



The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living

Joseph Telushkin

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In **The Book of Jewish Values**, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin has combed the Bible, the Talmud, and the whole spectrum of Judaism's sacred writings to give us a manual on how to lead a decent, kind, and honest life in a morally complicated world. Telushkin speaks to the major ethical issues of our time, issues that have, of course, been around since the beginning. He offers one or two pages a day of pithy, wise, and easily accessible teachings designed to be put into immediate practice. The range of the book is as broad as life itself:

The first trait to seek in a spouse (Day 17)
When, if ever, lying is permitted (Days 71-73)
Why acting cheerfully is a requirement, not a choice (Day 39)
What children don't owe their parents (Day 128)
Whether Jews should donate their organs (Day 290)
An effective but expensive technique for curbing your anger (Day 156)
How to raise truthful children (Day 298)
What purchases are always forbidden (Day 3)

In addition, Telushkin raises issues with ethical implications that may surprise you, such as the need to tip those whom you don't see (Day 109), the right thing to do when you hear an ambulance siren (Day 1), and why wasting time is a sin (Day 15). Whether he is telling us what Jewish tradition has to say about insider trading or about the relationship between employers and employees, he provides fresh inspiration and clear guidance for every day of our lives.

The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living Details

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Les says

This book was recommended to me by a Jewish friend so I could better understand her faith. Each daily reading is a carefully reasoned guidance on correct action and attitude in a common situation in everyday life -- not just Jewish life but anyone's life in the world.

The lessons are grounded in Jewish teaching, but that is a tradition grounded in millenia of study and reasoning and interpretation of truly good and just action. I found little in it to contradict the life Catholics are supposed to live and much to cause me to reflect on how I live my own life.

I will be returning to this book for many years.

Kris Siegel says

There is an entry for each day of the year. When my kids were younger, I tried to read this with my family at dinner each night. We didn't make it through the whole year, but this book offered lots of conversation starters. At the end of a week's worth of entries, there is a list of questions to discuss on Shabbat. This is really a great book, and I'm putting it back on the dining room table!

Kirk Mahoney says

Reading this book aloud to my wife was my daily habit this year, with some reading ahead because of a vacation and again at the end of this year.

We were reared in Christian homes, and we found that every one of the values discussed by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin resonated with -- and reinforced -- our own values.

No matter your background, I highly recommend that you make reading a "day" from this book a daily habit for a full year, if not for two!

As a fan of Dennis Prager, I see how he and Joseph Telushkin have been life-long friends.

Denise says

I love reading this book. It helps keep things in perspective and helps me keep my moral compass calibrated. I take it out every year during the Days of Awe.

Cheryl Kloda says

In this age of many false values, I found it very refreshing to read "The Book Of Jewish Values". The author, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, makes his book very understandable. Many topics were covered such as how to deal in business, raising kind children, better ways to speak to people etc. Sadly, there are people that practice Jewish rituals, but they are not kind or ethical. Rabbi Telushkin shows that even if one does not practice all the rituals, he or she can still be an ethical person. Yes, words and actions do matter! If more people practiced these values, we would live in a kinder world. Finally, one can be any religion and still get much wisdom from reading this book.

Todd says

Finished my second read through and found plenty of wisdom within. I probably mention something from this book on a weekly basis and really enjoyed the format of daily topics.

Rachel Bayles says

Good, solid guidance for life.

Michelle Jones says

I read this book over the course of a year. Give or take a few missed and a few catch up days I read one value each day. This book has had such a large impact on my behavior in lots and lots of ways. One of the most obvious ways is the way I deal with panhandlers and homeless people I encounter. If someone asks me for a dollar and I have a dollar I will now give it to them and I will look them in the eye and tell them to have a nice day. If I don't have a dollar I'll offer to buy them some food. The chance that the person might just be scamming me is not nearly reason enough to deny someone (and myself) an act of compassion.

That's just one example, there are countless others. Seriously, I can't overstate how much this book impacted me. And I learned a lot of Talmudic information from it as well so win-win.

Farrah Weinstein says

If I ever dont know what the right thing to is, all I need to do is read one of these short stories and I am closer to the answer

Reid Boehm says

I will be reading and rereading for a long while. I love the author's tone and his wisdom.

CLAUDIO says

The best book I ever read about values. Many stories and examples on how to apply an entire value system in our daily life. It makes us wiser to take good decisions in our personal contacts.

Aryeh says

I read this book both because I wanted an introduction to Telushkin and as someone looking for a beginner-level Jewish ethics how-to manual to recommend to folks studying for conversion. Telushkin offers the reader short, daily, thought-provoking essays that outline a number of lessons from both Torah and Talmud, in language that is understandable and with references that draw the reader to further research. This is a useful entry-level tool, and I suspect I'll be recommending it in the near future.

Karen A. Wyle says

I just about never do this -- but I'm reviewing a book I haven't finished (despite the "finished" date on this entry). I do so because:

- (a) it's due back at the library, and
- (b) this is a book one can read in snippets, and in any order.

Rabbi Telushkin gives us 365 short (no more than two pages) discussions of how to apply the principles of Torah, as explicated in the Talmud and illustrated in the Mishnah and Talmud, to everyday modern life. He does so with a clarity and humility that I found very expressive and informative. This would be a terrific gift for a young man or woman in the year or so prior to a bar/bat mitzvah -- or for any adult, any time, who is interested in applying Jewish tradition and learning in order to improve the moral quality of his or her life.

Alison says

This book really helped me understand what Judaism is all about. Mainly I learned about its emphasis on ethical treatment of others--rather than the legalistic, hard-line emphasis on Torah law I had always been taught about (by people who had never studied Jewish thought). It taught me a lot about what integrity really means.
