



SUMMARY OF *AWAKENING THROUGH LOVE*

In *Awakening Through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness*, John Makransky pioneers new ways of making Tibetan Buddhist practices of compassion and wisdom accessible to people of all backgrounds and faiths. Drawing from the Dzogchen tradition, he uses plain, practical instructions to help readers uncover the unity of wisdom and love in the very nature of our minds. Makransky then describes how to actualize those qualities in every aspect of our lives, with particular focus on family and work relationships, service, and social action.

Each chapter of the book includes a guided meditation, powerful Tibetan techniques to commune with sources of inspiration and blessing that Makransky has adapted into a practicable form for Westerners. He combines his thirty years of practice in these teachings with a career as a professor of Buddhism and Comparative Theology at Boston College and his role as a Buddhist teacher, father, and husband.

Awakening Through Love explores several key themes and addresses several areas where love is particularly relevant and important today:

❖ **Without enduring love, relationships don't work**

"Love protects us from our own worst tendencies to reduce others to mere objects of momentary need or want, triggering hostility and competition whenever our expectations are not met. ... the quality of our presence to partner, children, neighbors, colleagues, students, and clients depends *entirely* on the strength of our fundamental care for them."

❖ **No real solution to violence without impartial love and wisdom**

"When individuals and groups do not experience being loved — when whole communities lose hope than anyone cares — fear and violence are often seized upon as seeming protectors in the form of gangs, mobs, and communal hostility."

❖ **Love is the motive force for genuine help**

"We ache at the violence, pain, and hunger in our world, and inside us is a will to help. But 'help' only helps if it is an active expression of love. Otherwise our attempts to help, limited by narrow self-concern, become rigid and too easily discouraged. ... In the moment of unconditional love it is not the ego-centered self that is viewing others but the power of love viewing through you. Such love feels as if it comes from beyond ourselves while also, paradoxically, from most deeply within."

❖ **Nourishing and protecting your family with wisdom and love**

“Let all the rituals of family life be rediscovered as gestures of wise love.... Commune with your children through the energy of love as they deal the cards, take a turn on the game board, or toss a ball. In that spirit, when you look into their eyes, your gaze mirrors their fundamental goodness without even speaking.”

❖ **Unleashing the power of loving compassion**

“Through these meditations, we discover that our suffering is not just a personal problem. It need not isolate us from others into narrow confines of personal pain. We can rediscover the meaning of our own suffering as a profound connection to countless others and to the dignity and sacredness of all our lives.... Such compassion doesn’t just share the sorrow of beings in their suffering. It is also a resolute will and liberating energy which communes with others at the level of their deepest freedom. And it is joy at participating in their freedom now.”

❖ **Empowering social service and action**

“Compassion that knows others in all levels of their suffering motivates service for them on all levels of their need. Such service is not easily discouraged at disappointing temporal outcomes, because it holds others in their deepest potential of freedom, which is always present.... We are learning how to hold our clients in the vision of their positive potential, confirming their essential goodness, even when confronting their harmful behaviors or limiting thoughts of themselves and others.”

❖ **Finding inner rest beyond burnout**

"Through the wisdom of letting be, we learn that we don’t have to react to the shifting contents of our experiences but can 'lean into' their unchanging essence of knowing emptiness. We can let be and find deep rest right there.... Wise compassion keeps our mind on realities that transcend self-centeredness, so our best intentions can be realized instead of being overwhelmed by emotional reactions to fallible people or disappointing outcomes.”

❖ **A complete path of spiritual awakening**

“Someone may first take interest in spiritual practice to improve her life. But practice doesn’t just improve your life — it also newly defines the meaning of your life.... When anyone, anywhere, learns to abide in such loving wisdom, they generate a zone of refuge and protection that encircles all those around them. They become a force to remake this world into a place of deep mutual reverence and appreciation. To learn to embody such wise love, and to act from there for the sake of all, is the greatest gift we can give to our families, communities and world.”

