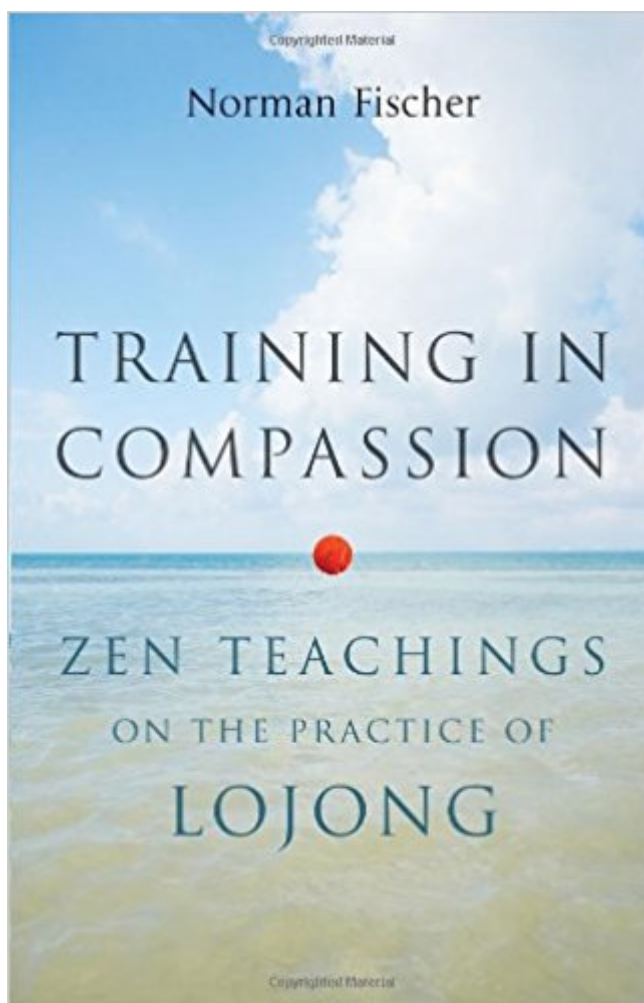


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Training In Compassion: Zen Teachings On The Practice Of Lojong



Synopsis

Lojong is the Tibetan Buddhist practice that involves working with short phrases (called "slogans") as a way of generating bodhichitta, the heart and mind of enlightened compassion. Though the practice is more than a millennium old, it has become popular in the West only in the last twenty years or so "and it has become very popular indeed, because it's a practice that one can fit very well into an ordinary life, and because it works. Through the influence of Pema Chödrön, who was one of the first American Buddhist teachers to teach it extensively, the practice has moved out of its Buddhist context to affect the lives of non-Buddhists too. It's in this spirit that Norman Fischer offers his commentary on the lojong slogans. He applies Zen wisdom to them, showing how well they fit in that related tradition, but he also sets the slogans in the context of resonant practices throughout the spiritual traditions. He shows lojong to be a wonderful method for everyone, including those who aren't otherwise interested in Buddhism, who don't have the time or inclination to meditate, or who'd just like to morph into the kind of person who's focused rather than scattered, generous rather than stingy, and kind rather than thoughtless.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Zen Master Norman Fischer teaches a fascinatingly powerful Tibetan system of mind training with his characteristic Zen-like simplicity and artful clarity. Norman shows once again why he is one of the most admired Zen teachers in America.” —Chade-Meng Tan, Google’s Jolly Good Fellow, author of *Search Inside Yourself: The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness*

(and World Peace) — Norman Fischer brings a fresh perspective to the profound Tibetan Buddhist manual of lojong, or mental training. With down-to-earth clarity, he applies its 59 pithy practices to the challenges of modern life. With repetition, these practices gradually change one from the inside out. His writing is direct, penetrating, and powerful, with the authenticity and impact that comes from a great teacher, as he shows readers how to develop resilience and compassion, strength with heart.

— Rick Hanson, PhD, author of *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom*

— Norman Fischer has illuminated Atisha's lojong slogans with the depth of his own Zen koan practice, infused with his savvy, no-nonsense heart. The result is stunning — a fresh slant on Tibetan compassion teachings, making them universal and now.

— Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown, Naropa University, author of *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*

Norman Fischer is Senior Dharma Teacher at San Francisco Zen Center, where he was abbot from 1995 to 2000, and he is currently the director of the Everyday Zen Foundation, which is dedicated to bringing the Zen perspective to the world outside Zen, including to Christian and Jewish religious settings. He is a highly regarded poet and translator, and his numerous books include *Opening to You: Zen-Inspired Translations of the Psalms*, *Taking Our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up*, and *Sailing Home: Using Homer's Odyssey to Navigate Life's Perils and Pitfalls*.

I've looked into the lojong training technique to train one's mind and ultimately to be more compassionate. I was first exposed to this method through reading Pema Chondron and her explanation of the seven-point mind training technique. I have also perused B. Alan Wallace's book on the subject with a decided Tibetan approach. I am sorry to say that I had not come across Norman Fischer until getting this jewel of a book. Fischer is an excellent and brilliant writer and long-practitioner of this technique. He brings to it his own special slant of Zen and infuses it with personal experiences he's had with implementing and living with this lifelong commitment to this training. He has aroused in me my old fascination with Zen. I did not understand it or its approach until Fischer opened Zen's door for me. I am diving into Zen now, having traversed the many roads that Buddhist thought and practice brought forth, including the pre-Buddhist The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. I think my attraction to this is partially due to the fact that I was brought up in Japan and subconsciously absorbed some of the Zeitgeist of this world view. Read Fischer and have your eyes opened and your heart warmed.

First off, I finished the entire book. And the author gives some very useful points of view in order to help us find compassion toward ppl. Most of the book didn't help me but there is something that spoke out to me and I'm very grateful to have read it. In that sense, this book has definitely helped me throughout my daily practice of being more compassion toward ppl.

One of the clearest and most accessible writings on this topic - highly recommended

The author sees life clearly. And I am grateful for this book, because after reading, I find that I can see life clearly too, if only for a short time. I will keep reading it in the hopes that such perspective will soon become second nature.

This is probably the most profound spiritual book I have read in quite awhile. I find that I keep it close by and read from it daily. It's not a fast read. It's something to contemplate and use on a daily basis. It truly is a mind training guide. It lays an amazing foundation to begin the study of the 59 slogans with a section on the preliminaries and setting your resolve to begin. I have been so deeply entrenched to the preparation and first few of the slogans, that I'm happy to stay right where I am. It is a book that truly calls to me and helps renew my spirit on a daily basis.

I had read several previous commentaries on the lojong slogans (Atisha, Trungpa, Chodron, Wallace), and doubted that much could be added. It turns out I was wrong about that! Norman Fischer's take is refreshing. Highly recommended for readers who are well-acquainted with the teachings, and those just beginning.

I found this book really helpful. I have worked with some of the other books available about the Lojong practice, and I found this one to be very accessible. Many of the slogans are given in their traditional translations but the author has modified a few of them in ways that make them easier to recall in day to day activities. The explanations and examples for each of the various slogans are very clear and the author gives excellent advice for working with the slogans. He advises learning each slogan and working with it for a while but the text was so interesting and enjoyable that I could not resist reading through the entire book. I plan to keep working with the slogans and returning to this book for its wonderful guidance and inspiration.

Norman Fischer is one of my favorite teachers. He brings the wisdom of Zen Buddhism within the

reach of those of us who are less scholarly inclined as well as appealing to those who are.

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