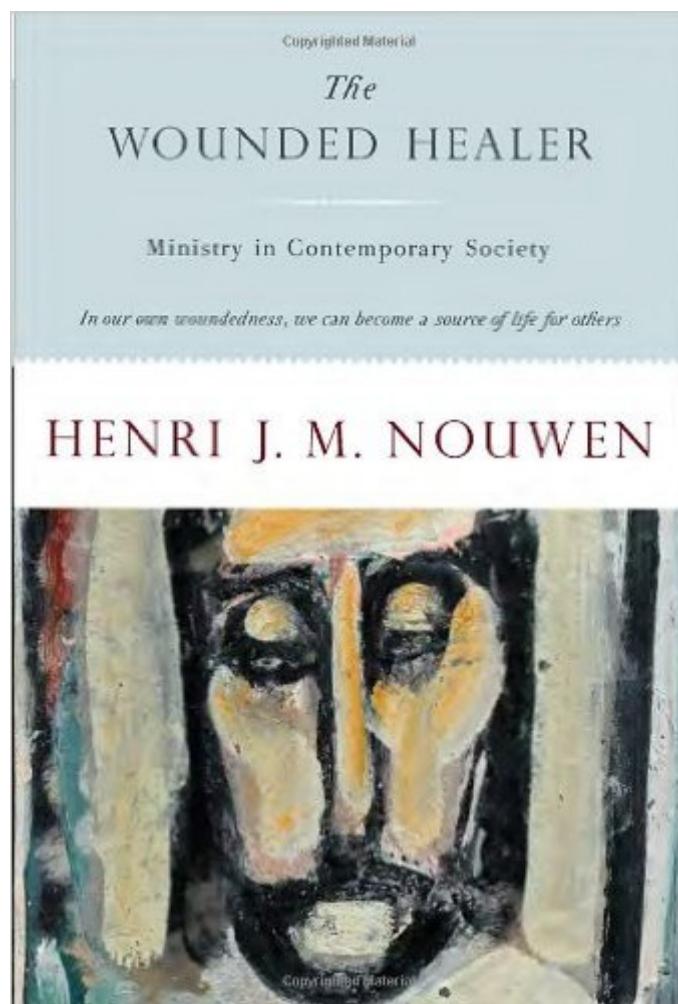


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# The Wounded Healer: Ministry In Contemporary Society



## **Synopsis**

The Wounded Healer is a hope-filled and profoundly simple book that speaks directly to those men and women who want to be of service in their church or community, but have found the traditional ways often threatening and ineffective. In this book, Henri Nouwen combines creative case studies of ministry with stories from diverse cultures and religious traditions in preparing a new model for ministry. Weaving keen cultural analysis with his psychological and religious insights, Nouwen has come up with a balanced and creative theology of service that begins with the realization of fundamental woundedness in human nature. Emphasizing that which is in humanity common to both minister and believer, this woundedness can serve as a source of strength and healing when counseling others. Nouwen proceeds to develop his approach to ministry with an analysis of sufferings -- a suffering world, a suffering generation, a suffering person, and a suffering minister. It is his contention that ministers are called to recognize the sufferings of their time in their own hearts and make that recognition the starting point of their service. For Nouwen, ministers must be willing to go beyond their professional role and leave themselves open as fellow human beings with the same wounds and suffering -- in the image of Christ. In other words, we heal from our own wounds. Filled with examples from everyday experience, The Wounded Healer is a thoughtful and insightful guide that will be welcomed by anyone engaged in the service of others.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This powerfully written, yet simple book changed my life! In "The Wounded Healer," Nouwen

addresses one of the main challenges of the human condition- our weaknesses. These wounds, as Nouwen refers to them, are so often viewed as sources of shame and guilt for us. He reminds us all, however, that these wounds, can be transformed into strengths, if we will allow them to be. By accepting that we are human and addressing our human weaknesses, we can then turn them into helpful resources to extend the gift of emotional healing to others. Because, in order to reach people, we need a point of connection. We can all relate to experiences of emotional woundedness, and within appropriate relational boundaries, they can become instruments of healing. Nouwen shares several stories, and conversations that he had with persons going through various experiences of emotional woundedness. One of the most poignant of these was a visit he made to a man who was about to go in for surgery to have a leg amputated. By offering himself as a compassionate listener, he was able to help the man find peace in the midst of a devastating loss. A point of clarification that Nouwen makes well is that becoming a wounded healer does not mean that we dump all of our problems on people, or seek to wear them like badges. Instead, by being aware of our woundedness, and facing it, we can become more sensitized to the needs of the people around us- after all we are all subject to human imperfection. If you are ready to find hope and a renewed perspective on helping others- read this book! I would highly recommend "The Wounded Healer" to all persons in caring professions, as well as anyone who just want to find peace in the midst of human challenges.

Nouwen, in this classic work, explains how in one's weakness, one can still participate in the healing of others. A major theme of most of his books, Nouwen stresses that only in one's brokenness before God and humankind can people really transform community. Admittedly, the philosophy of the wounded healer offered at the beginning and end of the book gets a little thick, but both portions offer excellent insights that make it a great read. The great benefit of the book is the clear examples offered in the middle of the text. Examples of people dealing with terminal patients and the like really clarify the condition that Nouwen addresses. A must-read for people in the helping professions and anyone else looking to impact people!

Henri Nouwen has been blessed with true vision of the human condition. Mr. Nouwen has also been gifted with the answers to solve the condition of "Nuclear Man" and isolation. Anyone who is a minister or healer of any kind should read this book. It is a "must read". I appreciated Mr. Nouwen's synopsis' at the end of each chapter. This truly helped me to "drive the point home". I thank Mr. Nouwen for writing this book. I am presently reading his "Return of the Prodigal Son" book. Another

"must read" book if one is interested in reaching the center of man. Gratefully, Teri Lynn Schons

As a young person seeking meaning in a difficult world, I have found Nouwen's work (every book I've read of his, actually) to clearly confront the ills of society, incorporating them into authentic Christian discipleship. Every priest, minister, layperson or questioning individual should pick up this brief - yet poignant - account of what it is to relate to others in the modern world. Nouwen consistently cultivates the meaning of authentic relationships one must have between him/herself, God, and those met in life. This is a must-read.

This is the first time I ventured outside the evangelical / protestant circles, and I was amazed at the simplicity with which this author was able to present some pretty deep material. The part that spoke to me the most was 'if we can live our lives as authentically as Jesus lived his, then there are many ways to live like Christ'. This was a revelation, I no longer have to stand a street corners, etc. to live like Christ. The good author is gone now, but his many books are available for us all. A very good alternative the usual a,b,c ... 1,2,3 stuff I was used to.

I found myself not agreeing with all of Henri's cultural analysis, but I don't have to. His work is still inspiring while at the same time not entertaining any moral high ground arrogance. Nouwen is down to earth and spiritually minded at the same time, he cares about people and you can't go wrong with that. Open and honesty, loving and kind, the book will encourage you to treat people the way they want to be treated---as human beings. Buy it, read it, and live it.

What does it mean to be a minister (a healer, if you will) in the world of today, to a rootless generation, to people who suffer loneliness and alienation? Henri Nouwen proposed that the wounds of the "wounded healer" can be a source of healing for others. Although this is a short book, it is very profound, and I'm not sure I totally grasped everything Nouwen was trying to say. He moves from the very practical third chapter (a case study of a one-on-one encounter between a clinical pastoral trainee and a lonely dying patient) to the rather esoteric fourth chapter (focusing on the wounded healer) which could have used more practical illustrations. This is a book that probably needs to be read several times, but it can be extremely valuable for the minister, and for everyone else.

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