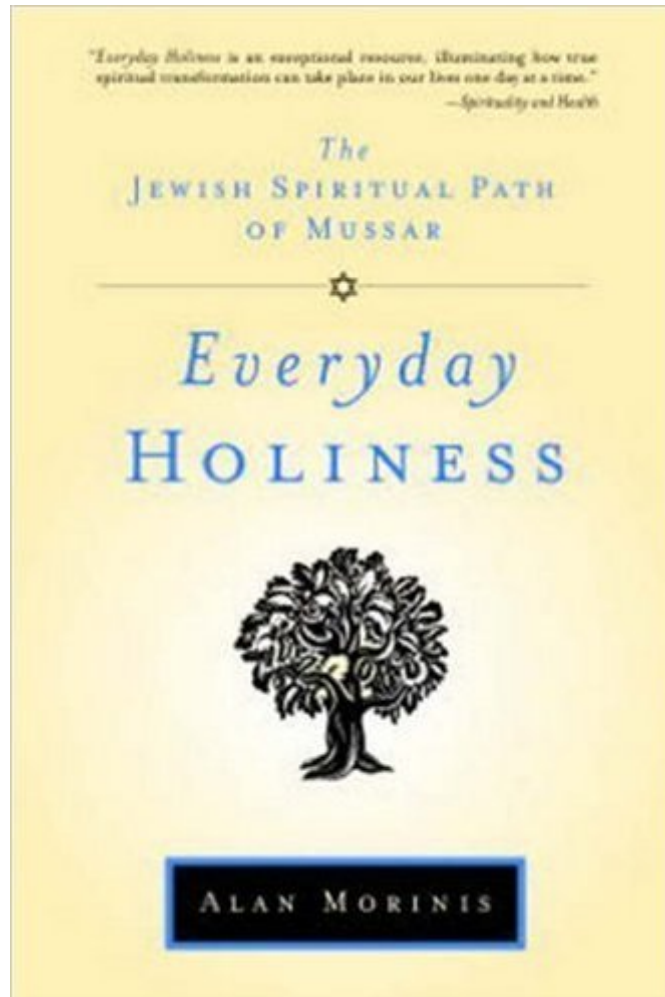


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# Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path Of Mussar



## Synopsis

Mussar is an illuminating, approachable, and highly practical set of teachings for cultivating personal growth and spiritual realization in the midst of day-to-day life. Here is an accessible and inspiring introduction to this Jewish spiritual path, which until lately has been best known in the world of Orthodox Judaism. The core teaching of Mussar is that our deepest essence is inherently pure and holy, but this inner radiance is obscured by extremes of emotion, desire, and bad habits. Our work in life is to uncover the brilliant light of the soul. The Mussar masters developed transformative teachings and practices—some of which are contemplative, some of which focus on how we relate to others in daily life—to help us to heal and refine ourselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is an excellent presentation of Mussar, by one of today's premier Mussar teachers in the US/Canada. The author is not Orthodox, and doesn't pretend to be. His own Mussar teacher is Orthodox, and approved of this author's teaching of Mussar to the larger community of both Orthodox and other Jews as well as non-Jews. The material is easy to understand and easy to put into practice. The author teaches Mussar as it was meant to be practiced, with kindness as well as consciousness. If you are the least interested in Mussar, and not interested in a practice to beat yourself over the head with, this is the book you've been looking for. I bought copies for friends along with my own.

Mussar is a Jewish ethical practice that involves self-examination leading to self-improvement. The

practice is positive in nature and outward focussed though it involves a certain amount of introspection as well. Everyday Holiness is well laid out in three sections. Part one explains what Mussar is and gives something of its history. Part two describes eighteen middot (character traits) including how they impact on our lives and steps we might take to improve the balance of that particular quality in our personalities. Part three describes Mussar practice, including daily, weekly and annual activities. I found the book wonderfully clear and relevant for today. It would be quite possible to launch into Mussar with just this book as a guide.

I had never heard of Mussar until recently. I am a Jew and have been practicing Buddhism for the last 25 years. Mussar ties Jewish thought, Talmudic and Biblical in origin, with concepts like generosity, loving-kindness and other principles that are common to Buddhism. This book is outlined in a way that offers daily readings and you could just keep starting over each time you finish. I read from it after i finish my morning meditation session. This book has provided me with a spiritual part of Judaism that had been difficult to connect with prior to reading it. I can't say that it has changed my life, but it has added to it something essential and beneficial for me and ultimately for all sentient beings. Thanks to Alan Morinis for writing it. peace

I bought this book because it's the text for a course the author offers at the Mussar Institute by the same name, which I'm now taking. The point of studying the material is to become a good person. Not necessarily a happier person, or a better-liked person, or a richer person, a better person in the ways that God measures that. I'd watched my husband study Mussar for three years and seen him become less anxious, kinder, a more attentive father who could listen more and judge less. He seldom talked to me about what he was studying or how it was effecting all those changes, but the evidence that Mussar brings dramatic changes was impressive. So I signed up. The process is so gentle and moderate, I didn't expect any results quickly. Yet they have come. I'm about 6 weeks in and my outlook on life has changed dramatically. I normally struggle with depression and cynicism and despair, and that has lifted in ways I find amazing. I am so glad to have started studying Mussar.

This book is not a self-help book, nor is it a book on philosophy. It explains how ordinary people who hope to actually accomplish some of their worthy resolutions to improved actions might succeed at that. The path is neither easy nor short, but the day-to-day changes that can be accomplished are backed up with centuries of success, and each step forward is a step in the right direction. Year

after year I have resolved that the next year I will become a better person, and I sincerely desired to do so. Yet my progress is so slow that I sometimes wonder if I have made any progress at all. In *Everyday Holiness* the branch is held back so I can see the path away from my wandering and really move forward in small practical daily steps. Now moving forward is up to me, and the time-efficient methods developed in the 19th century make this the 21st century person's optimal approach. I will use this book not just as a beginning, but will read sections of it over and over. I hope that one day my newly-autographed copy will look like the well-worn map at the end of a wonderful trip. My trip will be different than the trip you take with the same map, but I believe it's the right map for many worthy and individualized trips.

This book has the power to change your life. Every night I study the text, and every day I practice the lessons. I am a better person because of this book, and I am a much happier, well-adjusted man as well. If you are interested in becoming a mensch, this is a good place to start. The study of mussar is what I have been looking for my entire Jewish life, and I am so grateful that I found this modern presentation of the mussar ideals.

I did not know very much about Judaism much less Mussar when I selected this book, but I found it to be an excellent resource. It covers 18 traits and discusses how we need to grow or improve in each of them--such as equanimity, and charity. It proposes that we select 12 of them to work on for a year--giving each one a month's time. The method of self-improvement is well thought out. And it is evident that many people have worked on the descriptions of the optimum traits as they are so logical and well thought through. There are no absolute lines, careful thought is given to everything. I found it to be a great book for those who wish to improve themselves no matter which religion they prefer. These are not people who would support "Zero Tolerance" policies. They are much too nuanced in their thinking for that. I was most impressed by the careful logic and thought given to each quality.

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