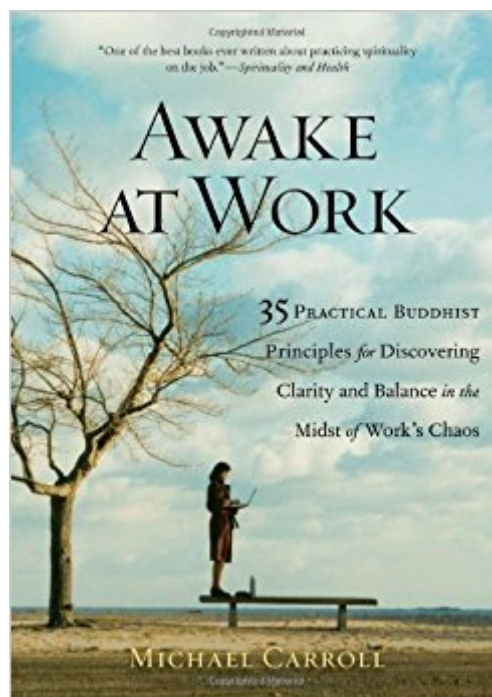




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Awake At Work: 35 Practical Buddhist Principles For Discovering Clarity And Balance In The Midst Of Work's Chaos



Synopsis

When we think of work, we often think of drudgery, frustration, and stress. For too many of us, work is the last place in our lives we expect to experience satisfaction, fulfillment, or spiritual growth. In this unique book, Michael Carroll—a meditation teacher, executive coach, and corporate director—shares Buddhist wisdom on how to transform the common hassles and anxieties of the workplace into valuable opportunities for heightened wisdom and enhanced effectiveness. Carroll shows us how life on the job—no matter what kind of work we do—can become one of the most engaging and fulfilling areas of our lives. At its heart, *Awake at Work* offers thirty-five principles that we can use throughout our day to revitalize our work as well as our understanding of ourselves and others. Carroll invites readers to contemplate these slogans and to use them on-the-spot, in the midst of work's chaos, to develop clarity, wisdom, and inspiration. Along the way, Carroll presents a variety of techniques and insights to help us acknowledge work, with all its complications, as "a valuable invitation to fully live our lives." In an engaging, accessible, and often humorous style, *Awake at Work* offers readers a path to rediscovering our natural sense of intelligence, confidence, and delight on the job.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Shambhala; Reprint edition (February 14, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1590302729

ISBN-13: 978-1590302729

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 35 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #141,116 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Exercise & Fitness > Injury Prevention #184 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Rituals & Practice #943 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Alternative Medicine > Meditation

Customer Reviews

Carroll, a businessman and graduate of a Buddhist seminary, brings the sitting cushion into the boardroom with this collection of teachings designed to illuminate the power that mindfulness—being somewhere completely—can have at work. By surrendering to the moment,

one becomes "alert, open, and unusually skillful," and in this way, Carroll asserts, "our work actually becomes our spiritual path." In brief, accessible chapters, Carroll expounds some 35 slogans designed to be both fodder for meditation and mnemonic devices for when that particular message can help the most, during an opportune moment at work. Many of the slogans are catchy, and their teachings are pointed and easy to recall: "Welcome the tyrant" helps one to disarm a cranky boss; "Avoid idiot compassion" reminds one to eschew giving merely superficial help. But other slogans are more obscure and their teachings more convoluted: "Study the six confusions" and "Extend the four composites." Carroll relates the spiritual principles to practical business settings—such as cherishing the "small boredom" of an elevator ride—and casual readers will gain some helpful tips for handling their professional lives. Yet for the uninitiated, Carroll's simple mindfulness slogans may appear merely simplistic, leaving the slogans' greatest impact for those who already have some experience with—and faith in—the practice of mindfulness training. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"If you're thinking about really showing up for the tens of thousands of hours you'll spend working during your life, you'll want to read this book." —Shambhala Sun "One of the best books ever written about practicing spirituality on the job." —Spirituality and Health "Highly recommended." —Mandala "Refreshingly practical and down to earth." —The Beacon "A revelatory book that brilliantly applies Buddhist principles to the life of work and vice versa." —Warren Bennis, University Professor, University of Southern California, and author of *On Becoming a Leader* "Michael Carroll does not just write about being awake at work; he has lived that awakening, thoroughly and inventively. His adaptation of Buddhist mindfulness to the complexities of modern employment is a singular and valuable accomplishment, giving us pithy exhortations and detailed instructions for being awake and aware in every workplace situation." —Lewis Richmond, author of *Work as a Spiritual Practice* "An invaluable guide to surviving—and thriving—in today's demanding business environments. I've drawn on Michael's brilliant and wise advice for years. Now everyone can benefit from his wealth of insight and experience." —Deborah Dugan, president, Disney Publishing Worldwide "A truly unique book. The wisdom that has been developed in two very different realms—that of business and spiritual practice—join together to create much richer insight and wisdom. Given the struggles of these times, these teachings are extremely important." —Margaret J. Wheatley, author of *Leadership and the New Science*

Everyone working for someone else, feeling stuck in the grind at work or working for corporate America should read this book. We cannot always change our circumstances but can look for the opportunities in the life we are living. This book helped me get through a trying period of a soul sucking job and turn my experience into a learning opportunity. I'm really grateful.

I love this book, have re-read it several times, and have sent dozens of people copies--virtually all of whom loved the book. It merits being mandatory reading for anyone with a job in a company with more than one person--whether you just got there and it looks great, can't stand it and are on the verge of leaving, or are someplace in-between. Why? How many of us work in companies where the environment isn't as healthy as we want it to be? Yet at the same time, we're often unconscious about these toxicities--maybe even distance ourselves from them or the jobs that create them. We often attribute the job of bettering the work experience to "them"...or maybe even change the environment for our own groups or for the company at large...but in effect treat the people we want to benefit (and ourselves!) as relatively passive participants. "Awake at Work" sheds a whole new perspective on the workplace experience. NOT just enabling people to see their own role in how they experience work. But giving very specific lenses (35, in fact) on how to change the way work feels FOR US for the better, without the environment having to change one iota. Brilliant! And a very easy, almost poetic read, too. How many books give you a whole new and very positive way to think about and experience a place you spend a lot of your time...can be used in a practical way (e.g., chapter a day)...and are just a good read in the bargain? I found Michael Carroll's "Mindful Leadership" great, too--but "Awake at Work" is entirely unique in my experience of management literature. The obvious benefit being "Awake" provides: you'll find work a much more pleasant, productive place--if only because you'll be better engaged with what you're doing, no matter how engaged you already are, or how yucky work seems. In addition to that, because you'll be better engaged, you'll probably find some ways to actually improve what's going on around you. And, while most readers will suddenly like their jobs more, others may realize it's time to move on--but will be much more productive in doing so, since a lot of energy lost in complaining and distancing yourself in the job you don't like is more positively directed while you're in it, and finding a new one. Get this. Read it. Re-read it. Pass it on!

Most of us spend a third of our adult lives at work, and for many it is not much fun. It becomes something that we do to pay the bills, rather than being a fulfilling activity in which we can be fully engaged. Even for people in the professions that require a lot of thinking, work often becomes a bit

of a hindbrain activity that people can do in their sleep. For the last three decades I have been asking three questions: "Why do so many people sleep walk through life?" "Would they thank us if they woke up?" and "What could we do to help them wake up?" The author of this important book helps provide some answers. He founded Awake at Work Associates, a consultancy that specializes in helping organizations and individuals apply mindfulness awareness in the workplace, to help both recover balance and well-being in work. Michael Carroll is both a practicing Buddhist who is an authorized teacher in the lineage of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and has over two decades experience in human resources in several large companies. He teaches mindfulness meditation at the Omega Institute, New York Open Center, and the Wharton Business School in Philadelphia. Michael encourages us to explore our relationships to work and his book is full of practical and uplifting suggestions that are grounded in his work in meditation. One good example is this: he points out that if we are going to be awake at work, we need to understand how we fell asleep. In Tibetan Buddhism, meditators study the six confusions or "mindsets that describe how we imprison ourselves at work." He then applies these six confusions in the workplace: Work as drudgery Work as war Work as addiction Work as entertainment Work as inconvenience Work as a problem As he says, "recognizing that we, not work are imprisoning ourselves is critical if we expect to discover well-being in our livelihoods." So he provides precise ways of "letting go" of the imbalances that work can introduce into our lives by cultivating authenticity and a right code of conduct. He also describes a practice that he calls "enrichment," that can be used to resolve conflicts. The idea is that in an adversarial situation, we should not try to defend our own truth or position, or to find some way in which we can benefit, but to act with good will to produce an outcome that is mutually beneficial. This is more than just trying to find the win/win in a situation: it is a broader concept that goes beyond personal gain to try and find the greater good. This may sound like something easier said than done, but the book contains good advice on how to attain this. What I particularly like about this book is that it is an exercise in practical spirituality. A spirituality that we visit for an hour or two a week may be fine for some people, but the real value of a spiritual life is that it can be something that can inform all of our actions, from education, to work, sex and politics. Highly recommended.

Only one or two helpful items. The rest are no surprises to even the most disgruntled worker. I plan to sell mine soon.

Fantastic book with a wonderful approach to the stresses of work. I have been reading one slogan

every weekday after my meditation practice and then sharing the slogan with a few co-workers who also practice meditation. We have really been enjoying the process of moving through the book and seeing how it impacts our experience. Highly recommended.

Amazing. Life-altering. WISH I would have read this book 30 years ago!!!

This book has really kept my sanity as I try to rise above the hustle of corporate life and yet keep my career interesting and challenging. It has helped me to put things into perspective on the everyday level and I read through parts during lunch and reflect, usually coming back to work energized and ready to face the remainder of the day. I highly recommend this title for anyone who gets the "blahs" from the everyday or is just living in fear that they could get a bad review at any moment because of one mistake they are destined to make at work.

Fun, easy to use, very useful, especially 'work is a mess'.

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