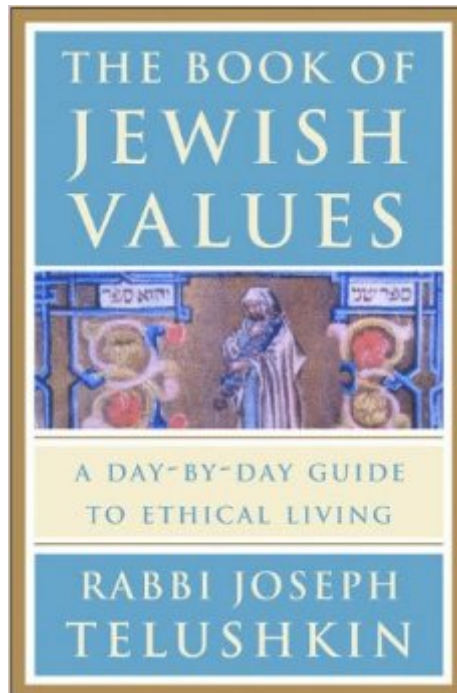


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The Book Of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide To Ethical Living



Synopsis

In *The Book of Jewish Values*, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin has combed the Bible, the Talmud, and the whole spectrum of Judaism's sacred writings to give us a manual on how to lead a decent, kind, and honest life in a morally complicated world. Telushkin speaks to the major ethical issues of our time, issues that have, of course, been around since the beginning. He offers one or two pages a day of pithy, wise, and easily accessible teachings designed to be put into immediate practice. The range of the book is as broad as life itself: The first trait to seek in a spouse (Day 17) When, if ever, lying is permitted (Days 71-73) Why acting cheerfully is a requirement, not a choice (Day 39) What children don't owe their parents (Day 128) Whether Jews should donate their organs (Day 290) An effective but expensive technique for curbing your anger (Day 156) How to raise truthful children (Day 298) What purchases are always forbidden (Day 3) In addition, Telushkin raises issues with ethical implications that may surprise you, such as the need to tip those whom you don't see (Day 109), the right thing to do when you hear an ambulance siren (Day 1), and why wasting time is a sin (Day 15). Whether he is telling us what Jewish tradition has to say about insider trading or about the relationship between employers and employees, he provides fresh inspiration and clear guidance for every day of our lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rabbi Telushkin has done it again. Already the premier author of a collection of books that amount to desk encyclopedias of Jewish Humor, Jewish Wisdom, Jewish Literacy, and Biblical Literacy, Joseph Telushkin now adds this wonderful volume on practical ethics. The book presents ethical

issues - one for each of six days with a time to review on the Sabbath - that weave current and historical illustrations of important ethical principles. What distinguishes this "day at a time" ethical compendium from others like it is the strength of the stories which illustrate each principle. These are deep and complex practical applications, neither contrived nor saccharine. Readers who are not Jewish will also be interested in this book. The lessons here are not related to any particular sectarian view but apply to all those who feel that a religious life must be an ethical life if it is to be meaningful and authentic. The publishers are to be commended on the beautiful presentation of this book. It should grace the shelves of anyone who wants a realistic guide to a more ethical life.

Joseph Telushkin is the premier ethicist of our time. Even though this magnificent book is informed by Jewish ethical values, it truly speaks to all people, regardless of race, religion or creed. It is a superior combination of scholarship, insight, humanity and warmth, which reflects off every page. For those who want to evolve spiritually, become better human beings, this is a must-read. It is written in a very cogent, lucid, readable and accessible style. A veritable gem!

The inches devoted to Telushkin books on my shelves are growing. Who is the better person? The person who performs a holiday ritual to perfection, or the person who is ethical and helpful. Which is the better "personal ad"? One that lists that the suitor has a DDS or JD degree, or one that states that the person is a 'mensch'? A co-worker used to correct me if I said, "I have time to kill." He said, "make time to live." Or when a flight was delayed, rather than be irritated, he thought, "oh, more time to read or meet someone." He tipped the chambermaid big even though they never met. Jewish Values are similar. We need to seek not to be annoyed, but to empathize, to connect with our neighbors, to heal, to help, and to praise. This insightful book of 313 teachings reminded me of our greater purpose; and its daily 2 page format made it easy to assimilate the information and advice and attempt to apply it in everyday life.

I cannot think of a more superb book to inspire contemplation of ethics, spirituality and values. I was already a fan of Rabbi Joseph Telushkin's writing when a long-time buddy of mine gave me "The Book of Jewish Values" as a gift. Before I even opened it, I knew I had a gem. Very simply, Rabbi Telushkin's writing is direct, concise, up-to-date and easy to understand. Also ... important! You don't have to be Jewish (I'm not) to appreciate the relevance of the ethical guidelines on which the author elaborates. For each day of the year (excluding the Shabbat) one of a broad range of issues is discussed and highlighted either anecdotally through quotes by other noted Rabbis or supported

by reference to important Jewish literature (e.g., the laws of the Torah and Talmud). You probably won't find 300+ issues applicable to your life, but every page is worthwhile reading nevertheless. The most pertinent and/or interesting topics to me were the ones involving relationships, charity, kindness, and speech. The book's format is suited to every kind of reading habit, so go at whatever pace you like. Each day is comprised of 1-3 pages, with cross-referencing where related discussion appears elsewhere in the book. Also, footnotes can be found on the same page where a reference is cited (I appreciate this) so you don't have to turn to the back of the book to check a source. In the event you do turn to the back, you'll find a decent glossary, bibliography and index. Whether your intention is to learn or to simply bolster your moral convictions, I give this book my highest recommendation.

Six lessons a week, for 52 weeks. Each lesson is one to two pages; R. Telushkin often hints at the complexities involved in each lesson (usually, each lesson has some "unless," "but," or something else to make it less than black-and-white). Each lesson has a short title that helps jog your memory if you do the "shabbat recap." Each is illustrated with words from the sages of the ages, or sometimes more modern sources. They're simple, thought-provoking, and I now put aside a few moments each morning to read the next one, write the title in my planner, and think about it during the day. Pluses: topic index, full index, extensive bibliography, glossary of Jewish texts. Lessons are short, easy to digest, memorable. Minuses: perhaps each lesson is too short. The Shabbat recap is just a list of the previous six lesson titles; it doesn't really add to the book. I think I would have liked to see the lessons for each week be of the same subject. But maybe not. I'm still not sure. BUY TWO. Share.

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