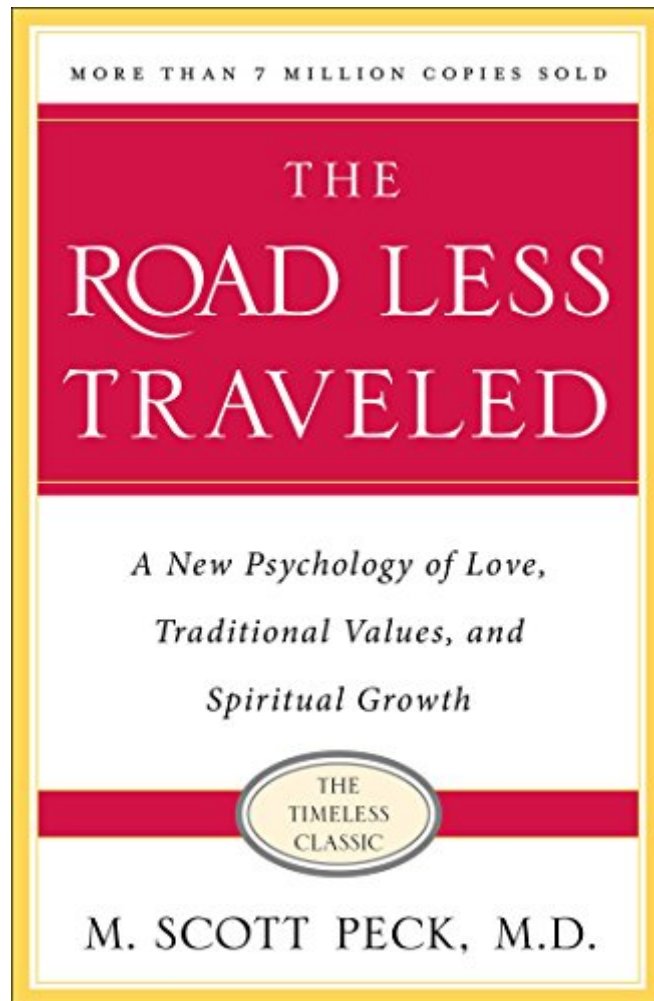


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The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology Of Love, Traditional Values And Spiritual Growth



Synopsis

Now featuring a new introduction by Dr. M. Scott Peck, the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of the classic bestseller *The Road Less Traveled*, celebrated by *The Washington Post* as "not just a book but a spontaneous act of generosity." Perhaps no book in this generation has had a more profound impact on our intellectual and spiritual lives than *The Road Less Traveled*. With sales of more than seven million copies in the United States and Canada, and translations into more than twenty-three languages, it has made publishing history, with more than ten years on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Written in a voice that is timeless in its message of understanding, *The Road Less Traveled* continues to help us explore the very nature of loving relationships and leads us toward a new serenity and fullness of life. It helps us learn how to distinguish dependency from love; how to become a more sensitive parent; and ultimately how to become one's own true self. Recognizing that, as in the famous opening line of his book, "Life is difficult" and that the journey to spiritual growth is a long one, Dr. Peck never bullies his readers, but rather guides them gently through the hard and often painful process of change toward a higher level of self-understanding.

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Customer Reviews

The way this book is written is at times light, nurturing, and joyous but often heavy, challenging, and confrontational. It is a metaphor for Scott Peck's perspective on life. The first sentence of the book, "life is difficult," reflects Scott Peck's idea that spiritual/mental growth must be worked towards, that human beings are generally lazy, and that growth of consciousness is a life-long process. Everything is generally working against our growth: laziness; defense mechanisms employed to maintain the status quo of mental illness over the struggle for accepting responsibility; confusion over the true nature of love; resistance to "grace" (the idea of being open to our unconscious and the symbolic language of God); lack of discipline; adults being mentally and spiritually immature; poor parenting resulting in neurosis and character disorder; and a culture that generally defends, accepts, and nurtures sickness over health. Sometimes Scott Peck's language is a little heavy, but it's only because he packs so much valuable information and insight into each page. The first chapter on Discipline (a tool to solve our problems. Another great Peck idea: see problems as challenges, and it is in our response to problems that life takes on its meaning and color) was a bit dry to me, but contains excellent information on delaying gratification, balancing and bracketing (attempting to listen to others/view situations with objectivity), dedication to the truth, and a key to anyone seeking to grow: ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY. The second section on Love was fascinating to me. Scott Peck does a great job debunking the myth of romantic love, but perhaps most valuable is the idea that real loving is about nurturing your own or another's spiritual growth. Love is an action and a decision, not just a feeling.

The book opens with the words "Life is difficult." Once you accept that, it becomes a lot easier! But most of us don't accept that. We think if we do things the right way, or if other people would, then eventually life would become easier. Our material needs will be met, love will bloom forever, bad things won't happen to us, and life will unfold according to our individual needs and wishes. Guess again. If you're constantly trying hard and finding life to be a major disappointment, you may find comfort and practical help in the reading and re-reading of this book. Peck writes in an easy to read, easy to understand manner, writing of his life and that of many of his own patients. He begins with a section on Discipline; the next is on Love; then Growth and Religion; closing (how appropriately) with Grace. When first I read this, in my mid-twenties, (living life in what one of my 'friends' called Life in the Breakdown Lane) the sections didn't look like they'd offer anything to help me. Discipline was something I wanted to act out against, not find solace in. The section on Love, I was disappointed to find, did NOT provide any instructions on how to find a knight on a white horse.

Growth and Religion seemed some kind of a paradox to me, and I was sure that Grace was nothing more than a name I wished I had. But within those Sections I have again and again (at different levels) found peace of mind through solutions that at first I didn't fully understand, but came to believe in -- for anyone looking for help in improving their lives, from a non-dogmatic, non-fundamentalist point of view, I'd strongly recommend this book.

I first read M. Scott Peck's 'The Road Less Travelled' over 20 years ago, but it is a text to which I return again and again, as Peck's insights and observations remain a constant source of inspiration and guidance in my life. It still finds a ready home in the hands of therapists, counselors, ministers, teachers, career planners, and others as part of their resources, and is not out of place in the home of anyone who cares about the directions of her or his life. Peck was a clinical psychiatrist - the material for this book came largely from his experiences with clients and others, seeing what worked and what didn't, what was missing and what was mis-understood. Often cases involved psychotherapy (talk therapy), but the processes here are not confined to therapists' offices. The same kinds of problem solving, processing and relationship building that takes place in psychotherapy can be used as life-long tools. Peck resists labels such as Freudian and Jungian; he doesn't look for, nor does he offer, quick fixes or the psychotherapeutic variety of the get-rich-quick schemes. This book is not a therapy manual, but rather a guide to spiritual growth that incorporates therapeutic and psychological principles. Peck echoes the sentiments of many spiritual directors and leaders through the millennia that spiritual and personal growth are long journeys, not short leaps. It involves dedication and intention, and a willingness to accept risk and change. Perhaps it is ironic that, given this, the first topic Peck focuses upon is Discipline. However, without discipline, change can go unchecked and uncharted, growth can become problematic, and the human soul becomes susceptible to a host of difficulties.

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