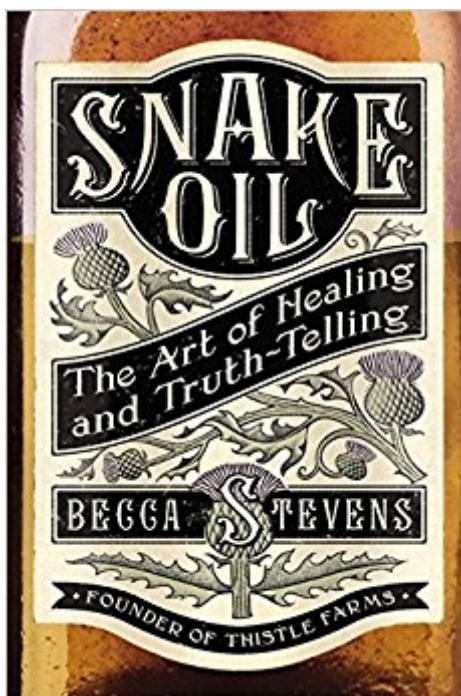


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# Snake Oil: The Art Of Healing And Truth-Telling



## Synopsis

"In the world of snake oils, you have to see the world a little differently. Where others see poverty, you see riches; where others see weeds, you see flowers; where others see sickness, you see openness." Becca Stevens calls herself a "snake oil seller": She takes natural oils, mixes them with a good story, sells them in an open market and believes they help to heal the world. Becca is the founder of Thistle Farms, one of the most successful examples in the US of a social enterprise whose mission is the work force. She is also the founder of its residential program, Magdalene. The women of Magdalene/Thistle Farms have survived prostitution, trafficking and addiction, and the natural body care products they manufacture-balms, soaps, and lotions-aid in their own healing as well as that of the people who buy them. The book weaves together the beginnings of the enterprise with individual stories from Becca's own journey as well as 20 women in the community. In Snake Oil, Becca tells how the women she began helping fifteen years ago have been the biggest source of her own healing from sexual abuse and her father's death as a child. Wise and reflective, Snake Oil offers an empowering narrative as well as a selection of recipes for healing remedies that readers can make themselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stevens is an Episcopal priest and founder of the not-for-profit Thistle Farms, which produces all-natural body products incorporating traditional oil blends. It's these oils, and the alchemy Stevens and her coworkers use to turn them into healing balms and lotions, that inspired

both this book and its cleverly incongruous title. The daughter of a pastor, Stevens lost her father young and suffered years of sexual abuse at the hands of a family friend. The profound effects that these experiences had in shaping her life are apparent in her understanding of the work required to heal oneself of spiritual and psychological ills. Stevens is a big believer in faith healing and backwoods medicine, and she discusses these practices in a way that is wise, gentle, and firmly nondogmatic. Recipes for healing oil blends like The Best Healing Salve Ever are included at the beginning of each chapter, giving the reader a wonderful way to connect to the healing principles discussed in the book. Rich and insightful, this is a rambling contemplation on the power of faith and the strength of simplicity to heal. --Taina Lagodzinski --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"SNAKE OIL is one of the best reads I have had in a very long time. Stevens is a consummate storyteller...poignant, persuasive, witty, wise and, ultimately, a passionate lover of God."

~ Phyllis Tickle, lecturer on religion in America and author of *Emergence Christianity: What it Is, Where it is Going, and Why it Matters* "A simple, comforting reflection on one woman's crusade to make a difference in the world." ~ Kirkus Reviews "Rich and

insightful." ~ Booklist "SNAKE OIL, Becca Stevens' profound and sensual autobiography, carries a weight of joy in every syllable. Stevens' greatest gift--as a writer and as an Episcopal priest--is an ability to make falling in love with God an inevitable, sacred, and necessary reality."

~ Alice Randall, author of *The Wind Done Gone* and *Ada's Rules* "In her new book, Becca Stevens does more than reclaim the term Snake Oil, she tells a personal story of reclaiming life, hope, and grace. A truly inspiring read of painful hardships, enduring faith and seizing hope." ~ Senator Bill Frist, M.D. "With her signature poetic simplicity, Becca Stevens leads us bravely through her healing journey and along the path she has forged for so many wounded women--so that we can find our own way as both healed and healer. Reading this book is like being anointed with the very oils she writes about." ~ Nancy Rue, Christy Award-winning author of *The Reluctant Prophet* trilogy, inspired by *Magdalene* and *Thistle Farms* "I always think of Becca Stevens as a sort of extraordinary, down-to-earth angel--conscience, guide, inspiration and girlfriend all rolled into one. I will treasure this book." ~ Lee Smith, author of *Mrs. Darcy and the Blue-Eyed Stranger* "Only Becca Stevens can write a book extolling the virtues of being a snake oil salesman, and have us believe it. After reading this, I'm ready to be anointed!" ~ Marshall Chapman, author of *They Came to Nashville* and *Goodbye, Little Rock and Roller* "This book is a fascinating life story of a woman who took the evil done to her and used it for the motivation to do

good for abused women around the world. She has been God's instrument for healing and hope for countless numbers of broken women across America." — Tony Campolo, PhD, Eastern University  
Some old-timey snake-oil salesmen offered the Gospel and then sold their products. Becca Stevens does it the other way around. This book helps explain why her way works better." — Don Schlitz, Grammy Award-winning songwriter

The Rev. Becca Stevens writes from the heart about how she has studied and been transformed by the healing oils she and the women she works with at Thistle Farms make to help support Magdalene House in Nashville. Magdalene House has now inspired numerous people to work for the betterment of women who have found themselves living life on the streets, as well as inspiring similar ministries in other cities. Each chapter opens with the formula for a healing oil that is made by Thistle Farms. This book is nourishment for the heart.

This book was soul nourishing to me. It made me want to be braver and more loving. Her stories of vulnerability and resilience.....both her own and the women who have "graced the doors" of Magdalene are raw and inspiring. Buy this book and be prepared to find company on your path to living with your whole Heart.

I had the opportunity to hear Becca speak in N.H. yesterday. She is inspirational and so is her book. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in healing and transformation. Becca is making a difference in the lives of women who have often been overlooked and forgotten. She proves that one woman can have an enormous impact. Her writing is descriptive and I promise you will not regret buying this book.

So far I like the book

My wife and I both love this book, and Becca Stevens has the most inspirational story to tell. My wife said that the book changed her life and she can't wait to meet Mtr. Stevens.

This is an incredible book. It is wonderful to know that someone had a great vision to help women pull themselves out of poverty, addiction and trafficking. I highly recommend this book. Also--her website Thistle Farms has wonderful items made by the women she writes about. Her book (just released) The Way of Tea and Justice is equally wonderful

Becca Stevens' story is honest, raw, grace-filled. She weaves her own story of abuse in the beginning part of the book in a way that is truthful and just enough details to fill the reader in without revealing all of the private details that should remain hers. The heart of the story is about the Magdalene homes and Thistle Farms. Beautifully written.

Becca Stevens is now my new hero! The book is practical and educational while also being thoroughly spiritual and inspirational. I've also read "Letters from the Farm."

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