

Radical Acceptance Summary



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1-Sentence-Summary: *Radical Acceptance* teaches how you can become more content and happy in your life by applying the principles of meditation and Buddhism.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



All the time we hear people say, “Nobody’s Perfect.” But how often do we really take this to heart? Many of us deal with feelings of inadequacy in life. We are so preoccupied with being perfect that we hold ourselves to impossible standards. There are things about ourselves such as our body or our work ethic that we wish we could change. We dwell on our faults and try to hide them from those around us.

But doesn’t have to be this way.

It’s okay, and perfectly normal to have flaws. That’s what makes us human. Western society has evolved in such a way that makes us feel that we aren’t enough. But using techniques from Buddhism, you can learn how to fight the urge to be hard on yourself and start being more content with who you are, flaws and all.

In *Rational Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha*, psychologist Tara Brach teaches that principles in meditation and Buddhism can help you be more content with who you are and what happens in your life so you can be happier. She shares tons of mental exercises to help you reduce self-criticism and stress. Through doing this you’ll find yourself living a more gentle and tranquil life.

Here 3 great takeaways from this book:

1. Western culture has conditioned us to believe we are inadequate.
2. Radical Acceptance will bring you greater freedom in your life.
3. Suffering will help you discover yourself, don't let self-criticism get in the way of feeling.

Get ready to learn how to have a calmer and happier life!

Lesson 1: We feel we are inadequate because our culture conditions us to believe so.

Have you ever had that dream when you are trying to run from something, and no matter how hard you try, you just can't? It is thought that dreams like this mean that the dreamer feels deep down they are inadequate, as so many of us do.

The reason we tend to feel this way is a result of our culture. And it's no wonder that we do. Most of us go through life with a narrow goal in mind to achieve certain things. We don't enjoy where we're at, but instead, think about where we need to "go" next. We aren't taught that we're enough where we are now.

In the story of Adam and Eve, there is also the message that we are fundamentally flawed and must redeem ourselves. The message of original sin is that we need to constantly strive to redeem ourselves to gain entrance into heaven. This central story of the origin of man in Western culture shapes how many people see themselves.

No wonder we tend to feel inadequate— we're taught from a young age we aren't enough as we are. In contrast, Buddhism emphasizes that humans aren't naturally sinful and flawed, but rather they are naturally loving and wise. They believe you're probably just fine where you are and don't focus so much on where you need to be.

Lesson 2: Radical Acceptance is the way to set yourself free.

Brach shares the story of Mohini the tiger to illustrate how some of us become trapped in our lives. Mohini was a tiger that was kept in a small cage for years. After years, she was given a large enclosure with a pond and acres of space to roam around in. The zookeepers thought she would love her new home. But instead, she paced the same area every day that was the same size as the small cage she had been in before, never roaming the new area. Even though she was freed from the small cage, her mind was what kept her trapped in old patterns.

Similarly, we do this to ourselves. But instead of a cage, it's our self-judgment and feelings of inadequacy that trap us in old patterns. It might tell us we're not good enough, and hold us back from things we want to do. The key to freedom is accepting everything about us, inside

and out. We should stop resisting and start considering every thought, feeling, and sensation with an open heart.

This is radical acceptance. Even those unwelcome feelings that everyone has sometimes, such as disliking someone, we shouldn't give ourselves self-criticism, but rather accept them and move on. **Radical acceptance will quiet the inner negative voice that holds you back. And your newfound self-acceptance will help you live a life of greater freedom.**

Lesson 3: Don't let judgments about yourself get in the way of feeling suffering because it will help you discover your true self.

Sometimes we can be really hard on ourselves. We blame ourselves for many things in our life, even things that are out of our control. The reason we beat ourselves up, Brach says, is a defense mechanism. It works by covering up feelings like jealousy, fear, or vulnerability with unnecessary self-judgment.

By pushing the feelings away we are protecting ourselves from what other undesirable feelings they might lead to, such as neediness. But rejecting feelings of suffering like this makes things worse. **The only way we can begin to heal where we are hurting is through allowing ourselves to fully experience suffering, instead of judging it or pushing it away. When we receive these emotions and have compassion for or suffering we can find our innermost self.**

The approach that Buddhism offers on suffering is much more positive than what we tend to practice in Western society today. Buddhists believe that feeling suffering is the gateway to gaining compassion. They believe being compassionate is the way we can express the deepest parts of ourselves. So if you want to grow tender compassion, start accepting your suffering and letting yourself heal. Self-compassion is the only true way to heal.

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Radical Acceptance Review

I found *Radical Acceptance* very practical, hopeful, and beautifully simple. True healing and moving past things in a healthy way is as easy as feeling the emotions and accepting them. It's refreshing and encouraging to hear we are perfectly fine, flaws and all. Learning how to be more self-compassionate is important for everyone, but I would recommend this book particularly for perfectionists.

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Who would I recommend the Radical Acceptance summary to?

The 23-year-old college student who is constantly stressed out and wants to find calm, the 42-year-old interested in Buddhism and meditation, anyone who struggles with beating themselves up.