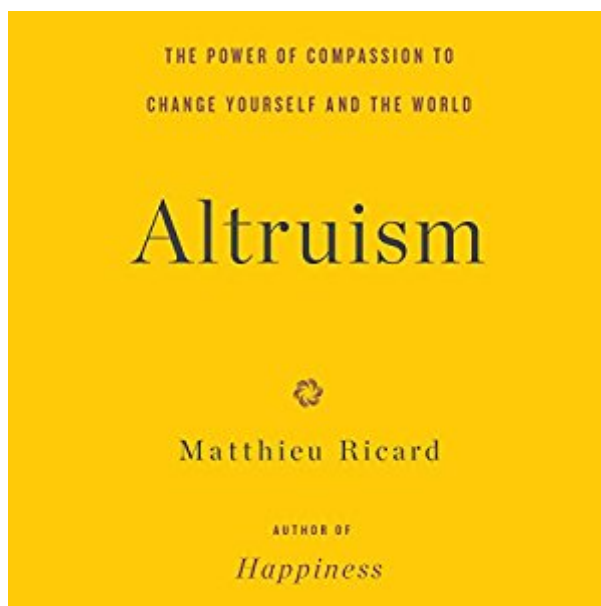


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Altruism: The Power Of Compassion To Change Yourself And The World



Synopsis

The author of the international best seller *Happiness* makes a passionate case for altruism - and why we need it now more than ever. In *Happiness*, Matthieu Ricard demonstrated that true happiness is not tied to fleeting moments or sensations, but is an enduring state of soul rooted in mindfulness and compassion for others. Now he turns his lens from the personal to the global, with a rousing argument that altruism - genuine concern for the well-being of others - could be the saving grace of the 21st century. It is, he believes, the vital thread that can answer the main challenges of our time: the economy in the short term, life satisfaction in the mid-term, and environment in the long term. Ricard's message has been taken up by major economists and thinkers, including Dennis Snower, Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, and George Soros. Matthieu Ricard makes a robust and passionate case for cultivating altruistic love and compassion as the best means for simultaneously benefitting ourselves and our society. It's a fresh outlook on an ardent struggle - and one that just might make the world a better place.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A highly readable and yet profound book on altruism, compassion and empathy by a noted biologist Tibetan monk, commonly referred to the "happiest man" on earth. The book is lucidly written with poignant warnings against our individualistic, and often narcissistic, tendencies in favor of more egalitarian and altruistic society and behavior. Highly recommended.

The basic thesis of this comprehensive book is that altruism is a vital idea that can help us to recognize and to respond to the major challenges of our time. It is very well-documented and it took the author five years to prepare this absorbing work. Matthieu Ricard is a celebrated Buddhist monk and scientist who received a PhD in cellular genetics at the Institut Pasteur in Paris. He left his home in France, 35 years ago and lives in Nepal, where he has been working in various humanitarian projects in the Himalayas. He has been an active participant in the study of the effects of meditation on the brain and is author of various best-selling books, including "Happiness," and "Why Meditate?" From the first page, Ricard introduces the reader to the various forms of altruism and portrays "true love" as a supreme form of compassion. He recognizes that individualism, greediness, egocentrism, and narcissism are human forces that oppose altruism, and brings up the famous Groucho Marx quip, "why should I care about future generations? What have they ever done for me?" Nevertheless, through the entire book, he conveys an astonishing and varied amount of information, ranging from historical analyses, comparative biology, the role of the hormone oxytocin, the functioning of "mirror neurons" and the effects of vagal tone on the parasympathetic nervous system, to explain that humans are social animals that have a natural tendency to cooperate; such a view is opposite to the well-known concept that humans are by nature competitive, selfish and behave like wolves. The book gives a particular emphasis to two central themes, the demonstration that altruism exists, and how to cultivate it. The book arrives at a most propitious moment when the United Nations is holding negotiations to adopt a new strategy for the next 15 years, called "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs). It is also the time when many religious groups are intensifying their teachings about tolerance and cooperation to deal with the modern world, and particularly the affirmation that we have the moral obligation to act, as stated in the recent papal encyclical about climate change. Ricard expands the notion of altruism to deal with its social dimension and devotes many pages to explain the concepts of interdependence and interconnectedness, which are at the core of the yoga tradition. Based on solid scientific research, he brings the well-known concept of "planetary boundaries" to explain the magnitude of the current planetary challenges. The fifth part of the book is devoted to discuss the basis of a future altruistic society. Altruism is a dense encyclopaedic and documented work that demands deep study and reflection. It has 1,769 references, printed in the last 131 pages as end-notes. It will remain for many years a major reference on the subject. We hope that in a new edition the publishers will include an alphabetical index of authors and subjects as this scholarly work will be an indispensable source of information.

His major concluding remarks are a clear message: "We must dare to embrace altruism. Dare to say that real altruism exists, that it can be cultivated and that the evolution of cultures can favour its expansion. Dare to teach it in schools. .. Dare to proclaim that altruism is not a luxury, but a necessity."

Very long book but I'm going through the book slowly to grasp the whole idea. I like it so far.

Matthieu Ricard's written works and speeches are fantastic to see what is really important and what is not in life. Along with Eckhart Tolle I highly recommend Ricard's works to anyone who wants to witness the wisdom of a Buddha takes the form of words.

Important book for those who care about compassion and empathy, and helping others.

A comprehensive distillation of scientific and other evidence. Altruism and Cooperation is the path to solving personal problems and the wicked problems we face in the world today. This book does not call upon God, or Religion to justify good behavior, it is all about evidence. Dr. Mike

excellent copy

Great book!

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