

Your Way There (To Being Fully Alive): Concepts and Tools for Mindful Transformation

Gretta Keene

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(237pp)

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Leading by example, Your Way There (To Being Fully Alive) is an insightful self-help text with advice on dealing with a plethora of relationship conflicts.

Gretta Keene's self-help book *Your Way There (To Being Fully Alive)* gives advice for increasing one's relational awareness.

Comparing life's challenges to the turbulent waters of a treacherous lake, this book suggests that if one develops the correct awareness of their full spectrum of emotions (or, their internal cycles, shaped by recurring thoughts, themes, and life experiences), they can change their own patterns. Through a series of reflections on client experiences, Keene sheds light on such internalized emotional cycles. Her book also suggests that, sans judgement from loved ones and negative internalized beliefs, internal and external curiosity develop, leading to more compassionate relationships.

The stories inspired by Keene's clients and her personal life take up the bulk of the text. Most focus on feminine perspectives in heterosexual marriages. In one, a husband buys his wife a vacuum for her birthday on the advice of his traditionalist mother; his wife interprets this as reflective of his desire that she be like his mother, regardless of her own wants. As the husband is encouraged toward understanding his wife's point of view, resolution, mutual awareness, and compassion take hold. Here and elsewhere, persistent family roles, internalized shame, and disagreements because of different life views are focal, and corresponding outward suggestions are made for the audience.

Throughout, the book outlines invaluable skills with consistency. However, its stories are quite similar in nature; their messages repeat. Further, some of the book's concepts are underaddressed, and some prior knowledge is presumed, as with its coverage of the four responses to danger, which are referenced several times without an examination of these individual reactions in depth. A concept review section comes at the end of the book; it contains questions and longer explanations.

Still, this is a book that represents much psychotherapeutic wisdom, and whose whimsical diagrams and comic panels complement its text. They help to illustrate concepts like power dynamics in relationships, like two partners communicating on equal grounds as opposed to assuming the unequal roles of a judging parent and defiant child. Some of the illustrations are personalized: Keene and her husband are depicted on a kayak in one, paddling through the dips and swells of a stormy lake to symbolize the roughness of relationships.

Your Way There (To Being Fully Alive) is a self-help book for couples looking to gain awareness and compassion about each other's internalized emotional cycles.

ALI ORTIZ (January 10, 2023)

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