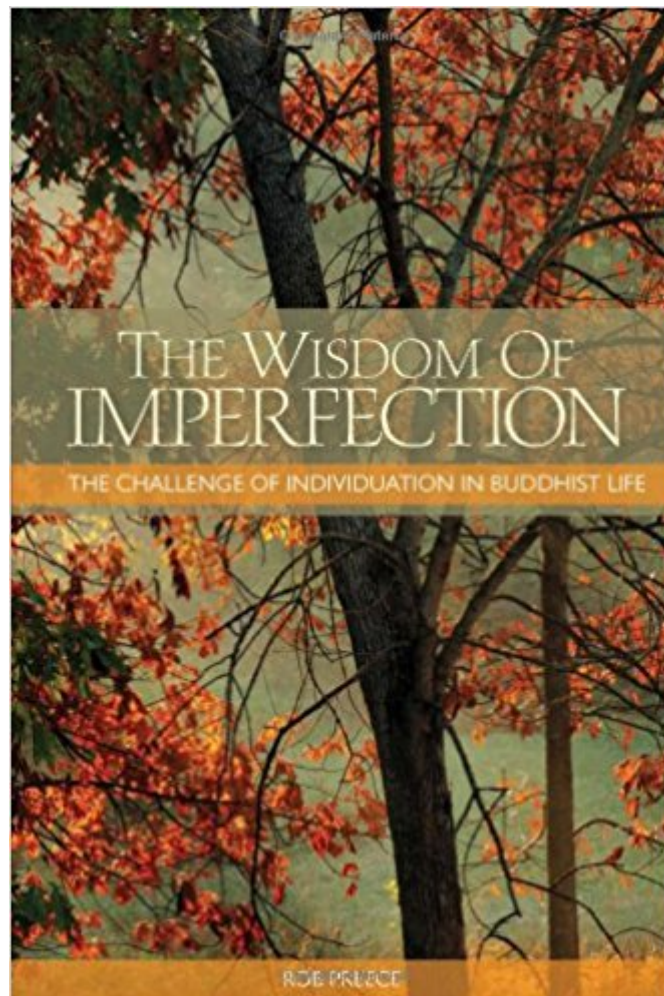




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# **The Wisdom Of Imperfection: The Challenge Of Individuation In Buddhist Life**



## Synopsis

If you have been practicing Buddhism for a while, why do you still have so many problems? And how do you balance the sometimes different needs of spiritual and psychological perspectives? Rob Preece draws on his personal experience—over two decades as a psychotherapist and many years as a meditation teacher—to explore and map the psychological influences on our struggle to awaken. For psychological and spiritual health, acceptance of imperfection is key. Wisdom does not always come as a flash of inspiration but from the slow, often painful, workings of experience. As we detach from our ideals of perfection and develop our acceptance of imperfection, our love and compassion can grow in ways that are both psychologically and spiritually healthy. The Wisdom of Imperfection delves into this journey of individuation in Buddhist life, articulating the psychological processes beneath the traditional path of the Bodhisattva.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A wonderfully thorough and engaging look at the unfolding of the spiritual/psychological journey. Drawing on a depth of personal experience, Rob Preece offers an insightful and important perspective." —Sharon Salzberg, author of Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience

"In The Wisdom of Imperfection Rob Preece takes us on a remarkable journey of self-discovery. The book offers a powerful vision of wholeness based on profound insight into the principles of Buddhism as well as a sophisticated understanding of modern Western psychology. This lucid and well-written work is further enriched and brought to life by compelling anecdotes and case histories drawn from Rob Preece's practical experience as a skilled psychotherapist and Buddhist

practitioner. The Wisdom of Imperfection is an important contribution to the growing dialogue between Western psychology and Eastern spirituality." Åçâ –â •Howard C. Cutler, MD, coauthor with His Holiness the Dalai Lama of The Art of Happiness and The Art of Happiness at Work "The Wisdom of Imperfection strikes an illuminating balance between commitment to a Buddhist practice and recognition of deep-seated psychological realities. This is the book for all those who wonder why they can't stop undermining and contradicting what they cherish most deeply." Åçâ –â •Stephen Batchelor, author of Confession of a Buddhist Atheist "Preece generously offers Jungian insight to the common pitfalls encountered by Westerners on the Buddhist path. His depth of understanding yields gems for anyone struggling to hold the tension of opposites the spiritual life demands. The Wisdom of Imperfection is a perfect read!" Åçâ –â •Deborah Bowman, PhD, associate professor and founder of the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology program at Naropa University "Offers Westerners the opportunity to link psychotherapy and Buddhism for added impact . . . with chapters drawing important connections between spiritual enlightenment and mental health." Åçâ –â •The Bookwatch "Chapters discuss not only the reality of awakening and dealing with one's own dark side but also the path to individuation and the necessity of accepting imperfection for the sake of both psychological and spiritual health. A fascinating exploration of the psychological processes underlying the path of the Bodhisattva as well as a helpful guide for modern Buddhists struggling with contemporary psychological and sociological difficulties." Åçâ –â •Wisconsin Bookwatch "Rob Preece is well known for his contribution to transpersonal therapy in the U.K. and in particular for his work bridging therapy and Buddhist teaching. . . . [His] experience has given him important insights into the psychological issues that European Buddhists bring with them into their practice of the Dharma and into how these may be addressed . . . those with a professional background in psychology and therapy or who are interested in psychological growth as well as spiritual change will find important insights in Preece's work." Åçâ –â •The Middle Way "As he mentions in his introduction, one of his greatest challenges as a practicing Tibetan Buddhist of some thirty years has been to reconcile two worldviews, those of Buddhism and Jung. As he went deeper into both these traditions he became increasingly aware of what he describes as a journey, a path, and a process. These increasingly subtle distinctions shed a different light on our self-actualization. This book tries to achieve a balance between these different traditions, a balance between commitment to a Buddhist practice and recognition of deep-seated psychological realities. Indeed, it is quite possible to achieve remarkable insights from a lateral approach. This book is simply written and easy to follow. It is well recommended." Åçâ –â •The Middle Way "A welcome addition to the fertile subfield of Buddhism and psychology. . . . At his strongest when uncovering the complicated

relationship between personal psychology and spiritual practice, Preece offers astute insights."

•Religious Studies Review "This should come as a relief to those of us who find ourselves caught up in guilt and shame because of our imperfections. . . . The Wisdom of Imperfection arises from Preece's own dharma journey. . . . There is much advice . . . about how to deal with things that arise as we Westerners walk the dharma path: disillusionment, perfectionism, and the deep, deep fear that arises when we confront the reality of emptiness as an emotional reality rather than a cognitive exercise. . . and many more. Do read it. You will laugh at yourself and cry. Above all you may find the wisdom you need to balance your dharma path." •Vajrayana News "An excellent and worthy addition to Buddhist studies shelves, highly recommended."

•Wisconsin Bookwatch "Like Pema Chödrön's When Things Fall Apart, this wonderful book . . . fills a hitherto unmet need amongst Buddhists. . . . Compelling anecdotes and case histories bring the learning to life." •Branches of Light "A book that slowly carries you deep into thought page after page, offering light-bulb moments for those who already have a basic understanding of Jung's thought and the Buddhist way. . . . Preece offers the reader insightful wisdom for those on the path to self-discovery, particularly those struggling to negotiate their Buddhist practice with Western reality." •Payal Patel, Elevate Difference

If you have been practicing Buddhism for a while, why do you still have problems? And how do you balance the (apparently) different needs of spiritual experience and psychological development? Like bestseller When Things Fall Apart, this wonderful book fills a hitherto unmet need amongst Buddhists. Psychotherapist and meditation teacher Rob Preece draws on his 18 years as a psychotherapist and many years as a meditation teacher to explore and map the psychological influences on our struggle to awaken. Acceptance of imperfection, for both psychological and spiritual health, is key. Love and compassion grow out of an understanding of our fallibility, not from ideals of perfection, and wisdom does not always come as a flash of inspiration, but from the slow--often painful--working of experience. The Wisdom of Imperfection explores the journey of individuation in Buddhist life, looking at the psychological process beneath the traditional path of the Bodhisattva. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Fascinating psychological & spiritual glimpse into Buddhist practice.

We used this book in our book study group. The chapter on the student - teacher relationship is the best I have seen and should be studied closely by anyone seeking a teacher.

This is very good.

When I bought this book, I had my reservations. Mixing the two subjects of Buddhism and Jungian Psychology seemed almost impossible. I have been trying to unify the two topics in my life for many years. Preece has done an outstanding job of seamlessly combining the two ideologies. I highly recommend this book!

Being a buddhist committed to seeking enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings is a tall order. One needs to be physically and mentally fit to follow that path. In the same way as religious texts do not provide many instructions for physical fitness, they do not provide all the answers to mental fitness. This book shows how Jungian psychology can help Western buddhist practitioners be mentally healthy buddhists. In particular, it shows how to avoid the pitfall of denying the "shadow" part of our cultural and psychological make up -- which, if negated, would lead to very destructive distortions of our practice. This book was recommended to me by a monk at a time when I was too emotionally troubled to practice. I found it very helpful.

Excellent all around.

Best offer

This thoughtful book compares Jung's Western psychological individuation process with the Mahayana Buddhist bodhisattva journey. It is very insightful & explains, simply, the relevant concepts of each & their great similarities. In doing this, the author (& thangkas painter) provides many examples via personal experiences esp. in his practice as a psychotherapist & his Tibetan Buddhist studies in India & the West, including pithy paraphrases from the 14th Dalai Lama & his own teachers, esp. Lama Thubten Yeshe. However, this work does not have a Gelugpa bias &, while relying heavily upon Tibetan Buddhist studies, is primarily aimed at the wider scope of Mahayana. Indeed, the author provides a balanced view--looking at both the upside & downside of Western Buddhist practice, delineating the many pitfalls of meditating prior to addressing one's psychological wounds--Buddhist bandaids don't work! It's hard to climb a mountain with a heavy (though unseen) weight on your back. Furthermore, he addresses common Western misconceptions such as the negating of the self (p. 40: "It is not, however, the ego that needs to go

but the ego-grasping that holds on to a self as solid & ultimately existent"), renunciation, "spiritually correct" behavior, transference to the guru, giving of the mandala, generosity, etc. He aptly introduces appropriate archetypes: puer/puella, senex/seneca, wise old man/woman, Self, etc. For example, pp. 254-5: "As an image of the Self, to use Jung's term, a deity is a source of true inner power & vitality." Finally, he ties the processes together via the religious life cycle (e.g. p. 307: "Social institutions equally have a life span or life cycle that can be of varying lengths." The book is easy to read & understand despite its erudite subject matter. There are many books now comparing various types of Western psychology to various types of Eastern religion. This is a very good one, esp. in that it explains in detail the psychological problems/ramifications of Buddhist practice for Westerners. For many readers, this book would rate 5 stars.

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