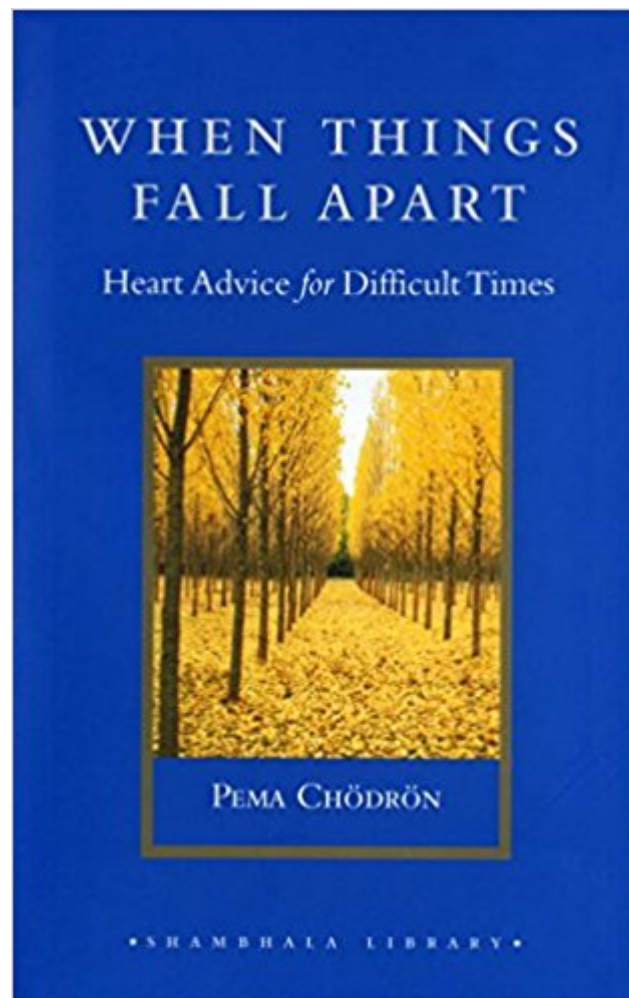




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# When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice For Difficult Times (Shambhala Library)



## Synopsis

There is a fundamental opportunity for happiness right within our reach, yet we usually miss it—ironically while we are caught up in attempts to escape pain and suffering. Drawn from traditional Buddhist wisdom, Pema Chödrön's radical and compassionate advice for what to do when things fall apart in our lives goes against the grain of our usual habits and expectations. There is only one approach to suffering that is of lasting benefit, Pema teaches, and that approach involves moving toward painful situations with friendliness and curiosity, relaxing into the essential groundlessness of our entire situation. It is there, in the midst of chaos, that we can discover the truth and love that are indestructible. The Shambhala Library is a series of exquisitely designed and produced cloth editions of the world's spiritual and literary classics, both ancient and modern. Perfect for collecting or as gifts, each volume features a sewn binding, decorative endsheets, and a ribbon marker—in a delightful-to-hold 4 1/2" x 6 1/2" trim size.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Much like Zen, Pema Chodron's interpretation of Tibetan Buddhism takes the form of a nontheistic spiritualism. In *When Things Fall Apart* this head of a Tibetan monastery in Canada outlines some relevant and deceptively profound terms of Tibetan Buddhism that are germane to modern issues. The key to all of these terms is accepting that in the final analysis, life is groundless. By letting go, we free ourselves to face fear and obstacles and offer ourselves unflinchingly to others. The

graceful, conversational tone of Chodron's writing gives the impression of sitting on a pillow across from her, listening to her everyday examples of Buddhist wisdom. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Pema Chodron, a student of Chogyam Trunpa Rinpoche and Abbot of Gampo Abbey, has written the Tibetan Buddhist equivalent of Harold Kushner's famous book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. As the author indicates in the postscript to her book: "We live in difficult times. One senses a possibility they may get worse." Consequently, Chodron's book is filled with useful advice about how Buddhism helps readers to cope with the grim realities of modern life, including fear, despair, rage and the feeling that we are not in control of our lives. Through reflections on the central Buddhist teaching of right mindfulness, Chodron orients readers and gives them language with which to shape their thinking about the ordinary and extraordinary traumas of modern life. But most importantly, Chodron demonstrates how effective the Buddhist point of view can be in bringing order into disordered lives. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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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