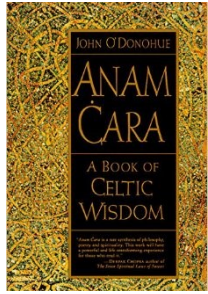




# Discussion Guide



## About the Book

Book Title: *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*

Author: John O'Donohue

Published by: New York: Harper, 1997

Author website: [www.johndonohue.com/](http://www.johndonohue.com/)

## Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. Donohue calls this a book of Celtic wisdom? After reading this book how would you describe Celtic wisdom?
3. What is a soul friend? Have you had soul friends in your life? If so, share about one of these relationships and what it meant to you.
4. How did Donohue talk about the Irish people's relationship to the earth? Is that similar or different to your own? To general society now? In what ways?
5. Have you ever been to Ireland? If so, did you experience any of what he explains first hand? If so, describe.
6. Many Americans seem to have a love affair with all things Irish. What do you think this is about? Does it have anything to do with what this book explains?
7. Donohue suggests that we should make friends with death. Do you agree? Why or why not?
8. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
9. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?

### Other Links...

**Listen to Krista Tippett interview the author on her public radio show "On Being," in the last interview before he died:** <http://www.onbeing.org/program/john-o-donohue-the-inner-landscape-beauty/203>

**A wonderful video of scenes of Western Ireland where John lived, with some quotes from this book, even some spoken by John can be found on YouTube at: Ireland's Landscapes, John O'Donohue Remembered,** ([https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=ireland%27s+landscapes%2C+john+ODonohue+remembered](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ireland%27s+landscapes%2C+john+ODonohue+remembered))



**NANCY:** *“The eternal world and the mortal world are not parallel, rather they are fused.”*  
 I discovered this book on a pilgrimage to Ireland. Once home, I read it in sweet doses every morning before meditation for several months. It contains so many gems and the truth I sought on my Irish trip. I feel like I am just beginning to understand this ancient Celtic worldview and it calls me to learn more, to go deeper and to incorporate this perspective into my life. I am so sad that O’Donohue died in 2008 at the age of 53. I wish I could learn more from him. I have purchased this book for many people. The next book I write will include this Celtic perspective.

**SALLIE:** *“In our mediocrity and distraction, we forget that we are privileged to live in a wondrous universe.”*



Kids get this. That’s why I enjoy them so much. Adults do forget how marvelous the created world is. And that’s what I like about John. He has a way of making all things sacred in the way he writes and thinks and communicates his Celtic spirituality. I really like him.



**ABIGAIL:** *“All the possibilities of your human destiny are asleep in your soul. You are here to realize and honor these possibilities. When love comes in to your life, unrecognized dimensions of your destiny awaken and blossom and grow. Possibility is the secret heart of time.”* I loved John’s writing. It’s a book to savor. So many gems in these pages. I wish I could meet this man. Don’t you agree that our quest is to discover and honor the possibilities of your soul?



**MOLLY:** *“Human skin is porous; the world flows through you. Your senses are large pores that let the world in. By being attuned to the wisdom of your senses, you will never become an exile in your own life.”* I really enjoyed his chapter on the senses. My people came originally from West Africa, the Gullah people in the US. They experience life this way as well. I see some parallels between the Celtic and Gullah culture. Both are very in tune with the realms of the senses, transcending time.



**PRISCILLA:** *“Keep Something Beautiful in your Heart to Survive Difficult Times and Enjoy Good Times.”* This guy really has what my granny would call “the gift of gab”, doesn’t he? I enjoyed this book, too. This quote I like and it reminds me of other things granny used to tell me. I wonder if some of this Celtic wisdom was what she passed on to me as a little girl!



**KATHARINE:** *With complete attention, landscape celebrates that liturgy of the seasons, giving itself unreservedly to the passion of the goddess.*

He does have a way with words, doesn't he? The form of Christianity that emerged in Ireland was distinctive from the Roman culture. O’Donohue expresses this so well. I think I might have my students read this in my Introduction to Religious Thought. This book is helpful for those wanting to go deeper into the life of the Spirit.



**JANE:** *“It is strange to be here. The mystery never leaves you.”*

This book makes me want to go to Ireland! What do you think, MAMs? Are we up for another adventure? Could we go to John’s hometown on the west coast and find some people who knew him? Could we talk to some of the ghosts he mention that still hang out in the land? Could we try out some Guinness? Visit Priscilla’s relatives and have a jolly good time? If Nancy wants to write about this, don’t you think we should accommodate her by living an adventure that she can write up into another book? What should our goal be? Do you want me to buy us all tickets to the Emerald Isle? Who’s in?