

A New Earth Book Summary, by Eckhart Tolle

by Allen Cheng

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1-Page Summary of A New Earth

Overview

We often get so caught up in our thoughts and anxieties that we forget to feel alive. We can reconnect with life by focusing on our breathing. Breathe deeply, filling your body with air and feeling it fill all of the parts of you: limbs, fingers, toes, stomach and chest. It's a simple exercise but one that is incredibly powerful when done correctly.

When you watch the news, it's easy to be depressed by all the conflicts and man-made catastrophes that are plaguing groups of people all over the world.

Although there are many things improving in society, humans still have problems. We're violent and greedy.

So what is the underlying cause of all these conflicts and constant misery? The answer, you'll discover, is found in our minds.

In order to be happy, we must live in the present moment. We can do that by not letting our egos take control of us and make us worry about things that we have no control over.

In this passage, you'll learn what sin really means in Christianity; why "evolve or die" is the twenty-first century's motto; and why you should aspire to be like a duck.

Big Idea #1: Violence is a problem in society, and it's getting worse.

Most people believe that we live in crazy and overwhelming times. The most renowned Indian sage, Ramana Maharshi once said that the "mind is maya" in Hinduism. Maya means a form of mental illness which affects everyone on a collective level.

In fact, most ancient religions agree that dysfunction is a large part of our natural way of living.

Buddhism describes the human condition as one of suffering. This idea is seen throughout Buddhist philosophy, and it can be traced back to Buddha himself.

In Christianity, the concept of sin means to miss the mark. Missing the point is what it means to sin.

Despite our triumphs over art, medicine and technology, we still seem to be tainted by a destructive force. It's as if there is an insane part of us that drives people to do terrible things.

In fact, people of the twentieth century have both created and witnessed some of the most horrific, systemized methods of destruction. Such developments led to mass killings in Soviet Russia and to a brutal regime that killed over 25% of Cambodia's population.

Even today, violence, greed and hate continue. We destroy forests, pollute the air and water, and mistreat animals in factory farms.

Even though many religions have tried to offer ways to stop violence, they haven't been successful.

So, what is the solution? The answer lies in the following paragraphs.

Big Idea #2: Religion is not the cure for our inner madness, but we must find a solution.

Throughout history, people have attempted to improve society with ideas such as communism. Communism is an example of a philosophy inspired by good intentions and lofty ideals.

Communism failed because the people who led it weren't able to change themselves and lead the society.

To guide us, we still have the enduring wisdom of ancient religious teachers, from Buddha to Lao Tzu. However, many of these teachings have been distorted by both their contemporaries and following generations.

Ideas were added to a lot of teachings, even though they didn't make sense. Some teachers were ridiculed and killed because of the ideas that they had.

In this way, an idea of love and unity can be twisted into a religion that is hateful and divisive. Considering Jesus spoke about empathy and kindness, it's surprising that brutal periods such as the Crusades and Spanish Inquisition could take place under the banner of Christianity.

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