

In this handy little book, spiritual author and band director Donald Lee gives three simple steps to put your spiritual growth into high gear. Using music as a metaphor for spiritual growth, he explains how you too can become a saint!

**The Band Director's Pocket Guide to Spiritual Growth:
3 Simple Steps to Becoming the Person You Want to Be
(and God Intended You to Be)**

By Donald Lee

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SECOND EDITION (2022)

The Band Director's Pocket Guide to SPIRITUAL GROWTH

*3 Simple Steps
to Becoming the Person
You Want to Be
(and God Intended You to Be)*

DONALD LEE

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OTHER BOOKS BY DONALD LEE

*The Band Director's Lessons About Life:
Volume 1 — 50 Parables on Life's Performance Cycle*

*The Band Director's Mini Lessons About Life:
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*What the Hell Is Going On?:
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INTRODUCTION

In this little booklet, you'll find a simple yet relatively unknown process you can use to make definite and rapid spiritual progress. In all my reading and study over the decades, I have yet to find the process explained this simply and concisely. That's why I've written this booklet.

It's still a good idea to read many spiritual books, attend workshops and retreats, go on pilgrimages, and sit for hours in prayer and meditation. But if you, like me, have done these things for years yet still feel like you're spiritually spinning your wheels, this simple method might be the thing that finally gives you some traction.

This method for spiritual growth transcends religion. It doesn't matter which religion you follow or if you've no religion at all. The spirit knows no religion. Spirit comes from God. Religion comes from man. Religion is, at its best, man's attempt to understand and explain the spirit. At its worst, religion is man's way to gain power over other men.

In this booklet, you'll find no theology, no dogma, no rules. I simply explain three steps you can take to help you

become who you want to be—and who God intended you to be. That is, it's about *you*.

Spiritual growth is a gradual and eternal process. Our souls are eternal. I don't claim to know where we come from or where we go except that we somehow come from God and will return to God. We always have been and always will be "in God." There is nowhere we can go where God is not. We've just forgotten this. Since our eternal existence is "in God," spiritual growth is inescapably part and parcel of our existence. But we can choose to progress or regress, to move slowly or quickly, to pause and plateau or rush forward with wild abandon. Our destination is God. Why tarry? I suggest you make spiritual growth a priority. Ask for God's assistance, and with His help, you will be on the fast track of spiritual growth.

Growth means change. If you desire spiritual growth, you must be prepared to change. We often resist change, even when our present situation is painful. As they say, we prefer the devil we know to the devil we don't know. We fear the unknown. Fear of change is what holds us back from growth of any kind, including spiritual growth. Have courage. In fact, you *do* have courage already. Just like the cowardly lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, you already have the courage you need. God has placed it in your heart. You just need to recognize that it is already there.

The paradox of change is that we cannot change the world around us or anything outside us. We can only change what is inside. Yet by changing what's inside us, what's outside us also changes.

This booklet is about how to change yourself for the better. You *can* be the person you desire to be. You *can* be a saint. In fact, that is your destiny. You are here for that. God has put the desire into your heart. He is calling to you. Forge ahead, timid pilgrim—the Promised Land awaits!

OVERVIEW

The simple outline of spiritual growth is a three-step process.

1. Set spiritual goals.
2. Connect to the Divine within.
3. Practice.

In the following pages, I will walk you through this process, explaining each step. Think of me as your band director. I really have been a band director for many years. I will show you how to do it—but you must do the work. Like any good band director, my mission is to help you draw out the best in yourself.

This knowledge is like your new instrument. I'm giving you a clarinet. It's in your hands. I can't do it for you. No one can. If you are willing to take responsibility for your progress and practice diligently, you will become a musician, metaphorically speaking. Just like musical growth is achieved through consistent practice and good instruction, soul growth is achieved through the consistent *application* of spiritual principles.

Setting spiritual goals is like deciding you want to learn to play the clarinet. The music festival is in six months, and you want to perform a solo. You need to write down that goal and lay out a plan for how you'll get there. That's step 1.

You need to show up for your music lessons, listen to your teacher, ask him questions, follow his instructions, and do your best—even on bad days. That's step 2.

You need to practice daily, even the boring stuff, like scales and long tones, as well as the hard stuff, like learning high notes. You'll have to push yourself a bit. It's not easy, but you can do it. That's step 3.

Like the performance cycle in a band program, spiritual growth is an iterative process. We set a goal, work toward it, make some progress and some mistakes, experience growth, then set a new goal and start the cycle over. As we strive for spiritual ideals in our everyday life, our spiritual awareness expands and our soul develops. We can never see the whole path of our journey, but as we reach one goal, the next goal comes into view. At some point on our eternal spiritual journey, we will achieve that state of consciousness Jesus and Buddha achieved. It's known by many names, but I call it the Christ Consciousness.

A band student practices day by day, week by week, year by year, to become a true musician. Think about your daily efforts at spiritual growth as daily exercises your band director has assigned. Some of these tasks, like practicing an E-major scale or repeating tonguing drills over and over, aren't much fun on their own. But they have to be done, and nothing is gained by arguing or procrastinating. The

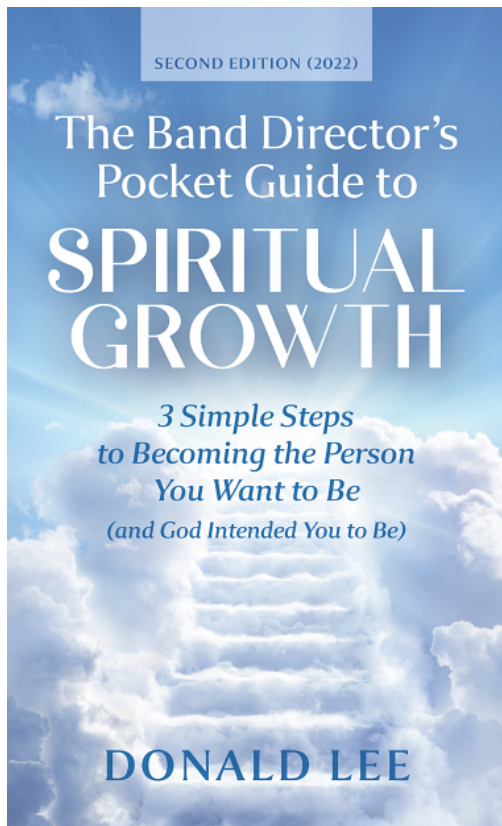
spiritual exercises you will engage in are the same way. They may be awkward or difficult, and you may resist them, but they have to be done, and nothing is gained by making excuses or procrastinating.

At the same time, everything in music is fun. Even our most embarrassing mistakes, which may make us want to crawl into a hole and hide, we soon laugh about and retell with pride. So it is with our spiritual journey. Our souls relish every experience—even the tragic events that break our hearts and wring oceans of tears from our eyes. In fact, pain is the greatest teacher. Drink deeply the elixir of human life. The highs and lows are both important parts of this exquisite experience. In the end, it's *all* good. Every experience is a lesson. By understanding this and following the procedure explained in this book, you will step onto the high-speed escalator back home to God.

Ready? Let's get started.



*Like any good band director, my mission is to
help you draw out the best in yourself!*



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