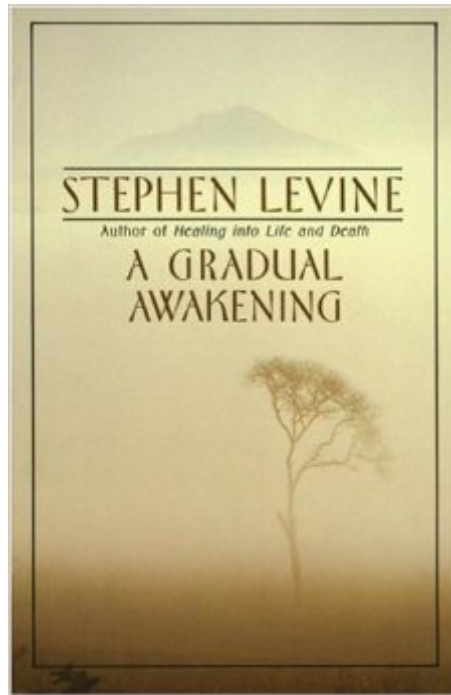


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A Gradual Awakening



Synopsis

Poet and meditation teacher Levine writes simply and gently about his own personal experiences with and insights into vipassana meditation. An inspiring book for anyone interested in deep personal growth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have read this book more than once and plan on reading it again. To me, it truly captures the essence of meditation, clearly articulating its various nuances and developmental stages. Levine is from the Theravada (Vipassana) tradition, whose methods I find very practical and somewhat similar to Zen. The only fault I find in Levine's book is that it is a little short on detail of the actual mechanics of meditation (i.e., sitting techniques, breath control, etc.). The best book I have found for technique is: "Mindfulness in Plain English," by H. Gunaratana, which offers precise instruction.

This, and Swami Muktananda's brilliant "Where Are You Going?" are the two books that have given me the most practical information on meditation in the most accessible way, especially as a beginner. Without these two books, I never would have begun a path that I'm so grateful to have embarked upon. Get them both!

"A Gradual Awakening" contains genuinely valuable information for those interested in Vipassana or insight meditation, such as:- our thoughts are our karma- when we pay attention to sensation we are not so entangled in the internal dialogue- the internal dialogue blocks the light of our natural

wisdom- stopping the mind does not bring wisdom--what brings wisdom is understanding the "nature" of mind- we don't have to import love, we only need to let go of that which blocks it- real control is letting go- the rational mind is often irrational- sensations in the body can be used in the same way a mantra is used- there's no reality to create. There's only a reality to tune in to.- the void is our true natureAccurate information is always useful but the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon. So in my opinion, the real gems in "A Gradual Awakening" are the guided meditations that lead to experience. These meditations are especially powerful when recorded and played back on tape.This excellent book also comes with Ram Dass's seal of approval, which to me is high praise indeed.

The only mistake Stephen Levine made in this book is opening it with trying to explain the abstract, extremely difficult to understand concept of "no self" in the first chapter. I could easily see the average person struggling through the first chapter and saying, "Forget it! This is too out there."Start with Chapter 2, read the book, then come back to Chapter 1 - you'll like and appreciate the book much, much better.I have been reading a chapter from this book every morning for the past year. It has made a huge difference in how I handle and cope with a high stress job in rehab medicine. I have read pages 101 through the top of 104 ("Pleasure/Pain and Happiness") to some of my patients in intense pain while they lay in bed with their eyes closed and every one reported genuine relief. Reflecting on my morning reading at points throughout the day has literally kept me from going crazy on some days.My copy of this book has so much highlighting and underlining that it's almost time to buy a new one.

The message in this book has the unmistakable ring of Truth to it. You will find yourself returning again and again to it. I have many books on Buddhism and Vipassana meditation, and I have to rate this as the most helpful.

I bought this book many years ago when it first came out. Since then, I have read it numerous times. I like it because it is simple, straightforwad, sincere, practical and contains a lot of wisdom without a lot of jargon.When I first read it and even today, I found the introduction a bit corny... or at least not very appealing. However, the meat of the text spoke to my heart.The book present several different ways of meditating and some alternative ways of looking at the world. This book gently challenges the reader to examine basic assumptions and to taste the practice of meditation for themselves.I think this is a unique book. It is particularly well suited to beginners, but has much to offer anyone. I

still get a lot out of reading it when I pick it up. Stephen Levine's heart was definitely in the right place when he wrote this and his enthusiasm for his topic is infectious.

In 1989, I was in drug-rehab where I was given this book by one of the psychologists. It literally changed my whole point of view on many issues and introduced me to Spirituality and Meditation. I still practice Vipassana and Chakra Meditation to this day. The book itself is written very simply with passion and will appeal to all levels of intellect. I have since then bought every book that Stephen Levine has published and I recommend all of them highly!

Stephen Levine is an extremely compassionate person who transmits this ability to the reader. He inspires the reader to be loving and patient with others and him/herself. Hope and love are inspired and it's an all together useful and reachable path that he shows us. This book is a must for any seeker or traveler on the spiritual path.

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