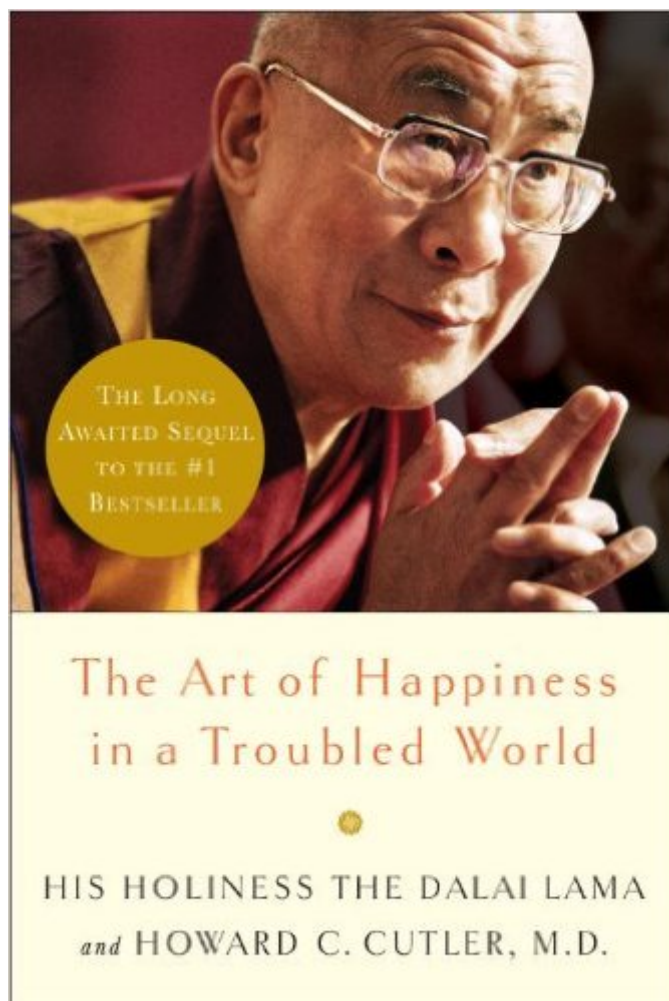


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# The Art Of Happiness In A Troubled World (Art Of Happiness Book)



## Synopsis

Blending common sense and modern psychiatry, *The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World* applies Buddhist tradition to twenty-first-century struggles in a relevant way. The result is a wise approach to dealing with human problems that is both optimistic and realistic, even in the most challenging times. How can we expect to find happiness and meaning in our lives when the modern world seems such an unhappy place? His Holiness the Dalai Lama has suffered enormously throughout his life, yet he always seems to be smiling and serene. How does he do it? In *The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World*, Dr. Cutler walks readers through the Dalai Lama's philosophy on how to achieve peace of mind and come to terms with life's inherent suffering. Together, the two examine the roots of many of the problems facing the world and show us how we can approach these calamities in a way that alleviates suffering, and helps us along in our personal quests to be happy. Through stories, meditations, and in-depth conversations, the Dalai Lama teaches readers to identify the cultural influences and ways of thinking that lead to personal unhappiness, making sense of the hardships we face personally, as well as the afflictions suffered by others.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are three things that really struck me about what the Dalai Lama has to say. First, is just the very, very different perspective that the point of life is to live with happiness. I don't know that that was necessarily presented as the purpose of life to me when I was growing up, so it struck me as a remarkably different angle from which to see the choices we make in life. And it frankly shifts one's

perspective about what really makes us happy or what happiness really means. Second, is that when one looks at what really makes one happy, what really brings satisfaction to one's life, what the Dalai Lama suggests about shifting 'from me to we' really hits home. When we shift our attention off ourselves, whether individually or nationally, and put our attention on others and how we can be of service to them, we are living with a higher purpose - and this state is what he terms happiness. It's a different and deeper definition of the word, rooted in compassion. Third, the Dalai Lama talks about perspective itself and suggests that people need to consider that there are many ways to see the same thing and that just because a person or a culture has an agreed upon perspective about something, in this case 'the purpose of life,' does not mean that is the right or only perspective. He urges readers to be open to seeing in a different way. This book is incredible for these concepts alone! The Dalai Lama's point of view immediately brings to mind authors Ariel and Shya Kane's work, which is very much about how to live your life with wellbeing and satisfaction, taking your attention off of yourself, and being of service to others. I would highly recommend reading their amazing books, *How to Create a Magical Relationship: The 3 Simple Ideas that Will Instantaneously Transform Your Love Life* and *Working on Yourself Doesn't Work: The 3 Simple Ideas That Will Instantaneously Transform Your Life* in conjunction with *The Art of Happiness In a Troubled World* - they compliment each other wonderfully.

In 1998, H.H. the Dalai Lama and Dr. Howard C. Cutler, an American psychiatrist, wrote a book, "The Art of Happiness" which became a surprise best-seller. The Art of Happiness, 10th Anniversary Edition: A Handbook for Living This book taught the importance of looking within and of controlling destructive emotions in finding happiness. Then, in 2003, the Dalai Lama and Dr. Cutler again collaborated in a book "The Art of Happiness at Work" which explores the reasons why many people suffer from job dissatisfaction and offers suggestions about improving one's life in the workplace. The Art of Happiness at Work The Dalai Lama and Dr. Cutler have again collaborated on this third book, "The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World" (2009) which is substantially more ambitious in scope than its predecessors. The book is based upon a series of conversations between the two men held over the course of several years. Dr. Cutler wrote and formatted the book which was then read and approved by the Dalai Lama's interpreter. The book is roughly structured in the form of conversation and follow-up. Dr. Cutler and the Dalai Lama meet for, roughly, one hour per day during which Cutler questions the Dalai Lama on various matters pertaining to finding happiness. The Dalai Lama responds, frequently by reformulating Cutler's questions, and the two attempt to elaborate their ideas. Cutler usually takes the role of questioner. Following Cutler's

descriptions of the meetings, he elaborates and expounds upon the Dalai Lama's ideas in his own voice. Sometimes Cutler offers a commentary upon what he has heard. But more often he uses his experience as a psychiatrist and his familiarity with recent psychological and neurological literature to put the Dalai Lama's ideas in a scientific context. The Dalai Lama's teachings, of course, are ultimately drawn from Buddhism, but this is not a religious book. Instead, the Dalai Lama presents what he calls "secular ethics" which he believes will be of value to people regardless of their religious commitments. Cutler writes from the perspective of Western science with the aim of showing the wisdom to be found in the Dalai Lama's teachings. The book examines a common dichotomy in thinking about happiness. Some people believe happiness is an individual matter and must be pursued by each person for him or herself independently of social issues. Other people think, roughly, that happiness is social and that it is necessary to look at political and related conditions, such as poverty, war, and prejudice, and alleviate them if people are to be happy. In a variety of ways, the Dalai Lama and Cutler attempt to break down this dichotomy. They try to show that happiness is not an either-or situation but that the individual and the social depend upon each other. Thus, in the first part of the book, titled "I, Us, and Them" they reject both the dichotomy between "I or we" and the further dichotomy between "Us or Them." in favor of an understanding "Me and We" and "Us and Them." Their view is predicated on an understanding of the common humanity everyone shares in which the differences among people, while important and to be treasured and respected, pale in comparison to the qualities shared by all human beings. In the second part of the book, "Violence versus Dialogue", the Dalai Lama expounds his teaching by focusing on the essential goodness and universality of human nature. He tries to explain the roots of violence in human destructive emotions and in the failure to understand reality. Realizing the difficulty and apparent intractability of some situations, the Dalai Lama and Cutler discuss the importance of seeing questions from many sides and from trying to understand the views of other persons. The authors believe these teachings have relevance to matters such as marriages, friendships, and the workplace, as well as to dealings between nations. Here again, there is a recognition on the Dalai Lama's part of the realistic, situational nature of this approach. It is not offered as a metaphysical or religious teaching. The final part of the book "Happiness in a Troubled World" draws on the teaching of Buddhism that suffering is endemic to life. Perfection is not to be expected. The Dalai Lama and Cutler describe the importance of positive emotions, including hope, optimism and resilience in finding the way to happiness. Great emphasis is thinking about three things, 1. the social character of human life; 2. the interconnection and interdependence of people in the modern world; and 3. the common nature and character of all persons, in finding a way to

individual and societal peace. The ultimate source of the teaching is empathy and compassion for both oneself and for others. In a brief summary in the Introduction to the book, Cutler describes its "key argument" that "positive emotions in general - and the supreme 'positive emotions' of compassion and empathy in particular - lie at the intersecting point between inner and outer happiness, with the capacity to simultaneously bring about personal happiness and provide a potential solution to many of the problems plaguing society today (at least as the first step in overcoming these societal problems)"(Introduction at xvi).Of the three Dalai Lama - Cutler collaborations, this one is the most challenging. The book is difficult to read. It is written for the lay reader, certainly, but both the Dalai Lama and Cutler conduct their discussions at a learned, serious level. Regardless of one's religious commitments, there is much to be learned about redirecting one's thinking from reading this book. I found it auspicious to read this work at the beginning of a new year.Robin Friedman

An incredible wonderful book, and the best so far by Dr. Cutler and the Dalai Lama. There are many Dalai Lama books, but the ones written with Dr. Cutler are by far the most enjoyable and readable. Dr. Cutler is both brilliant and gentle, asking the questions we would all like to ask and making the concepts of the Dalai Lama go straight to the reader's heart. This **MUST** be the next book you read: it will help you more than anything else you can imagine to understand our world and to live happily within it. It is time for Dr. Cutler to write his own book: he writes with such piercing yet entertaining clarity. Thank you!

The Dalai Lama's book is an important work which made me question how we are going about finding happiness, individually and collectively.His notion about how one's vision of human nature can mean the difference between living in a hostile, violent or a gentle, helpful world is fresh and courageous - opening doors to new possibilities. I found his idea of connecting with our basic nature of goodness to begin experiencing this well-being and connectedness, key.What I also find fascinating is that along with this spiritual leader's message there are other authors complementing that vision and making it available to experience in everyday life. Ariel and Shya Kane thru their book *Working on Yourself Doesn't Work: The 3 Simple Ideas That Will Instantaneously Transform Your Life*, are 2 such authors.Enjoy these two books that made an important impact in my life and my level of well-being and of those around me.

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