



## **To Have or To Be?**

*Erich Fromm*

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# To Have or To Be?

*Erich Fromm*

## **To Have or To Be?** Erich Fromm

To Have Or to Be? is one of the seminal books of the second half of the 20th century. Nothing less than a manifesto for a new social and psychological revolution to save our threatened planet, this book is a summary of the penetrating thought of Eric Fromm. His thesis is that two modes of existence struggle for the spirit of humankind: the having mode, which concentrates on material possessions, power, and aggression, and is the basis of the universal evils of greed, envy, and violence; and the being mode, which is based on love, the pleasure of sharing, and in productive activity. To Have Or to Be? is a brilliant program for socioeconomic change.>

## **To Have or To Be? Details**

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Author : Erich Fromm

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# From Reader Review To Have or To Be? for online ebook

## Diba says

I am a reader of your book, and I am very impressed with the depth and breadth of the content. The author's perspective on the subject is unique and thought-provoking. I have learned a great deal from this book, and I am sure that it will have a profound impact on my life. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the subject. The author's writing is clear, concise, and engaging, making it easy to read and understand. I have read this book several times, and each time I discover new insights and ideas. This book is a masterpiece, and it is a true gem. I am grateful for the author's contribution to the field, and I am sure that it will be a classic for many years to come. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are invaluable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come.

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## Hafsa says

I have just finished reading your book, and I am blown away. The author's insights are so profound and so timely. I have never read anything like this before, and I am sure that this book will change the way I think about the world. I highly recommend it to everyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's writing is so clear and so engaging, that I have read this book several times already. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come.

To be reviewed ..

## Hoda Elsayed says

This is a truly exceptional book, one that I have never read before. The author's insights are so profound and so timely, that I have read this book several times already. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come. I am a huge fan of this book, and I am sure that it will be a bestseller. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective on the subject. The author's insights are truly remarkable, and I am sure that they will continue to inspire and educate for many years to come.

## M.rmt says

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## Hans says

Absolutely brilliant book. It takes a lot for a book to move me, or present a new idea that totally affects my perceptions of reality. This book got right to core of a deep-seated culturally accepted norm that was so hard

to see I didn't even realize it was there. I have been aware of others talking about the alienating nature of Western culture without getting at the heart of why it is alienating. Erich Fromm makes it simple to understand; it is entirely our life-orientation towards having over being. This may seem insignificant but it is huge and influences every aspect of our lives.

Fromm contends that an orientation towards having creates a subject - object relationship with our environment. We interact with it through trying to possess it, through trying to possess property, knowledge and even people. Don't agree? Just look at these common expressions "I have a wife and two kids" or "I have a Liberal arts degree". I am the possessor they are the objects, instead of "I am a Liberal Arts major" or "I am a husband and a father of two". It seems small but it betrays how we have come to almost unconsciously define our world. It also has further implications that we enlarge and find fulfillment in our lives through not just possessing but possessing more.

It is interesting to me that upon pondering why some men physically abuse their wives I was always confounded by why the unwarranted cruelty towards the mother of their children and oftentimes best-friends. That is when after reading this it all clicked, and that for these men they view their wife and children as property "objects" and thus he can do as he pleases. I mean this even explains Jealousy. If you view relationships as property that you have, like "I have a best-friend" than you will obviously suffer from jealousy when you feel someone else has trespassed against you and your "property".

This book has caused me to seriously evaluate my own life and how much of it I spend intellectualizing and categorizing in the name of trying to possess an understanding of it. All the while neglecting to simply be fully present and live without judgement, without analysis but be completely lost inside the very present of being. I will definitely work on this.

I also enjoyed how Fromm has essentially conceptualized and 'westernized' Buddhist and even mystical christian thought, into something not only more palatable for the agnostic western student, but for the western mind in general.

"We fear, and consequently avoid, taking a step into the unknown, the uncertain; for indeed, while the step may not appear risky to us after we have taken it, before we take that step the new aspects beyond it appear very risky, and hence frightening. Only the old, the tried, is safe; or so it seems. Every new step contains the danger of failure, and that is one of the reasons people are so afraid of freedom"

"One has only to recall the wild, crazy enthusiasm with which people participated in the various wars of the past two centuries--- the readiness of millions to risk national suicide in order to protect the image of "the strongest power," or of "honor" or of profits. And for another example, consider the frenzied nationalism of people watching the contemporary Olympic Games, which allegedly serve the cause of peace. Indeed, the popularity of the Olympic Games is in itself a symbolic expression of Western paganism. They celebrate the pagan hero: the winner, the strongest, the most self-assertive".

"People who are firm believers in Christ as the great lover, the self-sacrificing God, can turn this belief, in an alienated way, into the experience that it is Jesus who loves for them. Jesus thus becomes an idol; the belief in him becomes the substitute for one's own act of loving. In a simple, unconscious formula: 'Christ does the all the loving for us; we can go on in the pattern of the Greek hero, yet we are saved because the alienated 'faith' in Christ is a substitute for the imitation of Christ"

"Finally, I believe that human beings are so deeply endowed with a need to love that acting as wolves causes us necessarily to have a guilty conscience. Our professed belief in love anesthetizes us to some degree







Đã bao giờ bạn cảm thấy mình lạc lõng trong một đám đông? Đó là cảm giác không thể diễn tả bằng lời, một cảm giác như mình đang lạc lõng trong một thế giới xa lạ. Đó là cảm giác như mình đang lạc lõng trong một thế giới xa lạ.

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## Tam Nguyen says

N?u mu?n hi?u v? x? h?i Vi?t Nam b?y gi?, h?y nh?n v?o n?c M? c?a nh?ng n?m 1950.

M?nh c? tìm hi?u v? l?ch s? M? v? v?c v?i cu?n s?ch nh? The Great Gatsby n?n m?nh bi?t, M? l?c ?? nh?n th?t tr?ng l? ? "b?n ngo?i" nh?ng h? ?ang ? trong kh?ng kho?ng tr?m tr?ng v? "b?n trong"; h? t?n s?ng ch? ngh?a v?t ch?t, h? "s? h?u" nhi?u th? nh?ng h? kh?ng th?c s? s?ng. V?, ??y l? c?u ch?m ng?n l?c b?y gi?: "s? h?u m?t chi?c xe h?i th? hi?n b?n l? m?t ng?oi th?nh ??t". C?n b?y gi? ? Vi?t Nam c? th? s? l?: "s? h?u m?t chi?c Iphone 5 ho?c l?m c?ng ch?c nh? n?c ch?ng t? b?n l? m?t ng?i c? h?c v? th?nh ??t".

Erich Fromm l? nh? ph?n t?m h?c, nh?ng ?ng kh?ng ?i theo ???ng l?i c?a Freud. ?ng ch?u ?nh h??ng s?u s?c t? Karl Marx v? Master Eckhart. Fromm ?? n?i r?ng: Karl Marx l? m?t nh? t? t??ng v? ?i, nh?ng c? l? ?ng ?? s?ng xa h?n ch?ng ta h?ng tr?m n?m.

?ng ?i v?o chi ti?t ph?n t?ch "to have" l? g? v? "to be" l? g?. "to have" c? ngh?a l? b?n c? qu? nhi?u tham



v?ng, b?n mu?n ? m?t v? trí cao h?n trong xã h?i, h? gào thét và tình m?i cách ?? tr? thành m?t ng??i n?i ti?ng, ng??i ta nuông chi?u theo c?m xúc và b?n không ng?ng ??u tranh ?? giành chi?n th?ng, ?? s? h?u và chi?m ?o?t, gi?ng nh? cái thuy?t Darwin th?nh hành lúc b?y gi?: "survival of the fittest". Và, m?t ?i?u không tránh kh?i, h? quên đi m?t nhi?m v? tr?ng y?u trong cu?c ??i mình: "To Be"

"To Be" là s?ng th?c s?. ??i v?i m?t ng?oi h?c th?c s?, h? s? r?t khác so v?i nh?ng ng?oi h?c ki?u "to have". và theo quan sát c?a mình thì h?u nh? t?t c? h?c sinh sinh viên ?ang h?c ?? "to have" ch? không ph?i "to be". Nh?ng có khi h? b? ép bu?c ph?i nh? v?y. V? tình yêu c?ng v?y, Fromm nói h?u h?t chúng ta không bi?t yêu, chúng ta ?ang yêu chính b?n thân mình ch? không h? yêu ng??i mà chúng ta t??ng là mình yêu.

Theo ý ki?n c?a mình thì t? t??ng c?a Erich Fromm có tính tiên tri, khá gi?ng v?i m?t vài ng??i mà mình m?n m?. Và càng ??c nhi?u sách thì càng tâm ??c m?t câu quotes c?a Schopenhauer:

"The wise have always said the same things, and fools, who are the majority have always done just the opposite."

N?u ai ??c xong cu?n này thì có th? ??c The Art of Loving, cu?n sách ?ó c?ng r?t hay.

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## Gypsy says

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## Leonard says

To have or to be?

“I have a problem,” or “I am troubled?”

“I have insomnia,” or “I cannot sleep?”

In *To Have or To BE?*, the psychologist Erich Fromm describes the having and the being modes of existence and argues for the latter. Do we live in the realm of objects, to get them, to manage them, to secure them, to use them? Or do we live in the realm of experiences, to sense our surroundings, to relate to other, to understand ourselves?

Fromm published the book in 1976, but his analysis of society remains relevant for our contemporary life. “Because the society we live in is devoted to acquiring property and making a profit, we rarely see any evidence of the being mode of existence and most people see the having mode as the most natural mode of existence, even the only acceptable way of life. All of which makes it especially difficult for people to

comprehend the nature of the being mode, and even to understand that having is only one possible orientation.” We have seen some of the havoc, such as the recent recession, this imbalance between the two modes could cause. This book reveals to us the other mode of living, the being mode, and helps us understand the arena in which we live and the challenges we have to overcome.

Fromm proposes that the new society would bring about the new Man and he listed such an individual’s twenty-one traits, including “willingness to give up all forms of having, in order to fully be.” So, he believes that once we remove the external corrupting factors, we can achieve such an ideal.

And I wonder whether he was in the having mode when he proposed such a solution.

Still, I recommend this book for the insight into one dimension of the human condition—the dynamics between having and being. This book lays out the landscape of our contemporary society along this axis, and helps us assess our mentality and way of life and navigate the obstacles between the two modes of living. And though Fromm’s new Man may seem utopian in light of our internal and external constraints, we can strive toward a balance between having and being, knowing the journey may be as important, if not more so, than the goal.

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## **Kinga says**

To have or to be? Well, it’s simple really. To be, of course. To be rich!

Now, jokes aside.

I don’t normally read philosophical books because I share Lara's, from Doctor Zhivago, view on philosophy. She says: "I am not fond of philosophical essays. I think a little philosophy should be added to life and art by way of spice, but to make it one's speciality seems to me as strange as feeding on nothing but pickles" Philosophy is, to me, a kind of brain game. A little like Sudoku, only with ideas instead of numbers. And what’s the point of looking at someone’s solved Sudoku? Yes, it all tallies up, well done, but what am I supposed to be getting out of it?

For this OCD reason or another I decided to tackle this jar of pickles.

As per the title, Fromm talks about two modes of living – through ‘having’ and through ‘being’. You probably already have some general idea of what these two modes are. Fromm’s definitions are the common sense’s definitions only phrased in longer words

Fromm insists we are currently in crisis (or we were in the 70s but I assume it has got worse since then) and if we don’t do something about it and quick, not only will we be unhappy but we will bring the end of the world upon us! (Also apparently it is today – May 21st,2011.)

At the same time, he presents us with the long history of consumerism, disease as old as the humankind itself. He goes from Old Testament to Jesus, from Meister Eckhart to Marx and analyses views on ‘having’ and ‘being’ throughout centuries. That’s the strongest part of the book, because later Fromm plunges into moaning and rambling.

He gets a bit paranoid and even insists that the fact we say 'my dentist' or 'my lawyer' indicates our obsession with possessing things and people.

Basically, everything would be a lot better if we stopped chasing after things and start 'being' instead. He even postulates that the fear of death would desert us if we do that. According to Fromm, we fear dying because we fear losing all things we've accumulated such as status, houses, cars, wives, husbands, children etc. Fair enough, indeed we lose all that when we die but I don't see how turning to 'being' would save us from the fear of death. When we die, we essentially cease to be as much as we cease to 'have'. So what's your point again, Mr Fromm? No wonder that chapter was only a page long.

He also condemns any rivalry, like, God forbid, the Olympic Games. How he imagines humankind without rivalry is beyond me but he wouldn't be the first Utopian like that.

He talks about how we have created a religion out of possessions. I thought he was going overboard with this, I certainly don't pray to my Kindle, but then I read this: <http://www.cnn.com/2011/TECH/gaming.g...> So maybe he has a point.

He says that we are a society of people permanently unhappy, lonely, fearful, depressed, destructive, addicted... Wow. Really, are we? And when it comes to fearful I doubt we have anything on people from the Middle Ages who lived in the constant fear of Heaven's wrath.

He explains that consumerism leads to unhappiness because nothing will satisfy us. We can have all the finest things, we get the best food, we collect lovers, we even want wives, husbands, then we want children but we will never be happy if we consider all these things in categories of 'having' because this kind of need is insatiable. This is a sound argument but Pierces put it so much better in 3 and a half minute and the most complicated word they use is 'ménage à trois': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPBbRC...>

So while he obviously makes sense at times, we shouldn't do all that he wants us to do or life would get rather tiresome, literature would cease to exist and the civilisation would return to its initial hunting-gathering stage. I am going to keep my possessions, I like them very much, thank you.

Nonetheless, he did win me over just a little bit at some point. I even thought: "hey, maybe I can stop hoarding books like a madwoman if that's going to save the world." Just when I thought good old Fromm is maybe not completely stupid after all he came with his last chapter where he offered his own ideas on how to save the planet. He went straight up loco. Listen to this:

Fromm says that there has been very little effort put into studying and experimenting with new social/political systems. (I beg to differ; I think there has been quite enough. My country, for example, lost 50 years to one of those experiments.)

Here is what we should do:

First we all need to admit we have a problem and that we are unhappy. Then a true change in our characters will occur. Once that is done, more changes in the political structure should be implemented, as follows.

There should be a council created that would assess utility of ALL the products entering the market, and products that are not found to have any utilitarian value but that only drive people to unbridled consumerism would have to be distributed with special warnings. "The Council of mentally safe products warns: Gucci bags will eventually make you, and those around you, very unhappy". This council will be made up of psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers and theologians.

Meanwhile the government will subsidize the production of all the useful products until people start buying them and the subsidizing will no longer be necessary. Though, of course, Fromm admits that the biggest





