



A Book of Simple Living

Ruskin Bond

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‘This much I can tell you,’ writes Ruskin Bond in his introduction to this journal, ‘for all its hardships and complications, life is simple.’ Drawing upon a lifetime’s experience in the hills and small towns of north India, he records the many small moments that constitute a life of harmony—with the self, the natural world, and friends, family and passersby. In these pages, we watch a wild plum blossom and the moon come up between two deodar trees; we hear a redstart whistle and the rain drum on a tin roof; we recognize the ache of losing love and the consolation of old companions.

A Book of Simple Living is a gift of beauty and wisdom from India’s most loved, and most understated, writer.

A Book of Simple Living Details

Date : Published February 2015 by Speaking Tiger

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Author : Ruskin Bond

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Ritesh Kukrety says

Quintessential Bond. The books talks about simple pleasures - a flower blooming against all odds in a crack in the wall, the song of a flitting nightjar, moonlight sneaking in through an open window, the whisper of the wind amongst deodar leaves, the touch of a loved one, that last kiss - and how they are often all that we need to make it through life. It is also pretty contradictory: at one point, Bond tells us how he understood his limitations as a writer and decided to work well within them, only to later tell us that nothing could be gained without aiming high.

But then again, he never does claim that he has cracked the nut that is life, nor that he has a 'one-size-fits-all' solution for all of its problems. Do not pick this book up if you're looking for a teacher; you will be sorely disappointed. Pick it up, however, if you need a friend, someone who can wrap a comforting arm around your shoulders to tell you about their own experiences, how everything will be okay in the end, and say look, isn't life beautiful?

Priyanka Pathak says

My love for Ruskin Bond grows more with each of his book I finish. And it goes without saying, that this book too has got a place in my bookshelf forever..

Priyanka says

Buy this book. Admire its beauty - a classy cover, eye-soothing font type and lovely pages. After this ritual of superficial admiration is complete, read this book. In those 150 pages, Ruskin Bond gives away the secret to leading a content life. Happiness is ephemeral but contentment that's what matters and here's this lovely man telling us it all. I'd keep this book at par with Khalil Gibran's The Prophet, only difference being, I enjoyed reading this book more.

It says some lovely things like

'Happiness is a mysterious thing, to be found somewhere between too little and too much.'

'One sure way to lose the world and everything in it, is to try grasping it.'

'It's courage, not luck, that takes us through to the end of the road.'

Definitely recommended.

Sarba Roy says

As a devotee of Mr Ruskin Bond,I confess that this book has every ingredient that leaves a lasting

impression on the reader's mind.

The notes are brief, personal and timeless. They will linger in the reader's mind, long after the readers have kept it carefully in their bookshelf. It is more of a journey that one embarks with Mr Bond. Simple, riveting and endearing are the three words that best describe this book.

Kavita says

'A Book of Simple Living: Brief Notes from the Hills' is a compilation of years of wisdom distilled and offered simply by our favourite Ruskin Bond. These range from reflections upon life, to what constitutes love, learning to be at peace with yourself, observations on Nature. There is plenty to mull over in this slim book.

Having thoroughly enjoyed this book, one to treasure too, I know I will keep coming back to these pearls of wisdom and pure joy.

Few excerpts from the book:

“Darkness falls, and it is time to pull my chair to the window. Much that is lovely comes at this hour. There is the fragrance of raat ki rani, queen of the night, from a neighbour’s balcony, two feet by two. And soon there will be moonlight falling on those white flowers, and moonbeam in my room. Sometimes a field mouse drops in for a bite (he remembers my dinner time). High in the treetops, an owl hoots softly, as if testing, trying to remember. The nightjar plays trombone, and the crickets join in to complete the orchestra. They go silent when the swamp deer calls. A leopard is out hunting. A breeze has sprung up, it hums in the trees, and now the window is rattling. Time to shut the window. A star falls in the heavens.” P-24

“Man cannot help but live in conformity with his nature; his subconscious is more powerful than his conscious mind.

A bright young schoolgirl once asked me, “Sir, what is your philosophy of life?” She had me stumped. Should I tell her that I had just bumbled along? Would I disappoint her if I said that I was old but had no wisdom to offer? Well, better give her the truth, I decided and had her stumped.

This morning I was pondering on this absence of a philosophy or religious outlook in my make-up, and feeling a little low because it was cloudy and dark outside, and gloomy weather always seems to dampen my spirits. Then the clouds broke up and the sun came out, large, yellow splashes of sunshine in my room and upon my desk, and almost immediately I felt an uplift of spirit. And at the same time I realised that no philosophy would be of any use to a person so susceptible to changes in light and shade, sunshine and shadow. I was a pagan, pure and simple; sensitive to touch and colour and fragrance and odour and sounds of every description; a creature of instinct, of spontaneous attractions, given to illogical fancies and attachments. As a guide I am of little use to anyone, least of all to myself.

I think the best advice I ever had was contained in these lines from Shakespeare which my father had copied into one of my notebooks when I was nine years old:

This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night of the day,
Thou can’st not then be false to any man.

Each one of us is a mass of imperfections, and to be able to recognize and live with our imperfections ? our basic natures, defects of genes and birth ? makes, I think, for an easier transit on life's journey." P-85/86

Rachel Abraham says

A perfect read for a rainy day. Ruskin Bond did manage to sell me a dream of a life in the hills..may be some time after I hang my corporate boots.

Till then the learning of taking time to admire the small things that the world has to offer, living life to the fullest, living everyday to the max, doing you part in the best possible way and above all to forgive & forget before you end your day.

Cheers to living a simple yet content life.

Sachin Prabhu says

It was amazing !! It always makes me happy to read Mr.Bond. In this book Mr.Bond narrates stories from his life, some of journal entries about reading, poems and stories on hills,birds and so on.. what shall I say! It surprises me how an author can transfer one to magical world each and every time! That's characteristic of best author I feel. This book not only transfers one to magical world but also has some precious lessons for life.

Here's few things which I liked

"Happiness is a mysterious thing,to be found somewhere between too little and too much. But it is elusive as a butterfly,and we must never pursue it. If we stay very still,it may come and settle on our hand. But only briefly. We must savour those moments,for they will not come our way very often."

"Its the simple thing in life that keeps us from going crazy. They contribute more to our general happiness and health than acts of passion and high excitement."

"The pleasure of travel is in journey and not so much in reaching one's destination."

"Love your art,poor as it may be,which you have learned,and be content with it; and pass through the rest of life like one who has entrusted to the gods with his whole soul and all that he has, making yourself neither the tyrant nor the slave of any man."

-Marcus Aurelius

"Do what you know best,and do it well. Act impeccably. Everything will then fall into place. In the effort lies the achievement; but only if the effort is true and made with all your heart."

Richa Sharma says

Ruskin Bond makes you want to pack your bags, move to the mountains, bid adieu to the city lights, welcome the sun rays and moonlight in your rooms and hearts, observe and revel in the beauty of nature, all the birds, the flowers, the gardens, the mist, the hillside, the handwritten letters..everything. Who would not want a life in the hills, under the canopy of rustling leaves, chirping birds all against a view of the beauty that mountains are. He talks about solitude, friendships, laughter, life lessons (little ones), seasons and rum(!!) This book is magic :)

Shane Bordoli says

I read this in a single sitting from cover to beautiful cover today and it turned out I'd given myself a lovely gift. I wrote an inspired review just after I read it, but goodreads phone app failed to save it, so this one will have to suffice.

Normally caught up with hectic thoughts, I ended up sitting in soft silence as I read this heartwarming little book of short observations on life. Ruskin lets us into his life with simple and beautiful insights, where it's the little things that are magical. Living close to nature, with the company of friends, his adopted family and most of the plants and flower he loves, there's a friendly intimacy where the things that really count don't pass you by. Writing from his room in the cottage near the Indian hill station of Mussoorie that has been his home for 50 years, he looks even further back to his early years, but mainly we see a man at peace with his old age and it made me feel better about getting older too!

Harshit Gupta says

Ruskin Bond has never written 'words of wisdom' per se. But then this book is something of that, even though he doesn't say it out loud.

Eureka Alphonso says

This is probably the best book I own. Simple advice for a complicated life is just what the doctor ordered. I have found a soulmate in Ruskin Bond, his ideas and his living. This book is a must have for any one at any stage in their life.

rahul says

'and when all the wars are over, a butterfly will still be beautiful.'

Notes to self after reading Ruskin Bond.

1. Stick to what is your truth of observation, irrespective of a grand audience.
2. Keep it simple. Trust your first emotions in the face of nature.

- 3.Slow down. Observe. That is where all life is.
 - 4.Take walks. Long ones. Greet others with a smile.
 - 5.Hear sounds of birds. Pay attention to bugs on flower tips.
 - 6.Love quietly under the quilt of moonless nights.
 - 7.Hear the sound of rain falling on various things. Concrete terraces, mud, grass, tin roofs, car panes, glass windows, in the lonely corners of your heart.
 - 8.Pour secrets from your soul into wells for others to draw and share upon.
 - 9.Be a garden. Be a gardener. Bloom in spring. Be exuberant . Get naked in autumn. Be vulnerable.
 - 10.Try kindness for a change. To follow cynicism is to follow the herd.

 - 11.Read. Read more.
- Have a bed in a library instead of a bookshelf in a bedroom.
- 12.Love. Receive it with both hands. Give it with both hands, limbs and mouth and kisses.
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Nirav says

A book on living on hills and his experiences with it. I loved how he writes this one, like pages torn out directly from his personal diary. A book where he talks about things we are missing in our lives for living in the cities. Such simplicity is what I wish it was possible to inculcate in my busy life. A must read for each and everyone and for all ages. You don't wanna miss this cute book by Mr. Bond.

Vikash Bhandari says

So I got this signed copy of Mr. Ruskin Bond on my recent trip to Mussoorie. I can't surmise in words how sheer bliss it was holding this in my hand and reading each line one by one. The best thing about his writing is, that you always feel a certain kind of acquaintance with him. This book comprises few notes from his dairy along with few of his poems. The best part is, Ruskin himself telling you the secret to leading a content life.

Gives you some lovely quotes-

'Happiness is a mysterious thing, to be found somewhere between too little and too much.'

'One sure way to lose the world and everything in it is to, try grasping it.'

'It's courage, not luck, that takes us through to the end of the road.'

If you love Mr. Bond, it's a better book to add to your collection.

image: [image error]

Aqsa says

To be read and re-read on all days, happy and sad, long and short, sunny and cloudy.

Beautiful.
