

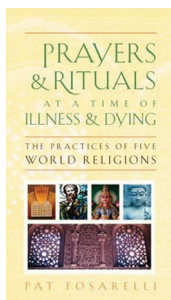
adoption triad: her parents adopted her sister, and she herself is a “first mother” now reunited with her child. She is also a retired paralegal, giving her the background needed to help families navigate the legal hurdles involved in a search.

Written in a straightforward manner, Brown’s book is meant to help members of the adoption triad get the job done as inexpensively as possible. She gives step-by-step instructions for requesting an original birth certificate, including templates for the documents needed to file a Court Petition if normal channels do not work. Once a birth certificate is obtained, the information given on it is the basis for a search.

There are many avenues open to searchers for gaining information. Brown addresses how to approach obvious channels, like the adoption agency or attorney who facilitated the adoption, as well as more obscure options, such as home security alarm registrations and pet licenses. Some are surprisingly simple; for example, one woman found her birth siblings by placing classified ads in the newspaper. Also included are tips for removing black marker from documents, advice on choosing a reputable private investigator, and a myriad of resource listings.

The search for a birth family can be daunting, but Brown believes that no one should be denied the right to his birth information because it may inconvenience someone else. As she says, “Whether good or bad, let them find their answers.” (October) *Christine Canfield*

## RELIGION



### Prayers & Rituals At a Time of Illness & Dying: The Practices of Five World Religions

Pat Fosarelli

Templeton Foundation Press,  
Softcover \$12.95 (106pp)  
978-1-59947-146-4

What happens when a Christian chaplain is called to the deathbed of a Buddhist patient? In what ways can a Jewish health care professional attend to both the physical and spiritual needs of a Hindu patient?

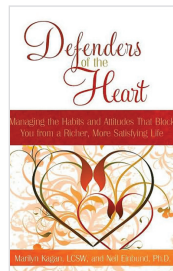
Concerned that his students lacked materials to answer such questions quickly, Fosarelli devised this little handbook that would help them assist ill or dying patients whose religious practices might differ from their own. Each chapter offers a very brief overview of one religion’s history and beliefs, an examination of ideal practices surrounding illness and death, ways that health care or religious professionals might modify those practices based on western standards, a too-short discussion of illness and death in children, and a collection of prayers related to illness and death.

Fosarelli, drawing on other reference sources, finds Buddhist beliefs encapsulated by the Noble

Eightfold Path: right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation. By following the tenets of this path, Buddhists strive for perfection by leading a life of compassion and happiness. He points out that Buddhists believe all life is sacred and should be treated with respect and thus they reject abortion and euthanasia. Fosarelli helpfully provides details about ideal Buddhist practices surrounding death and illness. “A health care provider of the same gender as the adult patient is usually preferred.... A dying person should lie on his or her right side, with legs gently extended. It is important to die with a positive state of mind and to be at peace. “Cremation is done within three to five days after death...ninety days after death, a memorial service is held, and another merit transference service is held on the one-year anniversary.” In ceremonies to support the ill, Buddhists recite prayers such as the Three Refuges: “I take refuge in the Buddha, the one who shows me the way in this life. I take refuge in the Dharma, the way of understanding and of love. I take refuge in the Sangha, the community that lives in harmony and awareness.”

In his chapters on Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, Fosarelli offers similarly helpful materials regarding illness and death. Fosarelli’s useful little handbook can function as a guide to anyone interested in this topic. (November) *Henry L. Carrigan, Jr.*

## SELF HELP



### Defenders of the Heart: Managing the Habits and Attitudes That Block You from a Richer, More Satisfying Life

Marilyn Kagan and  
Neil Einbund

Hay House, Softcover  
\$14.95 (240pp)  
978-1-4019-2037-1

What works as a protective strategy for children often turns into a block that constricts full satisfaction in adulthood, according to Kagan and Einbund, therapists practicing in Southern California. (Kagan has hosted her own radio and TV shows.) The authors, who have more than forty years of combined experience, observe that habitual defensive responses “hold you back from fully embracing the entirety of your life: emotionally, socially, and intellectually.”

Examining these “defenders of the heart,” and recognizing their patterns is the first step to gaining conscious control. The authors dispense insightful, user-friendly action steps to relieve the blocks. Easy to understand and anecdotal, the ten conversations cover the most common protective strategies left over from childhood traumas: denial, projection, rationalization, intellectualization, humor, displacement, sublimation, procrastination, altruism, and passive-aggression.

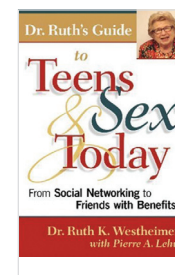
The authors address the complexity of defenders, acknowledging their beneficial attributes. Seemingly positive defenders like humor and altruism cause suffering when they become “too much of a good thing,” the authors say.

Each chapter defines the defender under discussion, illustrates it with pointed anecdotes, lists the defender’s qualities, and employs acronyms, questions, and exercises that encourage action and healing. The “Heart Beat” section expands the context to include statistics, studies, and reports, while the “Payoff” section outlines the reasons people hang onto their defensive strategies. Their message’s essence is this: “Understanding how burying our true feelings can isolate us from our loved ones and prevent us from leading a gratifying life, and learning how connecting with our emotions opens us up to acceptance and love.”

Ardent procrastinators learn to focus on the “procrastination pile,” with an assignment to work on the same pile for ten minutes—and no more—every weekday at the same time. The discussions of passive aggression and sublimation bring clarity to these over-used and under-defined terms.

With a light touch, real-life scenarios affirm to those searching for that promised “richer, more satisfying life” that they are not alone in facing these challenges. A final section of celebrity stories (including Patrick Dempsey of *Grey’s Anatomy* and Ryan Seacrest of *American Idol*) helps readers visualize their own patterns.

Purists may consider this “therapy lite,” but for millions of people actively on the path of personal growth, the authors provide an engaging vehicle for gaining insights into life’s journey. It is an ideal resource for creating conversations within families, among friends, or even in the therapeutic relationship, and opening dialogues enriched by the stories of others. (November) *Bobbie Middendorf*



### Dr. Ruth's Guide to Teens and Sex Today: From Social Networking to Friends with Benefits

Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer,  
with Pierre A. Lehu

Teachers College Press  
(Columbia University),  
Softcover \$13.95 (148pp)  
978-0-8077-4905-0

“Were you surprised that MySpace had to remove 29,000 sex offenders from its lists?” the authors ask? Dr. Ruth, who turns eighty this year, has kept abreast of the Internet age, its benefits and dangers. This book, her thirty-second, combines messages of concern with reassurance. She is characteristically good-humored, blunt, and sensitive, respecting privacy of parents and teens while guiding the former in asking and telling what is appropriate.

Westheimer offers three basic rules: “don’t panic, maintain control, and become an expert.”