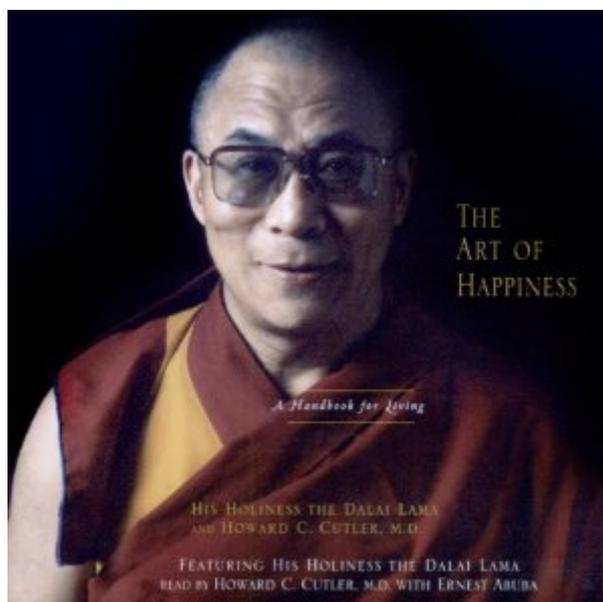


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# The Art Of Happiness



## Synopsis

"Whether one believes in religion or not, whether one believes in this religion or that religion, the very purpose of our life is happiness, the very motion of our life is towards happiness." --H.H. the Dalai Lama, from *The Art of Happiness* So popular and so rarely understood, this Nobel Peace Prize winner and man of great inner peace brings to a general audience the key to a happy life. In collaboration with a Western psychiatrist, *The Art of Happiness* is the first inspirational book for a general audience by the Dalai Lama. Through meditations, stories, and the meeting of Buddhism and psychology, the Dalai Lama shows us how to defeat day-to-day depression, anxiety, anger, jealousy, or just an ordinary bad mood. He discusses relationships, health, family, and work to show us how to ride through life's obstacles on a deep and abiding source of inner peace. Based on 2,500 years of Buddhist meditations mixed with a healthy dose of common sense, *The Art of Happiness* crosses the boundaries of all traditions to help readers with the difficulties common to all human beings. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have always had a lot of respect for the Dalai Lama and admired the fact that he radiates so much genuine compassion and tolerance despite the many hardships that he has faced in his lifetime. I believe that this book is the essence of this man's being and his outlook on life. It encompasses many of his core beliefs and serves as an inspiration to everyone, irrespective of religious affiliation or spiritual belief. This book is not written by the Dalai Lama himself, but by Howard C. Cutler, and is based on his numerous conversations with His Holiness. Dr. Cutler provides the "western",

science-based perspective on the buddhist monk's teachings. While his naivete gets to be annoying at times, he helps relate the Dalai Lama's teachings to our everyday lives by making them less abstract, more practical and actionable. "I believe that happiness can be achieved through training the mind... Generally speaking, one begins by identifying those factors which lead to happiness and those factors which lead to suffering. Having done this, one then sets about gradually eliminating those factors which lead to suffering and cultivating those which lead to happiness." These words contain the essence of the entire book. A premise so elegant and simple that it might be easy to dismiss at first, and yet so powerful. The more one thinks about their true meaning, the more one begins to understand that these words, in themselves, hold the answer to the purpose of our lives. The idea that happiness is the product of our mind, rather than of our objective situation, is hardly new. Yet, this book is able to explore this notion to the depths that I had never comprehended before. In particular, the distinction the Dalai Lama so eloquently makes between happiness and pleasure is especially enlightening. After all, it's the very things that bring us pleasure, that cause us unhappiness in the long term. Therefore, His Holiness says, one ought to always ask oneself before making a choice: "Will this bring me happiness?" I performed this simple practice for just a few days, and noticed immediate results. While I normally would do certain things without thinking, I have now become quite conscious of the effect that my own actions will have on my life down the road. Even such a simple thing as doing the dishes, or making that unpleasant yet necessary phone call, or buying something that we don't really need - each one is a choice that, once made, reverberates through our life and either brings us happiness or discontentment. This simple shift in perspective is a very powerful tool in bringing about real, positive change in your life through small, yet deliberate actions. It is by making these actions a habit that one is able to truly achieve happiness. Of course, in order to be able to work towards happiness, one needs to understand what it is that will bring them happiness in their personal life. This can be likened to having a "mission statement" that encompasses many different areas that, when all balanced and fulfilled, lead to a happier life. These ultimate goals, the Dalai Lama teaches, should be used as a compass to align your daily choices with in your pursuit of happiness. In addition to these very powerful meditations on the nature of happiness, the book stresses the importance of "human warmth and compassion" as integral components of achieving happiness through increased intimacy and deeper connection to others. The book also explores the "demons" that often prevent us from finding happiness, such as pain and suffering, anger and hatred, anxiety and low self-esteem. While you may not necessarily be afflicted with all of these "demons", reading this book will help you avoid them or enable you to help others who are suffering from them. Overall, I would

wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone on a spiritual journey, in search for a meaning of life, or simply looking for simple words of wisdom in our increasingly complicated and materialistic age. This is one book I know I will personally refer back to again and again for inspiration and guidance.

The big disappointment here is that there is very little Dalai Lama in this book. It is not the Lama's handbook for living, it is Howard Cutler's handbook for getting rich off the Dalai Lama's good name. Howard Cutler is a professional psychologist, and -- one quickly concludes -- a rather average one. The one fascinating thing about this book is observing how the Dalai Lama interacts with a perfectly ordinary, totally western person. Howard Cutler asks the same kinds of questions that you or I might ask, and is just as puzzled as we might be. He is not much of a writer, but he writes without artifice or elaboration. Through Cutler's unornamented prose, the reader can sense the Dalai Lama's reactions to such honest questions as "What is wrong with romantic love?" The Lama questions the question, and with a thoughtful words opens all the distinctions between our cultures. He transcends cultural bias easily, which is perhaps what makes him such a powerful figure in our age. Much of the book, however, consists of Cutler dissecting, analyzing, and providing examples from his own practice to elucidate the Lama's brief responses. Cutler's thinking is far weaker, but does serve to illustrate the vast gulf between ordinary thought and the thinking of someone who has devoted his life to it. Were I titling this book, I might have come up with something like "A Psychological Response to Selected Teachings of the Dalai Lama: A Collision Between East and West". (Fortunately for all of us, I do not have a job in publishing!) Although it is disappointing that the interviewer is not sophisticated enough to take these questions deeper, it is worthwhile to examine the Dalai Lama's approaches and responses to ordinary questions. All told, this is not a book I am happy to have bought. I would not file this under Dalai, or Lama (how does one alphabetize a title like that?), but under Cutler. The real problem is that his interviews with the Dalai Lama cover only a few paragraphs in each chapter. The bulk of the material is Cutler digesting and regurgitating the thoughts in various ways. Were I Cutler's therapist, I might find this more interesting, but as someone still searching for happiness myself, I find his perspectives both trite and unhelpful.

In *The Art of Happiness* The Dalai Lama tells listeners how to defeat day-to-day depression, anxiety, anger, jealousy. The concepts are simple but difficult. If you liked this book I would suggest you also read *Way of A Peaceful Warrior* and *An Encounter With A Prophet*

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