


Journey to Ixtlan

Carlos Castaneda

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In *Journey to Ixtlan*, Carlos Castaneda introduces readers to this new approach for the first time and explores, as he comes to experience it himself, his own final voyage into the teachings of don Juan, sharing with us what it is like to truly “stop the world” and perceive reality on his own terms.

Originally drawn to Yaqui Indian spiritual leader don Juan Matus for his knowledge of mind-altering plants, bestselling author Carlos Castaneda immersed himself in the sorcerer’s magical world entirely. Ten years after his first encounter with the shaman, Castaneda examines his field notes and comes to understand what don Juan knew all along—that these plants are merely a means to understanding the alternative realities that one cannot fully embrace on one’s own.

Journey to Ixtlan Details

Date : Published February 1st 1991 by Washington Square Press (first published 1972)

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Author : Carlos Castaneda

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Spirituality, Fiction, Anthropology

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Eric says

This third installment really filled in the gaps of the first two books with Don Juan. I really appreciated the fact that he disregarded his original emphasis on the significance of psychotropic drugs in the teachings of Don Juan and really focused more on the changing of one's consciousness without using drugs.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Journey to xtlan (The Teachings of Don Juan #3), Carlos Castaneda

Journey to Ixtlan is the third book by Carlos Castaneda, published as a work of non-fiction by Simon & Schuster in 1972. It is about an alleged apprenticeship to the Yaqui "shaman," Don Juan.

The title of this book is taken from an allegory that is recounted to Castaneda by his "benefactor" who is known to Carlos as Don Genaro (Genaro Flores), a close friend of his teacher don Juan Matus. "Ixtlan" turns out to be a metaphorical hometown (or Place / Position of Being) to which the "sorcerer" or warrior or man of knowledge is drawn to return, trying to get home. After the work of "stopping", his changed perspective leaves him little in common with ordinary people, who now seem no more substantial to him than "phantoms." The point of the story is that a man of knowledge, or sorcerer, is a changed being, or a Human closer to his true state of Being, and for that reason he can never truly go "home" to his old lifestyle again.

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- 1-The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (1968)
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- 2 - A Separate Reality: Further Conversation with Don Juan (1971)
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- 3 - Journey to xtlan: Lessons of Don Juan (1972)
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- 4- Tales of Power (1974)
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- 5- The Second Ring of Power (1975)
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6- The Eagle's Gift (1981)

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7- The Fire from Within (1984)

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8-The Power of Silence, Further Lessons of don Juan (1988)

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9- The Art of Dreaming (1994)

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10- Magical Passes: The Practical Wisdom of the Shamans of Ancient Mexico

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11- The Wheel of Time: The Shamans of Mexico Their Thoughts About Life Death & the Universe (The Teachings of Don Juan #11), Carlos Castaneda

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12- The Active Side of Infinity (1998)

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Lauren says

This is the first in a series of books which Castaneda wrote after he realized that his prior emphasis on psychotropic drugs was a misleading and "erroneous" means of conveying the lessons he gained from his apprenticeship with don Juan.

I began reading with few expectations and progressed with delight at how engrossed I became. I felt and absorbed don Juan's teachings in a very heavy way. I also found myself laughing out loud at various times throughout this book. This for me is always a good sign!

There are many spiritual guide type of books that just don't do it for me. . . "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle is a recent example. It seems to me that all the ideas in that book have been articulated a million times before, although in more individualized, artistic and passionate language. Don Juan encapsulates the entire message of Tolle's book in two sentences: ". . . because the only thing that is real is the being in you that is going to die. To arrive at that being is the not-doing of the self."

The problem with books such as Tolle's is that they require you to feel without inducing that feeling within you and that is exactly what "Journey to Ixtlan" succeeds in doing.

This book changed my life and I look forward to reading the rest that follow. :)

Sarah says

Hm. This is a tough one for me!

A friend of mine, someone I've always admired, recently recommended this book along with several others. I wrote them all down and immediately went to look for them at my local library.

Upon arriving, I discovered that, not only had I forgotten the list of books, I had no idea how to navigate the nonfiction section. For a minute or so, I wandered aimlessly with nothing but the name "Carlos" in my head. I started back towards the doorway but paused, reluctant to leave. I looked up at the shelf, and there it was! I told my friend and he said, "It's that kind of book. You'll see." And then he reminded me of the Dewey Decimal System.

Yes, it is that kind of book. And, I can see why my friend recommended it to me. But...

But.

No disrespect to my friend, or the will of the universe, but I can't do hunter/warrior mysticism. I just can't! I also refuse to call this "nonfiction".

Sorry, John!

Juliana says

"When one does not have a person history," he explained, "nothing that one says can be taken for a lie. Your trouble is that you have to explain everything to everybody, compulsively, and at the same time you want to keep the fresh newness of what you do. Well, since you can't be excited after explaining everything you have done, you lie in order to keep going."

"From now on," he said, "you must simply show people whatever you care to show them, but without ever telling exactly how you've done it."

"You see," he went on, "we only have two alternatives: we either take everything for sure and real, or we don't. If we follow the first, we end up bored to death with ourselves and with the world. If we follow the second and erase personal history, we create a fog around us, a very exciting and mysterious state in which nobody knows where the rabbit will pop out, not even ourselves." p34-35

"Death is the only wise adviser that we have."

"The thing to do when you're impatient, is to turn to your left and ask advice of your death." p55

"He said the only thing that counted was action, acting instead of talking." p61

"When a man decides to do something he must go all the way, but he must take responsibility for what he does. No matter what he does, he must first know why he is doing it, and then must proceed with his actions without having doubts or remorse about them." p61

throwback to the 18th century, when there was a convention of presenting fiction as though it were factual travel writing; think of Swift and Defoe. Castaneda's constant interaction with don Juan, along with his fretting about how this could not be real, has the effect of making it seem real even when one knows it is not. It is as real as the greatest fiction, and it doesn't lose its hold on the reader even when you know he made most of it up by piecing together all kinds of occult texts in the UCLA library. But it differs from most occult masterpieces in that Castaneda allows the reader to feel the process of initiation, and the doubts and anxieties it generates, in a moment by moment way. You feel you don't need to attach yourself to a guru, because Carlos does it for you. Whatever genre Journey to Ixtlan fits into, or if it fits into none at all, it's a life changing read. Now that all the controversy is over and the people who pursue that sort of thing have gone on to other interests, it's possible to sit back and read the don Juan books purely for the enjoyment of their ideas, their unexpected lyricism, their emotional wallop. Taken just as it is, Journey to Ixtlan is a read of many rewards.

Mike Spinak says

Journey to Ixtlan is presented as though it's a factual work, when it is a fictional one. Furthermore, Carlos Castaneda consistently claimed this set of books to be true. That dishonesty, and the consequent inaccuracies added to the body of anthropological work, and to the subject of metaphysics, has to be considered when reviewing Journey to Ixtlan (or Castaneda's other works in the series).

If you are looking for anthropology about Yaqui indians, Toltec shamans, Mexican brujos, etc., then reject these books and look elsewhere. If you are seeking metaphysical understanding, then reject these works as literal truth - but decide for yourself whether they serve you well as allegory and metaphor. They may.

The line-per-line prose writing style of this books is of poor quality. Nonetheless, there's a lot of charm to Journey, in terms of what he writes about. He weaves the concepts of some modern philosophers into an entertaining tale, filled with ideas to ponder and discuss. Taken as allegory, these books may well have value for many readers. They're not the most sophisticated works on various philosophical concepts, but they're an entertaining overview for novices.

I found this a much better book than the previous two in the series, The Teachings of Don Juan and A Separate Reality. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest you skip the first two books and begin the series with this one.

It can be a worthwhile read for some, if taken for what it is, and not for what it purports to be.

Mike Bull says

I took this book out of the library on a whim, because I like looking at different points of view. This book is published as fact, but many people believe it's fiction. It was written while the author was an anthropology student UCLA in California in the 1970s. He went to study and ended up on a series of strange journeys with don Juan Matus, a sorcerer or shaman, and the student became his apprentice.

The book is full of incomprehensible statements and alternate ways of looking at reality which are difficult to understand--at least this was my experience. On the other hand it gave me insight into how some people see

Daniel Stafford says

This book moved me. Much rather, I should say, the very last chapter moved me and nearly had me expressing tears.

This is my first book of the Don Juan series of philosophy and shaman ways, but I am told it is the most accessible, which I would agree with so far: the book was very engaging, and did not seem bogged down with philosophy.

Although, I was, as I am sure many readers would be, torn as to how much of this story to believe actually happened. It is classified as a book of nonfiction, and it is written as a first person account as to what Carlos says he experienced. However...well, there's a lot of fantastic magic that takes place in front of this eye-witness.

In spite of all of that, I feel as though I picked up a lot from reading it, and I felt as though much of what I go through in my own life has only been confirmed by Don Juan's teachings to Carlos. I liked that.

But, the last chapter, the confession of knowing once you make this transformation, there's no turning back, and one is still human once conquering their "ally" and seeing the other worlds...and one cannot go back to the place they once called home in spite of taking the rest of their life to journey back. That was heartbreaking to me, and, it would seem, heartbreaking to Carlos as well.

Erik Graff says

This is the third volume of the trilogy including *The Teachings of Don Juan* and *A Separate Reality*. I read all three, one after the other, while working at the Chicago Womens' Athletic Club during the summer between college and seminary.

Although it appears to be the case that Castaneda, the author, fabricated some of the material appearing in his accounts, including that of his doctoral dissertation which begins the series, it also appears to be the case that he knows a good deal about altered states of consciousness. While the books may misrepresent the Yaqui Nation and so be bad anthropology, they remain important and worth reading.

I've classed this volume as psychology [one could also, legitimately, class them as religion or as fiction] because so much of its content has to do with what we conventionally call "altered states" and relegate to psychologists. What is interesting about Castaneda, however, is that, for him, it is not so much a drug-disordered state of mind creating hallucinations as an entry into other worlds. In other words, the other worlds are real--indeed, they are truer in the sense of being more meaningful than the quotidian routines of our normal lives.

Phenomenologically, this is certainly the case to many, whether they experience non-ordinary realities through the use of drugs, spiritual exercise or because such things happen to them, either occasionally or regularly. Years of campfire tales about extraordinary experiences have led me to begin to intentionally ask people about such things and I've found it remarkable how ordinary non-ordinary states are. This raises questions about the typical approach of psychologists and philosophers to such matters--and as regards the kind of society which would put its members in such a Procrustean bed that they'd be disposed to discount

their lived experience in order to fit in.

I myself have experienced "other worlds" on a number of occasions. Of course, like everyone, I inhabit them nightly and remember them under the rubric of dreaming. Beyond that, however, I've had a couple of auditions (hearing voices which weren't coming from anyone another in the room would have heard), a rather unpleasant hallucinatory episode and at least two induced breakthroughs to domains radically different than this one I'm typing in--all of which felt realer-than-real. Beyond that, the usual psychedelic experience--and I've had scores--at least suggests these other worlds, worlds like those described by Castaneda, although one is not entirely thrust into them and out of this one.

Tandis Toofanian says

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Sofia says

No me gustó y no la terminé. Rayos. No me gusta dejar libros a medias pero al llegar a la mitad y ver que sólo lo leía por inercia y por encargo me sentí muy mal con ese libro. Quizás más adelante lo logre. Por lo pronto, sigo sin creerle a Castañeda su trabajo. Queda en ficción, nada más.

Blaine says

Ok, I'm a boomer and I went through my own period of reading and living with Carlos Castaneda, his teacher Don Juan, and their world of indigenous Mexican shamanism. This and its follow-up book Tales of Power changed my life when I read them in my mid-20s... they helped me forge a new identity as an adult, as a warrior with an awareness of personal power, and taught me lessons for a lifetime that are still with me. If you are open to the teachings in these books, they can truly be powerful and life-changing and, living far away from home as I was in my mid-20s in Finland, I was captivated by Don Juan's teachings since, as a youth, I had traveled a lot with my family in Mexico and the American Southwest so I could visualize (from Finland) the landscapes and culture they were part of. Anyway, this book goes into my all-time favorites list because of how its teachings so shaped who I became as an adult.

Syl Sabastian says

My favourite of Carlos' books. I came to his works at the tail end of a very long and extensive reading campaign, the purpose of which was to attain *practical* utilisable enhancement of self. I would read with a red pen, underlining what was of value, and could be applied, copying out those underlinings into large notebooks.

When I came to Carlos, my trusty pen worked overtime. Not so much in The Teachings, but went off the charts in A Separate Reality and peaked in Journey to Ixtlan, which to me had the foundational conceptual focus points that form a solid basis for Independence-of-Being.

If the book, indeed all his books, are read from the perspective of evaluating the wisdom value, which is independent of whether the origins are fictional or actual, then much is gained. This book has so tremendous value in that regard. But, it's up to us, the reader, to make it our own, otherwise the value is meaningless. A fabulous book in terms of starting one's journey. Highly recommended.

André says

Well, almost 10 years has it been now, since I read this book.

There have been odd discussions about the truthfulness of of Castaneda's books, about Don Juan and the experiences Castaneda describes.

In my opinion I don't care whether the stories are bogus or true.

Castaneda describes his journey as an average guy through different spiritual rituals and experiences, as he is taught by Don Juan about the shamanistic view of life.

I was 16, when I read the book and I loved the way Don Juan perceives the world as so very alive and kind of magical.

The book can be a good passageway to realize that the world is more than our rationalistic eyes are used to conceive.

Oh yes...clearly the book doesn't want to give any answers, but rather it stimulates our imagination on how we perceive the world.

Ever wondered if the Wind itself could be an animated thing roaming around the world, interacting and playing with those who perceive him?

Aaron Dennis says

Many readers of Carlos Castaneda stop reading after *A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*. Some read on to *A Separate Reality*. As I've stated before, Castaneda admits later on that his compulsive obsession on non ordinary reality as produced by hallucinogenic plants was the wrong area to fixate, and in *Journey to Ixtlan*, he recapitulates on many of the notes previously discarded.

It is in this wonderful story that Carlos introduces many concepts, or rather elucidates on many concepts, which Don Juan had introduced since their initial encounter; not-doing, stopping the world, living as a warrior, and dreaming.

What baffles me the most is that skeptics-and I was one-fixate on the impossibility of the story without so much as trying any of the prescribed techniques.

I remember being a small child. When I went to my grandparents' house, I used to spend countless hours just lying on the couch staring at the popcorn ceiling. After a while, the ceiling appeared to invert and the little pieces of stucco, or whatever, seemed to be holes rather than protuberances. When I did that, all my regular

thoughts slowly subsided until I had none whatsoever...that was my not-doing, and I think we forget those kinds of incidents. Furthermore, we obsess over the information that we only use some 10% of our brains and ask ourselves what can we accomplish if we focus the totality of ourselves on only one thought? Well...that is what stopping the world entails; shutting off our constant description of the world as reiterated by all those around us for just long enough to focus on nothing at all...or to focus ourselves on just one thing.

Yes, I think the teachings are real. No, I don't think they apply to all of us in particular. We are all so very different and unique that nothing is truly the same for any us. If you have not read any of these books, you may want to consider doing so. If you have read them and think they are phony, you may want to consider quieting your mind tonight when you lay down in bed, and try to find your hands in your dreams. You might be pleasantly surprised at what you can accomplish.

Here's another on of those little exchanges that pleases me to no end:

"What's the use of having beautifully polished crystals if you never find the spirit giver of power?" he said. "On the other hand, if you don't have the crystals but do find the spirit you may put anything in his way to be touched. You could put your dicks in the way if you can't find anything else."

The whole story is replete with power, emotion, revelations, and touched lightly with such grace and humor that it is just so pleasant to read over and over again. I also like Juan's counterpart, Genaro. His antics and personality are so like myself that I cannot help but love the character. In later books, Juan describes that there are only so many kinds of men, and that Genaro is a man of action. This doesn't mean much to those who have not read any of the books, and it doesn't mean much to those who only give the stories a cursory read, but I promise you, if you find your path with heart, you will see plainly that it doesn't matter how much of the story is real; the people's names, the area in question (both of which Carlos admits were made up in an effort to follow Juan's instructions), the point is that many of us are plain dormant. You can keep doing everything you do. Maybe you're happy, maybe you're not, but why not try something new and see if the universe can't show you something unknown?

This is an amazing book and part of an amazing series. Believe it or don't, either way, it is a fantastic read.

Douglas says

I have read all of Castenedas books and this is the one you should start with. The first three books tell the same story, but Ixtlan gets it right and you miss little of importance from the first two books. From Tales of Power on, I give the books five stars. To those who say it's fiction, I say so what? The wisdom and knowledge of Don Juan is a priceless gift to all of us warriors on the path of knowledge and the books are page turners of the first order.
