



The Places that Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times (Shambhala Classics)

By Pema Chodron



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We always have a choice, Pema Chödrön teaches: We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us and make us increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder. Here Pema provides the tools to deal with the problems and difficulties that life throws our way. This wisdom is always available to us, she teaches, but we usually block it with habitual patterns rooted in fear. Beyond that fear lies a state of openheartedness and tenderness. This book teaches us how to awaken our basic goodness and connect with others, to accept ourselves and others complete with faults and imperfections, and to stay in the present moment by seeing through the strategies of ego that cause us to resist life as it is.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Pema Chödrön may have more good one-liners than a Groucho Marx retrospective, but this nun's stingers go straight to the heart: "The essence of bravery is being without self-deception"; "When we practice generosity, we become intimate with our grasping"; "Difficult people are the greatest teachers." These are the punctuations to specific teachings of fearlessness. In *The Places That Scare You*, Chödrön introduces a host of the compassionate warriors' tools and concepts for transforming anxieties and negative emotions into positive living. Rather than steeling ourselves against hardship, she suggests we open ourselves to vulnerability; from this comes the loving kindness and compassion that are the wellsprings of joy. How do we achieve it? Through meditation, mindfulness, slogans, aspiration, and several other practices, such as *tonglen*, which is taking in the pain and suffering of others while sending out happiness to all--emphasis on the *all*. Chödrön introduces each of these practices in turn, backing them up with succinct practical reasoning and a framework of ideas that offers fresh interpretations of familiar words like *strength*, *laziness*, and *groundlessness*. Chödrön is the type of person you'd like to have with you in an emergency, and to deal with the extremes of daily life. In her absence, *The Places That Scare You* will do nicely. --Brian Bruya

From Publishers Weekly

American Tibetan Buddhist nun Chodron (When Things Fall Apart) teaches an intense form of meditation in which readers are encouraged to become "warrior-bodhisattvas," those who courageously confront suffering. Warrior-bodhisattvas, according to Chodron, are willing to have their inner selves broken, while keeping their minds and hearts from shutting down. They take on suffering with compassion and loving-kindness, working through their own emotions of fear or anger to help alleviate others' pain. Chodron highlights six traditional paramitas to model (generosity, discipline, patience, enthusiasm, meditation and unconditional wisdom) and cautions that ego, self-deception, unforgiveness and a grasping for permanence all present barriers to compassion. True meditation cultivates the qualities of steadfastness, clarity of vision and attention to the present moment. Despite the title, this book is more about generating compassion than facing fears. A few humorous vignettes are interspersed with the deeply philosophical text, such as when Chodron describes discovering her boyfriend in an intimate embrace with another woman. She tried to throw something at the couple, but the thing she picked up was a priceless piece of pottery that belonged to their millionaire host. "The absurdity of the situation totally cut through my rage," she explains, noting that many times "wisdom is inherent in emotions." Moments such as these mitigate the intensity of this highly cerebral book, which will offer meaty reflections for the serious practitioner, but less guidance for the mere bookstore Buddhist. (Sept.)Forecast: This title will receive some terrific exposure this fall. Shambhala Sun will excerpt two chapters and feature Chodron on the cover of its August/September issue, and New Age Journal will run an excerpt in September. In the piece de resistance, O magazine will run a substantial profile on Chodron in the October issue.

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From Library Journal

Chodron, a student of Chogyam Trungpa, is well known for her clear and inspiring books on spiritual practice (e.g., *The Wisdom of No Escape*). Here she once again presents Tibetan Buddhist wisdom in a clear, engaging, and undiluted way, making it useful and relevant for newcomers and longtime practitioners alike. This time her focus is on bodhichitta, a concept that roughly translates as "open heart" or "awakened mind."

As the text points out, this is a term more easily understood than translated, finding its ground in activities that embody compassion, tenderness, and awareness. In a series of short chapters, the reader is introduced to a number of ideas found in Tibetan Buddhist bodhichitta practice and is given practical exercises for daily life. Her clear and simple descriptions guide the reader through these powerful and sometimes difficult practices. Chodron has once again proven herself to be one of the very best working in this crowded field. Recommended for all collections. Mark Woodhouse, Elmira Coll. Lib., NY
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Users Review

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