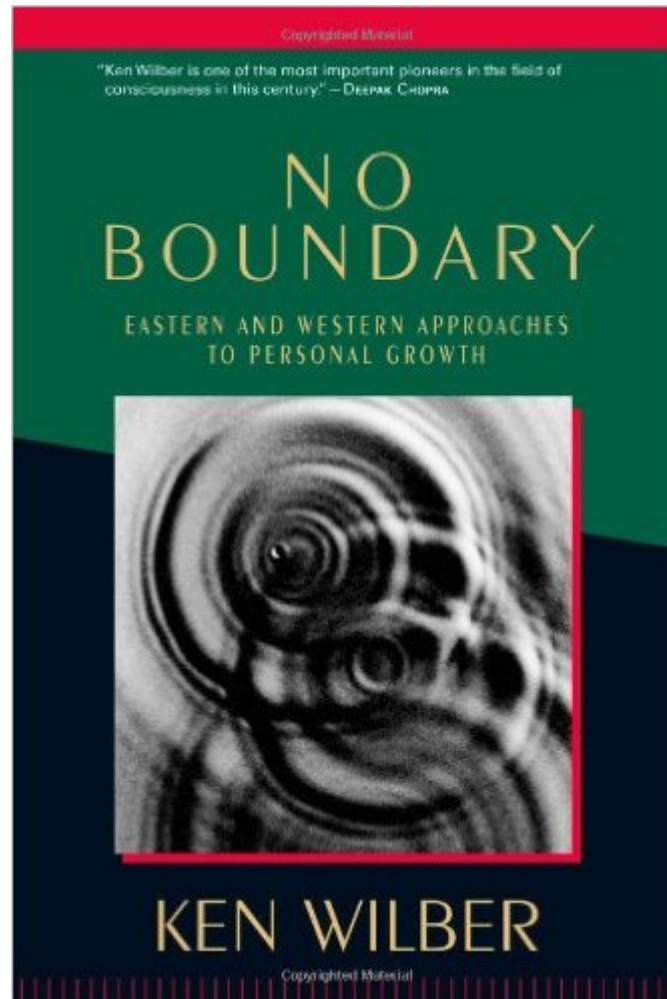


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No Boundary: Eastern And Western Approaches To Personal Growth



Synopsis

A simple yet comprehensive guide to the types of psychologies and therapies available from Eastern and Western sources. Each chapter includes a specific exercise designed to help the reader understand the nature and practice of the specific therapies. Wilber presents an easy-to-use map of human consciousness against which the various therapies are introduced and explained. This edition includes a new preface.

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Customer Reviews

Ken Wilber has provided a synthesis of virtually all psychological theories and spiritual perspectives in this short introduction to his spectrum of consciousness. Consciousness, in this context, refers to our personal sense of identify, our personal answer to the question, "Who am I?" Wilber makes much of the fact that our first answer to this question is largely a matter of identifying that which is "not me." The distinction between "me" and "not me" is the fundamental human error, for in making it we deny our oneness with all reality. Hence the title indicates that to grow in consciousness is to eliminate these artificial boundaries. The first half of the book explains this in detail. Fortunately, our denial of oneness with reality results in dissatisfaction with life that becomes the primary motivation to resolve four basic false dichotomies: (1) persona versus shadow; (2) ego versus body; (3) centaur versus environment; and (4) transpersonal identity versus unity consciousness. At each stage, the harmony in identity that follows elimination of the boundary becomes a new identity defined by new boundaries. Persona and shadow become ego. Ego and body become centaur. Centaur and environment become a transpersonal, but non-universal, identity. Only in unity

consciousness, or oneness with all reality, do we eliminate boundaries and find peace. Chapters are devoted to all four dichotomies. In each Wilber discusses the nature of the boundary conflict and therapeutic approaches sympathetic to its resolution. Interestingly, he understands the conflicts in various therapeutic approaches to be differences in dichotomy rather than truth. Some therapies work for one stage; others for another; all have value at times. Often he discusses the spiritual/religious impact of the dichotomies and their resolution. In each chapter he provides a narrative discussion of related materials by other authors for further study. Everyone will not find Wilber totally convincing. Jungians will be disappointed in Wilber's simplistic resolution of the persona/shadow boundary. Christians will be uncomfortable with the strong Hindu emphasis in unity consciousness. Behaviorists will note their total absence in the discussion. Those predisposed to resist Wilber's synthesis should take note that it is not fair to reject Wilber without providing an equally sensitive and compelling synthesis of the myriad therapies, theories of personality and spiritualities that have lasting value worldwide. This book is a primer, but one that awakened a desire in me to read more comprehensively and thoroughly. The analytical approach of experimental psychology is unlikely to answer the deepest questions of humanity. Wilber's spectrum provides a working model that may.

Ken Wilbur is one of the most intelligent and cohesive thinkers I have ever read. He unites many branches of philosophy and psychology in this book. He provides understanding why so many truths contradict each other. Ponder this: (paraphrased from the text) Unity consciousness, or no-boundary consciousness, by definition has no boundary. As such, you could say that there is no boundary which separates us from It in this moment. Logic tells us that this must be true. The only thing which prevents us from experiencing No-Boundary Awareness right now, is our resistance to it. The book is not exactly "light" reading, but if you are willing to put on your thinking cap, it is certainly fascinating

I have read many of Ken Wilber's books and this is one of the better ones. The spotlight reviews do a very good job of pointing out the shortcomings and strengths as well as summarizing Ken's general ideas. I won't repeat what they have said here, but will add my own thoughts. This book has a different tone and structure than many of Mr. Wilber's other books. There is less repetition and somehow he seems to be more accessible and lyrical in his descriptions and metaphors. If you read later Wilber, you will find it lacks some of the feeling tone of this earlier work. In this book, Ken talks about boundaries and how they are often mental constructs. For example, the boundary that defines

me could be taken arbitrarily as my skin. However, I might say I have a body, rather than that I am a body. This implies perhaps that I am a mind that is associated with a body and that I'm moving the line between self and other to the head. In a similar fashion, it is possible that a may have a transpersonal experience in which case my boundary moves out beyond my skin. The idea is much like the arbitrary division between a tree's roots, limbs and branches. These divisions don't necessarily exist as distinct boundaries on the tree, but arise from the analytical nature of thought. In general, the book looks at a synthesis of Western and Eastern psychological and spiritual approaches to growth. It challenges tacit assumptions on both sides and tries to get the reader to take a broader perspective on reality while honoring what is good in each particular tradition. It is an extremely thought-provoking work and includes a lot of good scholarship. I find it to be highly complimentary to Wilber's later work and often more eloquent. If you are looking for the best, most comprehensive and readable introduction to Wilber's work, I recommend A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING. If you are interested in a good developmental psychology book from Wilber's point of view, then the ATMAN PROJECT will not disappoint. It covers development from birth to enlightenment and it quite fascinating. If you own these three books you will have a good overview of Wilber's most important ideas without a lot of overlap. If you are interested primarily in his latest thinking, then INTEGRAL SPIRITUALITY may also be a good choice.

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