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The Art Of Being (Psychology/self-help)



Synopsis

How can we realize and actualize love, reason, and meaningful, productive work? Fromm here offers an Art of Well-Being, a way of living based on authentic self-awareness that comes only through honest self-analysis. He warns of the pitfalls of our attaining enlightenment without effort, or believing that life can be lived without pain. The tantalizing 'spiritual smorgasbord' offered by our consumer-oriented world, Fromm maintains, only feeds our illusions of 'easy awareness'. Confronting the psycho-gurus who preach these shortcuts to enlightenment, Fromm offers another way to self-awareness through meditation. If the Art of Being - the art of functioning as a whole person - can be considered the supreme goal of life, a breakthrough occurs when we move from narcissistic selfishness and egotism - from having - to psychological and spiritual happiness - being. The Art of Being is certain to be one of the most important and sought-after works in the Fromm canon for years to come. This volume is a sequel to one of Erich Fromm's most popular works, *To Have or to Be*. In this new book, Fromm examines the true paths - as opposed to false directions - that will lead us to self-knowledge and enlightenment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Ask does the desire for x or y enrich your life?" That is about as close to a one line summary of the book that I can give. The main focus though is to set up having and being as two separate and opposed motivations for human life. Although it should come as no surprise as this was primarily a chapter from *To Have or To Be* that was omitted for reasons he discusses at the beginning. It needs

to be said first off that this is NOT a self help book. Fromm offers no answers on what one should do to enrich their lives, but rather with great care diagnoses how we think. His task is merely to illuminate us to the disease, not prescribe relief. So this is for the individual looking for different questions, not direction. Although he would certainly advocate a life tuned towards being and not having, what one must do to attain this is never addressed. Fromm draws heavily on his varied background in psychology, sociology, and philosophy to make his case. His skill as a writer and researcher is finding ways for the ideas of these disciplines to fit together; with each offering a little piece to the overall puzzle. From Buddhism Fromm borrows ideas of suffering, from Marx a critique of capitalism, from Freud pathologies of the mind. From each of these viewpoints he approaches the same central notion of having vs. being. With each approach merely a different flavor of the same issue. Ultimately is there anything here which cannot be found elsewhere? No. But for the individual who loves to question and will never read Marx's 1844 Manuscripts, Buddhist writings, or Freudian literature; this is a great (although selected) taste of their ideas without getting caught up on the baggage that usually comes with reading each individually.

This book is an expansion of his book entitled "To Have or to Be". One should not read one without the other. Highly recommend both, as an insight into the art of trying to function in this life as a whole, real person in this consumer driven world.

Erich Fromm has spent many years studying the corners of our human psyche. We go to school to learn biology, chemistry, physics, economics but we do not take any courses on how to live. Mr. Fromm has made an intense effort to help us realize that we are who we want to be. There is a genetic structure that leads everyone of us in their own direction. However, nature is only one of the forces behind our development. As we become aware of who we are - our fears, strengths and weaknesses, we begin to understand how little we know about ourselves. Looking inside is a wonderful way to begin seeing the world around us. Erich Fromm is allowing us to become more comfortable with who we are, where we are, and where we want to go! Enjoy the book and the River of Life!

This is a book you get to read once in a lifetime. Certainly one of the 3 best books I've ever read. Unfortunately, it is not for everyone to just read off the shelf without prior knowledge. I have read this book after having read & researched a lot about (and sometimes experienced) the fields of (or persons) Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, martial

arts, Philosophy, Nietzsche, Capitalism, Social Democracy, Advertising, ADD/ADHD, Marxism, Freud and quite a few others. Only a person who has some basic knowledge of all these subjects, and preferably lots of knowledge about them, would be able to appreciate Fromm's greatness. It is because Fromm takes ideas and concepts shared by all these subjects, and many more, to produce an amazingly coherent outlook on our reality and society. I have never encountered anyone else who could seemingly merge so many topics, and discuss them with plain brilliance, as they were all just one thing. It is not just a great book in general - to someone who is into Buddhism or Daoism, this could be the best book he or she had ever read on this subjects - simply because of Fromm capacity to explain subjects like these, sometimes even without naming them, in a way a westerner could easily and intuitively grasp quickly. In this sense, and unlike what some reviewer has mentioned, it is a "self-help" book - it's just that the "help" it's going to give you is highly dependent on what is your starting point, knowledge-wise. Beyond the main subject of the book, which is "Being" (or "mindfulness") and how to "get it", I think this book has achieved something much bigger - a grand theory of the nature of our society and human civilization. No less. Read this if you value your intelligence.

I first read this as a requirement in an undergraduate English class in my second year of college - 1967. I read it again in about 1981, and am reading it for the third time now. It impressed me quite a bit when I was 18, but now I have a much deeper appreciation for the wisdom and insight Fromm offers.

I have given this book to all my closest friends. I wish everyone will receive what I received which was a different perspective on how to live and how to think. This is an exercise in breathing, reading and concentrating. Each time I read through a chapter I learn a little more about the author, about life and about myself.

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