, we are offered ecstasy. Does this seem to you to be something worthwhile in your life, remember we must go through the purgatory of ‘letting go’ first?