



Healing: A Woman's Journey from Doctor to Nun

Dang Nghiem

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This extraordinary story takes the reader from Saigon to the California coast to a monastery in southwest France. Huong Huynh was born to a Vietnamese mother and a U.S. soldier in the midst of war. She dedicated her life to healing and transforming the suffering of other people, first as a medical doctor and then as a nun. Ordained by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, who gave her the name Dang Nghiem, she eventually began to experience true healing practices. With humor, insight, and an irrepressible sense of joy, Sister Dang Nghiem's remarkable story offers clarity and guidance for anyone who has dealt with suffering and loss.

Healing: A Woman's Journey from Doctor to Nun Details

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Thuy-Tu says

An insightful and inspiring book from sister Dang Nghiem. The letters and poetry she wrote and shared in the book were lovely. I happened to read this during a period of major change and anxiety in my life, and it served as a great reminder that nothing is permanent, and that coming back to the present moment is always a way in which you can help to calm and heal yourself and others around you. So grateful to my mom for giving me this book many years ago.

Denise Tarasuk says

Reading sister Dang Nghiem's Healing A Woman's Journey from Doctor to Nun was such an honor! It filled my heart with love. I shall visit her words again and again. One time reading her touching words is not enough. I have cherished the story with in and feel so blessed to be able to read about her life. Thank you, for sharing Sister Dang!

Laura Pham says

This book is an excellent book about a women's journey from a doctor to a nun. Sister Dang Nghiem's story is so inspiring. I even got the honor to meet her when I was at Blue Cliff Monastery. When I was at blue cliff, I always knew her as one of the brothers and sisters who ran the teens program and is always graceful, happy, and loving. Being so loving and graceful, I would never think that she had so much suffering in her. I absolutely love Sister D and her book. I felt a deep connection with Sister D and her story. Having a similar past, this book taught me a lot and helped me with my struggles. This book is precious to me.

Carolyn says

excellent. made me want to pack my bags and go to plum village. you feel peaceful just reading her story and insights. she has had quite a journey from wartime viet nam to medical school to buddhist nun. it shows you that anyone can heal for past experience if you allow yourself.

Linda Walters says

I have had the distinct honor of meeting Sister Dang Nghiem when she was at Deer Park Monastery. She is such a delightful, happy, and peaceful person, one would never suspect the terrible suffering that she has encountered in her life. Now that I know, I wish she were near so I could practice hugging meditation with her and tell her that I will always be her for her.

All the myriad books that comment on and analyze the sutras are fine and they are a necessary part of the practice, but if you want to see it's pure essence and it's transformative power over one life, then please read this book.

Ro says

One of the most beautiful books I have ever read

Breanne says

I just loved this frank account of one woman's journey to becoming a nun. It inspires me to think that someone from such a rough background can find healing and peace. As with most auto-biographies, I find wisdom in being able to put myself in the shoes of another and understand their lives, their pain, and their healing.

JT says

"Pain is inevitable but suffering is optional"

Taking care of the present moment is taking care of the past. A beautiful present moment becomes a beautiful past.

When we encounter a situation in which our mind is strongly stimulated - such as when we are experiencing fear, anger, provocation, or excitement - the brain will release a large quantity of neurotransmitters and hormones related to emotions. The sense organs become extremely sensitive; the skeletal muscles contract; the heart and lungs work at a faster rate. When we practice mindfulness, our heart and lungs slow down, and we are able to truly experience the present moment, without getting stuck in the strong emotions.

What is most important to you? My awareness. Without awareness I would not know what I have and what I need to transform and heal.

My sincere hope has always been that my life experiences and insights can benefit others, so they may realize that "pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional." I hope that we all may find ways to take even better care of ourselves, so that each of us might choose light over darkness in every precious moment of our life.

Vicki says

A lovely book by Sr. Dang, one of Thich Nhat Hanh's monastics. Her story is compelling as she survived conflict, cultural and familial, and abuse growing up. Coming to the US, she adjusted to life here, but carried with her the traumas. Her decision to enter monastic life provided her with the means to heal. She describes this process honestly and with clarity. I thought it was a wonderful reminder of the ways we need to be

mindful and to be with ourselves and others compassionately, whether in or out of a monastery.

Janice says

I have been so inspired by Sister Dang Nghiem's dedication and courage to her healing. A wonderful book.

Genpren says

"I don't want to grow into an old woman whose nightmares and losses are her sole companions."(81) A book for anyone who would like to claim this line as their own intention.

I interviewed Sister Dang Nghiem several years ago after hearing her recount part of her story. I asked her to use her story to help explain the concept of a "Hungry Ghost". What I feel is missing from the short video is the knowledge that her mother died while Sister Dang Nghiem was a child.

<http://vimeo.com/100549>

Shelley says

Good addition to biographies (in this case, an autobiography) of contemporary Buddhist women. Born in Vietnam during the American war, Dang Nghiem is sent to the USA where she earns two medical degrees--only to leave medicine in order to become a Buddhist nun.

Nikki Myers says

I learned about Sister Dang Nghiem in a recent Prevention magazine article. Nghiem and her brother came to the United States from Vietnam. Enduring a painful childhood of abuse in Vietnam and rejection in the US, she graduated college, Medical school, and found a wonderful boyfriend. She was unable to escape the horrific memories that haunted her mind. When her boyfriend was unexpectedly killed in an accident, she found solace and healing in a monastery. She became a Buddhist nun with a healing touch.

Question: Is possible to gain personal healing outside of the monastic society? I wonder if Sister Dang will ever return to society outside of the Monastery?

It was a great story that has stirred my interest in how meditation can heal pain. Sister Nghiem displayed a tremendous amount of courage to seek change and peace in her life.

Alexa says

Sister Dang Nghiem's story really touched me. It taught me that we're all always improving and healing ourselves, and that there isn't a singular "point" we need to start from or achieve in order to be "okay." We can start from wherever we are, and as long as we keep working to improve ourselves, that's all that matters. There's so much more to this memoir than just that, but this is just what I've found as the most important lesson offered here. =)

Jen says

Just finished this. It is a very simple book with a very heavy premise. I think I loved it for it's ability to make Buddhism and Buddhist study...accessible. Sister Dang Nghiem's tone in the book seems at first very childlike, simple, yet the more I contemplated it, the more I think I loved it. It reminded me that we, most of humanity, have strayed so far from simple ideas, simple clear speech, even in my own world I make things more complicated than they need to be...this was a lovely little quick read that is drawing me back to the moment, of living with less, and back to my practice. I am yearning for practice.
