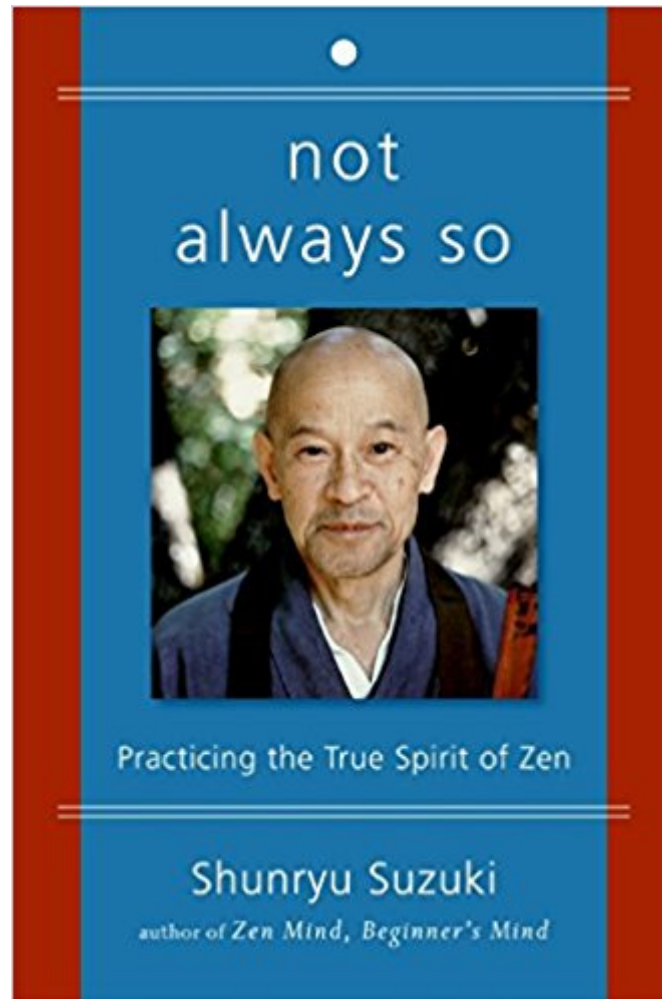


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# Not Always So: Practicing The True Spirit Of Zen



## Synopsis

Practising the true spirit of Zen. Not Always So is based on Shunryu Suzuki's lectures and is framed in his own inimitable, allusive, paradoxical style, rich with unexpected and offbeat "centre insights. Suzuki knew he was dying at the time of the lectures, which gives his thoughts an urgency and focus even sharper than in the earlier book. In Not Always So Suzuki once again voices Zen in everyday language with the vigour, sensitivity, and buoyancy of a true friend. Here is support and nourishment. Here is a mother and father lending a hand, but letting you find your own way. Here is guidance which empowers your freedom (or way of "seeking mind), rather than pinning you down to directions and techniques. Here is teaching which encourages you to touch and know your true heart and to express yourself fully, teaching which is not teaching from outside, but a voice arising in your own being.

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## Customer Reviews

When you think of Zen Buddhism, chances are the first name that comes to mind for you may be Roshi Shunryu Suzuki. His bestselling book, "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind," has remained a monolith in the area of Zen literature for years, and rightly so. The title of this particular book captures the ongoing paradox of Suzuki's teaching style, stemming from his often used phrase, "It may be so, but it is not always so." What this means is that people so oftentimes cling to their own understanding to the point where they cannot flex or learn anymore. We might become experts without even knowing it, even experts on not being an expert. This is possible. Yet everything changes in our world, that

includes even truth. In order to help this world as well as ourselves, we must be willing to bend some and let go of our linear thinking. Life is a process of learning. But learning alone is simply not enough. There isn't a good practice or a bad practice, there is only practice. That means you, "vow to save all beings suffering everywhere." That's not good or bad. That's your job. Roshi Suzuki helps each and everyone of us step into the world that is eternally present and free from all opposites. Where everything we encounter is, "Just like this." Only that. Every action leads to understanding, so please don't separate anything; this is Roshi's most precious gem he has left behind for all of us. Buddhist life is just life. It's going to work, caring for the garden, and taking a walk. I do hope you'll buy this book so you may step into the world of practice as stated by Suzuki here, because it's the key to all of the happiness humanity can ever know. The happiness of no happiness. Hopefully you understand that point. As Korean master Seung Sahn would likewise state, "Only go straight." Enjoy this book.

Can we accept ourselves and our lives just as they are? That is what Shunryu Suzuki asks us to consider in this wonderful book. The slim volume is a lovely successor to "Zen Mind Beginner's Mind" imploring us again to slow down, let our true nature find its expression in meditation and stillness. And then we can find our way in life-- feeling our way along-- supported in our expansive magnificence, and encouraged by our very limitations. "One day, something wonderful will happen..." Here is the expression of Zen in a modern teacher who came to America to share a quiet enlightenment.

This new collection of talks by Shunryu Suzuki is astonishing. They are perhaps more profound and more beautiful than those of Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind. These talks have the feel of a beloved friend returning after many years --ready to continue the simple but beautifully profound conversation about the nature of being human and the practice of living in the true world.

This is a wonderful collection of beautiful, pithy, unpretentious and very brief Zen talks. It's not just for a beginner; it's for any Zen student of any Zen lineage (and I'm writing as a Zen student from a different tradition than Suzuki-Roshi's). You know how a lot of Zen books don't seem to have "it"? This one's got it. Without a single extra word.

This is another series of talks given by Shunryu Suzuki who died in 1971. He seems to have been the greatest Zen Master in the occidental world to date. The first series of talks is in "Zen Mind,

Beginner's Mind" which came out in 1970. This seems to be the most inspirational book in Zen of our time. Please buy both of these treasures. Please don't buy these two books (or one if you already have "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind") if you believe that this book will teach you Zen formally. The author makes it clear that you need a teacher. But once you have one, these two books are the most inspirational books that you can have. I guess that the most practical is still "The Three Pillars of Zen" by Roshi Kapleau. This second book of talks seems just as good as the first. I don't know why Zen Center waited 32 years to print it. Nevertheless, it is a real treasure. Please don't treat this great man's teaching as basic. He implies in this book that just sitting can lead you to seeing the source of all phenomena. So this is not a "cute" book. It's quite deep. Thank you.

Edward Espe Brown has done graceful justice to these powerful teachings of Suzuki roshi. Mr. Brown himself is a wise teacher and gifted editor here. His presentation of these pearls to us is a gift and this book belongs on the bookshelf of many practitioners and seekers. I cannot recommend it strongly enough. If you have an opportunity to spend time with Mr. Brown, please thank him for me.

I think of this book as a treat to carry about. Each chapter is short and refreshing, and ends with his "Thank you"...I have many things to encourage myself to practice, this is one -when first I got it, I used it as a breakfast treat, allowing myself to read just one of the very short chapters in the morning, then meditate. He makes me laugh and smile and be. Now I need to read Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind (I often do things backwards). Thank you.

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