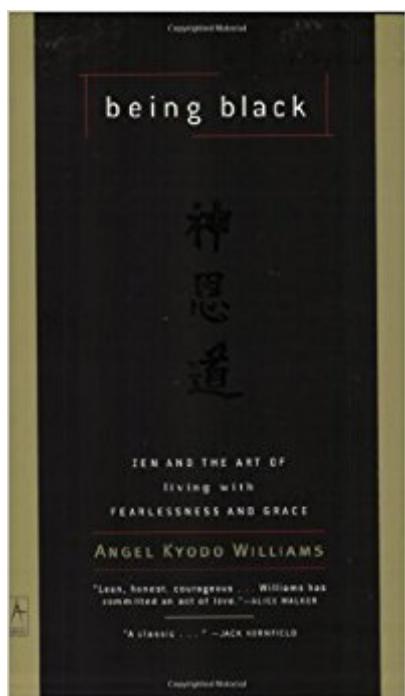


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# Being Black: Zen And The Art Of Living With Fearlessness And Grace (Compass)



## **Synopsis**

Being Black has gained an enthusiastic following in African American and Zen communities. Angel Kyodo Williams shows black Americans how to develop a "warrior-spirit" of truth and responsibility that can lead to happiness and personal transformation. The principles and tools she offers provide a framework for addressing the African American community's unique worries, hopes, challenges, and expectations. Williams uses an eloquent, hip, and honest approach to share personal stories, time-tested teachings, and simple guidelines that invite readers of all faiths to discover how to step into the freedom of a life lived with fearlessness, grace, and fluidity.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In this exquisite primer on Zen Buddhism, author and ordained Zen priest Angel Kyodo Williams is not trying to convert African Americans into a new religion. Instead, she is simply presenting Zen principles and practices that emphasize living a life of grace and self-acceptance. Having faced the daily challenges of growing up black in America, she is especially adept at showing how these Zen principles apply to the African American experience. "People of color are especially in need of new ways and new answers to the separation and fear we face each day," Kyodo Williams writes. "It wouldn't be a stretch to say that as black people, more than most groups in this country, we live our daily lives with the distinct taste of fear in our mouths.... While the principles offered here are not an antidote to the underlying reasons for our fears, they can give us a different way to approach them."

Kyodo Williams offers a savvy yet tender voice as she walks readers through the basic principles of Zen. It's hard to resist her invitation to take on the numerous sensible vows that lead to enlightenment, such as staying true to the warrior spirit while "committing ourselves to practicing good." The bottom line is that this is a book about claiming the strength, compassion, and integrity that dwell within everyone. And although it speaks to the particular needs and trials of the African American community, readers of all colors and walks of life will find this an irresistible invitation.

--Gail Hudson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Compatibility with other traditions is an unsung strength of Buddhism. Here, ordained Zen priest Williams makes a compelling case for African-Americans to embrace this practice that originated far from their fundamental roots on the continent of Africa. Although she does not advocate that African-Americans replace their traditional religions with Buddhism, she does believe that Zen's practical approach to ordinary life can help them, noting also that Buddha was a brown-skinned person. Williams, who is African-American, quite comfortably employs black vernacular, balancing such light moments with meatier discourses on the particular history and weight of blackness. Williams's primary thrust, however, encompasses the basic whats, hows and especially the whys of Buddhism. Under her effective touch, such concepts as Bodhisattva Vows, Pure Precepts and the Eightfold Path become accessible possibilities for a better everyday life. Postures and procedures round out this unassuming primer that squarely embraces Zen (meaning "meditation"). With subtle persuasion and highly readable prose, Williams advocates that a "warrior spirit" of truth and responsibility is a good fit for people who "want to know how to be here in this life and be okay just as we are." She has reached well beyond her stated audience, for to whom does this not apply? (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Learning about what being a Buddhist means from someone who is not a white academic is very liberating. Too much has been written from a very narrow, academic, view point. The academic perspective is important but the actual lived experience of humans, all humans and all beings, is one of the aspects of Buddha's teachings. Angel Kyodo Williams brings the perspective of a Black Woman whom is also a teacher of the Dharma to the general reader. She also reaches out to minorities who are too often, whether white buddhists are aware of it or not, shunned from participating in the life of many American Sanghas. The religious background of many Blacks in the United States is that of being Southern Baptist. Kyodo williams addresses how this background

informs her experiences in the US, with various Sanghas and with Buddhism, specifically Soto Zen Buddhism, in particular.

I found "Being Black:Zen and the Art of Living with Fearlessness and Grace" to be exactly what the doctor ordered. The Book is written in a language that is clear, to the point, and easy to understand. Free from the "psycho-babble" that some books on Buddhism tend to be bogged down with, 'Being Black...' is written in such a way that I felt the author empathized with other Black people who find themselves alone on the Buddhist path and in life. Sharing in the problems we as Black people sometimes face in our family and social settings. Touching on the negative self talk that we sometimes indulge in. Showing how we can be our own worst enemies at times. Don't get me wrong-anyone and just about everyone can benefit from reading this book, regardless of race or spiritual path. It teaches, inspires, comforts, and is even entertaining in some parts. I highly recommend this book to all who are on a spiritual quest to improve their lives.

A must read for anyone looking to initiate a practice of loving kindness, especially anyone of color. Not only enlightening, but instructional as well. HIGHLY recommended!

I loved this teaching from beginning to end. It will start me on my journey. Thank you Rev. angel Williams

Black, white or any color this is a great Dharma book.

This is a great book for anyone interested in learning more about buddhism, particularly if you are a person of color.

A very fine, thought-provoking book

Excellent musings and observations by a thoughtful and insightful person who has not spent her time just floating thru the world without learning anything

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