



## Time for Awakening

**Constance Casey**

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*Time for Awakening is a contemplative memoir that sheds light on the personal and practical applications of Buddhist meditation.*

In *Time for Awakening*, Buddhist meditation teacher Constance Casey outlines her long and winding road toward inner peace and mindfulness over multiple decades of recovery and practice.

As a married Midwestern mother of two teenage boys, Casey was mired in the introspective slog of her dawning middle age and peripheral family milestones. She and her husband had taken their home down to the studs and embarked on a frugal, drawn-out renovation process that affected their interpersonal chemistry, meager finances, and patience. And Casey began to question and expand upon the twelve-step recovery work that dominated her personal life.

Casey's interest was piqued by a road sign pointing to the Dharma Field Zen Center in Minnesota, signaling the opening of her interest in Buddhist meditation practice. Following her instincts and feelings of deep yearning, she identified the chasms in her relationships with her past and her present. Soon, she toggled between her responsibilities as a do-it-yourself contractor, work-from-home web developer, mother and wife, and burgeoning yogi. After robust leaps of faith and distance, she ended up at the Malaysia Buddhist Meditation Centre, seeking inner tranquility and an end to her material hangups.

Earthy and meditative, the prose reflects well the precepts of strict Buddhist retreat customs—and sometimes, of Casey's insubordination to them. The religious traditions she explored are covered in an approachable manner that reflects her own budding awareness and arduous curiosity. There are also expansive descriptions of her visions as she went deeper into her meditation practices. During one silent meditation, Casey outlined a blurring of corporeal barriers, or an out-of-body experience, where "time was a distant concept":

*An inner brightness expanded and cascaded across the universe, causing cataclysmic changes in the cosmos... . My head transformed into a massive elephant's head, complete with a thick trunk running down the front of my torso. It felt so real, I wanted to reach out and touch it to check.*

In addition to its spiritual focus, the book devotes considerable space to dissecting Casey's home life, in terms of both her marriage and her motherhood. Stricter practice created space for Casey to come to terms with her marriage, where she deduced that her happiness was not dependent entirely on her husband. And her curiosity about herself and her place in the world around her brought her halfway around the world and back, whether in or out of body. As a result of her found clarity, *Time for Awakening* achieves a contemplative authority that sheds light on the personal and practical applications of Buddhist meditation.

The spiritual memoir *Time for Awakening* is about how the rigorous teachings of Buddhism and its multipronged tenets provided hope and guidance for a seeking woman.

RYAN PRADO (January 22, 2025)

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