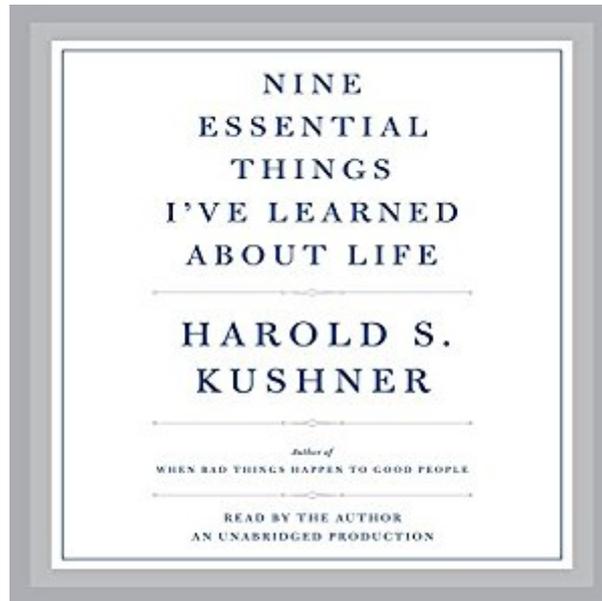


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# Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life



## Synopsis

From the beloved author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, deeply moving and illuminating reflections on what it means to live a good life. As a congregational rabbi for half a century and the best-selling author of 12 books on faith, ethics, and how to apply the timeless wisdom of religious thought to everyday challenges, Rabbi Harold S. Kushner has demonstrated time and again his understanding of the human spirit. In this compassionate new work, his most personal since *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, Kushner relates how his time as a 21st-century rabbi has shaped his senses of religion and morality. He elicits nine essential lessons from the sum of his teaching, study, and experience, offering a lifetime's worth of spiritual food for thought, pragmatic advice, inspiration for a more fulfilling life, and strength for trying times. With fresh, vital insight into belief ("there is no commandment in Judaism to believe in God"), conscience (the Garden of Eden story as you've never heard it), and mercy (forgiveness is "a favor you do yourself, not an undeserved gesture to the person who hurt you"), grounded in Kushner's brilliant readings of scripture, history, and popular culture, *Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life* is compulsory listening from one of modern Judaism's foremost sages. Distilling the wisdom of an extraordinary career, this profoundly inspiring yet practical guide to well-being is truly the capstone to Kushner's luminous oeuvre.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Like all his books, *Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life*, is well written and thought

provoking. I find that I need to read Rabbi Kushner's books twice, once for the broad themes and observations, and then again to digest and think about the arguments presented. I like to walk early in the morning, and have spent the last week or so "arguing" with Rabbi Kushner and his conclusions. It is clear that his perspective is very different from New Testament theology, but that is what is so enjoyable about his writings. He presents well reasoned, theologically sound, insights that stimulate thinking. In a time when so many books try to overwhelm with mind-numbing actions and contrived circumstances, Rabbi Kushner presents observations steeped in experience and life learned lessons. The book is well worth your time. It is good to wrestle with your beliefs and look at life from another perspective. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Rabbi Kushner's best and most meaningful book since "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." He does not preach, but rather tells of his own beliefs and thoughts at the age of eighty, after many years as a rabbi. He does so in a kind and understanding manner, leaving the reader comforted and perhaps thinking, "Yes, he makes a good point." This is not a book filled with clichés. This is the product of a life well lived, by a man who suffered the tragic death of a son, who presents his thoughts on life in a simple and readable manner.

An excellent book about the truly important things in life. Rabbi Kushner nails it exactly, especially if you are Christian. He gets down to the roots of the Judeo-Christian beliefs as they probably originated and discards the concepts that have been added over the last 2000 years that detract from the usual, exclusive interpretation.

I have savored every word thus far... clinging to it like a child's blanket. I grew up well grounded in the Scriptures, but life has given me more lemons than I could make lemonade with. For those in my shoes, when you wish the Shepherd would notice you are missing and actually come looking for his little sheep... this is for you. Finally, someone has lovingly understood my sorrow, yearning, and pain. I wish I could meet the author just to hear him say, "I understand. It's okay. I know."

I did not find this to be full of insightful gems, but others in my book group did, so perhaps it's just a matter of how the book intersects with one's own experiences, spiritual journey, etc. You can get the main messages (the "essential things") from the chapter titles -- if those intrigue you, the book might work for you; if those seem kind of obvious, might not be worth your time. I would note that this book could have appeal to readers from any of the major Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity, and

Islam), or even to spiritual seekers who don't identify with a particular religion.

I love all of Harold Kushner's books! This book is very insightful and gives a fresh view of faith in any religion. He asks questions you yourself have asked and gives plausible answers. A must read for the inquiring mind.

I really appreciated his perspective although I have a Christian background. He tackles the Adam and Eve story and other Biblical stories that are hard for me to accept and understand. Wise and well written. I got from my library but would like a copy for my personal shelf. Thank you for writing this.

Good book with nine helpful principals for living our lives. These are gleaned from the Rabbi's many years of writing, speaking, counseling, and helping. They are the principals by which he tries to live his own life.

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