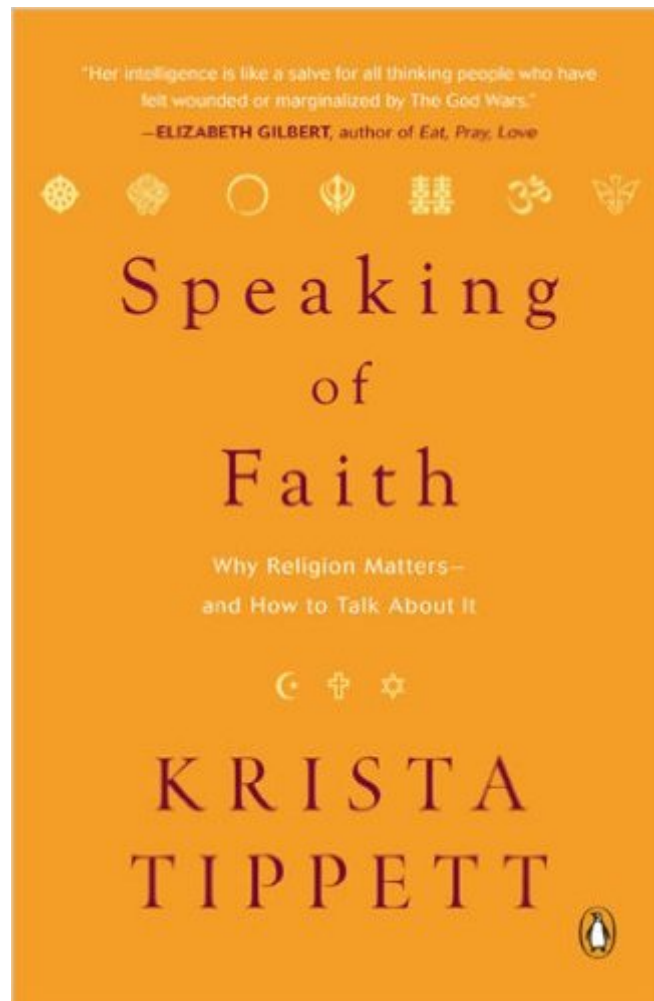


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# Speaking Of Faith: Why Religion Matters--and How To Talk About It



## Synopsis

An intimate, thought-provoking, and original appraisal of the meaning of religion in our time- from the creator and host of public radio's *Speaking of Faith* Krista Tippett, widely becoming known as the Bill Moyers of radio, is one of the country's most intelligent and insightful commentators on religion, ethics, and the human spirit. With this book, she draws on her own life story and her intimate conversations with both ordinary and famous figures, including Elie Wiesel, Karen Armstrong, and Thich Nhat Hanh, to explore complex subjects like science, love, virtue, and violence within the context of spirituality and everyday life. Her way of speaking about the mysteries of life-and of listening with care to those who endeavor to understand those mysteries-is nothing short of revolutionary. Krista Tippett's newest book, *Becoming Wise*, will be published on April 5, 2016.

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## Customer Reviews

You get the feeling that Krista Tippett was overwhelmed by what she was trying to accomplish. One gets the sense that she is 1) Trying to pull together all ideas that she has discussed in the years that she has had the privilege of talking spirituality with some of the most lucid, intelligent, and articulate people in religion and 2) Do some cathartic spiritual mind cleansing and 3) Try to weave the two threads together. The enormity of her enterprise is evidenced by the confusion in the structure of the book and the poorly executed organization. This is true of course, only if you are reading the book as a book. I didn't really understand the key until I was well into the book. The key is that one need

to read the book as an extended conversation, or better yet, as an extended essay and rumination on theology, and peripherally, the impact that theology has had on her life. The theological discussion was extremely successful. It opened up deep wounds and it presented wonderful ideas and complex viewpoints clearly and succinctly, much like the radio show. The only drawback with this aspect of the book is that the book is not a comprehensive book, so she was not able to delve into the intricacies of the thoughts as much as she did with the radio program. So a basic understanding of the people of whom she speaks of is almost a necessity. Yet it was also substantial reading. It calls for all of your attention. The breadth of the book, the coverage of the religious landscape, the depth of the potential side trips, are all so very tempting and intellectually stimulating. I found myself thinking about the discourse and I also found myself laying the book down to take notes and to sit and think aloud, trying to digest all the implication brought up.

Speaking of Faith was my first introduction to Krista Tippett. I have since gone to the website from her American Public Media radio program and you are able to listen to all of her programs and the site is very well organized. If you enjoyed this book, I'd highly recommend the website if you have not yet visited it. It is so refreshing to have a voice for faith like Tippett's. On page 140 of her book she writes, "We have had few models in our public life for religious speech that does not proselytize, exclude, anger or offend." Exactly. It is time to welcome people back to a Christianity that is hopeful, loving, forgiving, understanding, peaceful, and compassionate. I love that Tippett invites us to have questions about our faith. Through these questions, I personally have had many spiritual experiences with the presence of God. It also occurs to me that when there is too much "religion" and not enough "spirituality" people lose their connection with God. My husband has no interest in faith anymore and when asked why he says he remembers a childhood of repeating things that soon lost their meaning. I asked him if he ever thought about what he was saying and he said "no." Perhaps someday he will go back to think because there is so much to ponder. I loved Tippett's discussion on the difference between religion and spirituality, here is a quote from her book: "A rabbi, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, gave me the best illustration I know of the difference between spirituality and religion. On Mount Sinai, she says, something extraordinary happened to Moses. He had a direct encounter with God. This was a spiritual experience. The Ten Commandments were the container for that experience. They are religion."

Krista Tippett in Speaking of Faith, the public radio program she created and hosts on a weekly basis, has lifted the ban on public discourse of meaning, ethics, and values. She dares to draw the

lines connecting politics and religion - connecting people."The human condition is the reality around which political life revolves - and upon which it falters.... This fact is made more complex, not more transparent, in our era where religious passions and identities overtly fuel political conflict," she observes, in the book that echoes the program's name and theme. Tippet's interview strategy is simple: to invite her guests, men and women of spiritual depth, practical achievement, and passionate conviction to speak in the first person, letting their own stories guide and illuminate the conversation. Her approach, however, is far from simple, combining the incisiveness and nuance of a fine mind, broadly and deeply informed, and a heart overflowing with compassion for the world in its urgent complexity. Speaking of Faith is densely populated with Tippet's conversation partners: these "others" speak. However, in the book, her own voice surfaces as well, welcoming us to ponder her religious upbringing, her early careers in diplomacy and journalism, and the sometimes thorny path that eventually led her to a mature spirituality that persists in asking the hardest questions. In a way, Krista Tippet asks those questions on behalf of us all: How do faith and science, religion and politics intersect? Where is God when people suffer? Why do we cause others to suffer in the name of our gods? What is virtue, where is it found, how can we cultivate it? How can we speak unreservedly of the ideals we hold most dear in ways that honor and respect difference?

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