



The Buddhist Path to Simplicity: Spiritual Practice in Everyday Life

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Moments of peace and stillness give us a glimpse of how extraordinary our lives could be. Yet this sense of meaning and wonder is so easy to lose sight of in the hectic pace of modern living. In *The Buddhist Path to Simplicity*, Christina Feldman, a Buddhist teacher, shows you how to find harmony and balance by applying ancient Buddhist wisdom to the here and now. The path of conscious simplicity, she suggests, allows us to fully recover ourselves, by rediscovering our sense of meaning and wonder. As a mother, a layperson and an internationally recognized teacher, Feldman knows the stresses and strains of modern life. She addresses subjects of compassion, speech, effort, intention, mindfulness and awakening. The path to peace, she suggests, is not necessarily complex or arduous. If we simply turn our attention to this moment, it will speak to us of wonder, mystery, harmony and peace. She demonstrates that there is no better moment in which to awaken and discover everything our heart longs for than this very moment.

The Buddhist Path to Simplicity: Spiritual Practice in Everyday Life Details

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Bliss says

very inspiring and yet simplicity is the best policy..

Reid says

This is a fine and charming book, full of little pearls of wisdom. The problem I have with many books describing the modern application of Buddhist teaching is that, really, there is only so much to say and then one is repeating oneself. This book is like that. If Feldman had found a way to say something truly new or did not reiterate the same points using different words, I would have been hard-pressed to give this book less than five stars.

The reason I can give it such high praise? Consider these lovely quotes to whet your appetite:

"The endless strategies we engage in to ease the tension and unrest in our hearts are like rearranging the furniture in an overcrowded room."

"When alienated from inner vitality we mistake intensity for wakefulness."

"Stillness and calmness are the children of integrity; simplicity is the companion of integrity."

"The things in our life we call obstacles are mostly the experiences we find ourselves unable or unwilling to welcome....In the light of this engaged attention we discover it is impossible to hate or fear anything or anyone that we truly understand."

I have been on a weekend retreat with Christina Feldman and her commitment to liberation has if anything become greater since she wrote this book. It seems to me that she truly is one of the wise voices of our age. If the subject matter interests you, this is a wonderful book to read.

Janelle says

I imagine I will read this book again and again. It makes perfect sense, explaining Buddhist concepts of mindfulness in a thoroughly nondogmatic, uncomplicated way. Though ideas are restated in various ways, the repetitiveness never feels intrusive but rather helps you view different aspects of each idea.

Krista Tillman says

I always go back to this book for good advice and grounding. Helps me to focus on the important things.

Arlene H. says

Amazing. A pure & simple guide for living. Worthy to be studied.

Ian MacGregger says

This is a very well written and highly useful book. I am now using it as part of my mentoring practice. Christina writes in a clear and easily understandable way about some very complex and subtle ideas. The words she chooses are accessible to the ordinary reader, the pace of the book is manageable even for a beginner and the examples that she uses to make her points are highly useful. I recommend this book to anyone who is looking to move out of the early exploratory stages of Zen Buddhism and into a deeper understanding.

Meg says

If you're looking for a better, more satisfying life or even just to look at things with a kinder eye and better understanding and calmness then this is the book.

Ted says

This has been the MOST influential book i have ever read. I highly recommend it to anyone working or interested in working on their higher spiritual selves.

Jan-Maat says

Really this is the kind of book that I could have read over again as soon as I had finished it. I read it slowly over a fair while that probably killed any awareness of structure or developing argument in the book as a whole, so more substantive comment about the organisation of the work will have to wait for a reread.

On the whole though I thought this was a very supportive book, offering some encouragement, and insight, to aid those engaged in some kind of meditative practise or engagement to live differently.

Some quotes in lieu of a review:

“No one who truly loves themselves could ever harm another, for they would be harming themselves” (p50)

“There is no thing and no one in this world that is separate, independent, or disconnected. All life is woven in an eternal dance of interdependence” (p63)

“Genuine freedom is never found through transcending our own stories, but in learning to find freedom within them” (p106)

“We may feel the deep sorrow that feelings of shame and worthlessness bring, yet to nurture another way of being in our lives involves risk and exposure” (p117)

“Wise avoidance is neither aversion nor rejection, but the simple recognition that not all experiences or circumstances are conducive to our well-being” (p143)

“Everything that is born will die; everything that arises will pass away. Nothing is exempt. Whenever we endeavour to separate ourselves from this rhythm we create a world of struggle and fear” (p180)

“Our own illusions are constantly challenged by reality, and we are startled into wakefulness” (p186)

“There exist within us two polarised forces. A genuine thirst for authenticity, awakening, and freedom, is accompanied by an equally powerful desire to remain undisturbed. The truth is that life disturbs us, because it is rarely obedient to our wishes and it will not stand still for us. Meditative paths are dedicated to the cultivation of peace and serenity, but they are also intended to disturb us deeply – to challenge all of our illusions and beliefs in the quest for awakening” (p188)

Of course I made the disastrous mistake of lending this to my sister along with the *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (view spoiler), disastrous because the passage of time reveals that she understands *lend* to mean: 'give for perpetuity and renounce all title and claim to', scorning the more typical definition found in dictionaries and understood by most native speakers. I have even spent some time staring at the items on her shelves considering seizing them and carrying them away with me - I doubt she'd notice their escape.

Colleen says

Considering how ironically I kept putting this book off because my life was too busy for simplicity, I actually really enjoyed it. The book itself is very calming without it being too preachy.

Peter says

Phenomenal book that does a good job of putting Buddha's teachings into perspective. It is definitely worth reading.

Walter says

This is an excellent book, densely packed with important insights and thought-provoking questions. I thoroughly enjoyed it, though it did challenge me greatly. Frankly, so many of the Buddhist tenets investigated herein are so different than the Judeo-Christian principles with which I was raised that getting my head around them took real work (which, I realize, is the point of the exercise).

Because this book challenges the reader, it becomes an almost involuntary developmental experience while imparting ageless wisdom that can alter one's worldview if you are open to it. This combination of wisdom and experience make it a worthwhile read and, more importantly, great investment of one's time and energy.

Is it perfect? No. There are many sections that contain repeated passages and the phraseology is also

frequently repetitive as well. Also, there are times when the writing is unnecessarily esoteric, but these are quibbles compared to the volume and magnitude of the insight and opportunity that the book offers.

So, get it, read it/work your way through it and benefit from its gifts. Then, if you're like me, you may choose to re-read it to insure full appreciation for its abundant gifts.

Josephine says

There are some wonderful teachings in this book. I did find myself re-reading many paragraphs though, because there are so many lists of words eg: "Greed, anger, hatred, jealousy, or obsession are not to be released because they are bad, unspiritual, or unworthy..." Personally for me all these lists of attributes or issues etc, made the content seem anything but 'simple', hence the re-reading to confirm what the author is actually saying.

Larry Smith says

Christina Feldman, British Buddhist with Insight Meditation group, gives us the heart of a practice that meets life with "bare simplicity." This is not to say blindly, but directly. I read it on the Kindle version so I could keep notes (highlighted), and I found true insights on every page. This is not the first Buddhist practice book I've read, but it is by far one of the best. She weaves insights with examples in a clear and compelling style. I highly recommend it.
