



## **Learning from the Heart: Lessons on Living, Loving, and Listening**

*Daniel Gottlieb*

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# Learning from the Heart: Lessons on Living, Loving, and Listening

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## **Learning from the Heart: Lessons on Living, Loving, and Listening** Daniel Gottlieb

In the nearly 30 years since the accident that made radio personality and columnist Dan Gottlieb a quadriplegic, he developed a finely-tuned quality of awareness that most people never achieve: he became an outsider among us—"like a foreign correspondent," as he puts it. From that vantage point, he has acutely observed the way people act, think, feel, and live—in short, he studied and learned exactly what it means to be human. Here, Dan shares his insights, written with humor, honesty, a gift for storytelling, and breathtaking compassion.

*Learning from the Heart* looks at what divides as well as unites us, including the problems of family life; difficulties confronting today's parents; challenges faced by the disabled and the aging; and issues of injustice that affect the way we understand the world and our lives.

Although Dan is now speaking directly to the reader, rather than to his own family, you'll recognize the distinctive voice and format that caused an outpouring of e-mail from fans of *Letters to Sam*: short anecdotal chapters rich in wisdom, generously revealing and deeply personal, and resonating with universal truths.

## **Learning from the Heart: Lessons on Living, Loving, and Listening Details**

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**Daniel Gottlieb**

## From Reader Review Learning from the Heart: Lessons on Living, Loving, and Listening for online ebook

### Doug says

Pretty much the same message as Tuesdays with Morrie and The Last Lecture, but never gets old rehearing it. Because he has quadriplegia instead of a terminal illness, he has to live each day instead of prepare for a imminent death, which made it the lessons of living life to the fullest even more relevant.

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### Shahd says

So glad that I am done reading it. It made me feel more deppressd I don't know why.

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### Lain says

I am a sucker for "life lessons" books, especially those written by someone who's undergone tremendous adversity. Daniel Gottlieb, a newspaper columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer, has written and compiled a collection of thoughtful essays on the topic of humanity, hope, struggle, and love.

I particularly liked his essay on the gift of hopelessness. I found many gems to be cherished, but by the end of the book I felt like I'd read it all before and was rushing to finish.

All the same, there are some real lessons here, if you are willing to listen.

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### ?Ali Al-ahmad says

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## Patty says

No one would be surprised if Gottlieb was an unhappy man. He has had more than his share of tragedy and trauma in his life. He could have just crawled in a hole and pulled it in after him.

The subtitle of this book is Lessons on Living, Loving and Listening. It was the word listening that caught my attention - I am trying to listen more closely to those around me. However all three topics are very important and Gottlieb has good thoughts on all of them.

This is a book to read slowly, learn from it and savor Daniel Gottlieb's writings. I was so captivated by the author that I read the book quickly. I am planning on reading at least parts again very soon.

Daniel Gottlieb has a lot to teach me - and others.

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## Sunny says

True story. Very interesting and philosophical read. I liked this. It's one of those books that I feel if it comes into your life at the right time then it's brilliant but I can imagine that if the timing isn't right this could come across as a little clichéd. I was touched by this in many places. The book is about a psychologist who has had an accident and becomes a quadriplegic. This change in him is followed by the death of his wife amongst other calamities. The end result is that he gains a wonderful insight into human life over and beyond the insight he had gained as a trained psychologist. As mentioned the insights at times I found deeply and beautiful simple and profoundly honest. I liked the book. Here are some of the best bits:

- “Once when my editors at the Philadelphia Inquirer harshly criticized one of my columns I felt terrible anxiety and shame. So I took my fears to the worst case scenario and imagined either getting fired or resigning from a job that I love. For the next several days I lived as if I was no longer a columnist. Not surprisingly the fear diminished pretty quickly.”
- “After my accident I hated being taken care of even though I needed it. And secretly I wanted people to take even better care of me. I wanted them to know how scared I felt and wanted them to hold me. I wanted them to know how overwhelmed I felt and I longed to hear the words “you don’t have to worry about anything ever again. I will take care of your life for you.” – the same words that small children long to hear when they feel scared.”
- God is so powerful and he loved us all and yet in that love he sets us free – he has given the majority of us freedom. Let me ask you, what is it that you love the most? Now how brave or willing are you to give that very thing the freedom it deserves, to spread its wings and truly fly? What a powerful thing to do!
- “The moment when Moses met God on Mount Sinai was as follows: there was an instant when God’s back was turned and as he passed into front of Moses, just for a moment Moses saw the world through the eyes of God.”
- “What were the chances of that sperm fertilizing that egg and producing life? And what were the chances that you would have lived all the years you have lived in relative good health? And what were the odds that you would have so many people in your life whom you love and who care about you? And what were the possibilities that you could look out of almost any window and see the beauty of nature?”
- “Our society is fond of slogans like “be all you can be” I’d rather we said “nurture the Deimante.”
- “Desire is just a symptom of distress and not (necessarily) a call to action.”

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### **Paula says**

This book discusses what the author thinks is our biggest problem: a national "anxiety disorder." It's a book that helped me learn to be a bit easier on myself. I love Daniel Gottlieb's compassionate and very real voice, and how he has used the many hardships of his life as learning tools for himself and others. I took this book with me on a trip to a funeral for a close family member and it helped me through a tough time. Definitely a book to cling to when going through something rough.

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### **Neti Triwinanti says**

what is it to be a human?

apa artinya menjadi manusia?

Danniel Gottlieb melalui buku ini mengajak pembacanya untuk memetik pelajaran dari banyak hal yang terjadi dalam keseharian kita. kejadian yang sederhana dan terlihat biasa saja.

how to deal with sadness, differences, or how to face the problem with our parents.

buku ini menyenangkan walaupun kdang kadang aku butuh beberapa jenak untuk merasakan apa yang dimaksud penulis (merasakan, bukan sekedar paham dan mengerti apa yang dimaksud penulis).

sedihnya buku ini sekarang tampilannya sudah jelek karena kehujanan :( harus beli lagi deh ini.

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### **Deb says**

\*\*Gifts of wisdom\*\*

What does it mean to be human?

That's a question, among many others, I've been passionately pondering as I approach another milestone birthday. Fortunately, I stumbled upon Daniel Gottlieb's latest book, and found some gifts of wisdom to help me with my quest(ioning).

Here are just a few of those gifts I unwrapped:

What I've Learned About Love:

It seems as if the more we let go, the more we experience love. Love is beyond everything else—anxiety, desire, hope, resentment. Love is openhearted, demands nothing, and needs nothing. It is more likely to visit when our desires are quiet, when we don't need or want much, and when we accept that everything we love is not permanent but is with us at this very moment. (p. 11)

But I Keep Holding On:

And that's the most difficult part of this theory business. We keep holding on to our theories [ex: "If I lose weight, I'll be happier with myself," "If my spouse changes, I'll have a happy life," "If I get the promotion, everything will be fine," "If I don't get my work done, I'll lose my job,"] because it's all we have. To let go of something we've always believed in requires a leap of faith—trust in something unknowable. And, I think the task for all of us is to have faith in our own resilience. When this happens, we are exposed to many more

possibilities. (pp. 22, [19-20])

#### Living Under the Bell Curve:

Over the years I have learned that we humans tend to be happier when we are where we belong rather than trying to get somewhere that is not really who we are. (p. 26)

#### For a Change, Do Nothing:

The truth is, if we become comfortable with who we are rather than who we think we should be, then we will be less insecure. (p. 53)

#### Our National Anxiety Disorder:

True security happens when we are no longer afraid of our own minds. If you feel anxiety, simply feel it. If your mind has taken you to a dark place, just stay there. (pp. 64-65)

#### Our Orphanhood:

At our core we are all so similar. That's the dance I've observed of being human. We ache to be understood, to be seen for who we are. It's a fundamental of life. And at the same time, there is a part of us that knows we can never be fully known. It is one of our primary fears. If I open myself fully, how can I survive if I am rejected?...When we close off part of ourselves, we lose a way to connect with others. Part of our journey, as I see it, is about opening, little by little, at first to ourselves and then to others. Yes, we are orphans. But the more we unfold, the more connected we feel. (p. 115)

#### Faith:

Our society is fond of slogans like "Be all you can be." I'd rather we said, "Nurture the diamond." It's not about achievement. It's about blossoming and becoming. (p. 129)

#### In Pursuit of Peace:

Trying to change others is about intolerance, which is at the core of so much enmity. We cannot find peace unless we are trying to help others find peace also. It doesn't come when we win battles; it comes when we stop fighting. (p. 133)

#### We, the Wounded:

It's my responsibility to ask the questions that will open doors inside of them that maybe have never been opened...And to me, that is the work of psychotherapy: to help people understand and grow comfortable with their own humanity. (p. 138)

#### What I've Learned About Wanting:

Try to imagine what it would be like if the urgency of your desires simply went away. What if your life were just about as it is now, but your desires turned to simple wishes? No longer a loud demand for something that feels urgent, just a quiet wish for something not there. (p. 150)

#### Peace Comes Only When We Stop Fighting:

But when I can sit with the fear and not try to push it away, I feel great sadness—as I am reminded that my life, like everything precious, is temporary. Somehow, that sadness feels more real and truer than the anxiety. That's because, as uncomfortable as it is, the anxiety helps me avoid feeling what I really feel. But when I feel that sadness, I feel more alive, loving, and compassionate. At those times, I can truly experience my life and not categorize it as good or bad, easy or difficult. When I can just experience my life in all its fragility, everything seems more vivid. (p. 153)

## Final Thoughts:

So what does it mean to be human?

When you see a fellow human...look in the other person's eyes. You will find a human who is tender and vulnerable, one who pursues security, happiness, and love. You will find someone who is capable of great, selfless compassion and one who can be terribly self-centered. You will find someone who has been hurt and who, in turn, has hurt others. You will see a hypocrite, a child, an orphan, a warrior, and a hero. You will see someone who wants more love. And if you look deeply into another person's eyes, you will see that person's soul. And then you will discover what you have always known about your own humanity. (p. 168)

Sitting here with these unwrapped gifts of wisdom, I'm getting a little more clarity about what it really means to be human. I feel grateful for finding this book—and its gifts that will undoubtedly keep on giving!

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## **Maria Carmo says**

Just like "Letters to Sam", a book that dives into everyday despair and reality in order to find peace of mind and to discover how one can deal with sadness, frustration and the challenges of life that drive us to our limit...

The Author is deep and yet candid in his unveiling of his own mind and in a way this book is written in what I would consider a "Krishnamurti-an" way, because the Author tries to pass on that one must never "escape" difficult emotions, the harshness of reality, but by serenely observing it a lot is changed in us... The mere act of observing is trans-formative of our condition. And one of his main messages for his Readers is: "You can handle it! No matter how hard, that is what everybody does: everyday, we deal with life as it comes" ... Loved the book in all its love and candor and believe it can be very inspiring and soothing.

Maria Carmo,

Lisbon 14th. March 2014.

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## **Steve says**

I eschew self help type books. The line between insipid simplifications and positive suggestions is so thin. I would not naturally pick a book like his up.

Sometimes I like a simple obvious inspirational books, and I've taken a run at quite a few.

I feel pretty full of facts and information, or not want the challenge of a more theoretical book. I'm enjoying process so much more these days. So I don't totally look down my nose at this kind of book.

I am in a book club at my sons' school, and I've always wanted to be in a book club. This is what they chose to read. So I read it.

I've teared up many times reading this book. It's a touching book.

I think Gottlieb is a JewBu, because he quotes Buddhists, and talked about coming off a retreat, and feeling like the gains were quickly lost. There's a lot of implicit Buddhism, though he doesn't make it explicit, though at times he runs straight into it and talks about the Buddha's ideas about desire. But he also talks about God and the divine.

He's not just a Buddhist, he's a psychologist and a human. It made me wonder about my obsession with the Dharma. Maybe I need to loosen up and be a little more free ranging for a while. I liked his Jewish stories. It's a very spiritual book, and not offensive to me in any ways (it's easy to offend me with facile comments about God).

He tells good stories, and I felt his advice was pretty good about trying to accept things more. He includes poetry and has written a really good book in my opinion. I like his messy authenticity, his commitment to get closer to the bone.

I think much of his insight comes from having quadriplegia. He has to just sit and experience his emotions. Instead of distracting or doing something. He has to just sit there. He shares the wisdom of this experience.

He's also donating the proceeds to charities! Amazing. I can get behind this book on another level.

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### **Lori says**

I first listened to Gottlieb on Fresh Air and was so taken with this psychologist's warm, reassuring voice and wise sensibility, that I couldn't wait to get my hands on his latest book. I wasn't surprised to learn that Gottlieb is host of a radio show through WHYY in Philadelphia. I haven't listened to the show, but from what I gleaned from the interview, it's a bit Frasier-like--call-in's regarding all sorts of struggles we all face--relationship issues, parental issues, depression, addiction, etc. In Learning from the Heart, Gottlieb reflects on what he's learned in his own life and I don't want to spoil anything, so I won't share any more. (I will say, however, it's not schmaltzy--he doesn't take any easy shortcuts.) This would make a great gift book...especially for father's day, if your day is into stuff like this.

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### **Haniva Az Zahra says**

Lama juga ya saya menyelesaikan buku ini, :) Entah salah siapa, saya merasa tidak sempat membaca buku ini dan memang tidak ingin membaca buku ini pada waktu-waktu sela. Saya butuh merasa hadir sepenuhnya. Sebuah upaya yang saya lakukan agar tidak menyia-nyiakan pelajaran berharga yang Daniel Gottlieb tuliskan.

Buku yang baik, namun lebih berat daripada Letters to Sam. Format setiap bab sebenarnya disampaikan dengan cerita juga, tapi sepertinya karena tema-tema yang disampaikan tentang kehidupan, kematian, dan regulasi hati. Butuh semangat dan ketenangan hingga akhirnya selesai juga buku ini. Buku ini bagus sekali, karena penulisnya juga seorang psikolog, muncul juga keinginan bisa menulis buku seperti ini suatu saat.

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## **Claire says**

Just because I did not like this book does not mean I did not read it fully.

It is hard to come to grips with the unpleasantries of living life to the fullest, such as accepting I can't stay up as late as I once was able to, even if that implies I also have denied myself the ultimate pleasures of living life to the fullest, such as letting myself just sleep in and give up on the week, letting matters tend to themselves...

I bookmarked a page to discuss with the friend who loaned this to me, after which I might like this book a bit more, but this text was really hard for me to get through.

I'm not sure if I want to read any of this man's other works. As others have noted, it isn't what I tend to enjoy these days. However, when I was younger, I really did enjoy psychology. My mother insists I still analyse people immediately with precise accuracy. I wouldn't go quite as far, but I can't downplay what that magnificent woman says, particularly on Mother's Day.

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## **Loretta says**

Perspective is all about where you are in the life. What is devastating for one person is just an event for another. Mind over matter. Strength comes from within and can be inspired from without. I will be returning to this for little encouragements for many years to come.

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