Clarion Review

Body, Mind & Spirit

Compassion
Gita Bellin
BookSurge
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Four Stars (out of Five)

A pivotal point in the Buddha's search for enlightenment occurred when he remembered the ants crawling on the ground that he'd seen as a small child on an outing with his father. The remembrance triggered in him a profound feeling of compassion for those ants and for all other sentient beings. He had discovered that silent contemplation allowed him to see beyond his own existence to the wider universe. Since that time, although it is never easy to achieve, the expansion of self awareness has opened the hearts of many to the healing effects of compassion.

This second book in Gita Bellin's Amazing Grace Series offers guidance for people who want to awaken their hearts and minds in this way. Compassion follows the format of her previous book on reflection, which prepares readers for this next step. She observed, while teaching her students the process of awakening to compassion, what she describes as a way of being that blossoms naturally when the heart begins to open. This is not a book that can be breezed through without study and practice. Brief affirmations and analogies comprise the primary text and should be read during contemplative sessions. The lines can be reread whenever the need for guidance in reaching the goal of compassionate living arises.

Bellin travels internationally and gives workshops and seminars designed to help individuals, groups, and corporations transform their lives through personal growth. When at home in Australia, she enjoys the solitude of her farm, which she shares with many animals.

She sees the innocent gestures of animals as simple expressions of innocent trust that demonstrate the existence of compassion in everyday life. "Compassion is a purr with closed eyes," she writes. "Compassion is a wagging tail."

Another analogy compares the awakening of compassion to a cooperative interaction between two people, the first one acting as a candle to the second's match. Reversing roles, the second person then serves as a candle for the first's match. The author concludes by writing,

“Compassion is the Flame and the Light.”

Towards the end of the book, she explains how the heart opens naturally to feelings of compassion during meditation. “Through that wondrous gap where Awareness is aware of Awareness,” she writes. “Compassion trickles in.”

A recorded meditative guide to the text, accompanied by music, can be purchased separately. Novices may find the book difficult to work through on their own. For this reason, the author might consider offering readers the option of purchasing the book and recording together.

Compassion connects people. Bellin believes that humans have begun to realize the potential for improving the co-existence of all beings on earth through this connection. Compassion will, she says, “become the operating principle for the twenty-first century.” This book should interest all who wish to learn more about the positive outcome that compassion can bring to their lives.

Margaret Cullison