

Inner Engineering Summary

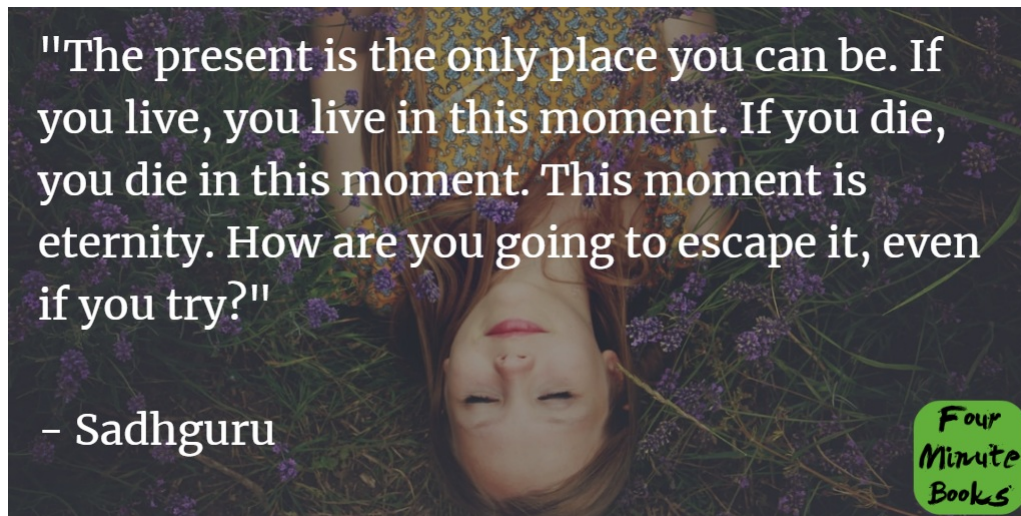


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1-Sentence-Summary: *[Inner Engineering](#) is an invitation to create a life of happiness by exploring your internal landscape of emotions, thoughts, and feelings, and learning to align it with the rest of the Universe.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



The western world came to treat yoga as a set of exercises that are just another [workout for our bodies](#). But in the original yogic tradition, the *asanas* that many people practice to improve their physical stamina are only one of the eight branches of a holistic system of knowledge.

In [Inner Engineering: A Yogi's Guide to Joy](#) yogic guru Sadhguru introduces you to the rest of this system. He does so in order to shine a light on the path of those who are ready to grow as spiritual beings. The first step on that path should be redirecting one's focus from the *external* events to the realm of the *inner* experience.

Sadhguru says that the term *guru* originally means “dispeller of darkness,” somebody who is supposed to “throw light on the very nature of your existence.” He doesn't see his role as imposing specific beliefs on the reader. He'd rather encourage you to let your own intimate experience, that you can only access from within, guide you.

Here are 3 lessons I took away from his teachings:

1. The fixation on the outer world can never lead to happiness.
2. Responsibility is intrinsically connected to freedom.
3. Your intellect doesn't necessarily help you to be happy.

Now let's take a closer look at what Sadhguru has to teach us!

Lesson 1: Happiness is realized within, rather than achieved on the outside.

It is a common practice to try to [enhance our happiness](#) or life satisfaction by changing our circumstances. Most people consider it so normal that they struggle to understand at first, what could possibly be wrong with this approach.

If you don't like your job, change it. Tired of being single? Get on Tinder. If you are not happy with the way you look, sign up for a gym class or get yourself a new dress.

This is the kind of advice most of us hear all our lives. As a result, we came to believe that we can [attain happiness only after we succeed](#) at work, find the perfect partner or look like the model from a magazine cover.

Sadhguru explains that this approach is plain insanity. **He argues that the fixation on the outside world is precisely what prevents us from experiencing fulfillment.** Simultaneously, he shows that all perceptions of the external objects and events are actually happening *within* us. And within is precisely where we should begin our search for happiness.

Yogic wisdom, he says, can help you generate the exact internal states that you are looking for – regardless of what goes on on the outside. But to master that, you need to get acquainted with some important concepts first.

Lesson 2: Freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility.

A big chunk of your inner work is connected to assuming personal responsibility for your life experience. But prepare to have your concept of responsibility challenged! Sadhguru's teachings in this respect may surprise you.

His notion that with more responsibility comes more freedom is something most of us are not used to. Usually, when we think of a responsible person, we imagine someone who *sacrifices* some of their freedom for the sake of their family, professional career or some other commitment. According to Sadhguru, this is a misguided understanding of responsibility.

Consider the word itself. *Response-ability* means being [capable of responding to life circumstances](#) in a conscious way instead of reacting based on unconscious impulses. This means that, as you increase your self-awareness, your ability to respond increases as well. You realize that there are always choices available and you are *free* to pick the best one of them.

For example, when a family member triggers anger in you, there are several ways in which you could respond. The unconscious impulse would probably be to yell at them – but as your response-ability grows, you start seeing other options. For example, you could also ignore their annoying behavior, respond with kind words, or change the topic of a conversation.

Now that sounds a bit more like freedom, doesn't it?

Lesson 3: Too much thinking will stand in your way to happiness.

Homo sapiens usually take pride in their intellect. After all, it is largely thanks to our ability to think logically, analyze and synthesize that we managed to build the global civilization in its current shape.

However, the human mind also has serious limitations that can stand in the way of experiencing life at its fullest. To illustrate how [people often become blinded by and lost in their thinking](#), Sadhguru recounts an ancient Greek anecdote:

One day, Aristotle strolled along the beach, lost in thoughts about the nature of life and the Universe. Suddenly, he stumbled upon a man digging a hole in the sand with a small spoon. Feeling curious, he asked what he was doing.

As it happened, this man was another great philosopher – Heraclitus. ‘I am digging up a hole in which to pour the ocean’ he replied. Aristotle chuckled and asked: ‘How do you imagine fitting all the water in? Surely, that’s impossible!’

Heraclitus raised his eyebrows to these words. ‘You make fun of me, but can you see yourself? How do you imagine fitting all that truth about the Universe into your brain – which is, after all, nothing more than a small hole?’

With this story, Sadhguru reminds you to stay humble. You shouldn’t ever hope to possess complete knowledge of the Universe, for as a human, you are insignificant when compared to the vastness of it. However, this shouldn’t stop you from fully experiencing life just as it unfolds in front of your eyes.

For that, you don’t need intellect all that much. Instead, you should focus on tuning into your internal experience and recognize that, at some level, you are one with the rest of life.

Inner Engineering Review

[Inner Engineering](#) is a helpful book, regardless of whether you have just started your spiritual search or have some experience in that realm already. Sadhguru introduces inner-growth concepts in a straightforward and refreshing way. He also deconstructs the most popular self-help notions, like “be in the moment” or “think positive,” and points to how such superficial slogans can also put us at a disadvantage.

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Who would I recommend the Inner Engineering summary to?

The 27-year-old yoga enthusiast who wants to get to know the ancient tradition beyond just *asanas*, the 35-year-old stay-at-home [mom](#) who wants to find more joy in her mundane, everyday activities, and anyone who is passionate about intentional personal growth.