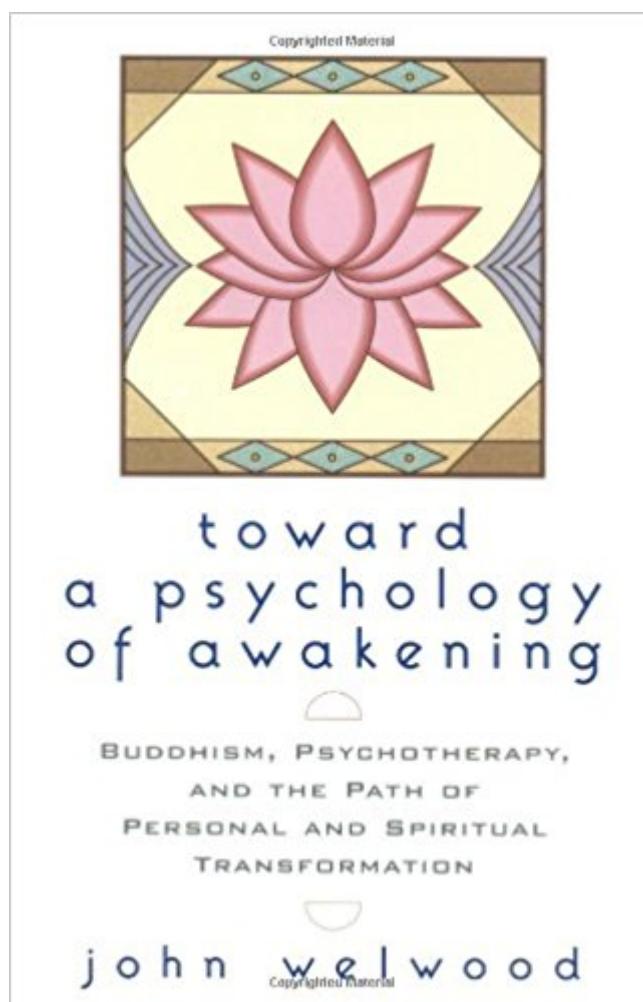


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Toward A Psychology Of Awakening: Buddhism, Psychotherapy, And The Path Of Personal And Spiritual Transformation



Synopsis

How can we connect the spiritual realizations of Buddhism with the psychological insights of the West? In *Toward a Psychology of Awakening* John Welwood addresses this question with comprehensiveness and depth. Along the way he shows how meditative awareness can help us develop more dynamic and vital relationships and how psychotherapy can help us embody spiritual realization more fully in everyday life. Welwood's psychology of awakening brings together the three major dimensions of human experience: personal, interpersonal, and suprapersonal, in one overall framework of understanding and practice.

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Customer Reviews

Have you ever noticed that self-described spiritual people are not necessarily all that easy to be with? John Welwood has a term for what often happens--spiritual bypassing. This is when a person reaches for the stars while forgetting about the goop on his shoes. Welwood, author of the popular *Love and Awakening* and *Journey of the Heart* has made a profession out of bringing East and West together, integrating the path to enlightenment with the techniques of psychotherapy. In *Toward a Psychology of Awakening*, Welwood integrates a series of his articles written over a period of 30 years in an attempt to explain the dynamics of psychologies East and West. The hope is that, combined, they can create a wholeness that encompasses the various levels of human experience. Since many of these articles were written for specialist readers, they won't have the verve and inspiration of Welwood's other books, but Welwood fans and enthusiasts of transpersonal

psychology will be delighted to have all these ground-breaking articles together in one place. So go ahead and reach for the stars--just don't forget that you still have to slog through the mire with the rest of us. --Brian Bruya --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Much has been written about the link between Buddhism and psychotherapy in recent years. Yet this thoughtful work by longtime psychotherapist and Buddhist practitioner Welwood (Love and Awakening) shows that an experienced observer can add much to the emerging conversation about a path of development that could embrace both personal psychology and the deeper reaches of our inner nature. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the human condition was seen to touch three dimensions: earth, heaven and man. At its best, Welwood believes, psychotherapy acts as earth, grounding the individual, while Buddhist thought and practice can be heaven, liberating a person from fixed ideas and blind spots by providing a spacious view of the real self. To become fully human--able to embrace our experience with an open heart and an open mind--we must stretch between heaven and earth. Welwood illustrates how this stretching works by showing how various concepts from Buddhism and from psychotherapy play out in practice. "The Mahamudra lineage of Tibetan Buddhism sees the awakened mind and the confused mind as two sides of the same reality," he writes. "An image from this tradition that portrays coemergence is that of the silkworm binding itself in its own silk." Welwood describes how one client built a sense of self in a deprived environment by identifying with deprivation itself; how another nurtured a sense of specialness and aliveness by identifying with sadness to distinguish himself from his uncaring family. The author helped these clients appreciate the brilliant resourcefulness behind the defensive personalities--the better to eventually let them go. Rich, potentially transforming insights abound here.

Psychotherapists and spiritual seekers alike will be enriched by this book. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Amazing book. A culmination of Welwood's work over the last 2 decades. This is an absolute must read for therapists and buddhists (I am not Buddhist). Anyone in a helping profession would likely benefit. Enjoy. There are 10 books that I categorize as precious in my library. This is one of them. Alongside the Tao Te Ching and A few texts by Trungpa (path of the warrior, cutting through spiritual materialism).

Welwood's books are amazing, but even for someone with degrees in psych and religion quite a intense read. One of the only authors I've read outside of academic necessity where I find myself

rereading paragraphs, sometimes sentences, multiple times to assure myself of the deeper meanings. This particular book offers some fabulous insights into the differences, similarities, and the surprisingly frequent nexus of Eastern and Western thought. Just recommended it for a friend, and decided to buy the hardcopy for my personal library and give it another read myself.

This is an excellent book on the theory of enlightenment. I have asked numerous Buddhists of differing denominations, what is enlightenment, and few have been able to give me a straight answer. Some acted like it was a supernatural state of being that was impossible to achieve unless you were destined to achieve it in this lifetime. Others claimed that enlightenment was undefinable and only the one enlightened would know if they were (of course, if the only person who could tell they were enlightened was themselves, enlightenment was no more than a self-delusion). Without understanding what enlightenment is, there is no reason for anyone to wish to be enlightened. John Welwood does an excellent job at explaining the state of enlightenment. John clarifies the distinction between being non-existent and the non-existence of the self, since they are not the same thing. John shows how the source of suffering can be caused by the split between our perceptions of reality and reality itself. We think we know reality when all we really know is our mis-perceptions of reality created by the constant filtering of reality by the ego. We live in a dream world of our own re-making and whenever our dream world clashes with actual reality, reality always wins, and we suffer as a result. We need to awaken and start trying to see reality as it is instead of what we wish it were like. This is what enlightenment is -- awakening from suffering and the games people play and the misperception of reality -- but although many try, few succeed in ever attaining it. There are many things to distract a person from ever reaching that goal so it takes belief, desire, and a little guidance, from time-to-time, from someone 'higher up' than ourselves. John believes the next step in conscious or psychological evolution is going to be in the realm of passionate relationships and devotes a third of the book to this topic. He gives a good case for this belief, one that shoe horns nicely into the theories of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. In other words, by concentrating on fully conscious, passionate relationships, we have the greatest chance of reaching enlightenment today. This is all excellent material except for one thing: theory is nice but theory is all talk and no action. Passionate relationships is only half of the equation and John is a heavy promoter of meditation -- the other half of the equation -- yet he offers no guidance whatsoever on how to meditate. His excuse? Psychological therapy and meditation do not mix -- to which I say, what a stupid excuse! I've tried John's method of meditation, which he describes as focusing on the silence between thoughts, and all that happens to me is I fall asleep. So why did I give this book five stars,

despite this glaring omission and blunder? Because the theory is well thought out, easy to understand, and confirmed by demonstrable facts -- much more so than many other books I've read on the topic. This book is a great compliment to HOW TO SEE YOURSELF AS YOU REALLY ARE by the Dalai Lama, a book which goes into exquisite detail on how to meditate.

great philosophical and existential reasoning, and his work is not a simple read. for me, I had to digest some of it before I understood it well enough to move on the next thought! am reading it with a group of 8 women and 5 are psychologists and 3 of us are "other". we are all having a good time delving into his thought processes, and we're getting a lot from his book.

One of the best books I have ever read. Great merge of psychology and buddhism.

The main problem with this book is that it is another collection of articles edited to become a book. Thus, each chapter doesn't tend to flow with each other chapter. Although divided up into three broad categories. I would like it if the author putt all his ideas fully together in a book about the first two sections. The third section did not seem to fully fit, because it seems to be more about his personal thesis on how love relationships could somehow serve to awaken people. I personally found it unconvincing and too narrow. It would have helped if he would have talked more broadly, on how love between parent/child, friends, and intimate lovers, with full presence could serve as awakening. Some good notes about this book is that it began my interest on psycho/spiritual thinkers, and introduced me to focusing. But there are a few problems with his emphasis. For one, he is yet another psycho/spiritual thinker-practitioner who draws a sharp delineation between the traditional inner practices and the western psychologies and emphasis on the personal self. Few thinkers along these lines dare question the sufficiency and effectiveness of the traditional spiritual practices. They can see how practitioners are better served by working directly on their egos with certain psychotherapeutic methods, but do not think about the west and east, non-dualistically. I would refer the interested person to the works of A.H. Almaas, and some by Jack Kornfield. I do respect that this book drew me back into the psychological world and planted the seeds on my interest in looking into the field of client-centered pscyhotherapy. But I do believe that a few points need to be emphasised for the east and west to inform each other and the psycho/spiritual dialogue to evolve:1. Thinking does not have to be the enemy. And if wielded correctly, can serve the practice of awakening (See Almaas)2. The personal is not a barrier to awakening. There is a reason that the west keeps emphasizing the personal in-relation to the absolute in it's spiritualities.3.

Psychotherapeutic technique can be a spiritual practice in and of itself if used correctly. And meditative techniques and philosophies of the past are not always perfectly sufficient. What needs to happen is a reexamining of the traditional practices and philosophies of the past on awakening, and the potential depth of change possible in modern psychotherapy. A quote by Jung emphasizes my point well: "No insight is gained... by imitating methods which have grown up under totally different psychological conditions. In the course of the centuries the West will produce its own yoga." Or you can replace the west with modern civilization.

A very useful book, marrying views of psychotherapeutic transformation and redemption with traditional spiritual, and especially Buddhist, thought.

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The Great Psychotherapy Debate: The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work (Counseling and Psychotherapy)
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