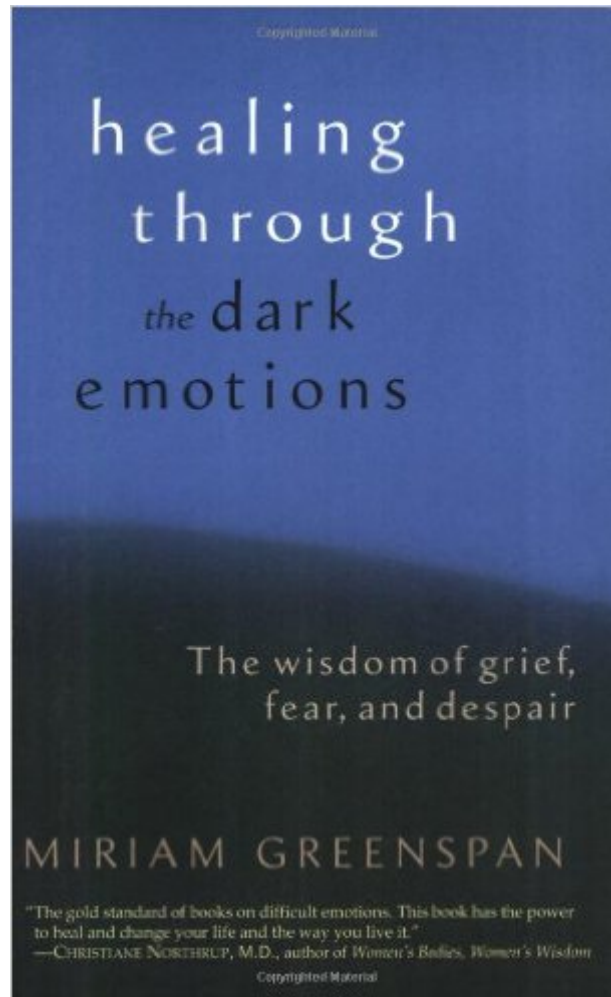


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Healing Through The Dark Emotions: The Wisdom Of Grief, Fear, And Despair



Synopsis

Nautilus Book Award Winner - Gold We are all touched at some point by the dark emotions of grief, fear, or despair. In an age of global threat, these emotions have become widespread and overwhelming. While conventional wisdom warns us of the harmful effects of "negative" emotions, this revolutionary book offers a more hopeful view: there is a redemptive power in our worst feelings. Seasoned psychotherapist Miriam Greenspan argues that it's the avoidance and denial of the dark emotions that results in the escalating psychological disorders of our time: depression, anxiety, addiction, psychic numbing, and irrational violence. And she shows us how to trust the wisdom of the dark emotions to guide, heal, and transform our lives and our world. Drawing on inspiring stories from her psychotherapy practice and personal life, and including a complete set of emotional exercises, Greenspan teaches the art of emotional alchemy by which grief turns to gratitude, fear opens the door to joy, and despair becomes the ground of a more resilient faith in life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Greenspan's book deserves wider recognition. I found it by accident online and I wish I had seen it earlier. What I liked best: Greenspan writes from her own experienced as therapist and bereaved mother, a woman who came to the US as a young child and lost her first child due to unexplained brain defects. She knows the darker emotions first-hand. Even better, Greenspan is not afraid to confront the received wisdom of the psychiatric establishment. Medication works for some depressed clients, but it is only by going into the emotion that we can transform despair into faith and fear into joy. She picks up on the values embedded in the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria:

depression is a "mood disorder," which means that only cheerful, upbeat people are "normal." I found myself making notes of key points that were unusual and insightful. In particular, her discussion of "boomerang emotions" will be especially valuable to anyone who's ever been frustrated in one area and acted out in another. It is easy to make impulsive, often dysfunctional decisions after stifling feelings for a long time. This section is one of the best in the book. On the downside, I wish Greenspan had been more rigorous. Although her views seem sensible, some research suggests disagreement. For example, one study found that people recovered from grief as well if they were medicated as if they were allowed the full experience. Other studies have demonstrated that people experience grief differently. Some may not need to go deep into the feeling. Because Greenspan works with therapy patients, she does not discuss the context of these "dark" emotions. Despair can be experienced by someone like William Styron, whom she discusses, as a person who seems on top of the world.

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