ForeWord Reviews

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

Embracing Heaven & Earth: The Five Fundamental Tenets of Enlightenment
Andrew Cohen
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Move away from the "dazzling distractions" and "absorption in the feeling experience" towards liberation, transformation, and enlightenment. This is the invitation issued by Cohen, a spiritual teacher since 1986, to listeners at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, and on this audiotape.

As a young teacher, the author "romanticized the psychology of enlightenment," believing that his emphasis should be on "direct spiritual experience," a concept often inexplicable to the uninitiated. Twelve years into his teaching career, Cohen shifted his emphasis to "moral and ethical development," trusting that "revolution begins within the self."

In subsequent lectures and writings, Cohen discovered that "Most humans, particularly Americans, are deeply divided and confused" as to how to best let go of ego, fears, desires, selfishness, and inconsistencies. He wryly summarizes, "Most don't want to take the leap just yet."

Cohen proceeds to list the five tenets that he has found to be fundamental in working toward personal enlightenment, using each as a touchstone throughout his lecture. Stated simply, people who want to be free from self or ego must: clarify their intentions; be willing to take responsibility for what happened in their past; face everything and avoid nothing; learn the truth of impersonality; and recognize that humanity is a whole.

He reminds listeners, "Humans are not born saints. We act in selfish ways and create a fair amount of our own problems. Acting out of ego causes consequences."

Mixing humor with hard truths, Cohen urges listeners and readers to be responsible, act with dignity, and be trustworthy. Morality is not a judgment call; it is a choice for the individual who wants inner transformation. His message is timeless; his formal arguments erudite and logical.

Embracing Heaven and Earth is the companion audiocassette to the book with the same title. Cohen is the founder of *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine and the author of eleven books on personal growth, including *Enlightenment Is a Secret* and *Freedom Has No History*.