Clarion Review

Body, Mind & Spirit

Reflections
Gita Bellin
BookSurge
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Throughout recorded history, humans have relied on introspection to help them understand the meaning of life and how they fit into it. In today's multitasking atmosphere, there seems to be little time for people to engage in self-reflection. Yet the quest to understand self continues to attract seekers of inner peace, who find support through spiritual disciplines and meditation groups. Books offer guidance for the individual pursuit of self knowledge.

Reflections, the first book in Gita Bellin's Amazing Grace Series, begins with an explanation of why she chose "Amazing Grace" as the series' title. Each book is prefaced by the lyrics to the seventeenth-century traditional song by that name. The deceptively easy-to-read text contains thoughts about reflection that the author has gleaned from lecture transcripts, audio and video recordings, meditations, and notes contributed by her students. These ideas are written as short affirmations and analogies, which should be read and pondered in moments of quiet contemplation.

Bellin's personal training includes years of study in Eastern and Western spiritual thought. Her forty-five year career as a teacher of personal growth, stress management, and meditation took place in a variety of countries and settings. She works with international consulting firms to help implement cultural and behavioral change in businesses seeking to improve employee interaction and cooperation.

People live, to a greater or lesser extent, in an illusory world of their own creation, which offers protection from what they perceive to be a capricious external world. This aversion to accepting reality, as it is, hinders their ability to realize their full potential. Bellin tells readers that they can choose to stay hidden in their shell of illusion, like a tortoise, but she also offers an alternative, writing, "Or are you the hare, racing ahead celebrating the joy of Life."

Questions about the value of self lie at the root of each person's innermost fears. Grave

doubts about self can cause people to compromise their actions, resulting in despair rather than satisfaction with life. “Your worth is not established by what you do, who you know, how much you have,” Bellin says. “Your worth is established by Love of Self and love of God.”

Bellin encourages readers to acknowledge their own intelligence when they find meaning in a book, instead of giving credit solely to the author. “That is a confirmation of your own, Self Realisation,” she says. “Not a confirmation of how much wiser the other person or event is.”

A recorded guide for meditating on the text, with appropriate background music, can be purchased separately from the book. Beginners to this type of focused thought might find the recording helpful in understanding the book’s message during their initial reading. Offering the option of buying the book and recording together would help them.

Readers interested in developing inner awareness will appreciate the book’s message, which provides a good foundation for the next book in the Amazing Grace series, which focuses on compassion.

Margaret Cullison