



The Wisdom of Not Knowing: Discovering a Life of Wonder by Embracing Uncertainty

Estelle Frankel

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A deeply affirming exploration of the challenges and possibilities of the unknown--with meditations and exercises that can help transform the fear and uncertainty of "not knowing" into a sense of openness, curiosity, and bravery.

For most of us the unknown is both friend and foe. At times it can be a source of paralyzing fear and uncertainty, and at other times it can be a starting point for transformation, creativity, and growth. The unknown is a deep current that runs throughout all religions and mystical traditions, and it is also the nexus of contemporary psychotherapeutic thought and practice and a key element in all personal growth and healing. In *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, psychotherapist Estelle Frankel shows us that our psychological, emotional, and spiritual health is radically influenced by how comfortable we are at navigating the unknown and uncertain dimensions of our lives.

Drawing on insights from Kabbalah, depth psychology, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and ancient myth, Frankel explores how we can grow our souls by tapping into the wisdom of not knowing. She also includes case studies of individuals who have grappled with their fears of the unknown and, as a result, have come out wiser, stronger, and more resilient. Each chapter includes experiential exercises and/or meditations for befriending the unknown. These exercises help convey how we must be willing to "not know" in order to gain knowledge and be able to bear uncertainty so we can be free to enjoy a healthy sense of adventure and curiosity.

The Wisdom of Not Knowing: Discovering a Life of Wonder by Embracing Uncertainty Details

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From Reader Review The Wisdom of Not Knowing: Discovering a Life of Wonder by Embracing Uncertainty for online ebook

Bruce Silverman says

Estelle Frankel's book is pure music. It flows along with the modulated cadence of a Paul Simon song. "The Wisdom of Not Knowing holds to its premise of exploring how the context of things, the unspoken, the dark, the uncertain, and the mysterious, feed us in profound ways.

Like Simon, she too invokes the wisdom of various cultures and traditions outside of her own personal Jewish background and training. The work moves effortlessly from chapter to chapter, exploring the paradoxical twins of light and dark, sacred and profane, silence and sound, science and spirituality, intuition and predictability, in short, a dozen "verses" that challenge our notions of what it means to know or not know.

In this book we hear teachings and tales of Zen Masters, Hasidic Rebbe's, Sufi poets, Western physicists, philosophers, artists and movie-makers, and yet, Frankel always returns to the "chorus" of her own psychotherapeutic encounters as a healer and her personal Jewish mystical practice without a hint of dogmatism or stridency.

At the core of the book are the woefully misconstrued notions about darkness and light that plague our culture and our world.

This, I believe, is the most misunderstood and dangerous of all paradoxes that feed fear, projection, racism and violence. Frankel's work artfully and methodically addresses this fundamental misconception by exploring the many traditions of "non-duality" with quotes, anecdotes, poems, and stories artfully presented.

The book is so rife with such nuggets of wisdom that I've started utilizing it as an I Ching in my own counseling practice. I've dared to hand it to clients on the cusp of making daring life changes who then randomly open the work, and there to our shared amazement, we sit together, mouth agape, and the clients wonder if I've enacted some therapeutic slight of hand that led to the perfect passage that mirrors their struggle, question, or immanent transformation.

Yes there are many works that attempt to synthesize the polarities of good and evil, science and religion, and doing and being, but Frankel's books (Sacred Therapy being her first) are certainly at or near the top of the heap in terms of depth, tone and especially, sheer humanity. This book is soothing to read as well as informative; you will smile, cry, and be moved by the writings of a master storyteller.

The poet Rumi peaks of the "doorsill where the two worlds touch."

Frankel effortlessly welcomes us at that gate, counseling mystery as well as planning, spontaneity as well as ritual observance, white space as well as the printed word, silence as well as speech, and yes, even the value of heartbreak and despair as well as good fortune.

Even Paul Simon might be pleased a half century after penning the line: "Hello darkness my old friend" that those words had more essential truth and power than he might have intended.

Lydia Clark says

I was pleasantly surprised to find aspects in this book that could help me not only in my personal life but my future career as well. I enjoyed how it offers many viewpoints through multiple religious teachings so we are not just seeing one side but many different ones. I would recommend it to anyone who is looking for a new perspective or if you are just struggling with some personal issues.

Jason Beck says

Very insightful book breaking down the many aspects of the unknown, how to understand it, approach it, accept it, and ultimately incorporate it into one's life as a spiritual practice. The examples are all relevant. Each chapter gives tangible tips on how to utilize information.

Laura Luzzi says

I love the connections made with the unknown and divinity. Excellent insights and truths.

Becky says

Excellent book combining the mystical prospect of the unknown and not knowing as paths to growth and depth. We cannot know...the more we know we acknowledge the less we know. The author uses the Jewish mystics as her primary source but also utilizes her experiences as a therapist. For those of us raised intellectually that we must know in order to be wise, this book is a most excellent resource for letting go of the need to know.

Krissie Bentley says

I bought this for a friend and intended to skim it first to make sure it was a good fit. I loved this book. Encouraged spiritual curiosity with stories from familiar traditions. I loved it. Lots of notes.

J Aislynn d'Merricksson says

This book was reviewed for the Manhattan Book Review

Using lessons garnered from such diverse sources as Jewish mysticism, Buddhism, psychology, mythic studies, and spiritual alchemy, Frankel offers a new way of looking at the unknown, and embracing the chaos of uncertainty. As we age, we lose the wonder of the child, for whom everything is new. As pressures of time

and the responsibility that come with age strip the wonder from us, we grow more fearful of the unknown. In other cases, people who are introverts tend to be more wary of change from a young age, and this only solidifies with age.

In *The Wisdom of Not Knowing* Frankel teaches us to regain that sense of wonder we once had as a child. Woven into mythic analysis and psychological commentary are exercises to help open us to the unknown once again. With gentle, piercing clarity, Frankel reminds us that xenophobia will only stunt our growth, and stifle us with a slow suffocation most are not even aware of. One of my favourite characters from the Harry Potter movies is Luna Lovegood's father. His personality thoroughly embodies his name- Xenophilus, love of the unknown. Frankel teaches us how to transmute fear to delight, to transmute xenophobia to xenophilia.

I am an extreme introvert. I despise change, and need an advance warning for changes, especially large ones, to give time for acceptance. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and have started making use of the techniques. One, near the beginning, reminded me I had been gifted with a small metal labyrinth that you trace a stylus through. I've dug it back out for the labyrinth exercise. Other exercises sparked my inspiration again. I've been languishing in an apathetic haze for, well, since the horrors of the election. That I've felt the stirrings of my creativity waking once again thrills me to no end. The exercises have helped in other ways too.

I don't drive, and don't see well. I've been very resistant to taking the bus places for fear of getting lost. It's engendered a near phobic fear that triggers panic and has severely curtailed my freedom. During my reading, I worked up the nerve to do something I've dreaded trying because of the unknown factor. I took a trip that required a bus change each way. That Frankel's work helped me achieve this speaks volumes to me of its value.

I enjoyed the quotes at the beginning of each chapter, and the snippets of poems and passages within the chapters, especially the occasional Rumi. This book gave me a new appreciation for Jewish mysticism/ Kabbalah, and prompted an interest in delving further. I also ended up snagging Frankel's other book, *Sacred Therapy*.

????? A valuable tool for any looking to befriend the unknown and find a valuable ally for living whole, and free of fear around life's uncertainties.

Tali Barr says

In *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, Estelle Frankel takes readers on a journey into the heart of the “unknown” and, there, shines a light on this hidden terrain with insights from Kabbalah and other wisdom traditions, poetry and spiritual practice. As the book progresses fear and resistance turn to curiosity and open-mindedness. I found freedom and strength in the darkness of not knowing and meaning in the silence beyond thought. This book is a natural continuation of Estelle's first book, *Sacred Therapy*. Both are deeply spiritual, full of wisdom and helpful for any inner search.—Tali Barr

Patricia Rohrer-walsh says

There's some good advice here. I especially gravitated toward the stories. It's good to remember that the questions are more important than the answers and that assurity can be the bane of flourishing. Be aware that

Frankel ground many of her insights in religious faith.
