



You Have to Say Something

Dainin Katagiri

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Dainin Katagiri (1928–1990) was a central figure in the transmission of Zen in America. His first book, *Returning to Silence*, emphasized the need to return to our original, enlightened state of being, and became one of the classics of Zen in America. In *You Have to Say Something*, selections from his talks have been collected to address another key theme of Katagiri's teaching: that of bringing Zen insight to bear on our everyday experience. "To live life fully," Katagiri says, "means to take care of your life day by day, moment to moment, right here, right now." To do this, he teaches, we must plunge into our life completely, bringing to it the same wholeheartedness that is required in Zen meditation. When we approach life in this way, every activity—everything we do, everything we say—becomes an opportunity for manifesting our own innate wisdom. With extraordinary freshness and immediacy, Katagiri shows the reader how this wisdom not only enlivens our spiritual practice but can help make our life a rich, seamless whole.

You Have to Say Something Details

Date : Published January 4th 2000 by Shambhala (first published 1998)

ISBN : 9781570624629

Author : Dainin Katagiri

Format : Paperback 194 pages

Genre : Religion, Buddhism, Zen, Nonfiction, Spirituality

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Matt Edwards says

5 Stars. Again 5 stars. I come back to this book every year or two and am refreshed every time. Katagiri talks about what can't be talked about in a way that just works for me. Most of the language and phrasing I use to think and talk about Zen and spirituality I have taken directly from this book.

One of my favorite quotes -

"The changes that occur through spiritual practice are not really your business. If you make them your business, you will try to change your life directly. If you try to change your life directly, no matter how long you work at it, you will not satisfy yourself. So, if you truly want to change your life, you should just form the routine of doing small things, day by day. Then your life will be changed beyond your expectations. If you practice continuously, day after day, you will become a peaceful, gentle, and harmonious person. There is no explanation for this."

First of all - this is something I need to be reminded of every day. Second - I am moved every I read that last sentence - "There is no explanation for this." It is so matter of fact and so human. And although the workings of our existence are an impenetrable mystery that cannot be explained or understood through our minds, he gently reminds us throughout the book that we can experience the Truth of our existence directly.

Krehel says

Book is simple and moved me in ways like no other book has. True a Zen book but from life and its standpoint really talks you through issues in a simple way. Loved this book for years and would love to have it on my KIndle if I can find it.

Eric says

Good stuff.

I kinda feel I may be more a Katagiri guy than a (S) Suzuki guy (gasp! preferences!). A friend mentioned his playing second fiddle to Suzuki as being quite appealing, and I gotta say, that does also please me too. This seems a bit more concrete/direct or maybe contemporary, references to things I can maybe relate to better, (eg. sudden astonishment of "wow! a moose!" — must be a Minnesota thing). Then again, I've heard that Katagiri can be a bit "cosmic" in places.

Could also be a time/place thing. Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind was a good while back, maybe worth reading after a bit more practice.

Found the clarification between habit and vow, as well as commentary on unwholesome ways of doing zazen.

Ross Cohen says

Repetitive yet profound.

Ben says

I Love this book of post meditation lectures given by D. Katagiri!

Tim T says

This is one of the best books of Zen essays. I rank it right alongside 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind' though it isn't as famous.

Katagiri Roshi's core thesis is that Zen is simply every day life. Our lives are how we spend each day, day after day. That to live wholeheartedly in the moment is enough ... not enough, but truly all there is. In the face of it all, just live.

The author covers a wide range of subjects, deftly weaving every day language with core Buddhist concepts. He is always powerful and direct -- we should expect nothing less from a Zen Master.

'You Have to Say Something' is an easy, joyful read. This is one that I will return to taste several times a year.

Favorite quotes:

'No idea can touch Reality.'

'There is no place to bite into.'

'Keep your mouth shut & act with a true heart.'

Ridgewalker says

This was an excellent book on Zen and Buddhism. I love the theme that the heart of Zen is found in this present moment, whatever it may be.

Brendan says

A nice collection of transcribed talks by Dainin Katagiri. The topics are short, but dense. For such a thin book, it took me a while to get through it.

Patrick says

It's true.

Not bad. I guess I pulled out a few important things, but a very few. Like many Zen books, it gets confusing and complicated.

I did however, enjoy the understanding of compassion and what is "right" in Buddhism. It is "right" to support all other things in their endeavor to deal with life and death.

Susanne says

I thought this was a great book and it brought me back to meditate every day and see, that the day to day practice of ordinary things is important and the core of all spiritual practice. Dainin Katagiri is clear and uncomplicated - my favourite quote: "The changes that occur through spiritual practice are not really your business, if you make them your business, you will try to change your life directly. If you try to change your life directly, no matter how long you work at it, you will not satisfy yourself. So if you truly want to change your life, you should just form the routine of doing small things day by day. Then your life will be changed beyond your expectations . If you practice continuously, day after day, you will become a peaceful, gentle and harmonious person. There is no explanation for this."

I always meant to read one of his books since I first heard about him via Natalie Goldberg, one of my writing teachers, whose zen teacher he was. She mentioned him so often in her books. Now I am glad I finally did read him and will pretty soon start his other book "Returning to silence".

Greg says

amazingly simple and deep zen writings by katagiri.

covers a wider range of topics and ideas than 'each moment is the universe'.

definitely one of my favorite zen writers.

he does a good job of bringing all intellectual ideas and concepts back to the present moment, so we can all practice being ALIVE!

Monica says

Not sure if this fits with Nichren but maybe someday I'll check it out.
