


THE FIVE INVITATIONS: DISCOVERING WHAT DEATH CAN TEACH US ABOUT LIVING FULLY BY FRANK OSTASESKI

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Can Teach Us About Living Fully*



FRANK OSTASESKI
Foreword by Rachel Naomi Remen, MD



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Review

"Frank is a pioneer in mindful care at the end of life. He embodies the wisdom and compassion he shares in these magical and compelling pages. You feel it instantly, because it is real, and it is really about you and your life." ?Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of MBSR and author of *Full Catastrophe Living* and *Coming to Our Senses*

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"These moving teachings can open your heart and change your life. For decades, Frank has been a compassionate guide to thousands of people facing death. In *The Five Invitations*, he shares his timeless wisdom, beautifully, as a blessing to all." ?Jack Kornfield, international Buddhist teacher and author of *A Path With Heart*

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Death is not waiting for us at the end of a long road. Death is always with us, in the marrow of every passing moment. She is the secret teacher hiding in plain sight, helping us to discover what matters most.

Life and death are a package deal. They cannot be pulled apart and we cannot truly live unless we are aware of death. The Five Invitations is an exhilarating meditation on the meaning of life and how maintaining an ever-present consciousness of death can bring us closer to our truest selves. As a renowned teacher of compassionate caregiving and the cofounder of the Zen Hospice Project, Frank Ostaseski has sat on the precipice of death with more than a thousand people. In *The Five Invitations*, he distills the lessons gleaned over the course of his career, offering an evocative and stirring guide that points to a radical path to transformation.

The Five Invitations:

- Don't Wait
- Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing
- Bring Your Whole Self to the Experience
- Find a Place of Rest in the Middle of Things
- Cultivate Don't Know Mind

These Five Invitations show us how to wake up fully to our lives. They can be understood as best practices for anyone coping with loss or navigating any sort of transition or crisis; they guide us toward appreciating life's preciousness. Awareness of death can be a valuable companion on the road to living well, forging a rich and meaningful life, and letting go of regret. *The Five Invitations* is a powerful and inspiring exploration of the essential wisdom dying has to impart to all of us.

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Features

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

This book should be on the national curriculum

By Vanda Marlow

Frank is an amazing teacher, and at last we have his words, written down, to savour, to re-read for inspiration when needed. This book should be on the national curriculum- how different the world would be if each of us had an honest conversation about death and dying with a wise person, as we headed into our adult lives. This book is just such a conversation, and helps me remember, and shows me how, to live my life fully, in right relationship with the certain knowledge that it will someday end. Frank's writing is beautiful; personal, intimate, at times laced with a self-deprecating humour. I'll be buying copies for all the twenty-somethings in my life!

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Thank you for your beautiful book.

By Carin Castillo

I was captivated by *The Five Invitations*, reading it cover-to-cover in a 24-hour period. As I got closer to the end, I found myself reading much slower because I just didn't want it to end. I was inspired by the stories of people both young and old at the end of their lives. The part that impressed me was that it was not just stories of inspiration on how I can embrace my days, but also I found wisdom as a new mom, and how to savor these moments with my little one more. There was a chapter about grief that hit me in a way that was very profound and moving, it opened up a place in my heart about a the loss of a dear friend many years ago, that just hadn't healed. Reading Frank's book gave me a new understanding on how to "be" with that loss and feel complete with it's incompleteness. Thank you for your beautiful book.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

The Five Invitations: A True Gift to the World : A Guide for Living and Dying

By Susan Wolterstorff

Having heard Frank Ostaseski speak at a mindfulness conference a year ago, I was deeply moved by his compassion, wisdom, vulnerability and heart-centered service to the dying and their families. Upon hearing

that Frank had written a book about "what death can teach us about living fully." I felt confident his writings would be a sacred guide and gift to the world.

When reading Frank's newly released book this week, I have found his writing to be very congruent with his "in person" teachings. What a treasure to have this resource. So whether a person is facing a life-threatening illness, is a compassionate caregiver, is facing other challenges of loss or is looking for a way to live a life of true meaning and purpose, *Five Invitations* is an exceptional guide for embracing the ever changing terrain of the human experience.

As I savored each chapter of *The Five Invitations*, I felt like I was in the same room as Frank, having a very intimate conversation of what matters most on the journey of life and death. I also found Frank's stories of serving individuals and families at Zen Hospice Project of San Francisco to make a lasting imprint on my heart and soul.

To summarize *The Five Invitations*, firstly, Frank shares the importance of living now, not putting life on hold, along with the fact that all of life is ever changing and is impermanent. Secondly, Frank encourages us to move towards our suffering and to welcome all things.. The Third Invitation is to bring our entire being to all of life's experiences, including our strengths and challenges, in other words, the light and the dark. Fourthly, Frank encourages us to find ways to embrace a place of stillness, peace, comfort and centeredness, which will ultimately help us to be with physical and/or psychological discomfort, chaos, and uncertainty. As the Fifth Invitation, Frank's shares his wisdom of how to be open to life, to surrender to what is and to embrace life fully with a sense of wonder in the here and now.

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“As a physician and neurosurgeon, I have learned that those who have truly lived are those that understand death as an integral part of life. In Frank Ostaseski’s profound book, *The Five Invitations*, he shares this reality, giving us insights and wisdom on the nature of dying but more importantly on how to truly live.” ?James R. Doty, M.D., Professor of Neurosurgery, founder and director of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, Stanford University School of Medicine, and New York Times bestselling author of *Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon’s Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart*

“Frank is a very dear friend. I have worked in the field of death and dying close to Frank and this book represents the distillation of many years of his efforts. He shows us that if you are to die consciously, there’s no time like the present to prepare. This book is a loving, compassionate reminder that the best preparation for death is a life fully lived” ?Ram Dass, international spiritual teacher and author of the bestseller *Be Here Now and Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying*

“Frank inspires us to live with joy by fully embracing all facets of life including our dying. With heartfelt compassion and wisdom gathered over thirty years as a Buddhist teacher and hospice founder he helps us understand that love matters most.” ?Chade-Meng Tan, Google’s “Jolly Good Fellow” and author of *Joy on Demand and Search Inside Yourself*

“Exquisitely profound and gut-wrenchingly real, I’m not sure a wiser book has been written in the digital age. Frank’s storytelling helped me to see that to step fully into life we need to embrace death as an adventure rather than an adversary.” ?Chip Conley, author of the New York Times bestseller *Emotional Equations* and head of Global Hospitality and Strategy at AirBnB

“How to die and how to be with the dying are questions everyone faces. Here are sharp, insightful answers from one of the great end-of-life counselors.” ?Stewart Brand, creator of the Whole Earth Catalog

“This is a gem of a book! With a lifetime of inspiring service and deep spiritual wisdom to draw from, Frank Ostaseski has given us all a gift straight from the heart.” ?James Baraz, author of *Awakening Joy: Ten Steps to Happiness* and cofounding teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center

“Frank Ostaseski speaks with clear wisdom and deep compassion. Sharing stories and insights from his decades of working with people at the very end of their lives, his ultimate revelation has to do with how meaningful, in both our living and our dying, is the capacity to be open to and present in grace. His words offer much worthy of contemplation and his service to all of us is worthy of deep respect.” ?Kathleen Dowling Singh, author of *Grace in Dying: How We Are Transformed Spiritually As We Die* and *The Grace in Aging: Awaken As You Grow Old*

“This book is deep, right and rare. The compelling lessons shared in *The Five Invitations* are valuable to people at any phase of life. Whether facing your own imminent death or that of a loved one, navigating a crisis, or looking to embrace and enjoy living your life more fully, you will find the wisdom lovingly offered in these pages inspiring and enlightening.” ?SARK, coauthor and artist of *Succulent Wild Love*

"Every sentence in this book is written with a velvet pen from deep within Frank Ostaseski's heart. The authenticity of his life and his work is on every page. It is a sharing that, ultimately, our own reality is love and that when we remember that, fear has a way of disappearing by becoming valueless. It takes a lot of courage to write a book that is so beautifully transparent." ?Gerald Jampolsky, M.D., cofounder of Attitudinal Healing and author of *Love Is Letting Go of Fear* and Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D., cofounder of Attitudinal Healing International and coauthor of *Love Is The Answer*

“[Frank Ostaseski] has found the space where awareness of death is revealed as a powerful elixir for living more abundantly, and he shares that secret brilliantly in this landmark book. If you want to live fully and free from fear, read it and give yourself and those who love you a rare gift!” ?Robert A. F. Thurman, Professor of Religion, Columbia University, and author of *Infinite Life*.

About the Author

FRANK OSTASESKI has dedicated his life to service. He is the cofounder of the Zen Hospice Project, founder of the Metta Institute, a Buddhist teacher, an international lecturer, and a leading voice in contemplative end-of-life care. He has been honored by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and AARP named him one of America's Fifty Most Innovative People. He has offered seminars at Harvard Medical School, the Mayo Clinic, and Heidelberg University, and he teaches at major spiritual centers around the globe. His work has been featured on the Bill Moyers PBS series *On Our Own Terms* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, among other programs.

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