



## The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff

*Jeanne De Salzmann*

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As the closest pupil of the charismatic spiritual master G. I. Gurdjieff (1866–1949), Jeanne de Salzmann was charged with carrying on his teachings of spiritual transformation. Known as the Fourth Way or "the Work," Gurdjieff's system was based on teachings of the East that he adapted for modern life in the West. Now, some twenty years after de Salzmann's death, the notebooks that she filled with her insights over a forty-year period (and intended to publish) have been translated and edited by a small group of her family and followers. The result is this long-awaited guide to Gurdjieff's teaching, describing the routes to be traveled and the landmarks encountered along the way. Organized according to themes, the chapters touch on all the important concepts and practices of the Work, including:

awakening from the sleep of identification with the ordinary level of being  
self-observation and self-remembering  
conscious effort and voluntary suffering  
understanding symbolic concepts like the Enneagram  
the Gurdjieff Movements, bodily exercises that provide training in Presence and the awareness of subtle energies  
the necessity of a "school," meaning the collective practice of the teaching in a group

Madame de Salzmann brings to the Work her own strong, direct language and personal journey in learning to *live* that knowledge of a higher level of being, which, she insists, "you have to see for yourself" on a level beyond theory and concept. De Salzmann consistently refused to discuss the teaching in terms of ideas, for this Fourth Way is to be experienced, not simply thought or believed.

## **The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff Details**

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## From Reader Review The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff for online ebook

### Mark Esping says

I read this rather slowly. It has a framework which presents the information in many various parts or segments of a system. It gives several exercises, one of which was quite revealing for me. Train the attention to notice sensation. I will now go back and reread a reading per week. Interesting guidance.

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### Brendan says

An entirely decent companion to Gurdjieff's writings. My only complaint is that De Salzmann is, at times, slightly less interesting to read than Gurdjieff himself; I found myself picking up his writings at times instead of paying attention to reading hers.

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### Donatella Zabetta says

One of the best book about Gurdjieff.

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### Dean says

I'm giving this book three stars. I was hoping for more from this book, probably due to the write-ups and recommendations (mainly by Foundation followers and Fourth Wayers). I really wanted to enjoy the book, and took time reading it. As others have commented, it is a 'hard slog' to get through. Mainly because it is composed of the author's personal diary entries, and in no particular plan or aim. The book is largely impractical (again to my disappointment), and in some parts drones on about one's inability to 'do', to focus, to gather attention, to unify the centres, to become more conscious etc. Most of the ideas have been done before (and better) in Gurdjieff's own books, or Ouspensky's.

The positives (and why I will keep the book) relate to how the author writes from her own perspective, and in that the book could easily be read aloud, with some effect happening in the reader. Her experiences are universal, and the sufferings detailed are all of our sufferings.

There are a couple of unique practices (but very few) given, mainly in gathering attention (such as in focusing on body parts and intoning 'I am' etc.). Some nice work is written about self-observation and self-remembering (and the need for it). However, unlike Ouspensky's work, the actual detail in performing this is left out, and rather the author's subjective thoughts about how difficult it is etc. etc. are written (again in diary style).

There's a bit of a departure from Gurdjieff's standard set of teachings here, and the book drifts into Nondual/Buddhist/Advaita type philosophy in more than a few spots. Some of Gurdjieff's ideas about needing to form a 'soul', or voluntary suffering, sneak in here and there, but there's also the idea given here that there is a Presence available now, from the start (which clearly goes against what Gurdjieff taught in a few places). There are more examples of where she has gone off into her own philosophy throughout the book, which is fine, though probably needs to be acknowledged by some of her students (rather than the

usual story of how the author was the 'appointed heir and custodian' of Gurdjieff's work). Overall, a good read for those familiar with the "Work", though don't expect anything earth-shattering here that can't be found elsewhere.

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### **Lina Slavova says**

The only reason I read this book is because I am trying to understand Pamela L. Travers's life time fascination with the Gurdjieff's teachings. It took me forever to finish this book written by Gurdjieff's most fervent student and follower Jeanne de Salzmann.

There was nothing enjoyable about the book. Do not waste time reading it.

Although, I now have an idea about what might have motivated Pamela L. Travers to join the ranks of Gurdjieff's followers but that I will explore in a future post on the [marypoppinseffect.com](http://marypoppinseffect.com) blog.

Again stay away from this book. Total nonsense, an amalgamation of different eastern spiritual teachings with some extravagant twists, presented in a negative and unsupportive of the self way.

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### **Kees Voorhoeve says**

See Reality of Being: <http://www.realityofbeing.org/>  
See excerpts: <http://www.realityofbeing.org/excerpt...>

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### **David Guy says**

Because of a friend, and because of the work of Jacob Needleman, I've become interested in the Gurdjieff work, which was one of the "new religions" of the 20th century. I really think these folks just discover the old truths and then try to re-invent the wheel, when they could easily just go back to the existing traditions. Gurdjieff as far as I can tell was just trying to teach presence, and he could have done what the Zen teachers did and just have people sit and stare at the wall. Jeanne de Salzmann was one of his leading disciples, and apparently had his child, which is taking discipleship to a whole new level. A number of people—including Needleman—think she was a realized person. This book was created from the notebooks she kept, and it isn't clear that she ever intended them to be published. She seems to be trying to describe what one learns from awareness practice, so the book is extremely abstract, though interesting. I read it in small doses. At one point she more or less gives the instructions for zazen, including the way we hold the cosmic mudra. I did find her book quite interesting, and well written, but she's essentially trying to describe something that is ineffable, and that ain't easy.

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### **Joseph says**

This is Reality ... this is by far the best book gurdijeff i have ever read. no doubt it was by his secretary.  
Find out who you are. find out who " i am" is  
there is something gentle and profound about this book  
for 4 weeks i held unto it carefully exploring each sentence like a labyrinth. it was mind blowing to say the least and i have read a LOT of books on gurdijeff . next to the fourth way and the man himself this is a highly recommended book

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### **Andrea Avalon says**

An amazon reviewer said that Eckhart Tolle's "The Power of Now is a good primer. This is the the advanced course. " I'm definitely interested in reading this book.

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### **Fred says**

Difficult reading for a person that does not have experience with Jeanne De Salzmann.

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### **Averill says**

This reminds me allot of krishnamurti's works. I guess all swami talk sounds the same... Absolve ego, ascend self,stop thinking, repeat lol. All jokes aside it was an ok book, repetitive but ok.

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### **Aktanin Khair says**

Best for inner journey

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