

The Heart and Science of Yoga: The American Meditation Institute's Empowering Self-Care Program for a Happy, Healthy, Joyful Life

Leonard Perlmutter

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Comprehensive, accessible, and eye-opening, The Heart and Science of Yoga is a definitive guide on living an empowered, fulfilled life.

Art dealer turned spiritual teacher Leonard Perlmutter writes with compassion, wisdom, and empathy as he describes his journey along a path of enlightenment in *The Heart and Science of Yoga*.

First, it's important to realize that this book is not about the practice of yoga as Westerners think of it, though there is a chapter devoted to the breath-based exercise routine. This book is a full-fledged description of what it takes to live a holistic life free from painful attachments and fear.

Touching on topics as widespread as meditation, chakras, Ayurvedic medicine, and the dangers of the ego, the book provides a self-care program that would transform the way many in Western culture think and act. It encourages incorporation of Eastern thought, allowing those who practice the method to essentially live in today's busy society without sacrificing health and inner peace.

Perlmutter came from the traditional Western mindset of achievement, wealth accumulation, and stress. It was only later in life that he and his wife, artist Jenness Cortez Perlmutter, began to study yoga and change the way they lived. This journey to enlightenment served them as they dealt with the unpredictable and often insincere world of business.

The book is part textbook, part study guide, and part personal memoir. Chapters are short and well defined, making it easy to read at short intervals and gain knowledge into a specific portion of Yoga Science. Tips are present in nearly every chapter so that concepts can be experimented with and put into immediate action. Pictures and illustrations help to demonstrate some of the more abstract concepts and constitute nearly the whole section on the easy and gentle yoga program that is recommended.

The personal memoir portion of the book ties in well with the more scholarly and spiritual aspects. Seeing how one couple slowly put this program into action in their own lives and how it transformed them is enlightening and motivating. It also makes the book less about preaching and more about revelation. The tone of the book is consistently empathetic and makes the newcomer to spiritual practices feel at home and comfortable with the topics being discussed. Fables, stories from religious texts, and anecdotes also serve to provide context and deepen the understanding of certain concepts.

The lengthy book is not a light volume that can be taken in all at once. It serves more as a guidebook that can be used for reference. Chapters build on each other to create a full picture yet stand alone well enough to serve as refreshers.

Those interested in learning more about the practices of yoga and meditation and who want to incorporate more

natural and mindful concepts into their lives will enjoy *The Heart and Science of Yoga* and refer back to it often.

ANGELA MCQUAY (April 19, 2017)

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