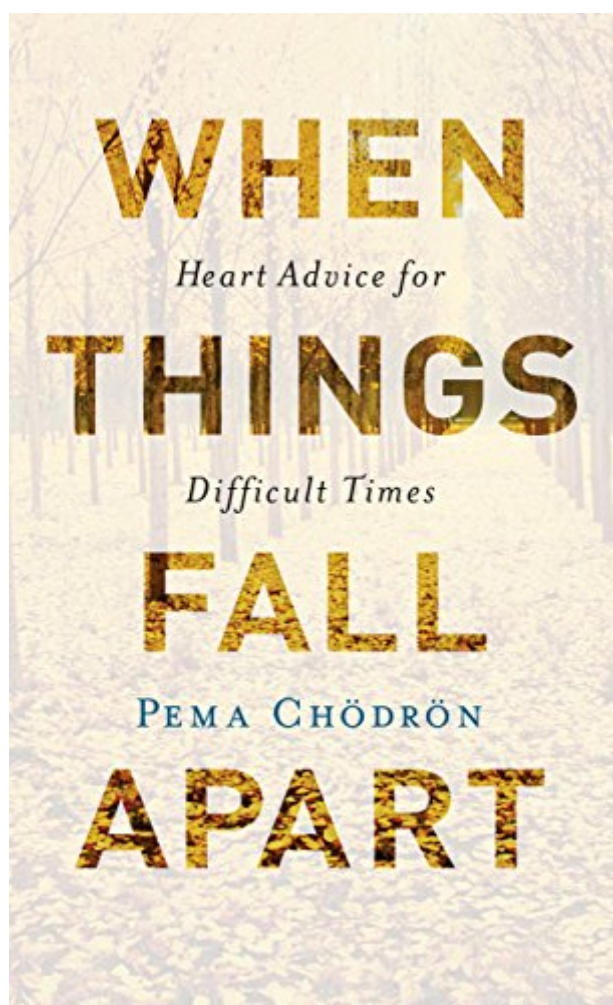


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# When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice For Difficult Times (Shambhala Classics)



## Synopsis

The beautiful practicality of her teaching has made Pema Chödrön one of the most beloved of contemporary American spiritual authors among Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. A collection of talks she gave between 1987 and 1994, the book is a treasury of wisdom for going on living when we are overcome by pain and difficulties. Chödrön discusses:

- Using painful emotions to cultivate wisdom, compassion, and courage
- Communicating so as to encourage others to open up rather than shut down
- Practices for reversing habitual patterns
- Methods for working with chaotic situations
- Ways for creating effective social action

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book's title caught my eye at a time when I felt like things were falling apart for me. I've long been open to the teachings of Buddhism and so I thought I might find some insight, even comfort, in Ms Chodron's words. And I did, but this is not a "hand-holding," "feel good" book. It's blunt in its view of life as, I suppose, Buddhism tends to be. The feel of the whole was, to me, "suck it up and soldier on." But do so with the

insights of Buddhism and an enlightened point-of-view. And so when facing one of those inevitable times when we are losing it all, we can find an understanding of what we're feeling when Ms Chodron says: "We react against the possibility of loneliness, of death, of not having anything to hold on to. Fear is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth." She illustrates this by describing a pivotal moment in her life when things fell apart. In her youth, her husband left her and she felt that loss of her whole world with anger and fear. But out of that experience she found Buddhism, a new life and a new vocation. She eventually became thankful for the experience, and that is a major theme of the book – the idea that life is all beginnings and endings. If we can understand that, and accept it, we can go a long way in coping with the bad times. Fear is what we're trying to cope with in those bad times. As she stated in the above quote, we are afraid of loneliness, death, and aimlessness. She asks us to understand that at the start of the book, and then goes on to offer insight to help us deal with it. She states what her whole book is about when she says: "What we're talking about is getting to know fear, becoming familiar with fear, looking it right in the eye – not as a way to solve problems, but as a complete undoing of old ways of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and thinking." I could go on and on with such quotes – there are so many quotable passages in this book. Also ideas that have helped me. Such as that things are just not what we think they are; we really don't know anything and so we must be careful in our judgments, even judgments as to what is good and what is bad (see chapter 1). Because we never know how things will turn out. When in emotional pain, people tend to return to those places they've found comfort in the past. There are times, though, when those places fail us, or don't offer enough comfort. If you're at such a place, then this book might be of help. It is likely to be, if you can understand and accept the basic cause of our unhappiness according to Buddhism. Ms Chodron states it as: "Thinking that we can find some lasting pleasure and avoid pain is what in Buddhism is called samsara, a hopeless cycle that goes round and round endlessly and causes us to suffer greatly." From there, you can go on to find out what you can do in your life to address samsara. And if you can find, ironically, that chasing happiness does not bring happiness, and running from pain does not eliminate pain, then you'll be at a point where this book can help.

This book is astonishing from beginning to end. Clearly written for a non-Buddhist audience, Chodron expertly introduces the lay reader to key strategies and governing principles found in Tibetan Buddhism. I found this book extremely helpful in setting me on the path to Enlightenment.

This is one of the better books I've read in a while. It is very clear and concise into what the author is constantly repeating through out the book which is to meditate and to do it often. Although she uses a lot of Buddhist terms, she is able to help the read understand the terms. I'd recommend it to anyone who is trying to find calm before and after the storms of life. My woman and I read at least one chapter before we go to sleep. I'd definitely recommend it to anyone that wants inner peace.

I am not a Buddhist but I believe that many of the Buddhist practices are key to living a peaceful life. I give this book to everyone I care about. Pema reminds us that life it is impermanent for all living things. She reminds the reader that we have no control over the fact that the sun rises and sets, people live and they die, that during our lives we will experience joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, triumph and defeat and that each day is different than the last. The human condition typically drives us to cling to and fight for permanence in an effort to feel safe. That clinging and struggling to make life "stay put" is a losing battle. Pema eloquently leads the reader through the Buddhist principles that she believes make the journey easier to travel. Her wisdom is written in simple, everyday language. I highly recommend it for anyone, Buddhist or not.

This is a manual to live by - it was suggested to me as part of learning about Gestalt Awareness Practice, and it is a veritable manual on the Practice. I love Pema's practical and gentle way of being in the world and her encouragement that we all can just be. There is nothing to fix.

Good book but I found it to be a bit repetitive after about 8 chapters (it has a total of 22). You get the gist of the book from the first few chapters. The rest is some more anecdotes, examples and elaboration, although some of them are still interesting to read. If I had to summarize this entire book in a single sentence, I would say: "Calmly accept whatever your destiny holds for you".

One of the most helpful books that I have ever read. It does not seem like a self help book at all. It really helped me change my perspective. Not only did it help me get through a really tough time, but it helped me learn to use those hard moments to grow and thrive. I highly recommend!

Never have I read a spiritual book with such compassion and humour and love. These teachings spoke to me in a way I believe will never leave me. If you are beginning to awake take this beautiful book with you.

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