



Don't Believe Everything You Think: Living with Wisdom and Compassion

Thubten Chodron

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It can be hard for those of us living in the twenty-first century to see how fourteenth-century Buddhist teachings still apply. When you're trying to figure out which cell phone plan to buy or brooding about something someone wrote about you on Facebook, lines like "While the enemy of your own anger is unsubdued, though you conquer external foes, they will only increase" can seem a little obscure.

Thubten Chodron's illuminating explication of Togmay Zangpo's revered text, *The Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*, doesn't just explain its profound meaning; in dozens of passages she lets her students and colleagues share first-person stories of the ways that its teachings have changed their lives. Some bear witness to dramatic transformations—making friends with an enemy prisoner-of-war, finding peace after the murder of a loved one—while others tell of smaller lessons, like waiting for something to happen or coping with a minor injury.

Don't Believe Everything You Think: Living with Wisdom and Compassion Details

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Author : Thubten Chodron

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Zaynab Shahar says

The most interesting part of this book is Chodron's commentary on Togmay Zangpo's The Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas. The antidotes from dharma students waxed and waned between being really interesting and quite frankly a little dull. They also embodied something I struggled with throughout this book, that is the assumption that materialism manifests itself in the same way across socio-economic statuses. Chodron writes from a place of having abandoning upper middle class living for life as a buddhist nun, and writes about materialism from the assumption that most folks living in the U.S who are grappling with consumerist culture have similar struggles in terms of leaving behind wealth and extensive material trappings. In an age where U.S buddhists are trying to grapple more heavily with white & class privilege, it was a little disappointing to read a book which doesn't take those things more thoroughly into account when discussing how to disengage from the culture of materialism U.S society lives in.

Wisdom Garden says

In a world of spiritual symbology within all religions and philosophies, Venerable Thubten Chodron cuts to the chase by reducing the ladder of abstraction into practical everyday living terms according to the Buddha..I recommend this book.

Elysse says

Lots of great wisdom if everyone applied just one thing he teaches to their life, this world would be a better place;

However, Chodron does seem to push going to a temple, or living the monastic life a bit too much. Still an insightful book, encouraging us to live compassionate lives.

Justin Lee says

This is not a self help book. I feel like with a title like that, one could easily assume that it is. I'm a fan of the author, Thubten Chodron, so I knew it was a book about using Buddhism in your life. The main title itself doesn't really fit this book and that's perfectly fine. It deals more with learning to treat others with compassion and learning a new approach to living.

I was fascinated by this book and found it very useful. I will definitely be reading more books like this. Buddhist practice is quite different and more nuanced than I'm used to. If you're looking for a beginners guide to practicing Buddhism, this seems to be a good one.

Nancy Nesbitt says

I just finished reading Don't Believe Everything You Think. It is one of the most hands on thought training handbooks I've seen. Reading the personal stories of everyday folks that have used these verses to transform challenges into opportunities for growing their courage and compassion gives me pause for hope. Maybe I too can work with my mind in this way. Thank you Venerable Chodron!

Tessa says

The 37 practices of Bodhisattvas were fantastic. I got tired of reading oversimplified example stories of people learning each one. It became redundant. I also felt that it was problematic to focus on folks in prison, it at times read like "trauma porn" to me.

Sandy says

Explication of The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas.

Maggie says

really appreciated this book. an excellent summary of buddhist methods at a moment when i needed a serious review and when the ideas are deepening within my practice making more sense out of the abstract qualities of this worthwhile method. but -- for me -- it also helped contrast the ideas i cherish and live by from my traditional faith path helping me see the distinction more clearly than ever before between christianity and buddhism. do i cherish the methods of zen practice? ohmy yes! are they the bedrock of my belief system? no. method itself has enormous value even as the essence of thought behind method may differ radically. this book has helped me to clarify that distinction. it's where i am at this point in time and i couldn't have gleaned this clarity from this book if the writer had been less dogmatic than he is in the thoughts he presented within this very book: don't believe everything you think -- a worthy thought-companion for the journey.

L says

This is definitely focused on Buddhist teachings and thus may not be as non-secular as it claims at the beginning of this book. There are definite wisdom in the 37 Practises but there was just something missing in it for me to give this a full five stars. Perhaps it leans too much in the way of advocating for monastic life.

Jess says

Thubten Chodron did an admirable job simplifying The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas. Not only did she thoroughly decipher each verse but she also helped make them applicable to modern times. When unraveling the verses, she used exceptional metaphors, similes, symbolism, and other figurative devices to revive the verses themselves.

Tanya McGinnity says

Venerable Thubten Chodron is a notable author, Buddhist monastic and the founder/abbess of Sravasti Abbey, a meditation community in Newport, Washington. She also hosts the Bodhisattva Breakfast Corner channel on YouTube which I highly encourage you to check out as well as her website which is chock full of information. It's quite remarkable how often I've gone down the rabbit hole of Dharma discovery when visiting it.

Her latest book, *Don't Believe Everything You Think: Living with Wisdom and Compassion* is a commentary on The Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas by Togmay Zangpo, a Tibetan monk and Bodhisattva. Within in the pages, she offers up a crystal clear interpretation and explanation of the Dharma by providing an in depth, yet accessible commentary on each of the 37 verses and then providing a myriad of stories from others on the path who exemplify the teachings within the verses based on experiences they've encountered within their lives.

The book is a helpful guide as to how to apply these practices in one's life in order to work towards the enlightenment of all sentient beings and to support one's efforts as a Bodhisattva. It is a nourishing read and covers a lot of ground – everything from meditation, practice and study to friendships, relationships, karma, adversity and so very much more. *Don't Believe Everything You Think* offers guidance like that of a warm friend rather than of disciplinarian as Thubten Chodron shares her personality and experiences with honesty and generosity. This book leaves readers in a way that one is left with a method to live and exist in a manner that brings less suffering for self and others.

Don't Believe Everything You Think: Living with Wisdom and Compassion is the perfect companion to one's study of the 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas and comes with my high praise for being so well-written and offering teachings that are easy to grasp and put into action. Now reminding oneself to do so – that is the real work of Bodhisattvas.

I'd like to leave you with a few links to check out from Thubten Chodron which are referred to within this book as well as from her website.

Audio of Thubten Chodron's teachings on The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas

A link to The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas by Gyelsay Togmay Sangpo

Talks by Ven. Chodron based on the book *Don't Believe Everything You Think*
