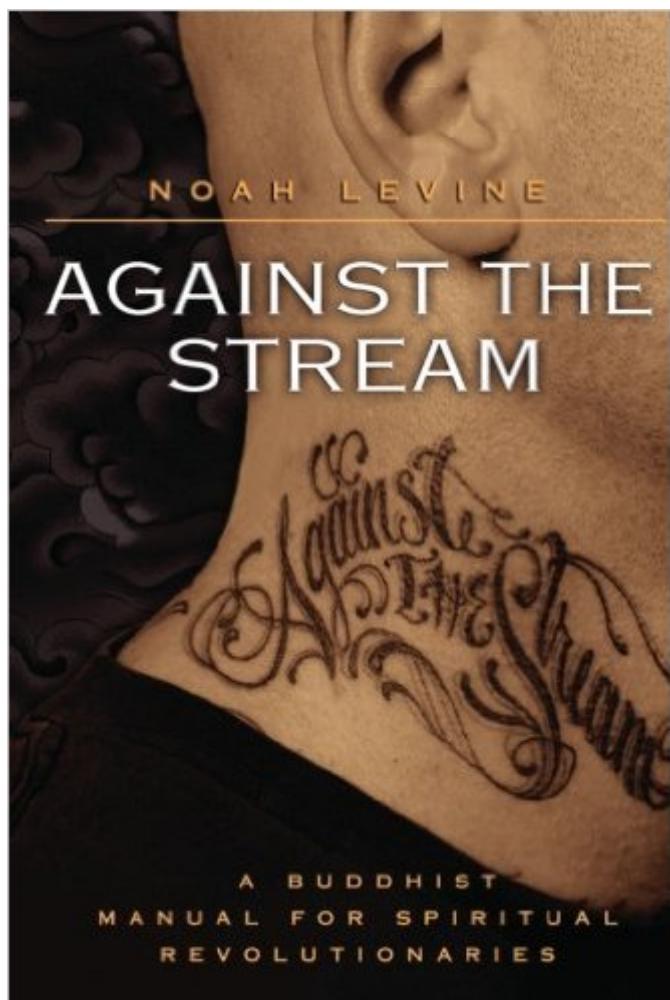


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Against The Stream: A Buddhist Manual For Spiritual Revolutionaries



Synopsis

Buddha was a revolutionary. His practice was subversive; his message, seditious. His enlightened point of view went against the norms of his dayâ "in his words, "against the stream." His teachings changed the world, and now they can change you too. Presenting the basics of Buddhism with personal anecdotes, exercises, and guided meditations, bestselling author Noah Levine guides the reader along a spiritual path that has led to freedom from suffering and has saved lives for 2,500 years. Levine should know. Buddhist meditation saved him from a life of addiction and crime. He went on to counsel and teach countless others the Buddhist way to freedom, and here he shares those life-changing lessons with you. Read and awaken to a new and better life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fairly simple and straightforward explanation of the tenents of Theravadian and Mahayana Buddhism from a "punk rock" perspective. Although perhaps too simple for most non newbies, I really appreciated the moral clarity and seeming earnestness of author Noah Levine's vision and got a lot out of it. A former punk rock junkie/ thug turned spiritual/ meditation teacher, Levine found Buddhism conducive to his anti authoritarian mentality (as we can see from such section headings as "Defy the Lies," "Serve the Truth," "Beware all Teachers," and "Question Everything." Levine takes his title from a quote of the Buddha where he claimed that spiritual path was a revolutionary one, which went "against the stream" of society which is founded on and valorizes hate, bigotry, greed, violence, oppression, and lies. Levine appreciates the counter cultural bend of Buddhism, especially where the Buddha said as he lay dying to, "Be a light unto yourself." Similarly Levine

implores us to not "Believe anything based on tradition or charismatic presentation. Don't even believe the Buddha, and certainly don't believe me," and "Nothing must be accepted on blind faith. If any aspect of these teachings doesn't make sense when thoroughly investigated, reject it." In the end, this text implores us to be revolutionaries in this world by practicing generosity, self compassion, have a willingness to protect others and alleviate oppression, to break our addictions, to attempt to see the world with open eyes and clarity, to face our personal demons and fears, and to explore our minds and emotions so they don't tyrannize us. I found his explanations of the Four Noble Truths and the Eight Fold Path useful.

Noah Levine freely admits he had a rocky background and describes it in detail in his earlier book, Dharma Punx, with a history of drugs, booze, violence and jail time. Yet I found this book remarkably similar to that of another writer who, in contrast, entered a monastery as a young teenager and probably never intentionally did as much harm as stepping on a bug, this later individual being Thich Nhat Hanh and the book being The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy, and Liberation. Mr. Levine does a fine job of presenting basic Buddhist philosophy and practices, using simple, easy to understand language without going into the background or detailed nuance that Nhat Hanh's classic book contains. As a result, Against the Stream: A Buddhist Manual for Spiritual Revolutionaries is a perfect book for a young person looking for a sane way of life without being burdened with a lot of details while Nhat Hanh's book is perfect for an adult who wants a more nuanced approach with additional background. Mr. Levine uses his reputation as a former 'bad guy' in his style, with occasional reference made to his prior life. But in fact, other than a few four-letter words used for emphasis and some street jargon, there's very little of this type of content, maybe enough to draw young people in.

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