

The Small Book of Light

Vicky Weston

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This encouraging and spiritual self-help book encourages people to effect change in the world around them.

Vicky Weston's encouraging spiritual self-help guide *The Small Book of Light* is directed at those who yearn to make a difference. It argues that they can, starting now.

Arguing that twenty-first-century life is stressful enough and that even well-intentioned people can be overwhelmed by it, the book says that human cycles of "collective inaction" are self-perpetuating and prevent change from occurring. As a counter, the book suggests turning one's thoughts and intentions to higher things. Here, positive and sustained good thoughts become a tool to effect change.

The book focuses its attention on innate human gifts, qualities, and tools that can be called into service to make a difference in the world. It argues that using such abilities is contingent upon learning to control one's mind, which, left alone, thrives on chaos. Above all, it asks what it considers to be a vitally important question: "Is what we are seeing in the world what we really want to see?"

There's a religious element at play in this work. Drawing upon spiritual and ethical teachings from many traditions, the book draws attention to shared messages like "Know thyself" and "Love one another," if without identifying their sources. It argues that all such teachings arose from the same place and that living in accordance with God's will would put an end to wars, famine, greed, and other horrors. It does not address how scriptures showing God to be jealous and warlike might be part of the problem, or how religious and cultural anthropocentrism are to be dealt with. Encouraging commitment to self-knowledge, it affirms the need to extend love to nonhuman and even extraplanetary beings that cannot yet be perceived.

Thoughtful, conversational, and encouraging, the book's tone is at times poetic, but the work is also repetitious. Short vignettes, some of them humorous, are included to illustrate its discussions and enliven the reading experience. Meditative moments invite contemplation and connection with nature. The end result is a wide-ranging and rapid-fire presentation of a variety of valuable observations.

The book's lack of focus means that insufficient time and space are given to its worthwhile ideas. Its thoughts do not always flow in a smooth or logical line. The book's grammatical choices, especially overused commas and capitalization for emphasis, are often distracting, and misused and missing words render some statements incomplete or unintelligible, particularly in the book's final chapters.

The Small Book of Light is a spiritual self-help book whose message of comfort challenges people to be the change they want to see in the world.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May 23, 2019)

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