



Feeding Your Demons: Ancient Wisdom for Resolving Inner Conflict

Tsultrim Allione

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Tsultrim Allione brings an eleventh-century Tibetan woman's practice to the West for the first time with FEEDING YOUR DEMONS, an accessible and effective approach for dealing with negative emotions, fears, illness, and self-defeating patterns. Allione—one of only a few female Buddhist leaders in this country and comparable in American religious life to Pema Chodron—bridges this ancient Eastern practice with today's Western psyche. She explains that if we fight our demons, they only grow stronger. But if we feed them, nurture them, we can free ourselves from the battle. Through the clearly articulated practice outlined in FEEDING YOUR DEMONS, we can learn to overcome any obstacle and achieve freedom and inner peace.

Feeding Your Demons: Ancient Wisdom for Resolving Inner Conflict Details

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From Reader Review Feeding Your Demons: Ancient Wisdom for Resolving Inner Conflict for online ebook

Steve Woods says

One of the things that continues to amaze me as my practice and investigation of Buddhism goes forward is that almost anything I have come across in my exploration and experience of western psychology is to be found somewhere in the canon of Buddhist practice, always in a far more thorough and accessible form than what western mental health practitioners have ever put to me. This book is about a Tibetan Buddhist practice which is similar to so called "chair work" that often turns up in psychologists offices and in groups in mental health facilities. The Tibetan model may seem a little strange and foreign to a western mind steeped so destructively as we so often are in the realm of the intellect. It provides a means for a person to approach and interact with those parts of their own psyche which are troublesome in some way; and it works if it is approached with willingness and an open mind. It often seems to me that in the process of developing modern western psychiatry we are not only reinventing a wheel already so thoroughly canvassed by Buddhist practice but we are doing it in a fragmented and less than efficacious manner. Tried and true for 2 millennia, Buddhist psychology has a track record where the bulk of that accruing to western psychiatric practice as it stands now seems to be one of consistent failure more than anything else. Band aids and no resolution though lots of money changes hands in the process. Ultimately we are all alone in the journey, the map has already been drawn for us, we have but to follow the prescription, pretty much as the Buddha indicated. This is a very useful little book, I find myself being consistently drawn ever more towards the tradition that gave rise to it.

Survivors says

Initially I thought, "Wow! Incredible so far. Wish I had read this along side Pema Chodron's "When Things Fall Apart" back in 2007 for the first time." After the first couple chapters I realized this entire book could have been limited to a third or less of the content. Brevity would have made this a five-star book. Principle is simple.

JMc says

Great read and reference! Restored my faith in literature in general and made me decide to join goodreads.com. I'm looking for more books like this. This book is hypnotic and ritualistic. Warning: Contains a bright perspective but has lots of things hidden in the shadow. The author is brilliant and manipulative :)

Doug says

Really fantastic adaptation of a somewhat obscure practice. Also filled with stories and anecdotes, which make it very readable. I've been doing it every day since I heard about it.

One other thing - at the risk of seeming un-PC, I noticed that this book is written with a strong female sensibility. It has many examples of women practitioners and most of its practice examples are told as stories. I didn't realize how much this is missing from the practice books I have read until I saw it here.

Spencer St Clair says

This is perhaps my favorite book on the subject of emotional and physical healing. Lama Tsultrim has woven the essence of an ancient Tibetan Buddhist ritual into a format that can be used in the west, by therapists or as a self-healing practice. Essentially it has to do with truly meeting one's demons. A demon is not something "bad," but is an aspect of oneself that is limiting. It can be a belief, an egoic tendency or even a disease. The process is not about going to battle with one's demons, but meeting them.. finding what they need to feel complete in themselves, and giving it to them. The results are transformational. Thank you Lama Tsultrim for this wonderful gift to humanity.

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Agnieszka says

It's a lucid practice manual for a psychologized adaptation of chod. My review is in a way more for the practice than the book. It's fine as a book, though a bit chatty. I understand the anecdotes are supposed to help a reader relate the practice to the every day life of a Western practitioner. I occasionally found them off-puttingly new-agey, in that they make claims to magical effects without just going out and saying yeah, magic is happening. Anyway as a book, it's trying to straddle the line between the psychological and the miraculous and I think it doesn't succeed. Claim your miracles and let me believe or not. Or don't claim them and be conservative. (I prefer you just claim the miracles, when you're basing your practice on something as outrageous as feeding a magical simulacra of your body to demons, but hey, not everyone comes to Buddhism from ceremonial magic).

Anyway, that's why it's four stars and not five. It's a wonderful practice, suitable for people with no meditation practice at all - no kidding! - and you can learn it from the book, I think. I took a course so it might be slightly better that way. But the point is, unlike traditional chod, you don't need a formal transmission, you can drive right in.

I would recommend this book and this practice especially to creative people. Your dark shit is where the gems of your creative potential are found, and this meditative practice literally lets you make friends with your demons.

Jody says

It's unfortunate when a Buddhist teacher claims the method is Buddhist when they are simply extracting it from other holistic teachers and renaming it theirs. This method is an exact replica of NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) methods. NLP teachers have been utilizing these EXACT step-by-step instructions since the 1970s.

Take a look at Core Transformation work by Connirea Andreas or Trauma Release Method by Jenifer Shapiro.

Or take a look at the pre-NLP parts therapies by Fritz Perls and all of the work by Virginia Satir.

This method is a re-branding and it is NOT a buddhist method by any means. If you look at it closely it does the exact opposite of buddhist methods - it causes you to become attached to feelings and release. This is not buddhist, it IS new age healing which I totally respect, it just isn't something this buddhist came up with and it's not buddhist.

Kaitlyn says

While this is a wonderful modern presentation of Chöd practice, I had a few concerns.

1. This is not a book I'd recommend to someone who doesn't have a solid grounding in some kind of practice, either Buddhist or with a therapist or as a therapist.
2. Tsultrim Allione makes some alarming claims that I consider problematic regarding the 'healing powers' of this practice. Which is not to dismiss it, but I think it's reckless to claim that any spiritual practice will cure cancer.
3. While examples are an excellent way to share a teaching and show how it can be applied in real life, the examples in this book really should have a content notification as they deal with some pretty traumatic stuff.

That being said, this is a really powerful practice and I found much to contemplate in the pages of this book. Just, if you read it, do so with a grain of salt.

Lee says

A Buddhist nun writes a Westerner's interpretation of the niche Tibetan Buddhist practice of Chod. I'm sure there's a lot here that's watered down and simplified--the author wants to introduce the practice to the west, not get into esoteric Buddhist concepts. What's here is an outlining of the basic technique--a sort of self-analysis in a Jungian vein, mixed with a sort of meditative role-play. Anthropomorphize your "demons" or problems/flaws, imagine them as physical characters, ask them what they want. Then, project yourself into them, feel what it's like to be them, and answer yourself as this "demon." You then visualize yourself dissolving into liquid, and feed your liquid self to your demon until it's transformed.

Not for everyone. The gist is similar to shadow work, the importance of knowing and managing the ugly, shameful parts of the self and acknowledging rather than ignoring them. I'd like to read more about the way Tibetans traditionally practice Chod--they were apparently often feared because they associated themselves with cemeteries and dangerous, frightening places as an extension of their focus on facing and "feeding" fear.

The second half of the book is nowhere near as interesting as the first--it's mostly full of extremely positive examples of Westerners who've been helped by the practice with various issues. It's fine if that's what you want. I found the beginning, with Allione's personal account of what led her to Chod, much more interesting and informative.

Allione also has a book full of biographical info on female Buddhists who are under-sung called "Women of Wisdom," and she does seem to have a passion for highlighting women's spiritual contributions and teachings. I'm sure I'll pick it up at some point.

Amanda says

3 stars. A simple, inspiring, good self-help book. Don't need to own a copy, but makes me want to delve more into the subject. I will actually really recommend this technique.

In "Feeding Your Demons", the author teaches a technique for exploring and reconciling your trauma and suffering. It involves really feeling and describing the "demon" or "problem" or "complex", initially splitting it off and giving it a form and look, communicating with it and also understanding it by seeing through its eyes, becoming it, transforming it (and therefore, transforming yourself) by feeding it what it actually needs and reintegrating it in the form of an ally, a need understood and lesson learned - and also, something to continuously work on. It is the opposite of repression and rejection. I found it refreshing, because in my spiritual context, we "banish" the negative.

The author clarifies that this is very much an adaptation for Westerners. The book does have recognisable Tibetan elements, such as the turning the body into nectar to nourish others, the dedications at the beginning and end of the book, the stories told about Buddhist teachers, and how we can apply those lessons to our own lives.

A reviewer named Jody criticized that this book is a rebranded psychotherapy technique and gave it a poor rating. I have to say that, if this claim is true, the book did a good job and holds a lot of merit. I do not believe this book is plagiarizing. In Mahayana Buddhist practice, one prays that all sentient beings attain enlightenment, not just the ones we like, and so extending compassion to our ourselves and inner demons is indeed Buddhist. Sogyal Rinpoche wrote similar techniques for self-compassion in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, which I highly recommend.

This book is very readable and gentle. It will be helpful to those who need it, especially people with creative minds. The stories in it are sad, and the practice itself risks being traumatizing and difficult.

There is still some risk of self-delusion in creative-self-healing work, something to keep in mind. Shadow-work has become more and more trendy, self-care has been commercialized, and mental-health is still stigmatized, is still not covered by many governments or insurance programs. I'm worried sometimes that practices like this risk being alienating.

I also think that the bad side of feeding your demons and starting awareness practices is under-emphasised. Like starting therapy, self-awareness work gets rocky before it gets good.

It is important to note that Tibetan Buddhist Chöd practice is something that you should be formally trained in, and is not taught in this book. There is impactful story about Chöd practitioners in "Magic and Mystery in Tibet" that makes me very wary. I encourage you to read this book - Allione even refers to it at the end of "Feeding your Demons."

Vicky says

sultrim Allione was one of the first Western women to ever be ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist nun. In this book, she presents an eleventh-century woman's wisdom to non-Buddhists in simple, easy to understand language that anyone can follow.

According to Tsultrim, we can all overcome whatever demons are causing chaos in our lives, whether they be weight, illness, anger, or whatever. By following her five steps, we supposedly can overcome these problems.

In the first part of the book, we are given an overview of Tultrim's life – her journeys into spiritualism, her marriages and divorces, her children, her tragedies and her triumphs. It is an interesting biography, if somewhat brief. But this book isn't supposed to be a biography. And it's not completely. The next section delineates the five step program to overcoming whatever ails you. It is clearly written and easily understood.

The third part of the book deals with specific types of demons. Each demon – illness, fear, addiction, abuse, etc. – comes with case studies allowing you to read about people who faced these problems and overcame them. Each one is different, and interesting to read. The last section of the book gives you information on how to deepen your work.

In the grand publishing segment that encompasses self-help books, this is one of the more interesting ones I've read. It is brief, to the point, easy to understand, easy to follow and deals with problems that plague almost all of us. Does it work? I'll have to get back to you on that. But I can't see where there's any harm in trying. If nothing else, you've spent some time meditating and that's always a good thing. If you're into spiritualism, Buddhism, or any of the mediating practices, definitely pick this one up. If you're just into reading about obscure spiritual readers, this would be a good buy.

Sue Smith says

What's really interesting about this book is the fact that I started to do a form of exorcising my 'demons' this summer. I decided to get the monkey off my back, so to speak, and get rid of so many things that I knew were holding me back. Long term, self defeating, negative things that I have no reason to have. So then I happened upon this book at the library!!! It was a sign that I was on the right track and delved into it right away.

Needless to say, I have discovered that it's not going to be an overnight exorcism!! From my understanding of the whole process, I'll be doing forms of it with the same monsters for quite a while. Which is understandable considering that some of them have been with me since childhood!! I haven't tried to do the tibetan form of exorcising. But the concept of not fighting it and actually seeing it for what it is and nurturing it is an eye opener for me. I can see how it works, as you get positive results with positive work and mind. It's just not as easy as you think ... well, it's not for me anyways!

Regardless, this book is a step in the right direction to -as the book says - 'resolving my inner conflicts' and I'm going to stay the course. I'm worth it!

Kony says

An accessible, practical guidebook for discovering and exercising compassion for yourself - specifically, the

vices and patterns that seem too ugly and scary to accept. This book shows you not only how to face these "demons," but how to neutralize their negative power by showering them with kindness.

The author marches through dozens of anecdotes that all seem to resolve with pat happy endings. As a whole, they don't come across as entirely realistic stories. But for me, the real value of these examples isn't so much that they provide knock-down evidence for this practice. It's that they collectively illustrate the range of life problems that, at heart, stem from inner conflict - and whose resolution lies in the marshaling of inner resources that we all actually have.

I may or may not look into walking through the 5 steps of demon-feeding. But I'm taking away some core ideas that I find incredibly helpful, humanizing, and empowering.

Jaymi says

This book has the potential to help anyone with any "demon" they have in their life, whether it is personal, professional, medical, mental or physical. I've used Allione's 5-step technique to help work on my own demons and am seeing benefits. Because of this, I'm telling everyone I know to read it, use it, and watch this process improve their lives.

"Be the change you wish to be..." and use this book to help you get there.

Deirdre says

This is a fine Buddhist Monk. She writes extremely well and she writes about ancient wisdom for the resolving of inner conflict. I am also interested in Carl Gustav Jung and the Jungian psychological community. These interests intercept.
