

As One Is: To Free the Mind from All Conditioning

Jiddu Krishnamurti

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In this series of 8 talks, given in Ojai, California in 1955, Krishnamurti confronts the confusion, habits, and assumptions of the human mind, and claims these lie at the root of all violence and suffering in the world. While these reflections were offered over 50 years ago, their meaning is as fresh and as relevant heard today. Krishnamurti discusses a world in which booming productivity and scientific advancement promise a happy future, but don't provide it. He points to the ongoing escalation of war, competition, envy and territoriality despite gains in education, religious ecumenism and the technologies of self-improvement. Ultimately and throughout, he asks his listeners to consider that all apparent progress of the self is not progress toward freedom, but a treadmill of illusion. Knowing one's mind, he asserts, through diligent self-observation, is the only way to freedom.

As One Is: To Free the Mind from All Conditioning Details


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John J says

A Diagnosis in Search of a Cure

The book presents a series of talks given by Krishnamurti in the 1950s. The general theme, repeated over and over throughout these talks, is that every human being has been conditioned from birth to conform to a set of ideas and beliefs, which ultimately distort reality. For a more clinical description of conditioning, read "a mind of its own" by Cordelia Fine, subtitled "How Your Brain Distorts and Deceives."

There is nothing wrong with Krishnamurti's diagnosis, but I was quite frustrated by his failure to offer a cure and his apparent annoyance directed toward those who entertain the notion that a cure even exists. It's kind of like being told by an oncologist that you have cancer, then being told to "just get over it" on your own. Even if that oncologist were tops in his field in terms of diagnosing the disease, those "words of wisdom" regarding the cure are entirely useless.

In my view, overcoming the conditioning Krishnamurti describes is equivalent to overcoming the "brain chatter" we're constantly being subjected to. The technique of transcendental meditation (TM), which was introduced by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, offers a cure without the lengthy diagnosis. Maharishi didn't say exactly what is wrong with us; he simply prescribed TM as a practical technique for making us better.

Krishnamurti's talks in Ojai are interesting and somewhat informative, but I was left with an empty feeling after reading them. Although K seems to feel genuine compassion regarding suffering, he seems somewhat detached from it all. This gives some go the impression that K is arrogant, but I don't believe he was. I think he was frustrated by the inability of mere mortals to find their own cure.

Vinayak Dasari says

If you are in search of Truth/God/Immeasurable/Eternal or not even named it what you are searching for, then this is guide to you to find your answers. I have read this book still every time I open it it feels new to me. Can not read this book in one go, read a passage try to digest and go ahead again.

James Jesso says

this book fully changed my life when I read it as a young man.

Ty says

This book is a great insight to the mind and was geared to free yourself from all conditioning. One of my favorite questions in the book was "Is it possible to teach your children without conditioning them?"

This book covers things such as The accumulation of knowledge vs the Individual and keeping the mind still or motionless.

Krishnamurti also explains the difference between attention, concentration and distraction.

This book was produced from an 8 day discussions in Oak Groove California in 1955. Krishnamurti's words were recorded and published in this book.

This man is quite fascinating and he touches on the problems of society, religion, politics, violence, dominance, sorrow, conscious, subconscious, ego and the cultivation of virtue vs. virtue.

This man is obviously one of the great philosophers of our time, even though he does not consider himself a philosopher at all. Krishnamurti seems to be a proponent of self discovery and always tells people to find out the truth for themselves. Because if you take someones word as truth, then you've been conditioned. :)

Truth is a pathless land.

Jen Madsen says

"And do you know how difficult it is to understand oneself? It is difficult because we are dilettantes; we are not really that interested. But if you are really aware, if you give your attention to understanding yourself, then you will find an indestructable treasure." --Jiddu Krishnamurti

That quote, perhaps, best sums up the entire book. This is a collection of talks Krishnamurti gave in Ojai, California in 1955. Once again I'm drawn to philosophy that at heart is as far from esoteric as it can be and yet feels very esoteric on the surface. There is no path to truth, no guru to get you there, no there to get to, in fact. So why bother trying to see oneself as one is? Is it possible to free yourself from all conditioning? I don't know, but I think I know why Krishnamurti thinks it's important to try:

"So, if there is no possibility for the mind to extricate itself from this prison of the collective, then the mind can only go back and reform the prison. But to me, there is such a possibility because to struggle everlastingly in the prison would be too stupid."

So the question is, do I remain a dilettante or set out on a pathless path with no guru, no guidance other than my own ability to observe the mind and peer into the abyss?

Sankar says

Reading J.Krishnamurti is a state of mind. It is like a gently flowing river and should be read in its entirety. In this collection of eight talks given over a period of a month in California in 1955, he generally talks about all the conditioning we subject our mind to - Religion, culture, habits, job, love, envy, desire

He is to be read. As he says himself he has nothing to teach. All he does is ask people to observe their mind

and understand its depths. Again he has to be read.

Personally it was very refreshing to read him after 5/6 years.

Finlay says

Very simple, but of course not easy. Can you see what conditioning means? I recommend you read this a bit at a time, because it does feel repetitive (as it's a series of talks, transcribed).

Daniel Hatke says

Wish I would have read this when I was younger, but that doesn't take away from the lecture's material now.

Veronique says

This book is composed of eight talks given in California in 1955. The author constantly goes back to the conditioning of the mind, which is important I agree, but still, there is a LOT of repetition in this book. After a while, I found Krishnamurti's tone not only very repetitive, but also annoying (I don't think I can stand another rhetorical question at this point) and borderline arrogant.

He asks a lot questions but seems to be circling around without ever finding the path to an answer.

One should not try to find peace and truth reading books or listening to a teacher or a spiritual adviser according to Krishnamurti (what exactly was he doing in front of an audience??). Well isn't there a contradiction when he spent a big part of his life creating foundations around to world to preserve his talks and writings? Or did I totally miss something?

Nithila Talgaswatte says

First attempt at a "philosophical" book, it was quite captivating, in that I continued to read it with great interest but at the same time quite difficult to comprehend and grasp some of the concepts, reading the first 6 "talks" will leave you with far more questions than answers but the 7th and 8th definitely provide more direction, I'll certainly attempt to read a few more books by Krishnamurti to try and make more sense of this one !

Noah says

This reaffirmed my belief in the importance of working on our own shit as a way to make social change. I loved the synchronicity of recently attending a panel on healing organizers, healers who work within social justice movements. But it goes beyond that. Violence does begin within each of us. How can we stop wars when we can't even get along with ourselves and our loved ones? The violence is within each of us. (And I love his very broad definition of violence, which includes "this whole problem of acquisition, of competition,

the desire on the part of the individual as well as the collective to seek power.")

I loved how he talked about how merely learning new behaviors, practicing nonviolence isn't enough. We can learn better behavior, but this is not the same as truly eliminating violence at the root, which he identifies as trying to avoid what I call the gaping maw of loneliness that each of us feels if we ever stop long enough to let ourselves feel it.

While I'd gotten good at watching my thoughts and being aware of my feelings, I had not moved beyond not trying to change them. This book helped me focus on simply being attentive and not trying to control the outcome. Just watch the feelings of anger, agitation, judgment come up. Just watch. As the feeling persists, don't name it, just feel it.

He also condemns efforts at self-improvement, which I've heard before, but not quite in this way. He basically says that anything directed at improvement is happening in the mind, in time, and cannot get outside of the past and social conditioning and experience. So basically if we want to "improve" we have to do so right NOW, we can't put it off. It's a moment-to-moment thing and isn't cumulative.

I appreciated the fact that it was from 1955, which isn't a time period that I associate spirituality with, so it's nice to know there were folks interested in it at that time. I also liked how I checked this out of the library and then found that it was referenced in another book I was finishing up.

I am excited to explore the principles in this book. (Note: the first chapter or two I found harder to connect with than the later chapters, so don't be put off by those.) I will almost certainly come back to this book and use it in my writing in the future.

Karthik Vegi says

The moment you stop seeking, you'll know the truth.

Joan says

This is my first introduction to the teachings of Krishnamurti and I am blown away. He pulls no punches in skewering all cultural artifacts including all religions. His teachings are basically the same as those of the Buddha but he completely rejects all institutions. His piercing insights, if taken to heart, leave you nowhere to run except into your own mind/heart to examine it.

Patrick Connery says

Some useful and interesting insights. Thoughtful commentary about society's problems and human psychological tendencies that may be at the root of that. However, at times somewhat aloof or patronizing in tone. Krishnamurti often prefaces a topic with some uncertainty about the audience's ability to fully grasp his point, then proceeds to repeat his thesis which becomes redundant in a written format.

Laurie A. Brown says

Oh my goodness. I love reading spiritual literature. This is one of the best as the teachings direct me to my own inner self. This is a very thought provoking read. I highly recommend Krishnamurti's books.
