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# EXiting The JW Cult: A Healing Handbook: For Current & Former Jehovah's Witnesses



## Synopsis

Numerous books have been written by ex-Jehovahâ™s Witnesses, exposing the false claims and practices of the cult or describing their personal challenges while leaving it. But when it comes to providing help to individuals in the process of exiting and recovering from the effects of membership in the cult, few compare with *EXiting the JW Cult: A Healing Handbook*. Author Bonnie Zieman was born and raised as a Jehovahâ™s Witness, leaving after thirty years to gain the higher education that she was denied and build a professional life as a psychotherapist. She knows firsthand what itâ™s like to deal with the inhumane punishments inflicted on anyone who leaves the Watchtower organizationâ” foremost among them, the complete shunning by family and friends. Drawing from both her personal and professional experiences, Zieman provides aid, advice, encouragement, and insight into the many challenges faced by current and former Jehovahâ™s Witnesses who are struggling to extricate their lives from this all-controlling cult. This empowering healing handbook is designed to be used as a reference that individuals can take down off the shelf and use to help themselves during difficult moments along their path to healing emotional wounds and coping in an unfamiliar world.

## Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (May 14, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1508477132

ISBN-13: 978-1508477136

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 starsÂ Â  See all reviewsÂ  (26 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #202,589 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #6 inÂ  Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Jehovah's Witness   #113 inÂ  Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Cults   #288 inÂ  Books > Self-Help > Abuse

## Customer Reviews

Having been born and raised in a devout JW family, and having married into an equally devout JW family, I began discerning distinctions between Bible teachings and certain Watchtower teachings by the time I turned 30. That is when I began struggling with intense feelings of guilt, although I had

not adopted a practice or lifestyle for which one could be disfellowshipped from one's congregation. By the time I turned 60, I realized I could no longer accept, support or recommend the JW religion, yet I was not free to pursue Christian fellowship outside the JW religion without dire consequences; therefore, I finally disassociated from JWs, yet my feelings of guilt only intensified. Psychotherapist Bonnie Zieman helped me identify two likely sources of the guilt which has plagued me for more than 30 years. EXISTENTIAL GUILT results from denying one's true self, especially when one fails to meet one's true potential, a feeling with which many JWs can identify. NEUROTIC GUILT comes from an imagined transgression such as changing one's mind on religious matters and leaving one's religion, a feeling with which most ex-JWs can identify. While existential guilt can serve as a healthy guide back to one's true self, neurotic guilt is unhealthy and damaging and is the type of guilt placed on doubting JWs by the Watchtower. If one does not understand the difference between the positive and negative types of guilt, the punitive part of one's mind (called the Superego) assumes one has sinned and deserves punishment, and one can end up unknowingly creating forms of self-punishment (e.g. depression, failures, accidents, chronic pain, illnesses, chronic anxiety, self-sabotage, etc.) Changing one's mind and leaving the Watchtower organization is not a sin, and one doing so certainly deserves no punishment!

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