

The Gentle Way of the Heart

Anders Nilsson

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Nilsson's refreshing perspective acknowledges the complementarity of the paths of mystic and scientist.

Stanford scientist Anders Nilsson pens a guide for connecting to a path of spiritual awakening. Its perspective is fresh and surprising because of the author's roots as an academic scientist. Nilsson, from Sweden, spent decades exploring, teaching, and refining the work of *The Gentle Way of the Heart*. It's separate from his academic interests of physics and chemistry. He invites readers along numerous paths to discover the light within: connecting with the true self, exploring beingness, transforming fear, making choices, experiencing reality, and coming into a sense of unity with the divine. Stories from those who have been in his workshops and practice his gentle process illustrate how ordinary people can make shifts from stress, fear, and judgment into a greater sense of calm and wholeness.

Sharing his own transformation from a science fundamentalist to teaching spiritual principles, Nilsson promises to take readers beyond self-help. With explorations that have taken him into Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and other traditions, the book reflects his synthesis of their common threads. He frequently shares the slightly different wordings from each of several spiritual traditions as they relate to a single concept.

Inviting his audience to "read more from the heart," Nilsson italicizes pithy and noteworthy injunctions. "Keep one hand on the light in our heart while we reach out with the other hand toward the challenges of the every-day life," advises the author.

Each chapter opens with an aphorism that sets the tone and is drawn from the wisdom of the Gentle Way. The chapter openers, by themselves, offer deep, rich material for contemplation: "We share the light in our heart / with all our fellow beings / They give us the magnificent gift / to experience forgiveness, / to find love / where we thought none could exist." To integrate the principles into everyday practice, each chapter concludes with three exercises: Concentration, Study, and Meditation.

In a subtle, gentle way, the author presents a quietly groundbreaking path to discovering the light within, relevant to all spiritual seekers. With uncommon sense and the gentleness of the title woven throughout, *The Gentle Way of the Heart* offers a window to deepening any spiritual practice. Experienced meditators will benefit from this gentle guide back to beginner's mind.

BOBBYE MIDDENDORF (Winter 2015)

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