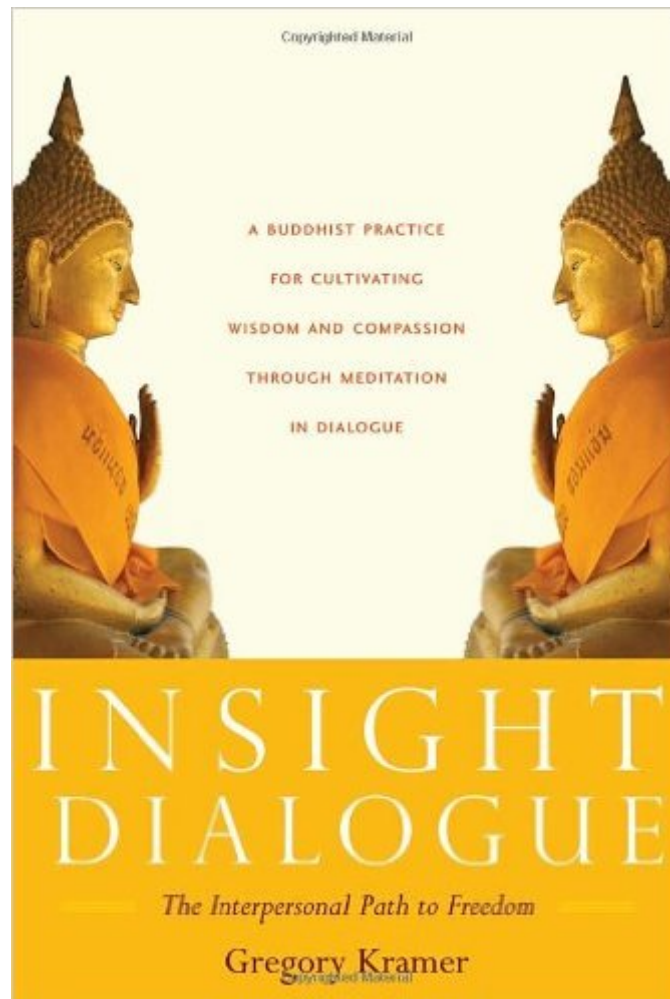


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Insight Dialogue: The Interpersonal Path To Freedom



Synopsis

Insight Dialogue is a way of bringing the tranquility and insight attained in meditation directly into your interactions with other people. It's a practice that involves interacting with a partner in a retreat setting or on your own, as a way of accessing a profound kind of insight. Then, you take that insight on into the grind of everyday human interactions. Gregory Kramer has been teaching the practice (which he originated) for more than a decade in retreats around the world. It's something strikingly new in the world of Buddhist practice yet it's completely grounded in traditional Buddhist teaching. Kramer begins with a detailed presentation of the central Buddhist teaching of the Four Noble Truths seen through an interpersonal lens. Because dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness) is often most forcefully felt in our relations with others, interpersonal relationships are a wonderfully useful place to practice. He breaks the Noble Truths down into component parts to observe how they manifest particularly in relationship to others, using examples from his own life and practice, as well as from his students'. He then goes on to present the practice as it's taught in his workshops and retreats. There are a few basic steps to the practice, deceptively simple to describe: (1) pause, (2) relax, (3) open, (4) trust emergence, (5) listen deeply, and (6) speak the truth. The sequence begins following a period of meditation, and includes periods of speaking, listening, and mutual silence. Kramer includes numerous examples of people's experience with the practice from his retreats, and shows how the insight gained from the techniques can be brought into real life. More than just testimonials for how well the practice works, the personal stories demonstrate the problems that arise, the different routes the practice can follow, and the sometimes surprising insights that are gained. To learn more about the author, Gregory Kramer, go to www.metta.org.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Shambhala (September 11, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1590304853

ISBN-13: 978-1590304853

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #264,078 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #75 in Books > Politics & Social

Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Theravada #349 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Rituals & Practice #57696 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality

Customer Reviews

I was very eager to read this book, inspired to bring mindfulness to interpersonal relationships and use dialog as a form of healing. At the root of buddhist practice is an attempt to create freedom and unconditional acceptance, and I am concerned about how effective some of the practices described really attain this...Upon reading it, I was somewhat surprised at many statements that implied subtle levels of judgment - and statements like these are woven throughout the book. These statements have some contradictory element in them that re-creates the dualism mindfulness is designed to surpass. There are many points of disappointment for me, but for now let me mention a just 2 for clarity and brevity:1.In regards to the "hunger to be" and wanting interpersonal recognition he says, when we don't receive this recognition that..."this is a taste of death, and it is horrifying, and we will do anything to avoid it."Upon reading this line, I had to wonder - "then what is buddhist practice itself?" - He of course discusses this point, but it makes the claim that "we will do anything to avoid it" untrue - since there ARE ways to lean into this in mindful ways. I would have liked some emphasis on what could contribute to a willingness to lean into it, instead of a broad generalization about human nature.This line is much better stated as: "when we believe we aren't recognized by others, it can be horrifying and this horror can sometimes contribute to an unwillingness to spend time to look at ourselves more directly."It is also my belief that social structures and cultural systems contribute to an individual's willingness to turn towards themselves or not (for instance buddhist cultures where mindful meditation is normal)...

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