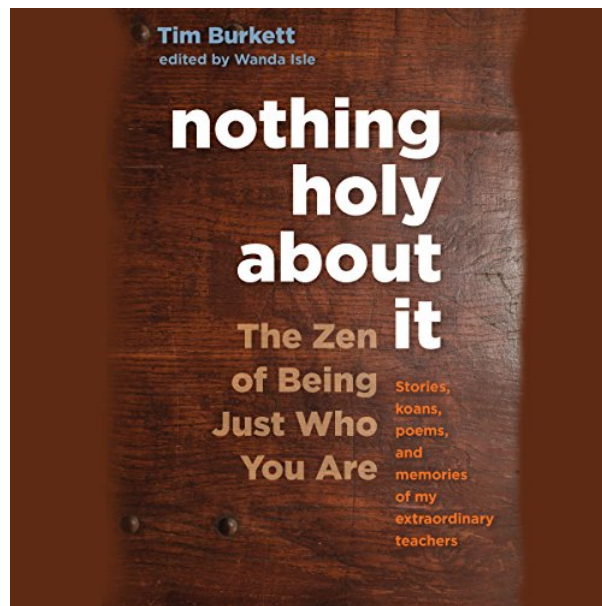
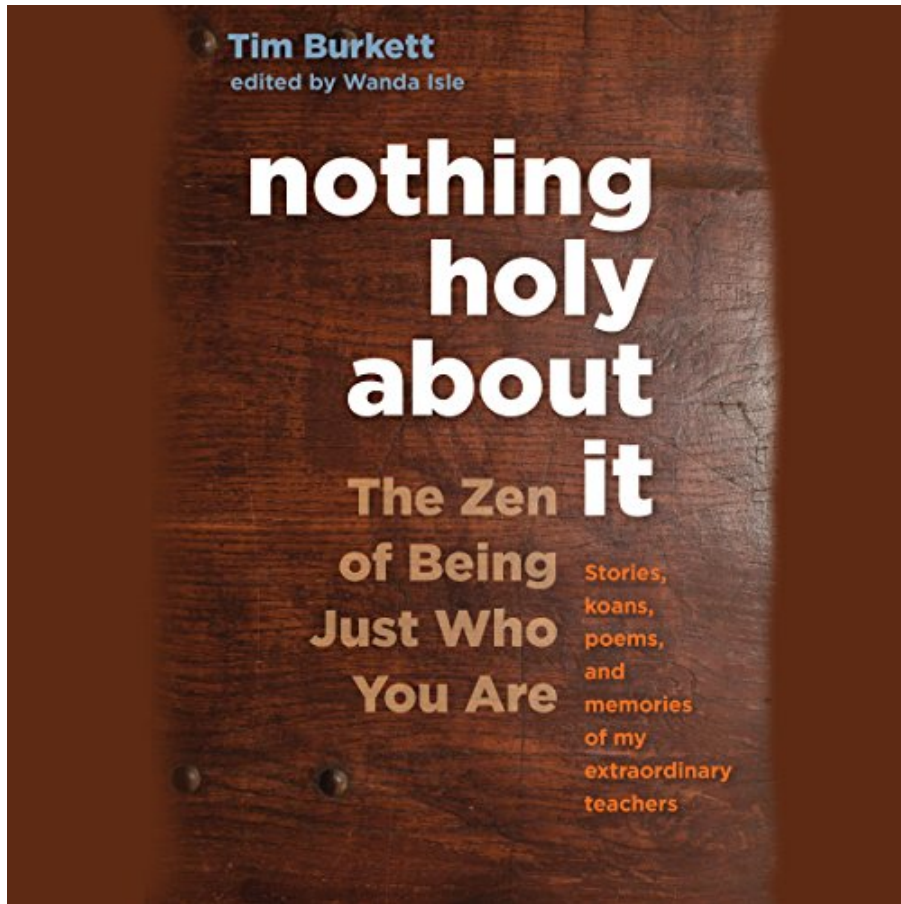


NOTHING HOLY ABOUT IT: THE ZEN OF BEING JUST WHO YOU ARE BY TIM BURKETT



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According to legend, when the founder of Zen Buddhism was asked about the main principle of his holy teaching, he replied that there was "nothing holy about it!" Now, a millennium and a half later, Tim Burkett reveals how and why the wisdom of nonholiness is the key to a joyful heart. You don't need to go looking for something sacred - the happiness you seek is right where you are.

In this book a concise summary of Zen teachings unfolds within the ordinary comedies and tragedies of everyday life, beginning with the delightful nonholiness Burkett experienced in the presence of his original teacher, Shunryu Suzuki.

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- Original language: English
- Running time: 509 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Like Sharing a Cup of Tea with Shunryu Suzuki

By Bubba's Dad

For anyone who wants to know what Shunryu Suzuki was really like, Tim Burkett's "Nothing Holy About It" is a great place to start. It is the best book since David Chadwick's "Crooked Cucumber" to paint such an intimate portrait of America's most influential Zen teacher. Tim Burkett was there with Suzuki Roshi for the Palo Alto talks that led to "Zen Mind, Beginners Mind". In fact, as a young Stanford student, Burkett helped organize the study group that made those seminal talks possible. He was also there when Suzuki founded Tassajara and at the legendary "Zenefit" where Suzuki got up on stage to thank Janis Joplin for her for amazing performance. Burkett and editor Wanda Isle bring all of these great moments in American Zen to life - and many, much more personal moments as well. It's a delight to watch as Tim's beloved Zen master helps him make sense of his college-age existentialist struggles over a cup of hot tea; and then join them at a roadside ice cream shop as Tim introduces a wide-eyed Suzuki Roshi to his very first chocolate sundae. The book would be well worth the price if all it did was bring the reader up close and personal with Suzuki Roshi. But it does so much more. "Nothing Holy" also provides a simple, yet profound, guide to Tim's own teachings. As the Guiding Teacher at Minnesota Zen Center, Tim applies the principles he learned from Suzuki and the other great teacher in his life, Dainin Katagari, as well as his own insights gained as a psychologist and social worker. His book captures those teachings in a practical, step by step approach to Zen that is kind, compassionate and grounded in the belief that true Zen is about gently and fully embracing the life you have right in front of you. The author maintains throughout that there is "nothing holy" about the Zen he learned from Suzuki Roshi. While it may not be holy, there is certainly something very valuable,

satisfying, and enjoyable about it. The same can be said for Mr Burkett's wonderful guide to the Zen of being just who you are.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A beautiful book!

By Leni de Mik

The subtitle of "Nothing Holy About It, "Being Just Who You Are" could be a useful description of Tim Burkett's own life. Coming of age at Stanford

University in the thick of the hippy era, the book tells how Tim left his family script, and took another path. Along the path he met the now famous Zen Roshi, Shunryu Suzuki, recently arrived from Japan.. The book tells stories of Tim's close encounters with Suzuki who became his teacher. Later , as a student of another Japanese Zen master, Katagiri Roshi Tim was ordained as one of the first American Zen priests .

This is a story filled with insights into the hearts and minds of two founding Japanese teachers of Zen in America who were Tim's teachers. It is also "Tim's Story" , the story of a young American man who had an inner call, who persisted on his own "road not often taken" , who became CEO of a large mental health charity that has met the needs of thousands, and who is currently the guiding teacher of the first Zen meditation center in Minneapolis.

Wanda Isle, Zen Priest and editor, writes with elegant simplicity. "Nothing Holy About It" is direct and honest. The stories, like parables, feel fresh and new. They touch something deeply reverential and human; perhaps for lack of better words, they touch the "sacred". I used the book as "bed time reflection"; the deep truths of the stories left me thoughtful, encouraged, peaceful. I was reminded of what I often forget but do well to remember and live by. The prose is exquisite, it sweeps the reader along: diamond clear, lyrical, inspired, it evokes inner stillness.

While about Zen Buddhist teachers and teachings I experienced the book as a universal story: the story of spiritual call, and of seekers who hear and follow that call and persist in walking the path. I loved the book, loved the stories, loved the lyricism of the prose.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Very Satisfying

By david lieberman

First a disclosure: I'm a friend of the author's. But I will give you an honest report, as is appropriate for a book about a way of sincerity. This is a book about Tim Burkett's life on the path of Zen Buddhism as it illuminates the path for others to learn from. The book mixes copious and wonderful stories from his experiences with his famous teacher, Suzuki Roshi, from Tim's own life as a Zen student and teacher, and from the Buddhist and allied traditions to create a well-woven narrative that is simultaneously teaching, autobiography, and remembrance of another.

I'm not a Zen adherent so there are aspects of the book that I didn't resonate with. But nonetheless I felt myself elated to be reading it. Mainly it was because as I read the first few chapters I felt like I was reading a book unlike any I had read before. In fact, it wasn't that the book was so unique—in it's themes, say—but that reading it didn't feel like reading a book at all. It felt like a direct encounter with a person. The book is the testament of someone who has digested a way of life so thoroughly that there feels like little Zen teaching in it that isn't carried in Tim's own voice and personality. You sense—though it's embarrassing to even say it outright—an achievement of a life. And it was immensely refreshing and heartening to bear witness to it.

It's also an achievement of an editor. The three themes are woven beautifully together so that the multiple purposes of the book are in harmony with each other pretty near completely.

These are the pleasures that readers will derive. In addition, it is a very penetrating presentation of the Zen way, particularly in a contemporary American context. I think both Zen students and those unfamiliar with

Zen will learn a great deal from this book.

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