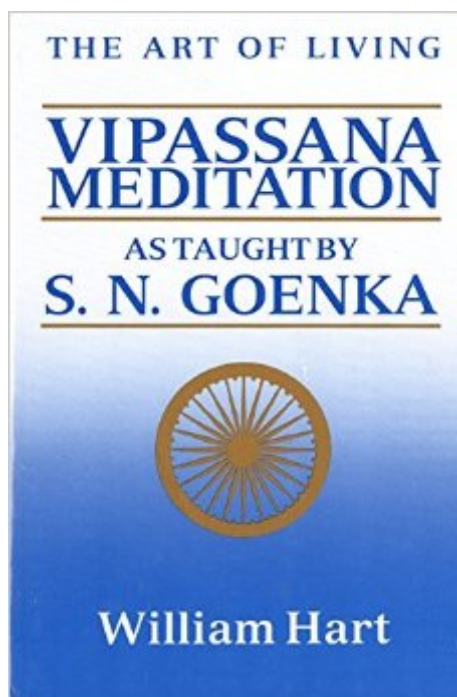


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The Art Of Living: Vipassana Meditation



Synopsis

The Ancient Meditation Technique that Brings Real Peace of Mind Vipassana and bhavand, "the development of insight," embodies the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. As taught by S. N. Goenka, this path to self-awareness is extraordinary in its simplicity, its lack of dogma and, above all, its results. The Vipassana technique can be successfully applied by anyone. Based on the lectures and writings of S. N. Goenka--and prepared under his direct guidance--The Art of Living shows how this technique can be used to solve problems, develop unused potential, and lead a peaceful, productive life. It includes stories by S. N. Goenka, as well as answers to students' questions, that convey a vivid sense of his teaching. S. N. Goenka's Vipassana courses have attracted thousands of people of every background. Unique among teachers of meditation, Goenka is a retired industrialist and former leader of the Indian Community in Burma. Although a layman, his teaching has won the approval of senior Buddhist monks in Burma, India, and Sri Lanka, a number of whom have taken courses under his guidance. Despite his magnetism, he has no wish to be a "guru" --instead he teaches self-responsibility. This is the first systematic study of his teachings to appear in English.

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Customer Reviews

This book and the accompanying 10 day course changed my entire life. This happened because my mind actually transformed, completely reinvented itself into a rational, sensible self. I too was a hard

sell- a highly educated, argumentative, self-centered business person- and have in no way given up my worldly life because of the program. I have cleaned out my mind of the negativities, so now I can continue to pursue excellence and success with a clean, positive, and radiant mind instead on an insecure, unsure, angry, and frightened mind. Every person in my life has appreciated the change, and not once have I tried to sell this technique to anyone else. It is too special. However, whenever people ask me about how I am able to live my life with the level of clarity, lack of fear, and boundless dreams and goals that I do, I love to share with them my secret, so they too can learn the amazing Vipassana. I am in no way a master, and I know I will need to study for a lifetime to make small steps. However, I will be eternally grateful for the changes I have already seen.

If you're looking for a book on "how to meditate" you should look elsewhere. This book is not about Vipassana meditation technique, it's more about the philosophy that underlies it. So the title may mislead, depending on what you're looking for. However, having said that I found the discussions that are contained in the book to be extremely good and very useful from the point of view of Vipassana as an approach to life in general. So if you think of LIFE as an extended meditation, then perhaps the book really is about Vipassana meditation. Anyway, as long as you're not expecting a book on meditation technique, I highly recommend this one. Good stuff.

"The Art of Living" is an excellent introduction to Vipassana meditation. Prepared by William Hart and based on the lectures and writings of S. N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, it could easily be considered the textbook for Mr. Goenka's world-famous Vipassana courses. Although Vipassana is primarily experiential, I consider the intellectual framework provided in this book as key to fully accepting the positive impact of the technique. As the saying goes, success happens when preparation meets opportunity. Here, in my opinion, are two key passages from the book: "Every thought, every emotion, every mental action is accompanied by a corresponding sensation within the body. Therefore, by observing our physical sensations, we also observe our mind." "We observe the sensation without reacting, neither liking it nor disliking it. It has no chance to develop into craving or aversion, into powerful emotion that can overwhelm us; it simply arises and passes away. The mind remains balanced and peaceful. We are happy now and we can anticipate happiness in the future, because we have not reacted." "You can access your mind through your body. By viewing and dissolving areas of blocked consciousness in our body we systematically de-condition our mind. The result is increased clarity, happiness, certainty and true self-expression. In a world not overly abundant in these qualities that's an excellent contribution to

make. I have completed two 10-Day Vipassana courses as taught by Mr. Goenka and they were the most positive transforming experiences I've ever been a part of. In *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, Eckhart Tolle says that we can use our inner body as an anchor to the Now. I agree. The menu, however, is not the meal. If you really want to anchor yourself to the "now" I recommend "The Art of Living" and the 10-Day Vipassana course it points to.

S.N. Goenka was a businessman who suffered from migraine headaches. He turned to meditation as taught by the Buddhist community in Burma. He relieved his symptoms and embarked on the journey to share the successful technique of Vipassana meditation with others. What a magnanimous gift! Basically, this book, written by one of his students, teaches one how to be "aware" and track the thoughts which arise and ultimately are the root cause of one's negative feelings, i.e. suffering. Since all thoughts arise and diminish, it is a matter of **not** forcing or trying to change things as they are ... but instead to **observe**, witness what is truly happening. In and of itself, sounds simple enough ... but anyone who knows what sitting still and quieting the mind is like ... will tell you ... **not** so simple or as easy as it sounds. The book concerns itself with "ultimate reality" which we all share. It concerns itself with the part we play in this world and where our happiness resides ... To quote the Buddha: "If with a pure heart you speak or act, then happiness follows you as a shadow that never departs." [p. 37, Harper San Francisco, c. 1987] William Hart the author covers basic Buddhist concepts of the cause of suffering, training of moral conduct, right behavior, training of concentration, training of wisdom, training of equanimity, right thought, right understanding, eradicating old conditioning, and penetrating ultimate truth ... He does a superb job of clearly articulating basic principles of the Buddhist viewpoint. He provides techniques for developing awareness and thereby more happiness in one's life. In conclusion, another quote from the Buddha (who said it best) ... "When faced with all the ups and downs of life, still the mind remains unshaken, not lamenting, not generating defilements, always feeling secure, that is the greatest happiness". [p. 125, Harper San Francisco, c. 1987 from Sutta Nipata II. Maha-Magala Sutta] This book is highly recommended for anyone seeking a technique to enrich one's life. Erika Borsos

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