



The Wisdom of No Escape: And the Path of Loving-Kindness

Pema Chödrön

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It's true, as they say, that we can only love others when we first love ourselves and we can only experience real joy when we stop running from pain. The key to understanding these truisms lies in remaining open to life in all circumstances, and here Pema Chödrön shows us how. Because when we embrace the happiness and suffering, intelligence and confusion that are a natural part of life, we can begin to discover a wellspring of courageous love within our hearts.

The Wisdom of No Escape: And the Path of Loving-Kindness Details

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From Reader Review The Wisdom of No Escape: And the Path of Loving-Kindness for online ebook

Candace says

I honestly believe that reading this book may have saved my life. I found it in the midst of the greatest crisis in my life, and I think it's what helped me to get through it.

Hannah Garden says

Oh lordie. Pema Chodron makes me understand how people go insane and become fundamentalists. She is SO SMART and EVERYONE should just walk around thinking about her ALL THE TIME.

Erikka says

Pema Chodron takes Tich Naht Hahn's Zen Buddhist wisdom and makes it readable. No totally obscure allegories or fragments of wisdom to decode for meaning. She is straight from the heart, speaks of her experience, and translates the traditional Buddhist teachings into an every day accessible language and practice. I reference Tich Naht Hahn, but she is actually from a different school of Buddhism under Tringpah Ringpoche.

VeNicia says

A beautiful series of talks given during a 1-month "dathun" (practice period) by Buddhist nun, Pema Chödrön, at a monastery called Gampo Abbey. It may be as close as I come to meditation practice at a monastery...but this description in the preface made me feel throughout the book as if I were almost there (easy to visualize because it sounds like my home in the Pacific Northwest that's forever a part of me): "The abbey is located on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia at the end of along dirt road, on cliffs high above the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, where the wildness and playfulness of the weather, the animals, and the landscape permeate the atmosphere. As one sits in the meditation hall, the vastness of the sky and water permeates the mind and heart. The silence of the place, intensified by the sounds of the sea and wind, birds and animals, permeates the senses." With that image in my mind I felt peaceful as I read about and attempted to practice the described meditation technique of Chögyam Trungpa. I learned that if I actually reverse a meditation that I created years ago for myself, I find both more peace and more strength in it. I really learned a lot from it. We'll see if I can put some of it into practice. I can't satisfactorily describe it all, but here are two thoughts that were powerful to me: 1) "The everyday practice is simply to develop...a complete acceptance and openness to all situations and emotions and to all people, experiencing everything totally without reservations or blockages, so that one never withdraws or centralizes into oneself." and 2) "If you really have these questions, you'll find the answers everywhere. But if you don't have a question, there's certainly no answer." I feel like this book would have something powerful to touch anyone who "has ears to hear". I

appreciated her honesty in sharing her own imperfection. I am Christian, and found much to appreciate in her teachings; a lot of value in her wisdom.

Lacey N. says

I picked Pema Chodron's book after I saw it laying on a friend's coffee table, intrigued but not completely convinced. I expected a self-helpy and precious book that I would drop after reading the first few pages. I was surprised, however, when Chodron's clear, intellectual prose brought me to a wholly unexpected place. Buddhism is often overly-cerebral and vague to me, with metaphorical stories I can never quite grasp. Chodron, a Buddhist nun, writes from the Buddhist perspective with a recognition that her audience most likely wasn't raised on the eight-fold path. She breaks down the essential concepts behind the various sutras without losing the greater philosophical tenets. She encourages us to be "warriors" on our paths to becoming more awake and alive, to engage with our fears--of success, of failure, of intimacy--without running away, with loving-kindness to ourselves. As someone whose harshest critic is usually myself, I found comfort in Chodron's descriptions of loving kindness. Recommended for anyone craving intellectual self-reflection.

Cassidy says

I would not call myself a particularly "spiritual" person, but someone who I respect deeply for his ability to treat all things with an even temper gave me this book. While I can't say that I practice this all the time (ha ha ha), I respect the idea that 1) it's important to accept yourself, including all of your glorious faults, 2) all things can teach you something, and 3) we should all try to be a little gentler with ourselves and with others.

Jennifer says

A series of short talks given during a meditation retreat, which means sometimes they were a little technical, but as always Chodron's writing is lucid and illuminating. Very useful for trying to be more mindful in everyday life as well.

Leslie says

I read this book right after I crushed my hand and was experiencing nearly constant panic. It reached me through that buzz when nothing else could.

I gave it to my mom to look at when she visited and she borrowed it for like 3 years. I just got it back. I remembered a story about ravens being knocked around in the desert wind, literally holding onto phone lines by their beak and claws. then how they would just let go and play in the fury. there was so much joy and fearlessness in the idea that I held onto the image for years even though I've never seen such a sight personally.

I would say if the words "spiritual path" totally freak you out--you could still read this. Simply stated and fit

for regular life. It's good sense in a world that rarely makes any sense at all.

H says

"Once you know that the purpose of your life is simply to walk forward and continually to use your life to wake you up rather than put you to sleep, then there's that sense of wholeheartedness about inconvenience, wholeheartedness about convenience. Comfort orientation murders the spirit--that was the general message. Opting for coziness, having that as your prime reason for existing, becomes a continual obstacle to taking a leap and doing something new, doing something unusual, like going as a stranger into a strange land." (94)

Rebecca Garcia says

very approachable teachings. perfect timing for the practice of tonglen and for the definition of "bardo"-- "you've left the shore, but you haven't arrived anywhere yet. You don't know where you're going, and you've been out there at sea long enough that you only have a vague memory of where you came from. you've left home, you've become homeless...that's called the bardo, in-between." "not quite here, not quite there, just hanging out in this sort of uneasy space and having to sit with it hour after hour....label it 'thinking'" (and let it go.) good stuff here for practice in easily understood lessons.

Kelda says

My second time reading this. First time was in Victoria, borrowed directly from the Shambhala Centre. It blew my mind.

Jennifer says

The first part of this book resonated with me more than the second part. Chapter 3 "Finding Our Own True Nature" begins with a metaphor of horses and how the worst horse turns out to be the best practitioner, not the best horse, the horse everyone wants to be when they first hear the story. There is also wonderful story at the beginning of the chapter titled "Joy" about strawberries. I was reading it during the same week our local strawberries were right at their peak. Enjoy the moment. Discussion of the idea that "You are always standing in the middle of sacred space," a concept from Black Elk Speaks on page 28 is worthy of note. And, I liked this quote best of all "The humor and beauty of practice is that going from one extreme to another is not considered to be an obstacle; sometimes we're like a drill sergeant, sometimes we're like mashed potatoes."

Teo 2050 says

Preface

01. Loving-Kindness

02. Satisfaction

03. Finding Our Own True Nature

04. Precision, Gentleness, and Letting Go

– Precision

– Gentleness

– Letting Go

05. The Wisdom of No Escape

06. Joy

07. Taking a Bigger Perspective

08. No Such Thing as a True Story

09. Weather and the Four Noble Truths

10. Not Too Tight, Not Too Loose

11. Renunciation

12. Sending and Taking

13. Taking Refuge

14. Not

Andrew says

As a teacher, Pema Chödrön is something of a cross between Thich Nhat Hanh and Charlotte Joko Beck. She is a bit more Western than Thich Nhat Hanh, but not quite as original as Joko Beck. However, her talks are more grounded in the Tibetan tradition than a Zen one.

This book is a collection of dharma talks given over the course of a one month retreat. The majority of the talks present sound, practical advice derived from the wisdom her teachers. For at least the first half of the book, there wasn't too much new for an seasoned Buddhist practitioner. But there were a few absolute gems in the second half of the book.

My very favorite was the chapter titled "Not Preferring Samsara or Nirvana". For me (and I'm sure I'm not alone in this), there has always been a tendency to think that if I could live the stress-free life of a monk, my spiritual practice would be so much richer. Or if I just had a simpler life with less responsibilities, that would be preferable. In that chapter, Chödrön eloquently explains the fallacy in that line of reasoning. One can get just as attached to a life of simplicity as they can to a life of luxury. As she says, "the ego can use anything to re-create itself, whether it's occurrence or spaciousness." Instead, one needs to be able to fully live with the experience of life with all it's challenges, and not be drowned in it. That's how one experiences balance and completeness. And you don't have to be a monk to experience it. In fact, it's almost better not to be, because modern life is a never ending opportunity to practice.

Smitha Murthy says

With her typical warmth, Pema again teaches me how to live. How to make friends with who we are. With who others are. This book is something that I would love to dip into every now and then -because the learnings from these are something that I need to refresh myself with all the time.
