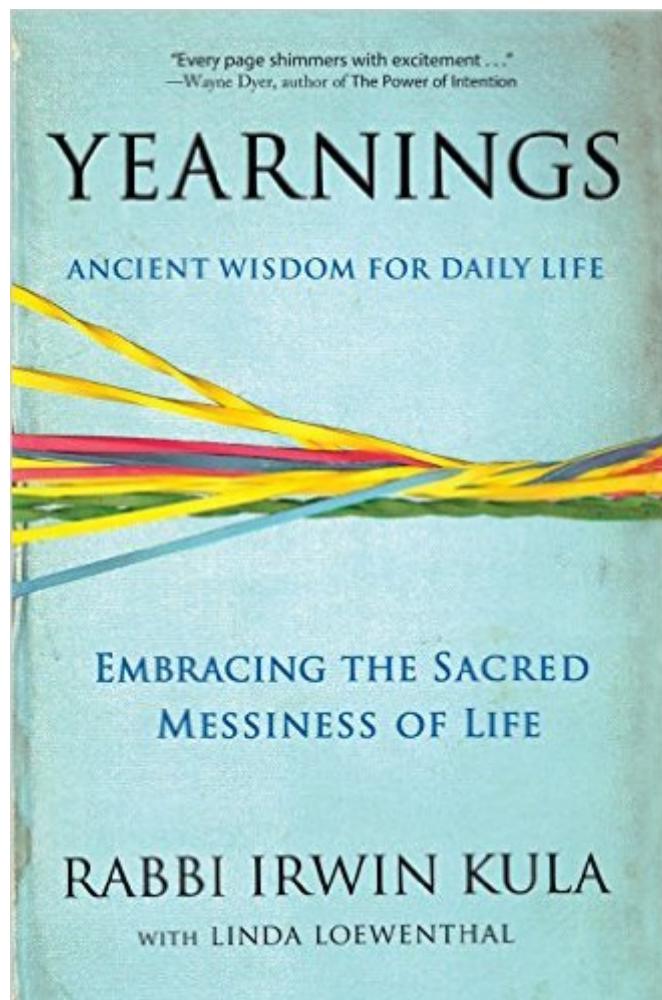


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Yearnings: Embracing The Sacred Messiness Of Life



Synopsis

Winner of the Books for a Better Life Award Chosen as one of "The 10 Best Spiritual Books of 2006" by Spirituality and Health magazine Rabbi Irwin Kula explores desire in spiritual life. Rather than leading us astray, our longings are gateways to self discovery. Our yearnings, once understood, can lead us to discover an expansive vision of God or a wider reality. And when we embrace even our most painful or taboo desires, we can love more deeply and live more fully. The Biblical authors wrote about characters who, rather than leading perfect lives, actually struggled with their longings for success, love, sex, and happiness. Through interpreting those stories and other spiritual traditions, as well as exploring his own desires and those of regular people, Rabbi Kula shows that "The more we allow ourselves to unfold, the less likely we are to unravel. The more we dive into our desires, the more exquisite life becomes."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With journalistic skepticism and scientific training carefully guarding any religious conclusions, I nonetheless am drawn to seek better understanding of spirituality, as experienced world-wide throughout the ages, taking wisdom wherever I find it, as long as it applies broadly. This book takes the stories that shaped our civilization as well as touches on others civilizations also, to help us understand where we came from. It suggests what we can take from those stories to live better, richer lives, regardless of whether or not the stories are precisely true. It explains how rituals developed and what they mean, and how they can be relevant today. Although Kula is a Jewish Rabbi, his insights are relevant to all beliefs. As a non-Jewish person myself, I never for a moment

felt the book was written for Jewish people; on the contrary, I think his goal was to include everyone in a common understanding . . . an understanding of the differences of mankind.

Irwin Kula takes us past our longing that a single truth applied everywhere will give us fulfillment. Instead he shows that in every problem is an opportunity--that what initially seems confusing and complicated doesn't need to be feared but appreciated. As I read his book, I felt optimistic without feeling naive or simplistic.

Rabbi Kula is a special breed of spiritual leader whose voice transcends the boundaries between religions. His book reveals a gift of communicating in a different way than typically comes down from the pulpit. In spreading his perspective of "wisdom", he is not afraid to challenge conventional wisdom and traditional interpretations; in fact he is at his best when looks inside these axioms that most of us take for granted. His willingness to share his personal experiences and his own transgressions lend credibility and humility to his stories and observations. This book serves as encouragement to look inside ourselves without judgment and look outward with a healthier perspective.

I found this book to be very helpful to me in tying together my core "yearnings" to the insights to a wisdom tradition that Irwin Kula makes alive and relevant. There is no claim to a "right" or "wrong" - rather it is how to tap into centuries-old teachings to make some sense of this crazy human experience. Almost everyone can relate to the stories that are told. There is truly something for everyone here.

I enjoyed this book myself, then one of our guest writers at our online magazine, [...], Gail Katz, wrote her own recommendation of Rabbi Kula's book. Gail points out that, as a Jewish woman, this book touched her -- but I can also recommend this to a broader audience, as well. The entire concept of the book is fresh and appealing because -- let's be honest -- most of us do not lead perfectly organized lives. Our lives are not only messy -- they're filled with ambiguity and daily friction. We love our family, for example, but we question -- and sometimes deeply disagree -- with some family members. The messiness extends further into our workplaces, communities and world. Rabbi Kula is trying to provide a spiritual framework for accepting that messiness as part of life's pilgrimage. Rather than trying to escape it, he argues, we should realize that a certain messiness is the fabric of life itself. The challenge is where we will allow our yearnings to carry us in

this pilgrimage through the mess.

I love this volume. I bought both the book and the audio version. Rabbi's voice and words are so soothing and he has the ability to impart so much truth and meaning into a few words. I recommend this work to anyone seeking wisdom. You will be richly rewarded by both the book and the audio cd!!!

I was so taken with the positive energy in Irwin Kula's book that I immediately gave a copy to each of my kids and to a friend who is dealing with a load of messiness as am I. Kula's interpretive take on several stories in the Bible is refreshing and helps me to use my own messiness to better advantage.

This review pertains to the audio version, and is read by the author. I am a spiritual counselor and an ordained minister. However, my daily work is in the financial industry. I point this out only to give the reader a perspective. If you have any interest at all in a real understanding of God and life, please read this book. Rabbi Irwin Kula shares wonderful insights and wisdom into why our perception and expectations of life are they way they are. He also helps readers to see the simplicity of our personal universe when given another, perhaps more considered, viewpoint. There is a lot of rich material for thought and enlightenment here, so take your time and enjoy what Rabbi Kula teaches. For me it was like eating a great meal, every mouthful to be savored and all the food healthy and nourishing.

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