



Thoughts Without A Thinker: Psychotherapy From A Buddhist Perspective

By Mark Epstein

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Traditional distinctions between matters of the mind and matters of the spirit are increasingly being questioned, and people are searching for alternate perspectives on these issues. *Thoughts Without a Thinker* is a major contribution to today's exploding discussion of how Eastern spirituality can enhance Western psychology. In it, Mark Epstein argues that the contemplative traditions of the East can be extremely beneficial to patients, not just in helping them recognize their problems, but by giving them the strength to heal. Clearly written and very accessible, this enlightening guide explains the unique psychological contributions of the teachings of Buddhism, describes the path of meditation in contemporary psychological language, and lays out the possibility of a meditation-inspired psychotherapy.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Drawing upon his own experience as therapist, meditator and patient, Mark Epstein, a New York-based psychiatrist trained in classical Freudian methods, attempts to integrate Western psychotherapy and the teachings of Buddhism. Repressed memories, painful emotions, narcissism and destructive energies can all be uprooted through Buddha's teaching on suffering, delusion, wisdom and non-attachment. Epstein argues that in recognizing his or her self-created mental suffering, a patient can overcome neurotic behaviors and even overcome a deeply ingrained negative sense of self.

From Publishers Weekly

Epstein, a New York City psychiatrist trained in classical Freudian methods, has studied Buddhist meditation in India and Southeast Asia. In a highly personal, thoughtful, illuminating synthesis, he draws on his own experience as therapist, meditator and patient in an unusual attempt to integrate Western psychotherapy and Buddha's teachings on suffering, delusion, wisdom and nonattachment. According to Epstein, Buddhist meditative practices can help people release repressed memories, work through painful emotions, uproot narcissism and redirect destructive energies. By recognizing his or her self-created mental suffering, the patient is able to overcome neurotic behavior patterns and may ultimately shed a deeply ingrained negative sense of self. Patients, psychologists and meditators willing to explore the arduous path outlined here will find much spiritual nourishment.

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From Library Journal

Many adherents consider Buddhism a psychology rather than a religion in the Western sense. Epstein, a practicing Buddhist and psychotherapist, argues that the two schools of thought are highly complementary, with Buddhism offering practical relief for the problems of narcissism and alienation and psychotherapy dealing with the feelings of neediness and lack of self-esteem that often plague Westerners who engage in meditation. Unfortunately, Epstein offers no affordable alternative to psychotherapy for dealing with such problems. While not a complete primer on either Buddhism or psychotherapy, this book gives an evenhanded treatment of the two subjects, and its writing will be comprehensible to the general reader. Where patrons have an interest in Buddhism, academic and public librarians should add this title.

Mary Ann Hughes, Neill P.L., Pullman, Wash.

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Catherine Gates:

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