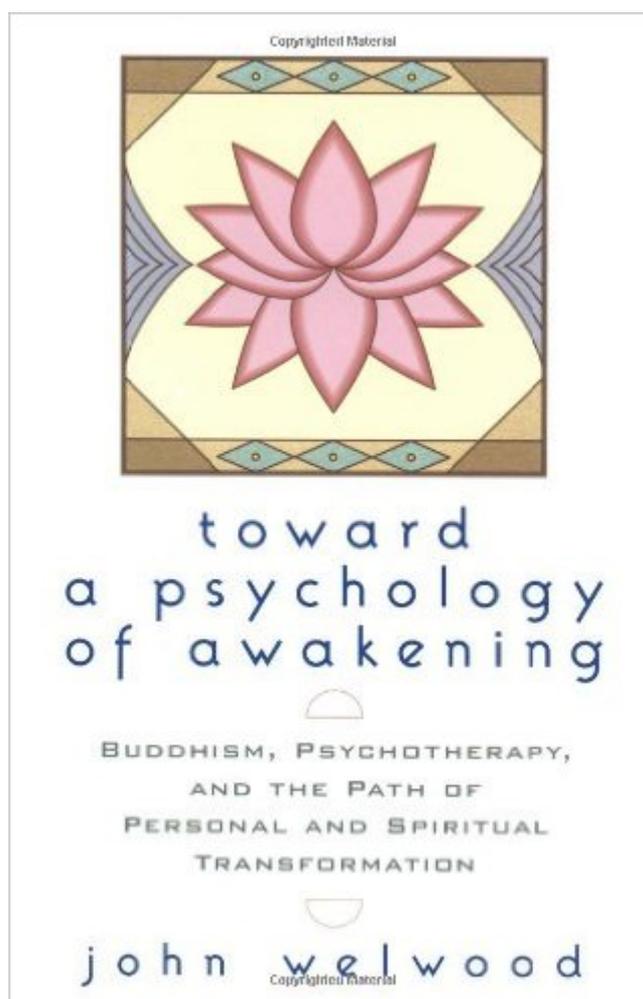


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Toward A Psychology Of Awakening: Buddhism, Psychotherapy, And The Path Of Personal And Spiritual Transformation



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

This is the best book on integrating psychology and spirituality that I've read, written in both a clear and heartfelt way. I'm truly moved by the great depths that the author has touched. His ways of discussing how healing happens and the warmth and brilliance and range of his insight are quite inspiring. His way of discussing the ground of being is the clearest I've read, and he writes of it in many different ways that will reach a wider range of people, both in the healing professions and in ordinary life. I felt that everything he discussed came from his own realization. He shows how spiritual work helps us discover how "the ground of our being actually holds us up" and how the essence of healing lies in learning how to let be. Can someone heal who doesn't learn that whatever emotional states they have can be held openly and unconditionally in awareness? This book shows how in both psychotherapy and spiritual work, it is being awake with thoughts, feelings, and

sensations, without separation and distance, that heals. Then the mind can "self-liberate" when we stay open right in the middle of what's coming up. In Welwood's words, "unconditional presence is the most powerful transmuting force there is, because it is a willingness to be there with our experience." Each one of the therapy examples in the book moved me and focused on the larger field of how we are with our experience. This book will undoubtedly be a guide for brand new ways of practicing therapy. Let me share one of my favorite quotes (among so many). Welwood describes a client whose fear of nothingness was a symptom of being cut off from herself.

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 put 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 psychotherapy. 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.

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