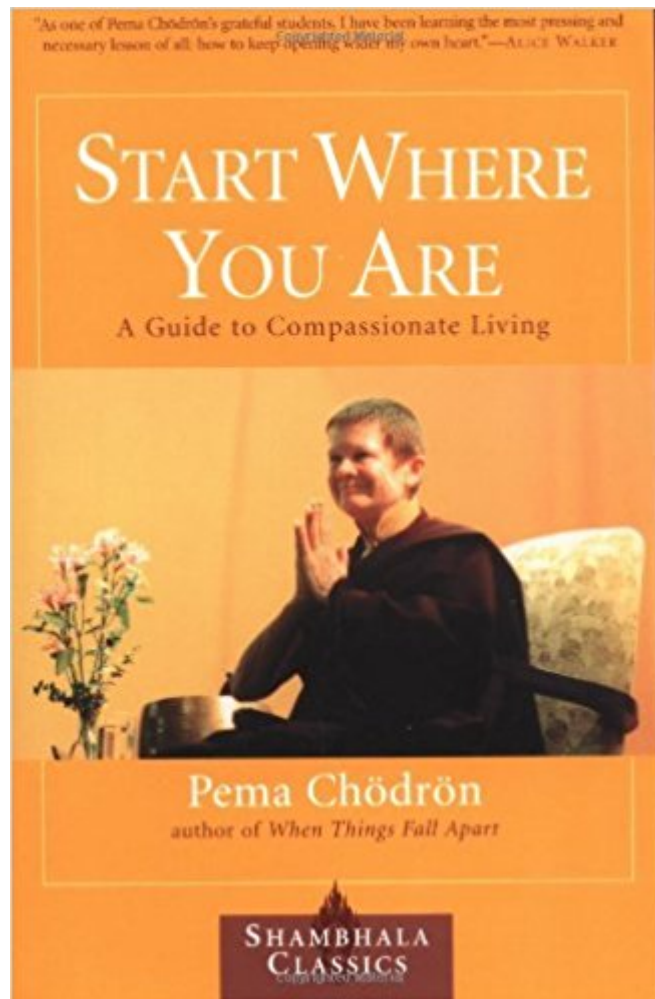


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# Start Where You Are: A Guide To Compassionate Living (Shambhala Classics)



## Synopsis

*Start Where You Are* is an indispensable handbook for cultivating fearlessness and awakening a compassionate heart. With insight and humor, Pema Chödrön presents down-to-earth guidance on how we can "start where we are" — embracing rather than denying the painful aspects of our lives. Pema Chödrön frames her teachings on compassion around fifty-nine traditional Tibetan Buddhist maxims, or slogans, such as: "Always apply only a joyful state of mind," "Don't seek others' pain as the limbs of your own happiness," and "Always meditate on whatever provokes resentment." Working with these slogans and through the practice of meditation, *Start Where You Are* shows how we can all develop the courage to work with our inner pain and discover joy, well-being, and confidence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I absolutely loved this book. I read it for a class about wisdom and of the 10 books we had to read I'm only keeping three; this is one. I didn't know anything about Buddhism before reading this and I don't feel that I need to be a Buddhist in order to benefit from Pema's insights. Her advice for living (taken right from lojong slogans from Buddhist traditions) can be taken on many different levels. I don't feel that you need to go deep into the practice in order to benefit from any of this books teachings. You take from it what you need to. I'm adding my voice to the many here who have praised her, Pema Chodron has written a wonderful, helpful book. If you're in pain emotionally I

highly recommend it. If you just want to get some peace in your life I highly recommend it. Everyone needs help coping with living, even if it's just a little. Pema has given us a guide to one way of coping.

I highly recommend *Start Where You Are* for anyone who is serious about meditation practice and wants an earthy, no frills, no pretensions guide to compassionate living. Pema Chodron stresses that in order to act with compassion toward others, one must start with themselves, opening up that can of worms full of all the messy stuff that we would all rather not fess up to. At a very difficult time in my life, I just kept starting at the beginning every time I finished reading it. I felt as if I knew Pema Chodron personally by reading her books. And having read everything of Chogyam Trungpa's that I could find prior, I had a strong grasp of the foundation from which she learned, but that is certainly not a prerequisite to benefiting from her teachings. I would also strongly recommend her earlier book: *The Wisdom of No Escape*.

I'm not a Buddhist and I'm allergic to meditation, but I work in a bookstore. Seeing lots of Pema Chodron books (and a lot of different kinds of people buying them), I decided to take a peek one day. I wound up buying this book, reading a chapter or two that night. I slept more peacefully than I had in years. Also, unlike a lot of other books on Eastern religion that I've read, she uses really western metaphors, which makes the book very accessible. Besides, how could you NOT like a book that contains the line: "One of my favorite dharma teachers is Dr. Seuss; he captures the human condition so beautifully." So, if you'd like to know what Star-Belly Sneetches have to do with compassionate living with an open heart, this is definitely the book for you.

My girlfriend bought me this book over the holidays, and I blew it off but finally had a chance read it from start to finish in a matter of 2 days. Pema Chodron wrote this book with clarity for everyone to understand her beliefs. I've read numerous other books pertaining to Buddhism and this one is by the far the easiest one to understand and comprehend. This book is based around the idea of being compassionate to yourself which in turn will penetrate others around you to develop some level of compassion. Chodron does an excellent job of motivating oneself to clear their mind and avoid unnecessary feelings of anger, aggression, pleasure, etc. Not only does Chodron explain the necessary steps to clear your mind, but she compliments this explanation with examples from her personal experience with students and teachers. The verbiage outlined in this book is very easy to comprehend versus other Buddhist books I picked up and read. I've noticed in the past I've had to

re-read certain passages quite a few times to fully understand it's meaning, but not with this book. This book motivates me to "start" working on myself, and in doing so it will encourage me to open my eyes to everyone and everything in this world.

Pema Chodron is a wonderful teacher, who shares time honored techniques of breathing in suffering and anger and breathing out compassion and love in a way that is so guileless and disarming that it is almost guaranteed to touch your heart. This book works on many levels... I am not a 'serious practitioner,' by any means, but someone who goes to work every day and has to deal with many frustrations and stresses, but this book offers practical methods that help you deal with just these impediments in your life, so that you can be happier, and give more happiness to others. I also sense that for someone who is more dedicated to making their life centered on spiritual practice, this book is a foundation for such a disciplined path as well.

This book presents Buddhist ideas and practice based around the idea that your current situation, however good or bad, is the perfect starting point for your journey toward spiritual wellness. I found the book to be very compelling. I've read it numerous times, and each time it has an impact on me. Pema Chodron has a very down-to-earth, casual and genuine writing style that I think a lot of people would respond well to. I highly recommend this book. Especially to those who constantly feel they are 'waiting' for woes and challenges to pass before tackling inner obstacles.

This book is bound to become a classic! One of the Buddhist practices, called The Seven Points of Training the Mind, is very complex and is comprised of over 50 "slogans" or "proverbs" to live by. In this book, Pema Chodron ingeniously weaves all of them into the contents with caring, humor, and inspired examples of how these slogans 'work' in our every day lives. Throughout, the goal is always tonglen, a special meditative practice that can be done in formal practice or while walking, at work or with the family. This book is insightful, practical wisdom for today's world to expand into lovingkindness ... individual by individual.

Chodron's book was such a fresh breath! While most books are giving us the top ten reasons why we should deny, hide or get rid of our not-so-good feelings and emotions, she suggests that we start right there and breathe them in. She points out that as our feelings are shared simultaneously with millions of others, we are never alone. This is so obvious, but the point is rarely made. Chodron teaches us that the self-improvement market can join the human experience! We are worthy as is.

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