

The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom: The Spiritual Experiments of My Generation

Wes Nisker

Anne Lamott, Contributor

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Wes Nisker's memoir *The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom* covers his search for spiritual meaning during a period of great economic, technological, and social change.

Born during World War II and brought up as the only Jewish boy in a small Nebraska town, Nisker was raised to believe that he could achieve anything that he wanted to. As he grew, he determined that what he wanted was fulfillment and enlightenment, but finding these proved much harder than following in his father's footsteps. And even as Nisker searched for meaning, the cultural landscape around him was evolving. Through beatniks, hippies, and global travel, Eastern thought came to prominence in the West; the New Age movement and environmental spirituality rose in prominence, too. Nisker was a part of it all.

Delivering interesting insights on growing up in the second half of the twentieth century, Nisker reminisces about interviewing the Dalai Lama and John Lennon, attending the Monterey Pop Festival, and traveling around the ashrams of Bombay. In the course of these recollections, he examines topics like consumerism, war, and the destruction of the environment. He also explores Eastern philosophical and religious thought, meditation, the intersection of science and spirituality, and the interconnectivity of human beings and the planet. He's a humorous guide who states that his first guru was *Mad's* Alfred E. Neuman and who says that the only benefit he realized from taking spirulina was getting in touch with his inner fish. Thus, though it covers complex topics, the book is accessible and enjoyable throughout.

The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom is an entertaining memoir that might just illuminate a path to a more enlightened future.

CATHERINE THURESON (May / June 2023)

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