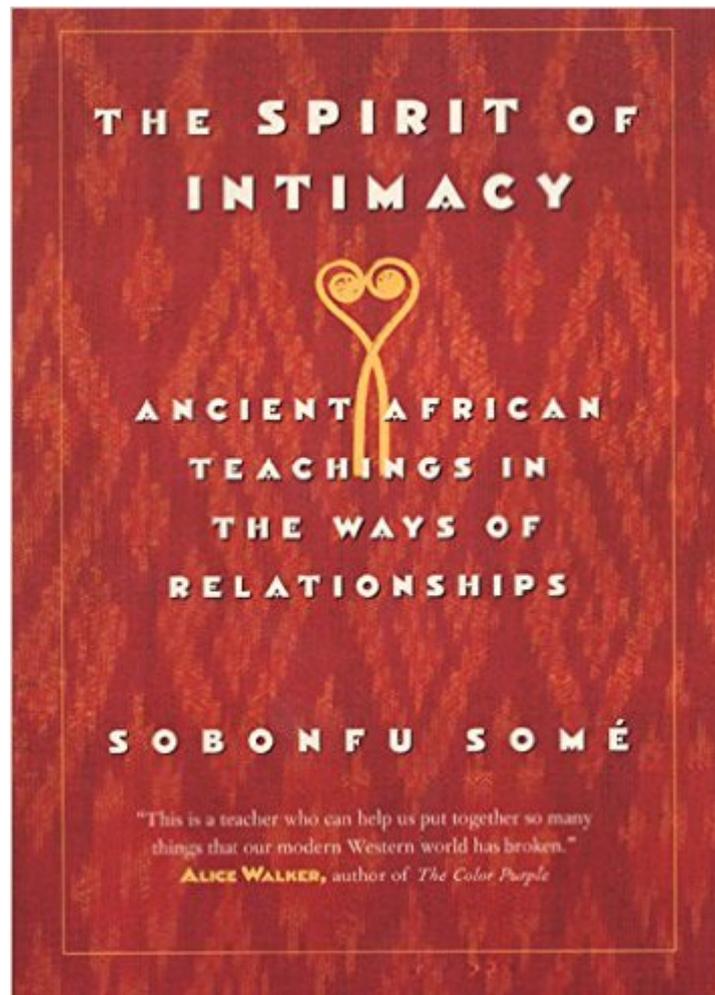


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The Spirit Of Intimacy: Ancient African Teachings In The Ways Of Relationships



Synopsis

A renowned, respected teacher and mentor to thousands, Sobonfu Somi is one of the first and foremost voices of African spirituality to come to the West. Somi was born in Dano, Burkina Faso, a remote West African village with a population of about two hundred people. Dano has preserved the old ways of African village life, with family structures, spiritual practices, and methods of living that have been in place for more than ten thousand years. In *The Spirit of Intimacy*, Somi distills the ancient teachings and wisdom of her native village to give insight into the nature of intimate relationships. Somi generously applies the subtle knowledge from her West African culture to this one. Simply and beautifully, she reveals the role of spirit in every marriage, friendship, relationship, and community. She shares ancient ways to make our intimate lives more fulfilling and secure and offers powerful insights into the "illusion of romance," divorce, and loss. Her important and fascinating lessons from the heart include the sacred meaning of pleasure, preparing a ritual space for intimacy, and the connection between sex and spirituality. Her ideas are intuitively persuasive, provocative, and healing--and supported by sound practical advice, along with specific rituals and ceremonies based on those used for thousands of years. With this book, the spiritual insights of indigenous Africa take their place alongside those of native America, ancient Europe, and Asia as important influences on Western readers.

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Customer Reviews

I remember how much we liked Kahlil Gibran's 'The Prophet' back in 1969. This is another little book (even easier to carry around) which is chock full of knowledge and wisdom, but it's even more. It will get you high just reading it, even though to truly practice what Ms. Some writes about will truly take a lot of work. But if you can find a group of people who want to support each other in this way, by all means . . . Sobonfu (I met her and her husband in Michigan about 10 years ago) grew up in a Dagaara community in southern Burkina Faso (West Africa); most of what she writes about is what they actually practice, and to good effect, in the villages there. It's all tried, tested, and true to life. She, like her husband, is extremely smooth and articulate in her use of language, and really gets her point across . . . reading this will change your mind about a lot of things. It's golden knowledge, really. Her explanations about how spirit works in the context of an intimate relationship, about the place of ritual in a community lifestyle, and so on, are full of heart, and very, very practical. Wiccans and other modern-day 'ritualists' will find a great deal here upon which to ruminate. It's simply put, but never simplistic; there's not a gram of cookie-cutter mentality here. The methods work because

things are set up to be responsive to any kind of situation that may crop up. Not necessarily infallible, but there's not much to screw up here if you pursue things honestly and with good support people. Towards the end there were some things that I didn't completely understand, but I imagine it's a matter of getting more experience. All of hers and her husband's books formulate multiple structures of thought/feeling which can give the reader numerous opportunities [while reading/thinking - or even sub/unconsciously] to re-envision/reclaim all kinds of experiences that you have passed through and that have passed you by in your life. It's almost as if you can travel to any point in your past, re-insert part of yourself, and relive the moment in a better way. And that can have a wondrous and powerfully positive effect on the present. I don't understand whether this is a by-product, or if it occurs as if by design. Sobonfu would probably say it hardly matters - that it's part of the workings of spirit. And I can live with that. And as she says in closing, "People may say that you're weird, and that you're reading about weird people, but you know, perhaps it's time to celebrate being weird."

Sobonfu Some, a member of the West African Dagara tribe, brings to the Western World wisdom uprooted from the ancient elders of her people. This small, concise little gem of a book is filled with practical advice and common sense practices to garner and enhance intimacy in all couple relationships. Although most of her teachings and suggestions are not practical for Westerners because of cultural differences and the negative influences Western society has on our lives today, there are still plenty of meaningful and thought provoking passages here that would easily apply to all cultures everywhere. People are people. The ways of love, human sexuality, and intimate relationships between men and women are the same worldwide, no matter which spot on the globe you look. Sobonfu's simple approach to intimacy takes the reader from their initial contact with their partner on through the many stages of growth the couple will experience. The ancient ways of intimacy in West Africa are community built; all village members participate in the nurturing, care, and growth of a couple's relationship, straight on through to the death of one or both partners. The most interesting aspects of their philosophy on intimacy revolves around the "spirit" and the rituals that can be created to help two people learn and understand each other's personalities, wants, dreams, conflicts and pain, and the importance of creating these rituals early on so that they will be carried forth throughout the duration of the relationship. In creating sacred spaces for sex, in the process of inviting in the spirit of nature and the spirit of love into their hearts and homes, in both parties total immersion into the communion and joining of hearts, minds, souls and the sacredness of their joined bodies, the African way of intimacy is a welcome breath of fresh air to read about. The

author teaches couples to explore, learn, to be patient and to communicate openly about all aspects of joy and sorrows, doubts and fears, expectations and disappointments. Open communication, the spirit of making effort and never giving up or into negative thoughts or actions toward the other partner is key to a healthy relationship that will beam with ultimate intimacy if some of these simple loving rituals and beliefs are put in practice every day. Some other topics covered are: controlling behavior patterns, death and dying, the illusion and dangers of romance, homosexuality, divorce and the importance of family and friends who can support the relationship when nurturing and healing are needed. This marvelous quick little read was well worth the time to peruse, and worth letting the wisdom offered up sink in, and make this reader ponder on her own experiences.

I fell in love with this marvelous book the moment I opened it. There are so many beautiful spiritual truths between the covers of this uniquely special book. I have passed this one on to a rare and unusual couple because spirit led me. Do yourself a favor and purchase and treasure the truths that are laid out before you.

Reading this book opened my eyes to the realization that there are certain things needed for a man and woman to successfully communicate in a relationship. Though, like many, I thought I'd weathered the storm and been thoroughly prepared, I found that there were a number of things I needed to improve upon. Having met Sobonfu, I can only say that she embodies what she's written. Reading a book has a different affect on you once you've met the author. The spirit she exemplifies is the one she writes about in the book. My suggestion is to buy it, read it, and then tell all your friends and family to do the same. Don't do Sobonfu an injustice by borrowing or loaning this book. Give her her just rewards buy purchasing your own copy. It's worth every cent and then some.

Sometimes the words you're looking for come from the most unlikely places. Sobonfu Some's contribution is key if we are to find a counterbalance to our consumer culture. Singles, couples, adults and teenagers alike will find rewarding activities in this book which warm the heart more than going shopping can, and it's a gasp of fresh air. I hadn't realised the import of how we connect to other people until I read this book.

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