



The Wise Heart: A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology

Jack Kornfield

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You have within you unlimited capacities for love, for joy, for communion with life, and for unshakable freedom—and here is how to awaken them. In **The Wise Heart**, one of the leading spiritual teachers of our time offers the most accessible and illuminating guide to Buddhism's transformational psychology ever published in the West.

Trained as a monk in Thailand, Burma, and India, Jack Kornfield experienced at first hand the life-changing power of Buddhist teachings: the emphasis on the nobility and sacredness of the human spirit, the fine-grained analysis of emotion and thought, the precise techniques for healing, training, and transforming the mind and heart. In contrast to the medical orientation of most Western psychology and psychiatry, here is a vision of radiant human dignity, and a practical path for realizing it in our own lives.

The Wise Heart is the fruit of a life's work that includes such classics as **A Path with Heart** and **After the Ecstasy, the Laundry**. Filled with stories from Kornfield's Buddhist psychotherapy practice and portraits of remarkable teachers, it also includes a moving account of his own recovery from a violence-filled childhood. For meditators and mental health professionals, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, **The Wise Heart** offers an extraordinary journey from the roots of consciousness to the highest expression of human possibility.

The Wise Heart: A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology Details

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Alex Bourke says

Most of the Buddhist and meditation books I've read are either appallingly written, dull as ditchwater though good for insomnia, and with too much Sanskrit mumbo jumbo, or they keep you stuck at the beginner level. Jack Kornfield holds a western PhD in psychology, is a practising psychotherapist, has lived as a monk for years in Asian monasteries, and works with several editors and multiple drafts to create a book that is highly readable, to the point, in plain English, and uplifting. Like the (almost unreadable) Daniel Goleman / Dalai Lama books, he explores how Buddhist psychology focuses on helping normal people achieve our full potential, going well beyond western psychology which focuses on getting depressed and anxious people back to "normal", and in this way it is in the same category as the Art of Happiness by the Dalai Lama and psychiatrist Howard Cutler, but this book goes much further.

Kornfield explains mindfulness through meditation, grasping, aversiveness/aggression, delusion and the antidotes of abundance thinking, loving-kindness, seeing things as they really are with wisdom, relating it all to western cognitive reframing. I would say that this book can give you the equivalent of two years of psychotherapy for the cost of about 15 minutes with a qualified therapist. Read it with a pencil, mark up what you like and return to it. Other Buddhist friends also recommend his book After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. But you don't have to become a Buddhist to enjoy this great book.

Lene says

This book is great food for thought, and is a reminder that compassion (especially toward oneself) is the most honest and productive way to find a path through the enormous piles of manure that life (and other people) heap on us. It is proving to be a quite effective salve for my wounds.

I don't believe in organized religion or a lot of cosmic mumbo-jumbo, and I have a very loosely organized code of morality. It takes in pieces of the Hippocratic oath; "I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm", commandments 5-9 of the Old Testament, and the Madeleine Albright quote "There is a special place in hell for women who do not help other women".

I read this book and am un-offended. I find myself more forgiving toward myself and others. (the former has always been a significantly larger challenge than the latter) This book is lovely. I am enjoying it a few pages at a time. Then, I pause, and I walk around in my head for a couple of days thinking about what I've read. It is a very cognitive-behavioral therapy approach to learning about Buddhist psychology.

Sue Harrington says

A wonderful book with such depth weaving together western psychology and Buddhist psychology with lots of practical application and exercises to help the reader join the journey, practice the understanding as you read. Only got a bit tired of some of the examples which often happens for me in a book like this where the author wants to put examples in to flesh out the concepts and understanding. But the down side forme is they seem too good to be true as you read a life transformation in a paragraph.....but what can an author do?!

Maria Gandara Gil says

This book is amazing for anyone that wants to get into mindfulness. It took me a while reading it, because it is a book that changes you as you read it. I feel I became a wiser person during the process of reading it. Around the firsts chapters I even went to visit Spirit Rock for a meditation course. I'm grateful that I found this book at the Wisdom 2.0 Conference in San Francisco.

Wayuva says

The two quotes below show the book is unscientific, superstitious even. It relies mostly on anecdotes to get its points across, no studies, no proper reasoning. I stopped reading half way through the third chapter. Even if you just want the theory on Buddhist psychology, I still wouldn't recommend it due to all the anecdotes. While I do think there may be good things to be found in Buddhist psychology, surely there exists a book out there which does a better job at divulging its secrets, while doing away with anything that isn't 'proven' or easily verified.

Just as we are interdependent with the earth and one another, we are also connected in consciousness. Western psychology does not yet acknowledge this, but it is true. Years ago when my wife and I were studying at an ashram in the mountains of India, my wife had a very clear but difficult vision of a death in her family. I tried to reassure her that images of death were simply a part of the meditative process. Sadly, I was wrong. Ten days later we received a telegram that began, "Your brother Paul has died." When we read further we discovered that the telegram was sent on the day of her vision, and that Paul had died on that day in exactly the manner she had seen. We have all heard stories like this. This is because we are connected in consciousness.

At first it was peaceful and still, like in a silent movie, as he watched his own body lying below being kicked. It was so peaceful he didn't know what all the fuss was about. And then Salam described how, in a remarkable way, his consciousness expanded further. He knew it was his body lying below, but now he felt he was also the boot kicking the body. He was also the peeling green paint on the prison walls, the goat whose bleat could be heard outside, the dirt under the guard's fingernails—he was life, all of it and the eternal consciousness of it all, with no separation. Being everything, he could never die. All his fears vanished. He realized that death was an illusion.

Kathy says

Nothing new for people who have read a lot of Eastern religion or Western psychology. I also went to a

workshop in Seattle by the author and I was not impressed with his constant references to his meetings with the Dalai Lama and the Pope. This might be interesting to someone who has not read or studied much Eastern religion.

Steve Cann says

What a remarkable book! I received it as a surprise Christmas present from a very dear friend, & it's been so enlightening for me. It's not a book to rush through - I found reading roughly one chapter per week was perfect, reflecting on each one's contents as I went along.

Jack Kornfield recovered from a violence-filled childhood to go on his own personal journey, eventually becoming a Buddhist master after many years of learning & teaching, & here he imparts his own wisdom to us - providing real tools for a more happy & peaceful life.

Each chapter highlights one of the 26 principles of Buddhist psychology. He sets each one out, examines their meanings & truths, & then supports these by giving real-life stories from his own personal encounters. Many of these are his own experiences, but many more are with people whom he has met on retreats who at the time were lost & at a low-ebb in their lives, & were looking for an answer they couldn't find elsewhere.

At the end of each chapter he then invites the reader to put the principle in practise - reflecting on how we see ourselves, our world, & how we relate to others, & encourages a regular meditation practise.

The book is a real treasure-trove of wisdom & positive teachings - beautifully written, humbling & very uplifting.

How wonderful if such a book could be part of the school curriculum - our world would literally be transformed overnight!

Thank you so much Jack for your generosity in sharing your wisdom - I really feel now as if I'd like to start reading the book again from the beginning! I thoroughly recommend it to everyone who wishes to seek the path to finding more joy, peace, love & happiness in their lives.

Steve Woods says

To say that this book is inspiring would be an understatement. It is not only that but it serves as a clear practical guide to introducing the basic tenets of Buddhist practice and psychology into daily life. After 4 years of intense study and practice this book has provided the key that will allow me to integrate so much of what I have learned into my daily life. It is timely and it will form the structure of my practice for the next few months. I am very grateful to this great teacher for his effort in passing on the wisdom to which I can only continue aspire. I live in a remote part of a remote country and language and culture present significant difficulties to me in practice, for that reason alone his efforts are essential and central to my life. For anyone this book followed with diligence and commitment will be an agent of transformation. That is certain. I highly recommend it to anyone.

Paige says

A little cumbersome to get through for me, but contains lots of wisdom. Psychology from a Buddhist perspective is much more holistic and less reactionary than Western traditions. Just breathe....this too shall pass. :-)

Ozma says

Although a bit longer than it needs to be, this well-written book cross-references Buddhist philosophy with traditional Western psychoanalysis. Other books do this too, but Kornfield is a better than average writer. He uses many examples from his own patients' stories to illustrate the principles. It's a lot of things most self-aware people know already, but it never hurts to re-visit them again.

Jerry says

Did you ever find yourself drawn to a culture or spiritual belief that was outside your cultural and social experience, so drawn, in fact, that it was more like you had experienced it all before. Theravada Buddhism has been like that for me, but lack of understanding and my western, scientific orientation has made it impossible to fully embrace. This book written by Jack Kornfield who embraced in the late 60's the spiritual wisdom of Asia while the rest of us were embracing the uniquely western hippy culture, shows how Buddhist psychology works for those with the western perspective, by illuminating the basic tenets of Buddhism which do not require a belief in cultural and religious dogma. An enlightening exercise.

Mario says

One of the most comprehensive and well-founded guides to a freer, better awareness

Please note that I put the original German text at the end of this review. Just if you might be interested.

Kornfield is a bridge builder, creator of Buddhist practice principles applicable to the Western way of life and, as icing on the cake, a good writer as well. In this, arguably one of the best, most non-dogmatic and sincerely honest work, the reader transforms.

As the pages move farther, it grows into a more open and from the negative attitude and voluntarily erected inner blocks to more willing people to change. At least in theory.

To combine it in practice with much consequence, inevitable setbacks and the constant struggle with itself to tread the new, thorny and impassable path, until it transforms itself to the new life way. While rocky, old mental trails and roads expire and are given to erosion. It is up to everyone to grow even in pain or to stagnate in supposed well-being. Alternatively, in the worse case, unconsciously advancing one's mental degeneration.

In the first of the chapters, you gain knowledge of your consciousness of whom you think you are and capture the root of all evil. In the form of exaggerated, restricting and often obstructive ego. In the Mindfulness Department, their liberating power, the influence of emotions, and the power of the subconscious are touched upon before the transformation of avoidable and unavoidable suffering.

There is a description of the personality types in Buddhism and the lengthy transformation of ignorance and hatred into wisdom and goodness. On the home straight, the more complicated disciplines such as letting go and liberation from suffering, behavioral therapy based on acquired knowledge, intention and karma, and the psychology of friendliness towards oneself. Moreover, the title-giving points and awakened hearts as a noble ideal.

To begin with, "The wise heart" concerning understanding and willingness to start practicing is sometimes too complicated and difficult to understand. Some of the approaches require previous experience of Buddhism, and above all, mindfulness, ego dissolution, sacred pause, an inner observer. Also, the ability, which is very difficult to master, to maintain inner peace in the face of one's own stressful experiences from the past or the here and now or external influences.

Without a certain amount of routine and prior knowledge, Kornfield's grandiose approaches are not only harder to implement. For non-specialists could fatally also give the false impression that some passages drift in the esoteric and pseudo-psychological, which is not the case at any moment. The comprehensibility, as well as the renunciation of dogmatics and overly specialized explanations, make the work outstanding. In addition to the consideration of the feasibility of daily life.

One can feel the conviction and how much Kornfield himself lives his paper-based thoughts, which is a rare, brilliant, unique selling proposition. The credible way of mediation makes it easier for the reader to access matter.

This is unfortunately not the case with works of monks and clerics that are too focused on the psychic philosophical overarching structure. Due to their self-chosen isolation of monetary and relationship-related constraints, they are sometimes questionable and unreliable, because they can have no relation to real people's real problems due to their environment.

The alliance of Far Eastern wisdom and Western self-help therapies is further developed in this form by Jon Kabat Zinn, who is similar to Kornfield in conception and mediation, and Matthias Ennenbach. Ennenbach focused more on the psychotherapeutic aspects and was significantly influenced by Kornfield and Zinn. The pure essence of healing approaches with less philosophical and holistic approach is more likely to settle at Ennenbach, while Zinn and Kornfield devote more space to the underlying schools of thought.

All in all one of the best and most meaningful works. Also from the re-reading benefit, as one can observe in the course of personal development, how the opinion and effect of the described problems changed. Nice to watch yourself, as at first reading still partly skeptical to jovial considered explanations vary. They gain in value in the course of practice, and one recognizes the approach, for which one was initially too closed now joyful and practiced. Resting in oneself on the eternal path to enlightenment.

Eine der umfassendsten und fundiertesten Anleitungen zu einem freieren, besseren Bewusstsein

Kornfield ist ein Brückenbauer, Erschaffer von auf die westliche Lebensweise anwendbarer buddhistischer Praxisprinzipien und als Sahnehäubchen auch noch ein guter Schreiber. In diesem, wohl einem der besten, undogmatischsten und von aufrichtiger Ehrlichkeit geprägten Werk transformiert der Leser. Während des Dahinraschelns der Seiten wächst er, zumindest in der Theorie, zu einem offenerem und seinen negativen Verhaltensmustern und freiwillig errichteten, inneren Blockaden gegenüber änderungswilligeren Menschen. Es in der Praxis mit viel Konsequenz, unvermeidbaren Rückschlägen und dem steten Ringen mit sich selbst verbunden, den neuen, dornigen und unwegsamen Pfad zu beschreiten, bis er sich zum neuen Lebensweg transformiert. Während schädliche, alte mentale Wege und Straßen verfallen und der Erosion Preis gegeben werden. Es liegt an jedem selbst im Schmerz zu wachsen oder im vermeintlichen Wohlbefinden zu stagnieren. Oder im schlimmeren Fall, der eigenen geistigen Degeneration unbewusst Vorschub zu leisten. Im ersten der 5 Kapitel erlangt man Wissen über das eigene Bewusstsein, wer man zu sein glaubt und erfasst die ursprüngliche Wurzel allen Übels. In Form des übersteigerten, einschränkenden und oftmals hinderlichen Egos. In der Abteilung für Achtsamkeit werden deren befreende Kraft, der Einfluss von Gefühlen und die Macht des Unterbewussten angeschnitten, bevor es an die Umwandlung des vermeidbaren und

unvermeidbaren Leids geht.

Es erfolgt eine Beschreibung der Persönlichkeitstypen im Buddhismus und die langwierige Verwandlung von Unwissenheit und Hass in Weisheit und Güte. Auf der Zielgeraden geht es an die komplexeren Disziplinen wie das Loslassen und die Befreiung vom Leid, auf den erworbenen Erkenntnissen fußende Verhaltenstherapie, Absicht und Karma und die Psychologie hinter Freundlichkeit gegenüber sich selbst. Und dem Titel gebenden weisen und erwachten Herzen als hehres Ideal.

Für den Einstieg ist „Das weise Herz“, was die Anforderungen an das Verständnis und die Bereitschaft, mit dem Praktizieren zu beginnen anbelangt, in manchen Abschnitten zu komplex und schwer nachvollziehbar. Einige der Ansätze erfordern bereits gemachte Erfahrungen mit Buddhismus und vor allem Achtsamkeit, Auflösung des Ego, Heiligem Innehalten und Inneren Beobachter. Und der nur sehr schwer zu meisternden Fähigkeit, angesichts eigener belastender Erlebnisse aus Vergangenheit oder dem Hier und Jetzt beziehungsweise äußerer Einflüssen die innere Ruhe zu bewahren.

Ohne eine gewisse Routine und Vorkenntnisse sind die grandiosen Ansätze Kornfields nicht nur schwerer umzusetzen. Für Laien könnte sich fatalerweise auch der falsche Eindruck ergeben, dass manche Passagen ins esoterische und pseudopsychologische abdriften, was in keinem Moment der Fall ist.

Die Verständlichkeit sowie der Verzicht auf Dogmatik und allzu fachspezifische Ausführungen machen das Werk hervorstechend. Neben der Bedachtheit auf die Umsetzbarkeit im täglichen Leben. Man spürt die Überzeugung und wie sehr Kornfield seine zu Papier gebrachten Gedanken selbst lebt, was ein selenes, glänzendes Alleinstellungsmerkmal darstellt. Durch die glaubwürdige Art der Vermittlung findet der Leser leichter Zugang zu der Materie.

Das ist bei allzu auf das psychisch philosophische Übergerüst fokussierten Werken von Mönchen und Geistlichen leider nicht so. Durch deren selbst gewählte Isolation von monetären und beziehungstechnischen Zwängen sind sie mitunter fragwürdig und unglaubwürdig, da sie aufgrund ihrer eigenen Lebenswelt keinen Bezug zu realen Problemen echter Menschen haben können.

Die Allianz von fernöstlichen Weisheiten und westlichen Selbsthilfetherapien wird in dieser Form auch von Jon Kabat Zinn, der in Konzeption und Vermittlungsweise Kornfield ähnelt und Matthias Ennenbach weiter entwickelt. Ennenbach konzentriert sich stärker auf die psychotherapeutischen Aspekte konzentriert und wurde von Kornfield und Zinn wesentlich beeinflusst wurde. Die reine Essenz der Heilungsansätze mit weniger philosophischen und ganzheitlichen Zugang ist auch eher bei Ennenbach anzusiedeln, während Zinn und Kornfield den zugrundeliegenden Denkschulen mehr Platz widmen.

Summa summarum eines der besten und sinnstiftendsten Werke. Auch vom erneuten Lesenutzen, da man im Zuge der persönlichen Weiterentwicklung beobachten kann, wie sich die Meinung zu und Wirkung von den beschriebenen Problemstellungen verändert. Schön, sich selbst dabei zu beobachten, wie bei erstmaligem Lesen noch teils skeptisch bis jovial betrachtete Erläuterungen sich wandeln. Sie gewinnen im Laufe der Praxis an Wert und man erkennt den fundierten Ansatz, für den man anfänglich noch zu verschlossen war nun freudig und praktiziert. In sich selbst ruhend auf dem ewigen Pfad zur Erleuchtung.

MissBecka says

I really enjoyed the principles, descriptions, practices and east to west comparatives.

That being said.....I had a lot of trouble working my way through this book.

There were a lot of stories introduced awkwardly throughout the book.

Some were choppy transitions into them and others were very off topic. I'm sure a lot of them were inserted to give everyday perspective to the teachings but they ended up giving a very mechanical feel to the book and had me forcing a good chunk of the reading.

The author has a beautiful way with words and I wish he would have trusted himself more to deliver the teachings without the third party experiences and unrelated memories.

John says

A wonderful book. I'm not much of a Buddhist, but that doesn't matter. These are teachings of wisdom and love. Kornfield is an authentic voice of true compassion. You sense that from the start. He holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and this book is an excellent study on the nature of heart and mind. One of the cool things is the range of references from Michael Ventura and Dipama Barua among others. I used a highlighter and read the book slowly. When you find the right teacher learning is a joy.

Heather says

This is a good book about Buddhist psychology and mindfulness. Mindfulness means being aware, being grateful, being courageous, being free, and changing. Mindfulness leads to compassion and love. There are some good thoughts in this book. Here are some of my favorites:

"See the inner nobility and beauty of all human beings (p. 12)."

"Whether practiced in a forest monastery or in the West, Buddhist psychology beings by deliberately cultivating respect, starting with ourselves (p. 18)."

"Aim to see as many beings as you can with a silent, loving respect (p. 21)."

"When we clearly realize that the source of disharmony and misery in the world is ignorance, we can open the door of wisdom and compassion (p. 23)."

"The courageous heart is the one that is unafraid to be open to the world. With compassion we come to trust our capacity to open to life without armoring (p. 31)."

"Living with compassion does not mean we have to give away all our possessions, take in every homeless person we meet, and fix every difficultly in our extended family and community. Compassion is not co-dependence. It does mean we lose our self-respect or sacrifice ourself blindly for others (p. 32)."

"We can always rest in awareness...freedom is always possible....A boy in school suddenly notices a sunbeam illuminating the dust and he is no longer the earnest fifth grader struggling with math. He smiles as he senses the ever-present mystery and his whole building and schoolboy drama are held in a silent, free awareness (p. 44)."

"Look for a day that you feel to be most positive, and start to mindfully observe the healthy states [wisdom, love, and generosity] that are present (p. 60)."

"Since you are searching for understanding of self, don't ask about caste or class, riches or birth, but instead ask about heart and conduct (p. 71)."

"We relax and discover we can let go of the false sense of self created by identification (p. 76)."

"Mindfulness is attention. It is a non-judging and respectful awareness (p. 96)."

"Sitting mindfully with our sorrows and fears, or with those of another, is an act of courage. It is not easy (p. 99)."

"When we have accepted the feelings that arise, we can investigate them. We can notice the way they feel in the body; the color, density, size, and energy of the mood; the stories our mind creates when they are present. We can also begin to recognize how automatic they can be, arising unbidden from past conditioning (p. 131)."

"It takes courage to experience the full measure of our feelings and emotions without reacting to them or cutting them off. Yet here is where our freedom lies (p. 134)."

"The universe is made of stories, not atoms (p. 138)."

"Learn to be mindful of thought instead of being lost in it (p. 139)."

"By developing mindfulness of thought, we can see how our beliefs and fears blind us (p. 140)."

"As you go about your daily rounds, first notice the gifts of the natural world. Notice the way the gift of sunlight streams behind everything...Notice too the rainfall and the rivers...Now notice how generously you are held and supported by the earth under your home and your feet, but the air you breathe, by the warmth of the day and the coolness of the evening. Now look at the unending care and generosity in humans around you: parents with children, teachers with students, healers and businesspeople, all serving one another. People stop at red lights so you are safe to go. They line up in the market, they share the parks....supporting others with countless hours of unspoken generosity and love...most of the time, the people around you are giving: in conversation, in action, adding the generosity of their life energy to the flow of the whole. Spend a day or a week just noticing, naming, bowing to this stream of generosity everywhere (p. 204)."

"We don't have to reinforce the pain of the situation by adding to the pain by our reaction (p. 214)."

"Let your heart teach you (p. 221)."

"When we live in delusion, we are quick to judge others. We miss their inner beauty. We also miss their pain, and cannot respond to them with compassion. With inattention, we miss the meal in front of us, the parade of passersby, the ever-changing scenery, the openhearted connection with the world (p. 227)."

"We can live wisely only when we accept the reality of change (p. 231)."

"Stop asking if we're almost there yet. We're nomads, for crying out loud (p. 232)!"

"By aligning our dedication with our highest intention, we chart the course of our whole being. Then no matter how hard the voyage and how big the setbacks, we know where we are headed (p. 263)."

"What matters most is how we respond....By responding in a sacred and compassionate way, we create a new pattern for the future (p. 268)."

"What we repeatedly visualize changes our body and consciousness. Visualize freedom and compassion (p. 277)."

"Most of those who survived the [concentration] camps did so [because] they had faith in a greater purpose for themselves and the world. Like these survivors, we each need to find our sense of purpose, to orient and support ourselves amidst the fragmented pulls of our busy modern life (p. 289)."

"Together, the practices of inner and outer kindness lifted the pall of her worry and depression. Very steadily, the new messages of compassion shifted who she believed she was (p. 300)."

"Concentration develops from our wholehearted dedication to a subject or activity. As we develop the ability to concentrate, our steadiness and focus grow. We find ourselves able to be more fully present with our whole being (p. 317)."

"Virtue...is the foundation for radical change. It means that we carry ourselves with truthfulness, integrity, passion, and purpose in all we do....Just as a life of virtue brings happiness, it also packs a punch (p. 332)."

"Forgiveness is not weak. It demands courage and integrity. Yet only forgiveness and love can bring about the peace we long for....True love is not for the fainthearted (p. 345)."

"With virtue and forgiveness we repair the world (p. 349)."

"The quieting of our mind is a political act. The world does not need more oil or energy or food. It needs less greed, less hatred, less ignorance. Even if we have inwardly taken on the political bitterness or cynicism that exists externally, we can stop and begin to heal our own suffering, our own fear, with compassion. Through meditation and inner transformation, we can learn to make our own hearts a place of peace and integrity (p. 358)."

"It is not given to us to know how our life will affect the world. What is given to us is to tend the intentions of our heart and to plant beautiful seeds with our deeds. Do not doubt that your good actions will bear fruit, and that change for the better can be born from your life (p. 381)."

"Love is our true nature, but as we have seen, it is covered over by a protective layer of fear. We have learned how Buddhist practices unearth the gold beneath the clay and return us to our natural goodness (p. 386)."

"A peaceful heart gives birth to love. When love meets suffering, it turns to compassion. When love meets happiness, it turns to joy (p. 387)."

"Gratitude is a gracious acknowledgement of all that sustains us, a bow to our blessings, great and small. Gratitude is the confidence in life itself....As gratitude grows it gives rise to joy. We experience the courage to rejoice in our own good fortune and in the good fortune of others (p. 394)."

Djrmel says

This was probably not the best book for me to choose as I switch from being curious about Buddhism to actively investigating it as a path I might want to follow, as it goes deep into the how Buddhism heals the troubled mind and skims the fundamentals. I still got a lot from it, possibly because I have a small background in Jungian psychology (I had no idea they shared so much) and also because Kornfield has so much experience in the area of Insightful Meditation that he's pretty much got an easy to understand example

for every situation. So may examples they sometimes break the flow of the teaching of something he has entitled The Principles of Buddhist Psychology, but they do keep the book from getting mired down in psycho babble. The lessons at the end of each chapter are easy to follow and demonstrate that if someone does choose The Middle Way, it's not an overnight conversion. Be prepared to work on yourself.

Happyreader says

This book made me cry. After almost 400 pages, I'm left with so many heartfelt stories of pain and transformation through the power of mindfulness. Probably his best book for how to sit through pain and confusion and how to shift your mind and heart positively towards a more open and loving way of being. Couldn't put it down.

Peter Landau says

My wife suggested I read this, or listen to it, because she found the audiobook on YouTube. She said it was practical, that Jack Kornfield spoon-fed the complexity of Zen for the Western mind, through a psychological lens. I found all this true. That is, as much as I could retain. Reading trumps listening when it comes to holding onto something. But then Buddhist say you have to let go of attachments. I'm not ready to do that just yet. The first thing I did after finishing this was click back to the beginning to start again. There's a lot for me to learn here. Maybe this is my extended mantra.

Christie says

WOW- everyone should read this. It is a discussion on the ten principles of Buddhist philosophy & psychology. "Buddhism isn't a "religion" it's a way of thinking". Cultivate your consciousness! The quotes and simplicity are life-changing, and the book will TEACH you how to process information and emotions in a healthy, constructive way. Probably in the Top 3 best books EVER.

da AL says

Kornfield does a great job of demystifying Buddhism. In a wonderfully down-to-earth style, he gives real world specifics on living fully.

I am neither Buddhist nor religious at all, nor plan to be - but love his easygoing style & how he links it up practically to real life happy harmonious living.
