

About Emotional Nakedness

Book Review

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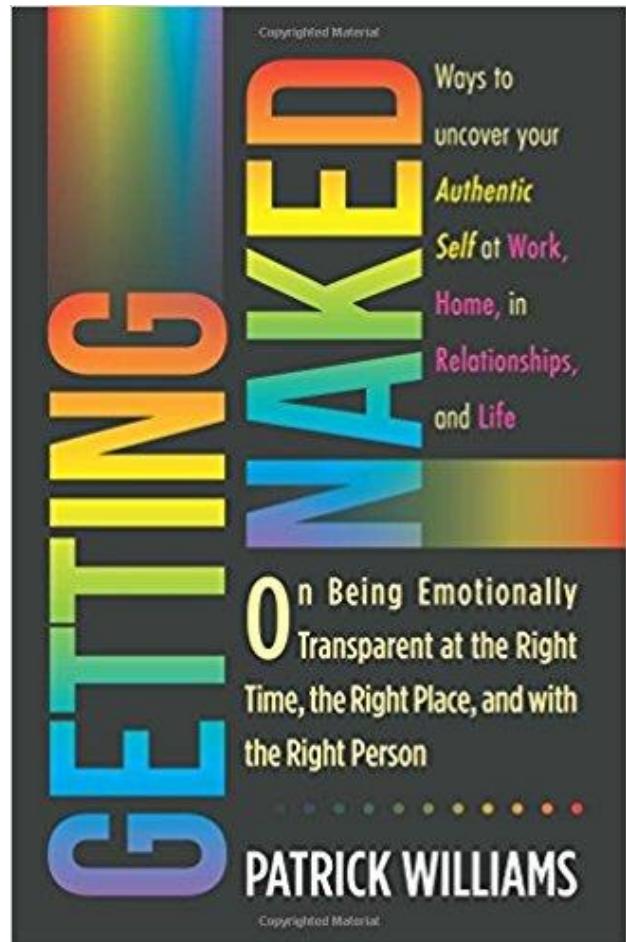
Dr Pat Williams' latest book

'Getting Naked' is not only an invitation to dive into oneself truly, deeply, authentically but to do it safely with the help of a few special caring trusted people. It offers an exciting exploratory journey through numerous stories, metaphors, concepts and practical tips originated from the author and from other contributors including psychologists, philosophers, musicians, comedians, clients.

The book can be intriguing at times and there is a lot to choose from. For instance, as a French native, I discovered the Velveteen Rabbit children's book, which is very popular in the US, and the story of its character and its deep discussions with the experienced Skin Horse. Becoming real means embarking on self-discovery through relational experiences; 'the witness is key' writes Williams. It is about adopting the values of vulnerability, authenticity and full acceptance of self and others while embracing risk of disclosure.

I also learnt about the positive side of the 'shadow', 'perhaps one of the least understood and most powerful concepts in personal and spiritual development' according to Williams.

He stresses what will propel someone forward, he talks about dreams and aspirations as opposed to past fears usually attached to this concept which goes back to Carl Jung's major contribution to the fields of helping



professions. Journaling, reflecting and working with a coach are among the strategies which he recommends using to unveil the 'shadow self'; courage to explore also comes to play. Some readers will enjoy the detour of Peter Pan's fictional character and Walt Disney's movie. Some will like this powerful statement: 'either you own your shadow, or it owns you'.

Although 'Getting Naked' is not about coaching, this book advocates coaching as a means to increase emotional transparency wholeheartedly.

Here again, Williams recommends safe and secure exploration. Executive and leadership coaches will find a full chapter dedicated to 'getting naked' at work. It includes ideas to help clients understand the benefits of self-disclosure in order to raise awareness, a mark of emotional intelligence, and how to build 'naked trust', which is crucial to resilience. Alongside the well-known Johari Window model, I enjoyed the sections and words of wisdom dedicated to tackle blind spots, to improve communication and to handle crucial conversations.

Because of my interest in the body-mind relationship and embodiment work, I could relate to Williams's appeal to rediscover the 'Uniqueness of the body' and go beyond the 'I think therefore I am' quote from the famous French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes. When talking about holistic views, somatic coaching, Gestalt and intuition, Williams shares some aspects of his coaching philosophy which I found inspiring. He is a great believer in daily centering practice such as meditation, yoga and walking. Readers will find some insightful stories and exercises to help them learn from their bodies, these 'tremendously under-utilised resources'.

What struck me in this book is that it can be read at various levels. General audience will appreciate its narrative, accessible and engaging style. No doubt that it will help readers to connect to their own lives by encouraging them to be wisely 'emotionally naked' for the purpose of fulfillment, emotional freedom, personal growth and transformation. Coaches and other helping professionals will recognize, throughout the book, the foundations, ethics and competencies required to thrive in their professions. Indeed, a generous, humble but strong call for individuals to find and share wholeness in their lives.

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