



Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life

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Out of nowhere, like a breeze in a marketplace crowded with advice, comes Byron Katie and “The Work.” In the midst of a normal life, Katie became increasingly depressed, and over a ten-year period sank further into rage, despair, and thoughts of suicide. Then one morning, she woke up in a state of absolute joy, filled with the realization of how her own suffering had ended. The freedom of that realization has never left her, and now in **Loving What Is** you can discover the same freedom through The Work.

The Work is simply four questions that, when applied to a specific problem, enable you to see what is troubling you in an entirely different light. As Katie says, “It’s not the problem that causes our suffering; it’s our thinking about the problem.” Contrary to popular belief, trying to let go of a painful thought never works; instead, once we have done The Work, the thought lets go of us. At that point, we can truly love what is, just as it is.

Loving What Is will show you step-by-step, through clear and vivid examples, exactly how to use this revolutionary process for yourself. You’ll see people do The Work with Katie on a broad range of human problems, from a wife ready to leave her husband because he wants more sex, to a Manhattan worker paralyzed by fear of terrorism, to a woman suffering over a death in her family. Many people have discovered The Work’s power to solve problems; in addition, they say that through The Work they experience a sense of lasting peace and find the clarity and energy to act, even in situations that had previously seemed impossible.

If you continue to do The Work, you may discover, as many people have, that the questioning flows into every aspect of your life, effortlessly undoing the stressful thoughts that keep you from experiencing peace. **Loving What Is** offers everything you need to learn and live this remarkable process, and to find happiness as what Katie calls “a lover of reality.”

Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life Details

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From Reader Review Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life for online ebook

Lori Kincaid Rassati says

I listened to part of the audio version of this book, but I couldn't finish it. I first learned of this book from a smart, very successful woman who referenced it in a talk to 250 of my co-workers. She mentioned how life-changing it was to determine what was her business, someone else's business or God's business. That made sense, so I decided to check it out.

My first dumbfounded moment was in her conversation with a mother who was struggling with her young son not doing his chores, not doing his homework and sometimes lying. When the author suggested that the mother needed to accept mediocrity because the world was all about mediocrity, I almost wrecked the car. Yes, we might all be *happier* or more content if we just accepted blanket mediocrity, but where would this world be?! Thank goodness many people refuse to accept mediocrity for themselves or their children.

I was also disgusted by her nonsense that everyone's truth is equal. That is patently untrue. A member of the Taliban might determine what truth is for him, but most reasonable people will determine his truth is not equal to that of the most of the rest of the world.

Finally, the idea that we should just accept everything as is ("it is what it is" she said over and over) is absurd. Again, where would we be with this notion? We'd still have slavery; we wouldn't have civil rights in this country; we wouldn't have people devoting their lives to social justice, the eradication of disease and poverty, etc., etc., etc.

I feel sorry for someone who believes the lies this woman is spouting.

Heather says

As other readers have stated, this book was really hard to review. I didn't feel that the author was truly honest, for some reason. She presents herself as completely altruistic, but the dynasty that she is building through "the Work" doesn't seem to support that hypothesis. She comes off as a bit of a New Age nut, and the book is a little silly in parts.

But I have to admit that the four questions were insightful and actually helped me to see through a lot of issues I have been dealing with lately. I think that the questions are basic stuff for those familiar with cognitive behavioral therapy, but for some reason Katie's four particular questions really work. What the process did for me was to help me clarify my part in the difficulties I was facing so I could let the rest go. Maybe the book wouldn't be so interesting to others who are already more self-aware than I am, but I liked learning to be more honest with myself. I think many people would be surprised to find the stress and frustration that they think others are causing are actually self-generated. Learning to ask myself "Can I really know that is true?", "How do I behave when I think that thought?", "Who would I be without that thought?" and "Is there any stress-free reason to keep thinking it?" will definitely become part of my self-talk from now on.

V says

To start, let me say I generally loathe self-help books. I don't like reading them, and most generally end up throwing the book out, or keeping it as a source of laughter material.

I would not have read this book if I didn't have to for a book club, and when I first picked it up and started reading I was like "Oh come on.. really?"

But as I got further into the book, and really started to grasp exactly what she was trying to say, and trying to get people to implement in their lives.. The simplicity of her steps, which breed deep insight in our own perceptions, and preconcieved notions.. that we may not necessarily be consciously aware of.. I found this book immensely helpful.

This book is NOT for those who cannot self-analyze at all, or do not have the ability to challenge their way of thinking in insightful ways. For those, that do have the above abilities, and consider themselves extremely in touch with themselves.. this book may seem stupid and too simplistic on a cursory reading. The beauty of her method is that it can be as deep and insightful as you make it, or as simplistically stupid as you see it. The choice really is yours.

Sometimes the hardest thing, is challenging and questioning ourselves because we already know our secrets and what buttons to push. Lies are easy. Truth is hard.

Steffan Bard says

As I made my way through it, I kept having this unsettling feeling - esp. as I read the dialogues in it. Eventually I figured out what was confusing and challenging about it. I deeply resonate with a lot of her core principles and premises (as they are ones I've come to on my own), yet I have some very sharp disagreements with how they are applied. This made it an odd book to read for me because usually when I resonate with the basic principles and premises an author is describing I usually also resonate with the way they suggest to live them out etc., but that was not the case here.

I'll be specific.

I totally agree with the idea of there being three "types of business" in the world, mine, yours and God's (reality's). However, the lines between these aren't always as clear as she tries to make them out to be for the sake of "the work" being able to be applied so simplistically and clearly I think. For instance, if I want to have someone else be a part of my life in a significant way, and they are important to me, then how they choose to live and operate is going to have significant effects on me. And I don't believe a healthy, integrated and sane adult just resigns to accept whatever the other person is doing just because it's "not their business." In that case, if they are in my life (and I in theirs) in that way, then the lines between "our business" may be more interdependent.

What I'm trying to say here is that I believe there is a healthy human place which acknowledges how we are affected by other people (while not being codependent) and can assertively navigate (ask for what we need or want) things without being attached by way of a neurotic ego. Being assertive means we ask for what we want while letting go of the outcome and the answer if the answer is no. So in some cases, "loving what is,"

means accepting the fact that someone else's behavior affects us a certain way and then asking for help from them and compassionately communicating our needs while not demanding or expecting the other person to meet them - as we understand our needs are ultimately our own responsibility and the other person may only be one strategy or source of meeting our needs.

And, worst comes to worst, we may have to apply some boundaries with a person who we are wanting something from, but who doesn't genuinely have the willingness to give it to us. A boundary says, "I'm not doing this to appease or upset you, I'm doing it to take care of myself." In this case, taking care of ourselves would be choosing the amount of involvement we have with someone who we want something from but who doesn't have the genuine willingness in them to give it to us. So we can move on to other people and strategies without blaming them, though we allow ourselves, compassionately, to feel disappointed, and take that disappointment as our soul's wisdom that we do need to move on and set that boundary perhaps.

Further on the topic of assertiveness though. The poet David Whyte has this idea he talks about of "the conversational nature of reality." And the basic idea is that we bring our desires to the world and the world brings its desires to us - and what happens is often something in between. We don't get all of what we want from the world and the world doesn't get all that it wants from us. What Katie's ideology here seems to reflect is a cutting off of the conversation because it's vulnerable and leaves us open to suffering. So she advises just accepting whatever the world is like.

However, we need to realize we are also a part of the world and do have some control over what happens; and that a healthy adult realizes that and is able to be assertive without being attached. Suffering is a part of life, and truly "loving what is." I'm not sure that perfect acceptance negates all suffering. True nonattachment and acceptance fearlessly admits our humanity and vulnerability, which includes us having wishes that are not fulfilled or are frustrated. So being an integrated, healthy or sane adult does not mean we just give up what we want because it would be "arguing with reality," as Katie reiterates many times.

This took me awhile to figure out, as to why I wasn't jiving with her application of the basic premise of the book, which I agreed and agree with - that it's generally much more healthy to accept what is rather than resist or argue with it. The serenity prayer guides a lot of my internal decision making. But it seems that Katie only affirms half of it - the acceptance of what we cannot change. But there are indeed things we can change, and can exert effort towards without being attached neurotically (though, granted, I do believe this takes a good amount of inner work and transformation before one can come to this point). So I didn't see this point being affirmed - that there is a necessity to seeking the wisdom to know the difference between what we truly can and cannot change. Katie seems to opt for a rather black and white binary as to what we can and cannot change as, I imagine, this makes "the work" a lot simpler to apply.

Okay, my other main disagreement is that the application of the work felt too rationalistic and, again, simplistic to me. The reason being, a person who is applying the work is left with these binaries - "is it true?" (or false?) - when, what's usually the most helpful, I believe, is seeking understanding as to why or in what context something is true or false, not merely asking if it is or isn't.

It was especially the third question of the work that bothered me the most - "Who would you be without this thought?" and "Can you think of one stress-free reason to keep this thought?" Asking those questions leaves no room for understanding or empathizing with the legitimate reasons why we have a judgment, resistance, "should" or pain in life or towards someone. And I believe that the most powerful place of transformation is in understanding the motivation for why we are operating in a certain manner and then figuring out if there might be a better way to meet the needs motivating our behaviors. But the way the work sets it up is that one is only meant to inquire as to whether the thought creates stress or peace, and then we are asked to let the thought let go of us (I did appreciate her clarification that she isn't asking people to "drop the thought" or to try to drop it) on the basis of realizing it's not helping us feel peaceful or happy.

However, all emotions are meaningful and necessary to becoming a more integrated human being. Stress, depression or unhappiness are the not our enemies, merely the signals that perhaps we are seeking to meet a need of ours through an inefficient or unrealistic strategy. And determining whether a strategy is inefficient or unrealistic is a very personal and intuitive process that requires a good amount of self-awareness and wisdom.

In Non-Violent Communication they say that all judgments are tragic expressions of unmet needs. And this is why we can have compassion on judgments - the judgments of others and our own judgments. So that is the kind of understanding I have found to be most helpful. Whereas, what Katie seems to be suggesting is a judgment of the judgment and trying to resolve it by the mere realization that it seems to be causing us stress or may not be true from another perspective.

However, something may be true for us - and there are good reasons why we have any judgment we have. There are certain needs within us that are trying to be expressed, though we may not know how else to express them but to have a judgment or resistance to something or someone. So I find that the place of transformation is not in merely rationalistically observing whether we feel stressed or at peace with a thought, but seeking to compassionately understand every part of ourselves, even the parts of ourselves that have judgments and resistances and then letting those parts of ourselves speak so that we might understand what they are wanting and why - rather than hoping they dissipate with the simple realizing that they are causing us stress or that we would feel more happy without them.

I'll give an example. In the chapter of dialogues on relationships and family she talks with Justin who is struggling because he feels that his family doesn't accept him or his way of life and they just want him to conform to theirs. But the way Katie speaks with him, she leads him to the conclusion that it is him that's being unreasonable or unaccepting because he's equally not accepting their nonacceptance of him essentially.

This, to me, reads essentially as trying to judge our judgments out of ourselves rather than compassionately understand them and resolve them - which is what I find to work a lot better personally, and from my understanding of human nature as a psychologist.

With Justin, what I would have tried to lead him to would be a compassionate understanding of his legitimate need and desire for acceptance. It's not his need for acceptance which is causing stress, it's the unrealistic strategy of trying to have it met through his family, which, in reality, doesn't, in his experience, have the willingness or ability to meet that need. You see what I'm saying? There is a much more helpful understanding in realizing the needs which motivate our resistances and judgments are legitimate, human and reasonable. What may not be reasonable or sane is the various strategies we may be entrenched in trying to meet those needs. Maybe Justin, after truly accepting that his family may not be able to meet that need of his (right now), seeks to find other friends or groups of people who are willing and able to meet that need of his - whereas, the work seemed to just have him bucket the need and strategy together, when it was only the strategy that needed adjustment perhaps.

That's what I think is a more healthy way of "loving what is." It's not necessary to judge or demonize our resistances or judgments as being "insane" because they "argue with reality." Our needs are important, legitimate and real as human beings. What may not always be wise, reasonable or sane is the various ways we seek to have our needs met that simply probably won't, or won't right now.

I have to admit that I didn't manage to finish the book after I had these epiphanies as to why I cringed so much during the dialogues in the book. So to be fair, maybe Katie addresses some of these things that I've hit on here, I'm not sure. Also, to be fair, and to live out the ideology I'm expressing here, I am imagining that it's possible Katie is just making "the work" overtly simple in order to bridge people over into a more integrated and mature perspective and so maybe my disagreements stem from that - just seeing where there are some very important nuances and elements to understand in order to truly and most healthily love what

is, in my experience at least. I will also say that I did find the simplicity and clarity of the work to be helpful in many regards too, as reminders to me of how I can live out the principles of acceptance for what is and what I cannot control better (e.g. the recognition that "should" statements in most cases signify nonacceptance or resistances that I'd do well to explore). This was a helpful reminder for me to think about what areas I still have "should" statements in and to explore why.

Some closing notes: I believe the model of cognitive behavioral therapy and its recognition of cognitive distortions to be a more helpful way of working through resistances to reality. Katie only asks in the work whether something is true or not - but I find that you come to a place of transformation and resolution much quicker if you can understand how or why something is true or not - and that's the useful part of the understanding of cognitive distortions as they are common biases or ways of thinking and perceiving that are ungrounded and unhelpful and that are often the source of a lot of our suffering and inability to face and accept what is. In addition, I'd recommend aforementioned model of non-violent communication (NVC) and its understanding of observations, feelings, needs and requests/strategies.

There are indeed some great principles in this book, ones that I deeply resonate with and that have been a part of philosophies like Taoism and Buddhism for centuries. However, there are some key nuances that I believe Katie seems to miss, which made the application of the work too simplistic and rationalistic, and ultimately not as effective as it could be if it incorporated a more humanistic and compassionate understanding of the psyche and our needs as human beings. That being said, I could concede that perhaps this could be an excellent and life-changing book for a person beginning to be exposed to such principles or philosophies. But those who are already familiar with them will probably be wasting their time trying to find something significantly insightful or transformative here other than perhaps just a reminder of and another way to word principles they are already aware of.

Britt says

My first exposure to 'The Work' and Byron Katie was about 15 years ago. Back then, I probably would have given any of her books one, possible two stars. But the truth is I wasn't ready or even able to hear or understand the concept of projection (even with a Master's in psychology! go figure). A recent accidental rediscovery--by way of a 7 min video of her working with someone on Youtube--just blew my mind. Since that day, I cannot get enough of Byron Katie's insights. The Work is working for me. I don't even really 'do' the Work but I ask myself the questions quickly and that in turn has helped me to see that my thoughts are not necessarily reality, and that my feelings are caused by those thoughts. That alone--dare I say it--has changed some aspects of my life dramatically. And I'm no pop psych junkie. I studied and appreciate the science of behavior, brain chemistry and sociology. I've been to psychologists, psychiatrists and therapist (which I still recommend for each and every person). What The Work brought me that all the books on the former list did not is an actual method--a process not a theory!--that gets you to the truth faster than any relational talk therapy can. And I mean in a very small fraction of the time: minutes vs years. That is a lot of cost savings if you think about it. But...I understand if people don't 'get' it. I certainly didn't. In summary: You have nothing to lose. Definitely worth a try for the money saved on therapy alone if it resonates with you. If it makes no sense, or is difficult to grasp in book form, try watching a video of Byron Katie working with someone (tons of videos on youtube) or at least visit the concept again in 6-7 years.

Nikki says

I was recommended this by my counsellor. I was very unsure about it because a lot of reviews suggested it

includes a lot of victim blaming -- and this is, in a sense, true: Byron Katie's theory is essentially that we are always the ones causing ourselves pain. She does tell a woman to figure out what part her nine year old self had in her own rape, what she did 'wrong'.

That sounds very discomfoting, but I think I see why she does it. When you've had some kind of trauma, there's often a question of what you could've done to prevent it. Maybe you let someone do something bad to you because you were frightened. You can believe almost totally that you couldn't have escaped the situation, but you still have that lingering shard of doubt -- and that could be a way in to learn to recover from it, starting with forgiving your own perceived complicity.

I don't think Byron Katie is 100% right. I found her attitude a little arrogant at times, and condescending. But the basic ideas can be useful and provide a way to logically see how you can better a problem by controlling your part in it. Likewise, it asks you to accept the past as it was, because that's the only way it can be -- you can't change it, only the way you relive it in your mind.

I would say, read this with caution, if you do read it. Aspects of it were useful for me, but I'm still uncomfortable about other aspects.

Emily says

Hmmmm...need to digest this one before writing a review. Some things rang true, some were rather disturbing. I'll be back in a bit...

I'm back. Here we go:

****Update****

After a long discussion with a good friend who found *The Work* extremely helpful in dealing with some difficult issues in her life recently, I'm willing to acknowledge that when applied appropriately with greater guidance and/or better explanation, many of my concerns as outlined below can be alleviated. My rating is staying at a 1-star level because I don't feel this book explains those points well at all and vulnerable people left to apply these concepts from this book without additional clarification (from the website, workshops, facilitators, etc.) can easily get the wrong message and be hurt rather than helped. That doesn't mean, as I mentioned below, that there isn't good to be found in this book or that it's not helpful to many. I just found some of the approach and particularly the explanation lacking.

****Back to the original review****

* "Is it true?" is a very useful question to ask when contemplating what is upsetting us or causing us pain, as long as there's willingness to acknowledge that we may not have all the facts.

* "Can you really absolutely know that that's true?" is not a useful question. If the answer is always "no," which Byron Katie seems to believe it is, then there is absolutely no moral foundation. Whether she agrees or not, I believe there *are* some "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts" in this world. People *should* be honest. Children *shouldn't* be brutalized, mutilated, beaten, starved, murdered, etc. Just because bad awful things happen, doesn't mean they *should*. The key, in my mind, is to accept that things that "shouldn't" happen sometimes do anyway, that you have no control over other people's choices, and that sometimes that really hurts, and then move on with a determination to try not to hurt others the same way, to ease pain instead of cause it, not to accept that bad things *should* happen because they did.

* Some aspects of the Turnaround have great application in the "beholdest thou the mote that is in thy

brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye" kind of way. Again, I'm not comfortable with rejecting every "should" or "shouldn't" statement. The idea that "he shouldn't be dishonest" can be turned around to "I shouldn't be dishonest" and become a great opportunity to ponder my own personal commitment to honesty. The idea that "he should be dishonest" is simply not helpful or enlightening.

* There were some disturbing "blame the victim" implications toward the end of the book when Byron Katie applied The Work to situations involving abuse, incest, rape, etc. For example, "There's no such thing as verbal abuse. There's only someone telling me a truth that I don't want to hear." Um, no. Verbal abuse is real. It is abuse, not necessarily grounded in truth, and no, it *shouldn't* happen. It's also completely inappropriate to ask a woman to identify what "her part" was in the sexual abuse her stepfather committed on her when she was nine years old. That's just wrong.

* Likewise, there seemed to be wholesale ignorance of clinical, chemical depression - and I'm not talking about the occasional "funk" or feeling low which I believe you *can* affect by changing your thinking. Statements like, "Only you can cause your depression" are irresponsible and can cause serious harm if people who need professional help choose not to seek it because "Byron Katie said I should be able to think myself out of this."

* Some level of judgment is necessary. "There's no path that's higher than another." Really? I mean, there are tons of paths that are A-OK by me, but I don't believe that *all* paths are of equal worth. And unless you think Mother Teresa's lifelong effort to serve others and relieve suffering is on par with Jeffrey Dahmer's lifelong path of sadism, death and destruction, then you too believe that some paths *are* inherently higher than others.

* I disagree with her assertion that "Nothing outside you can ever give you what you're looking for" because it completely discounts a higher power: God, Allah, the Spirit, the Universe, whatever you want to call it. My most transcendent moments in life have come from surrendering to that higher power and allowing Him/Her/Them/It to change me.

* Byron Katie also seems to discount the importance of planning for the future and having goals. While living wholly in the future or in the past is counter-productive, we need to expend some energy deciding where we want to go and what we want to be and then figuring out how to get there. Sometimes life will throw wrenches in those plans, but we can't remain static and expect to be truly happy. And we *do* have responsibilities to others, particularly our children.

While Byron Katie's book has some elements that would be helpful if used correctly, I'm concerned that too much of her approach would, in actuality, be damaging. I'm sure the thousands of people who have experienced life-changing events because of The Work will disagree with me and let me know just where I'm not understanding her approach, but there are other, much better and less problematic sources (go read something by the Dalai Lama, for example) for the good elements in Byron Katie's book.

For more book reviews, come visit my blog, [Build Enough Bookshelves](#).

MizzSandie says

I've got nothing against the message of this book or the questions it's build up around.

It's just that it's all a little... *shallow*. . and simplistic.

There's so much more to life, and people and their problems, and their stories, and their thinking and their feelings than Byron Katie acknowledges.

Life is complex.

And sometimes the way to clear your mind or look at life and things from a different perspective doesn't come in a 4-question package, no matter how well and often it has worked for others.

I get the questions. I get it.

And at times I think it can be a great tool.

Questioning your own judgements and investigating your own feelings and looking at them from other perspectives can lead to many new insights and open your eyes to liberating perspectives and thoughts you've never even considered.

But (and there is a 'but') at other times, I would have chosen a different path, a different wording, a different sensitivity, a different way to bring issues into perspectives. Blame that on my psychology training or my personal taste, if you like, but the bottom line is this:

I understand the questions might work for some people in some situations but when it comes to whether or not these 4 questions are the answers to **every** problem for **every** person, **everywhere**, me and Byron Katie certainly differ.

I guess I just don't believe in a one-for-all solution.

In my experience there are many paths to go, and I don't believe there is a 'cure them all' or a saviour, or one and one only remedy for life's hardships or personal challenges.

I found it disenchanting and troublesome how fundamentalistically Byron believes in the power of these 4 questions as the sure and only way to salvation, if not now, then later on.

Over and over again she claims that 'the work' will surely lead to the solution to everyone's problems, and if not, it surely wasn't the questions that could be at fault, nooooo, of course it's the *people* that just hasn't done their 'work' well enough, or was ready for its brilliance.

Dear Katie, I know they worked for you, and I'm really happy for you, and it's very kind of you to share what has clearly brought you (and others) so much joy and peace, but claiming it is the right way (and the only way?) for everyone else is at both a little arrogant, and potentially damaging to the people in question (literally).

There's a saying (I forget who) that I try to live by, that goes something along the lines of:

"Just because they aren't on your path, doesn't mean they've gotten lost."

There are endless ways, paths and healing ways to go and not everyone benefits from the same things, it all depends on the journey they are on.

This might be *one* way, but I surely it is not the *only* way.

And if you want to go beyond (and beneath) the surface level, I recommend you instead try to read Eckhart Tolle, *The power of Now* or Deepak Chopra's *"The book of secrets: Unlocking the hidden dimensions of your life"*

Lezlee Hays says

I have no idea how to star this. One star because I think it's potentially dangerous? Four stars because I think

some of it could be helpful for some people? Two stars because on balance I can't make up my mind? I don't know. Ultimately, I think Katie's concepts are too much for most people to digest without potentially having bad side effects. The idea of letting go of the things we can't control - other people, many of our thoughts, realizations that we're often our own problem and not the other person - these are good realizations. Most things in life that regard our interaction with others can be enhanced if we learn good boundaries and learn to understand it is only our thoughts about things that really affect us. However, Katie's core philosophy borders on nihilism. If taken to its logical conclusion her methods could lead devotees towards a existential crisis from which one might never recover. I can't in good conscience recommend the book for most people.

Farnoosh Brock says

What if four questions could turn your frustration around and create harmony in your life? What if you could ask yourself powerful questions and trust that the process would lead you to inner peace and pain-free existence? What if it really were that simple - not easy, mind you, but simple?

This book has been an awakening in ways that I had not intended to experience. Subtle. Powerful. Inviting. Gripping. Nudging. Original. Oh my, quite the awakening.

In "The Work", Byron Katie takes us through the process of asking four fundamental questions to the difficult, aggravating, frustrating and painful situations in our lives, be it a relationship, a workplace or office situation, a personal dilemma, or an internal conflict. She calls it "putting it to inquiry".

I love how she asks her participants if they want to know the truth. Some of us don't. Some of us like the lies we have made up. Some of us are too attached to those lies, and some of us would never welcome a wake-up call. Some of us imagine falling apart in the face of truth, so we run and hide with the lies.

But if you are not in that category, if you are courageous enough to face your demons with the statement: "I want to know the truth!", then you are the perfect candidate for Byron Katie's brilliant - simply brilliant - inquiry method.

"The Work" is a new level of introspection that I am now using with great results to work through my own personal problems and with my fabulous clients to help them work through some of their challenges. May it shine a light of clarity into your problems too. I am infinitely glad that I read this book.

On April 10th, I invited Ms. Byron Katie to come on to my show, The Daily Interaction podcast, for an interview and she said yes. I interview her in May and can hardly wait. What a treat for me and my listeners. Be sure to look up the show on iTunes and check it out.

Carolyn says

If you want a life-changing book, then you need to read this one today. It is so powerful.

Years ago, after months of dealing with post-partum depression after giving birth to my first child, my GP suggested I talk to a therapist to help me through the depression. I ended up seeing a cognitive therapist for a few months, which blew my mind. I actually got the tools necessary to help me deal with my emotional reactions to situations going on around me.

Byron Katie, whose book is at heart cognitive therapy, was introduced into my life a few months ago when Sagar Simon, who counsels with The Work here in Amsterdam, gave a sample workshop at my women's networking group, Connecting Women. I won the free coaching session with him in the group's raffle, at the end of which, my mind was blown again. He suggested I read this book in order to continue my healing at my own pace.

The book's basic tenet is that all our suffering is caused by our attachment to the stories we create about our thoughts. Here's a good example because it's raining in Holland. It's raining. That's the reality. It's not causing me any stress or irritation. However, the moment I start thinking that it shouldn't be raining, I get irritated and sad. Now, the thought that it shouldn't be raining comes to me in thoughts like "I'm so tired of this weather; if it's not warm and sunny I get depressed; rain is such a pain because i get wet, etc"

This book has taught me that the rain isn't causing my irritation; my irritation is caused when I attach my belief that it shouldn't be raining. Who am I to determine whether or not it rains? It's not my business whether or not it's raining - that's Nature's business, not mine. How about I stay in my own business? How about I figure out what's really causing my irritation?

Here are the bits of brilliance that I refer to all the time:

1. There are only three types of business: mine, yours and the Universe's. Whose am I in?
2. Universe, spare me from seeking love, approval and appreciation.
3. Reality never lies.

Katie's "Work" isn't without controversy. It can be hard to swallow because, once you start doing The Work, you'll be confronted with the idea that you cause your own suffering. The beautiful part is that you can also deliver yourself from your suffering.

Virginia says

This book about blew the top of my head off.

Numerous times I had to sit back and contemplate the book for a long long time before I felt prepared to continue.

I recommend this to EVERYBODY. It's another one of those books that would improve the world by major leaps and bounds if everybody read it.

Sherry Joiner says

It took years to correct the thought patterns and the way I felt about myself and others. In Byron Katie's book with Stephen Mitchell, Loving What Is: Four questions that can change your life, the light came on. I searched my soul for the truth, and it enlightened every situation around me by me doing the 'work' of writing it down. I found out the reasoning behind- why I was being paranoid, and- why I made such rash judgments. Byron Katie invites you to discover the reality in your life, how you react to it, feel about it, then turn it around. Doing "The Work," I no longer hold onto false statements that support my paranoid thoughts. Each day, I am growing with my healthier beliefs as I keep a journal on everything I feel needs my attention. This book is a must read for people of all walks of life.

Dani says

I went into this with open eyes and mind and ended up being quite disappointed.

SPOILER ALERT

The story that really sent me over the edge was the one of the abused woman. She was sexually abused by her stepfather from about age 9.

Byron Katie must not be a sexual abuse survivor because her "work" with this gal both appalling and insensitive. To tell a victim that they need to admit they are guilty of some part of the abuse is incomprehensible to me. And to tell a victim to put herself into the abuser's shoes (how he must feel about himself) made me ill.

The abuse happened when this gal was a CHILD. A child does not think or process information the same way an adult does. It in no way was her fault. I re-read that chapter twice to make sure I was not missing anything that made me draw my initial conclusion, but I still felt the same after re-reading. That's when the book was put into the pile to go back to the library.

Bob Klein says

This is a hard review. Her book (and her questions, but mostly her interviews-as-examples) have the potential to help a lot of people deal with interpersonal issues (that she boils down to inner-personal). The problem I have is the potentially dangerous way that she applies a universal logic to dealing with complex problems. The questions are general enough, and the answers are supposed to be generated by the people answering them. Still, she makes it quite clear from the numerous case studies in the book (examples from her workshops) that it's all about owning the bad things that happen to you. My concern is for the danger of applying this technique to (an admittedly small number of) extreme cases, such as those who are victims of crime. The dialogues follow a predictable pattern and if mapped onto, say, a rape victim, would end with the rape victim "turning it around" and concluding things such as "I hate myself for being raped" or if you really bungle the "turn-around": "I raped myself." Clearly this is not Byron's intent, but a mass-market paperback in the self-help section is a potentially tragic lure for people who self-treat despite needing the help of a serious professional.

That said, I can't help but admit that the book provides a structure to dealing with conflicts and issues. This structure, whether or not I like it, changed me (as books should) in a small way. Probably more the case-studies than the narrative... The case-studies revealed the complexities of the technique in ways that the oversimplified narrative could not. Hmmm... two stars? Is that really true?
