



BOOK REVIEW

The JoyfulTalisman: Conversations on Human Values for a Joyful World

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The profound discourse in the book JoyfulTalisman: Conversations on Human Values for a Joyful World presents not only a framework but a guiding light in times when humanity is adrift, having distanced itself from the very core of what makes life meaningful—our interconnectedness and values.

The book is a wonderful collection of conversations between the two authors reminding us of the ancient Indian tradition of dialogues or samvada, which can be described as the noblest form of conversations.

The eloquent exploration of human values through the concept of JoyfulTalisman —rooted in frameworks such as Carol Ryff’s Model of Psychological Well-being, Martin Seligman’s PERMA Model, and the concept of Human Interdependence Literacy—is a treasure trove of wisdom.

The concepts introduced—self-acceptance, personal growth, human solidarity, and nonviolent communication—are more than mere ideals; they are practical tools for inner transformation and collective betterment. It is apt that Mahatma Gandhi’s Talisman has inspired the framework of JoyfulTalisman developed by the authors through this book.

The deep conversations between the authors while discussing their different pillars of JoyfulTalisman depict how we can live a joyful and happy life through acts of altruism, serving and caring for others, and through abiding by an ethical and moral compass. This is critical as we see the erosion of ethical and moral standards around us.

It is not just the framework of human values that the authors give us through this book, they also introduce the concept of ‘Human Interdependence Literacy’. The notion of ‘Human Interdependence Literacy’ resonates powerfully. It is a poignant reminder that our existence is not isolated but deeply intertwined with every life form. In our present-day world, where climate change, environmental degradation, and societal divisions have taken a toll, the values of empathy, kindness, compassion, and gratitude you champion are not just noble—they are necessary.

These virtues connect us to our shared humanity and the myriad living beings with whom we share this planet. The authors argue that we need to be human interdependent literate to be able to negotiate today's growing challenges.

The insights on the first pillar of JoyfulTalisman, 'turning inwards' touch upon an eternal truth. In a world preoccupied with externalities, the call to cultivate self-love, self-compassion, and loving kindness is revolutionary. It is a call to dismantle the walls of our inner prisons and rediscover the profound joy that lies within. The authors have beautifully articulated this as the key to nurturing a peaceful and joyful world.

The authors have also introduced the concept of human solidarity footprints in the book. Emphasizing on how solidarity is a testament to the strength of collective goodwill, the authors underscore the need for individuals to be able to measure their solidarity footprints. By fostering reverence for all life and extending compassion to those outside our immediate circles, we create ecosystems of peace and coexistence and the authors, during their dialogue, highlight this.

Such solidarity is indeed the foundation of harmony in diversity. If we are able to measure our solidarity footprints, we can definitely contribute towards a culture of peace and harmony, the authors note.

According to the authors, the ability to measure one's nonviolent action as nonviolent footprints is also part of JoyfulTalisman. This includes practising inner nonviolence and nonviolence in all aspects of our lives, which would make us stress free. It will help in anger management and constructive handling of conflicts.

At the fundamental level, the authors have beautifully explained that the very essence of life demands respect for every creature—be it plants, animals, birds, or even microorganisms. These remarkable beings sustain us in ways we often overlook. The soil we walk on, the food we consume, the air we breathe—all owe their vitality to the unseen work of these life forms.

While they ask for no recognition or reward, they deserve our utmost respect and care. Living in harmony with all creatures is not just an act of kindness but also an acknowledgment of the intricate web of life that holds us all together. They underline that it is our moral responsibility to work and care for all living beings and that we are stewards of Mother Earth.

The book's message is timely and transformative. It is a call to reclaim the forgotten values of coexistence, humility, and respect for all life. The authors have given a clarion call to individuals who are committed to peaceful coexistence that they need to work incessantly to inspire human values amongst individuals and communities worldwide through a mission approach.

As we engage with the framework of 'Joyful Talisman' and imbibe its teachings, we take one-step closer to creating a world that reflects the beauty and integrity of our vision. It not only helps individuals in their personal growth, but also in their spiritual growth.

The authors in fact, could consider a JoyfulTalisman series as traversing the in-depth dimensions of different human values which is the need of the hour today.