

Words of Common Sense
FOR MIND, BODY, AND SOUL
By Brother David Steindl-Rast
Templeton Foundation Press

From the first sentence to the last, this little book is filled with useful examples and self-explanatory sayings about common sense. Brother David has unearthed adages apropos to almost every angle and situation involved in everyday life. He often expertly intertwines the wisdom given to Jesus' listeners through the ages as he taught with parables, with his own unique thoughts on the subject and those of other religious leaders. Actually the very last sentence is: *"But we can cultivate common sense so that the changes for which we and our society are responsible will be in tune with the creative force of the universe-call it the Tao, the Logos, or Dante's 'Love that moves the sun and all the stars'"*. In the introduction is a no-nonsense explanation of the narcissist and the depressed. He notes how these traits keep the individual from being a part of community with humans and from being in harmony with nature.

**Common sense:
so rare it's a
super power.**

In this review I am resisting the temptation to quote at least most of the great pithy and terse sayings he has placed two to five to a page as a little dessert surprise on the left hand side of quite a few pages. One exception is a Tamil proverb on healing in the development of mind, body and soul that says "medicine ¼ common sense ¾". I'm sure if you read this thoughtful work, you will come away with some new ideas and proverbs to add to your own portfolio. The book suggests the more lightly we take ourselves - the more we leave the narrow confines of our own world behind and enter the wide open spaces of our true selves (and the closer we will get to humility and agape love). Brother David points out a place in a parable whereby Jesus appeals to the divine authority in the hearts of the hearers, which is also common sense. He has condensed common sense in much the same way that it has been passed down from generation to generation.

When you put yourself in the place of the beaten person, as this author suggests we do, Jesus' telling of the Good Samaritan story takes on a larger impact. A central theme of this work is encapsulated in the idea of a "God Household". One of the characteristics of this would be "the love of power yields to the power of love". The five sets of parables are loosely

- i) Ones signaling to the end of an unjust and exploitative world order.
- ii) Ones speaking of new life stirring, as in buds bursting.
- iii) Ones alerting us to expect the unexpected.
- iv) Ones challenging us to seize the moment.
- v) Ones about a new order-an order of love.



The author reports Common Sense is as daring as it is patient. He points out Biblical instances where man, through this vehicle, knows the right thing to do ..so how much more, God. I can attest to many times when I had to admit that I know how much 2 + 2 is, but I don't always know enough to put them together at the right time in the right way. Common sense can sometimes just go so far because it is droned out by

the noise of the world or imitation busyness, it seems. I hope the lessons in this book will help me become more aware that this is a God-given gift that I should work to hone. I think this will entail paying more attention to detail and I hope everyone who chooses to read this sweet treat will enjoy it as much as I did.

Review by Pat Redick

I am a retired 72 year-old wife, mother, grand and great grandmother. I thank God for the blessing of good health and for His decision to plant me in rural PA. I relish every moment I get with all of my family. I enjoy writing, particularly poems, watching flowers, vegetables and all plants grow, but not really working at gardening, feeding and watching local wild birds out my window, finding “wonderful” old antique pieces and doing what is needed to them. I spend some time each day with EWTN and consider it one of the best gifts from God this old world has. Most of all I just appreciate having 6 Saturdays and a Sunday in each week, so I can do whatever I want most of the time. Since I turned 70, I often thank God for the “bonus” day each of them is whether I like the weather or not.



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