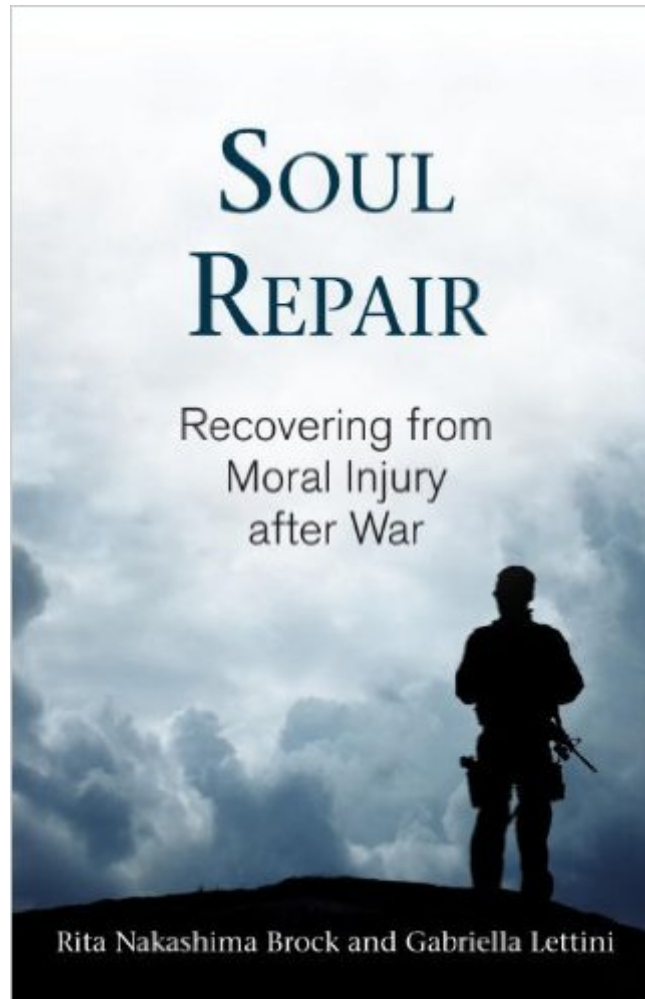


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Soul Repair: Recovering From Moral Injury After War



Synopsis

The first book to explore the idea and effect of moral injury on veterans, their families, and their communities. Although veterans make up only 7 percent of the U.S. population, they account for an alarming 20 percent of all suicides. And though treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder has undoubtedly alleviated suffering and allowed many service members returning from combat to transition to civilian life, the suicide rate for veterans under thirty has been increasing. Research by Veterans Administration health professionals and veterans' own experiences now suggest an ancient but unaddressed wound of war may be a factor: moral injury. This deep-seated sense of transgression includes feelings of shame, grief, meaninglessness, and remorse from having violated core moral beliefs. Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, who both grew up in families deeply affected by war, have been working closely with vets on what moral injury looks like, how vets cope with it, and what can be done to heal the damage inflicted on soldiers' consciences. In *Soul Repair*, the authors tell the stories of four veterans of wars from Vietnam to our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan: Camillo M. Bica, Herman Keizer Jr., Pamela Lightsey, and Camilo Mejía, who reveal their experiences of moral injury from war and how they have learned to live with it. Brock and Lettini also explore its effect on families and communities, and the community processes that have gradually helped soldiers with their moral injuries. *Soul Repair* will help veterans, their families, members of their communities, and clergy understand the impact of war on the consciences of healthy people, support the recovery of moral conscience in society, and restore veterans to civilian life. When a society sends people off to war, it must accept responsibility for returning them home to peace.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a description of moral injury, this text stands out among the best. The stories recounted fill the category "moral injury" with real meaning; meaning that you can feel as you read the text. This book represents an unparalleled glimpse into an increasingly valued vista of public discourse in regard to war and the drastic cost of sending people to fight it. If you seek an entry into this conversation that will resonate to your core, read this book. My criticism of this text centers on the fact that the book focuses on moral injury in an age of war, but does not, in any adequate way, deal with "soul repair" or "recovering from moral injury after war." I agree wholeheartedly that Christian (and other religious) communities should be places of grace for our veterans (p. 108), and I agree that "soul repair is how we hold on to our own humanity and how, at the same time, we can face the unbearable truths of who we can be in war" (p. 115). However, these "awarenesses," as important as they may be, do not constitute substantial avenues of approach to the complex question of bringing healing to the wounded soul of the warrior. Thus, I was somewhat disappointed not to find a more organized discussion about soul repair and recovery. Not that this is an easy subject matter to discuss or systematize, but it stands out on the cover of the book as the project of the text, and I am not clear that the book ever gets there. Still, in regard to the outstanding experiences that of real people that have come from the "Truth Commission on Conscience in War" (a session of which I was privileged to attend at Riverside Church in New York City) that awaits the reader of this text, this book is a gem.

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