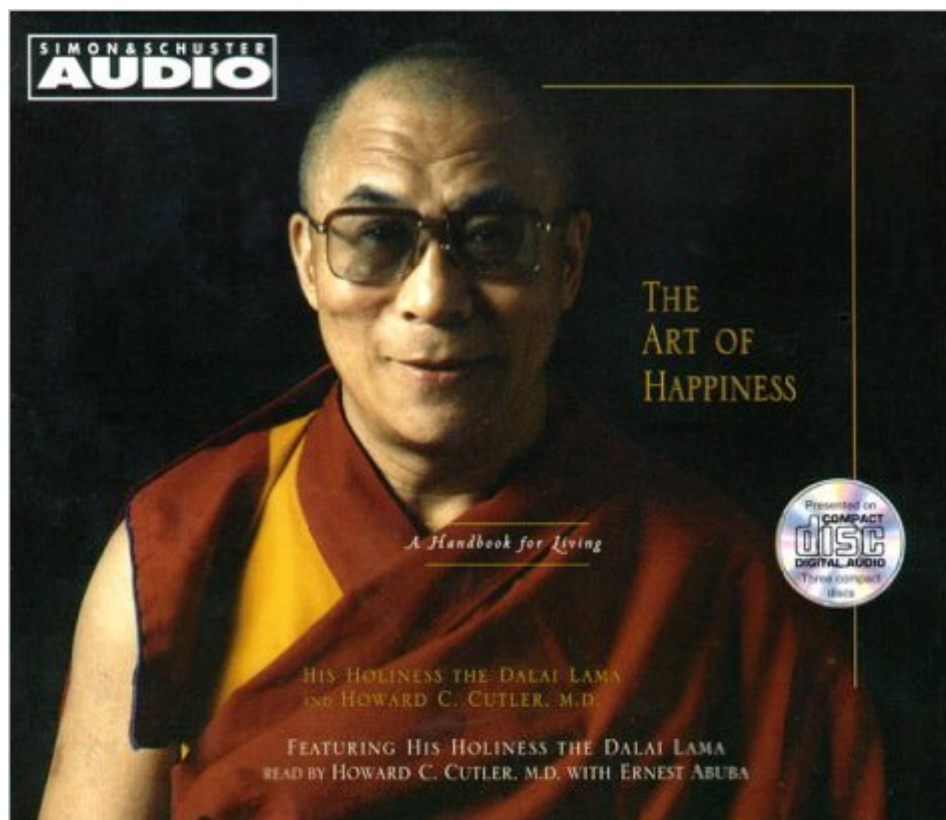


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# The Art Of Happiness: A Handbook For Living



## Synopsis

Nearly every time you see him, he's laughing, or at least he's smiling. And he makes everyone else around him feel like smiling. He's the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, the Nobel Prize winner, and increasingly popular speaker and statesman. Why is he so popular? Even after spending just a few minutes in his presence you can't help feeling just a little bit happier. The Dalai Lama is probably one of the only people in the world who if you ask him if he's happy, even though he's suffered the loss of his country, will give you an unconditional "yes." What's more, he'll tell you that happiness is the purpose of life, and that "the very motion of our life is towards happiness." How to get there has always been the question. He's tried to answer it before, but he's never had the help of a psychiatrist to get the message across in a context we can easily understand. Through meditations, stories and the meeting of Buddhism and psychology, the Dalai Lama shows us how to defeat day-to-day depression, anxiety, anger, jealousy, or just an ordinary bad mood. He discusses relationships, health, family, work, and spirituality to show us how to ride through life's obstacles on a deep abiding source of inner peace. Based on 2500 years of Buddhist meditations mixed with a healthy dose of common sense, The Art of Happiness is an audiobook that crosses the boundaries of all traditions to help listeners with the difficulties common to all human beings.

## Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio; Abridged edition (November 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743506308

ISBN-13: 978-0743506304

Product Dimensions: 1 x 5.8 x 4.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (725 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #123,658 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Dalai Lama #120 in Â Books > Books on CD > Health, Mind & Body > Self Help #121 in Â Books > Books on CD > Religion & Spirituality > General

## Customer Reviews

I have always had a lot of respect for the Dalai Lama and admired the fact that he radiates so much

genuine compassion and tolerance despite the many hardships that he has faced in his lifetime. I believe that this book is the essence of this man's being and his outlook on life. It encompasses many of his core beliefs and serves as an inspiration to everyone, irrespective of religious affiliation or spiritual belief. This book is not written by the Dalai Lama himself, but by Howard C. Cutler, and is based on his numerous conversations with His Holiness. Dr. Cutler provides the "western", science-based perspective on the buddhist monk's teachings. While his naivete gets to be annoying at times, he helps relate the Dalai Lama's teachings to our everyday lives by making them less abstract, more practical and actionable. "I believe that happiness can be achieved through training the mind... Generally speaking, one begins by identifying those factors which lead to happiness and those factors which lead to suffering. Having done this, one then sets about gradually eliminating those factors which lead to suffering and cultivating those which lead to happiness." These words contain the essence of the entire book. A premise so elegant and simple that it might be easy to dismiss at first, and yet so powerful. The more one thinks about their true meaning, the more one begins to understand that these words, in themselves, hold the answer to the purpose of our lives. The idea that happiness is the product of our mind, rather than of our objective situation, is hardly new. Yet, this book is able to explore this notion to the depths that I had never comprehended before.

The big disappointment here is that there is very little Dalai Lama in this book. It is not the Lama's handbook for living, it is Howard Cutler's handbook for getting rich off the Dalai Lama's good name. Howard Cutler is a professional psychologist, and -- one quickly concludes -- a rather average one. The one fascinating thing about this book is observing how the Dalai Lama interacts with a perfectly ordinary, totally western person. Howard Cutler asks the same kinds of questions that you or I might ask, and is just as puzzled as we might be. He is not much of a writer, but he writes without artifice or elaboration. Through Cutler's unornamented prose, the reader can sense the Dalai Lama's reactions to such honest questions as "What is wrong with romantic love?" The Lama questions the question, and with a thoughtful words opens all the distinctions between our cultures. He transcends cultural bias easily, which is perhaps what makes him such a powerful figure in our age. Much of the book, however, consists of Cutler dissecting, analyzing, and providing examples from his own practice to elucidate the Lama's brief responses. Cutler's thinking is far weaker, but does serve to illustrate the vast gulf between ordinary thought and the thinking of someone who has devoted his life to it. Were I titling this book, I might have come up with something like "A Psychological Response to Selected Teachings of the Dalai Lama: A Collision Between East and

West". (Fortunately for all of us, I do not have a job in publishing!) Although it is disappointing that the interviewer is not sophisticated enough to take these questions deeper, it is worthwhile to examine the Dalai Lama's approaches and responses to ordinary questions. All told, this is not a book I am happy to have bought.

I picked this book up at its first print. I found this book extremely spiritually insightful, to say the absolute least. Every time I read this book again (that's right, again), I find new value locked within the Dalai Lamas' words. However, I am reading a lot of these reviews in much disappointment. The Art of Happiness was written through the perspective of a western psychiatrist, Dr. Howard C. Cutler. It saddens me in the fact that many readers could not see beyond Dr. Cutler's viewpoints into the heart of the real matter. Dr. Cutler's remarks were not made to instruct or to educate, but merely to display the Dalai Lama in a more acceptable western sense. The most important thing the Dalai Lama speaks of is the act of cultivating compassion. This is important. Through compassion, one will come to appreciate Dr. Cutler's display of goodwill toward the overall benefit of humankind. It would seem that most negative reviews were not based on content alone, but based purely on an abundance of ignorance. You could say that they just 'didn't get it.' The very people in which complain of Dr. Cutler's perspectives are complaining, in a sense, of their own comprehension levels. Through compassion, one will inevitably find that life is through our own perception. This book does an exquisite job in relaying this fact among others noted respectfully through the wisdom of His Holiness, The Dalai Lama. This book reads itself, I have given it to friends, family, etc. It is a beautiful work of art in many senses. If you have any interest in spiritual growth, eastern philosophy, or if you just have a good heart, as I believe we all do, then buy this book. For those of you who still don't like this book, there are books out there not written by Dr.

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