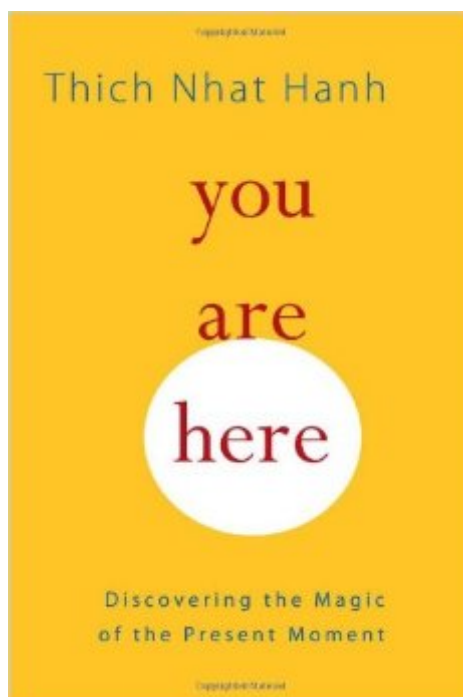


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# You Are Here: Discovering The Magic Of The Present Moment



## Synopsis

In this book Thich Nhat Hanh, the renowned Zen monk, author, and meditation master, distills the essence of Buddhist thought and practice, emphasizing the power of mindfulness to transform our lives. "Mindfulness is not an evasion or an escape," he explains. "It means being here, present, and totally alive. It is true freedom" and without this freedom, there is no happiness. Based on a retreat that Thich Nhat Hanh led for Westerners, this book offers a range of simple, effective practices for cultivating mindfulness, including awareness of breathing and walking, deep listening, and skillful speech. *You Are Here* also offers guidance on healing emotional pain and manifesting real love and compassion in our relationships with others.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Thich Nhat Hanh was the first meditation teacher I ever read. I went on to explore the literature widely. I'm slightly embarrassed to say that I'd sort of dismissed him as too simplistic- kind of a Mr. Rogers for adults. In his writing there are no abstractions, none of the ambitious theorizing about "enlightenment." He sticks with very simple basics teachings of moment to moment awareness of the breath as a key to human happiness. In our very uncertain times he advises that we take our anger and fear and treat them with great care and tenderness so that we can relate to others with kindness and compassion. He is indeed a Mr. Rogers for adults, exactly the guy we unhappy adults need.

As always, the writing is fluid, spare and moving. If you have never read on the subject, this is a wonderful introduction. If you have, an excellent summary. His descriptions, especially of karma and nirvana, bring simplicity and understanding to difficult concepts. (Einstein was right: when you really understand something, you can make it simple.) He also shares numerous breathing meditations useful for us all. A book to be read again and again.

Every page of *You Are Here* glitters with love, insight, and, best of all, practicality. I just love this book because from the very first page it goes to the very heart of the truly awakened life. Also Thich Nhat Hanh pulls no punches, He deals with struggle, pain, and the greatest challenges of life. He can do this with authority because he has lived every bit of it. Frankly, I do not consider myself a Buddhist, since I am, truly, a non-believer except for my own life directly lived, but this book speaks from this powerful voice. I cannot recommend it strongly enough.

I am extraordinarily happy that I bought this book. The common sense approach is above and beyond my expectations. Hanh speaks to the reader as a teacher speaks to a student, "Here are things you can do to make your life better, go ahead, don't hesitate, you can do it." I have begun the practices Hanh preaches and can tell you already I have seen a difference in my life and the way others are around me. This was exactly what I was looking for and what I needed.

Thich Nhat Hanh provides another demonstration of his skills as a Buddhist master and story teller. "*You Are Here*" further explores the Dharma whilst entertaining the reader with relevant practice "tips" for both beginner and serious meditator alike. "To me, the definition of hell is simple. It is a place where there is no understanding and no compassion." It is Thich Nhat Hanh's ability to simplify that is his great skill in inspiring us to strengthen our practice and clarify thorny concepts at the same time.

Another beautiful, profound message from "Thay!" The power of the present moment is artfully and lovingly explored. Beyond armchair theory, this gentle monk suggests practical applications in handling, embracing life challenges from a center of consciousness accessible to anyone. There is no requirement to adapt a belief system or theology. Upon finishing this book the first time, I gained a more compassionate regard for some challenging individuals. And here I am.

As someone who is mostly familiar with classes, books, and retreats from the Christian spiritual

tradition, I was dazzled for this little book to be my first read about Zen Buddhist mindfulness meditation. The 140 pages are not over-loaded with technical jargon. Hanh sprinkles in some teachings about Buddhism a little bit during the first few chapters, but then more heavily at the end for those who are interested. Even there, he is very concise. This seems like the perfect book to get your feet wet with a Buddhist approach to mindfulness. The practice is explained right away along with the simply philosophy behind it. Among the masses, our minds are often preoccupied with regrets from the past and worries or plans about the future. We go through our daily experiences without truly being "here" in that sense. From the very first pages Hanh introduces this mantra that you say internally as you are breathing: "Breathing in, I know that I am breathing. Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out." You don't necessarily try to manipulate your breathing, you simply follow it and use the mantra to focus on your breath as you feel it going in and out (focused enough to let go of the whirlwind of your other preoccupations). I have found that this simple practice, the backbone of Hanh's book, has the power to help me not be "up in my head" and, even better, truly be present where I am. When biking through the park, I notice the trees in a way I didn't before. I hear the birds and the trickle of the stream in a way I didn't before. The present moment becomes something enjoyable for me, while not accumulating unnecessary stress from unproductive ruminating. Suddenly I am living in the present and not the future. The breathing helps you shift back from being the evaluator to the observer. Evaluating all the time is stressful, but I find switching back to the observer helps me rediscover the wonder in everything around me. How simple! Hanh points out that you can notice a difference if you just practice it for a couple of minutes. He is right. Hanh also extends this teaching and philosophy in other practical ways. If you are not present in the moment, then you are not present for your inner self, let alone the birds and the trees. You can actually begin to heal those broken parts of you if you will stop and notice what is going on there in the moment. When you observe some afflictive emotion, Hanh says you shouldn't ignore it or try to get rid of it. It is a part of you and should be allowed to be transformed into something more positive by staying present to it. You treat your emotion tenderly, like a child, "Anger, I am here for you." Ultimately, you are being there for yourself and allowing the healing to happen on its own. Finally, once being present for yourself, you can become present to others. If you are not present in the moment, how can you possibly be 100% there with the people you are with. Indeed, this is how Hanh defines love, being 100% with the "other." That gives you the ability to "touch" the other, watering their lives in a way that causes them to blossom. The internal mantra you can say when in the company of others is, similarly, being, "My dear one, I am here for you." In a very short time this book has helped me to start to grasp what it means to live "one day at a time." Some of the ideas

from the first chapter are expanded in later chapters. Many of the transformations I began to experience came from the practices described in the very first chapter. If you are short on time, the book is worth getting just to read those simple 23 pages. Enjoy!

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