



A Communion of Friendship: Literacy, Spiritual Practice, and Women in Recovery (Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Paperback))

Beth Daniell

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Drawing on interviews and an array of scholarly work, Beth Daniell maps out the relations of literacy and spirituality in *A Communion of Friendship: Literacy, Spiritual Practice, and Women in Recovery*. Daniell tells the story of a group of women in “Mountain City” who use reading and writing in their search for spiritual growth. Diverse in socioeconomic status, the Mountain City women are, or have been, married to alcoholics. In Al-Anon, they use literacy to practice the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous in order to find spiritual solutions to their problems.

In addition, Daniell demonstrates that in the lives of these women, reading, writing, and speaking are intertwined, embedded in one another in rich and complex ways. For the women, private literate practice is of the utmost importance because it aids the development and empowerment of the self. These women engage in literate practices in order to grow spiritually and emotionally, to live more self-aware lives, to attain personal power, to find or make meaning for themselves, and to create community. By looking at the changes in the women’s reading, Daniell shows that Al-Anon doctrine, particularly its oral instruction, serves as an interpretive tool. This discussion points out the subtle but profound transformations in these women’s lives in order to call for an inclusive notion of politics.

Foregrounding the women’s voices, *A Communion of Friendship* addresses a number of issues important in composition studies and reading instruction. This study examines the meaning of literacy within one specific community, with implications both for pedagogy and for empirical research in composition inside and outside the academy.

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