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RITUAL

What It Is, How It Works, and Why

Robbie Davis-Floyd & Charles D. Laughlin

322 pages, 19 illus.; bibliog., index

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"One could say that this is a "ritual omnibus"—a text that takes us on a journey into the different scales and dimensions of ritual, and ultimately encourages its readers to rethink their understandings both of ritual and of society." • **Ruy Blanes**, University of Gothenburg

"This book is the go-to resource for anyone seeking a holistic, modern understanding of the human phenomenon of ritual. Robbie Davis-Floyd and Charles Laughlin not only assemble information and insights from a panoply of anthropologically known societies, but also enrich their discussion of ritual's power from their own personal life experiences. The results are exciting and potentially lifechanging." • **Megan Bieseke**, President, Kalahari People's Fund

Designed for both academic and lay audiences, this book identifies the characteristics of ritual and, via multiple examples, details how ritual works on the human body and brain to produce its often profound effects. These include enhancing courage, effecting healing, and generating group cohesion by enacting cultural—or individual—beliefs and values. It also shows what happens when ritual fails.

Robbie Davis-Floyd is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Rice University, and Fellow of the Society for Applied Anthropology. **Charles D. Laughlin** is Emeritus Professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Foreword • *Betty Sue Flowers*

Preface

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Chapter 1. Symbolism in Ritual

Chapter 2. The Cognitive Matrix of Ritual: Belief Systems, Myths, and Paradigms

Chapter 3. Belief Systems, Myths, Paradigms, Rituals, and the Process of Truing

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Chapter 8. Ritual and the 4 Stages of Cognition

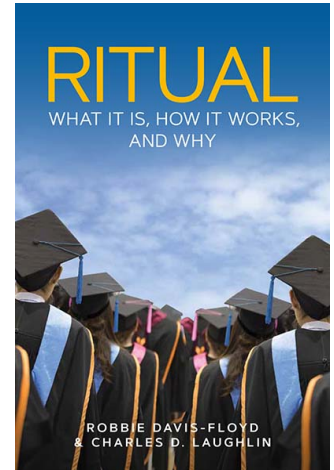
Chapter 9. Ritual's Paradoxical Roles: Preserving the Status Quo and Effecting Social Change

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Conclusion: Ritual: What It Is, How It Works, and Why

Appendix 1. How to Create and Perform an Effective Stage 4 Ritual: Things to Remember and Include

Appendix 2. List of Documentary Films about Ritual



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