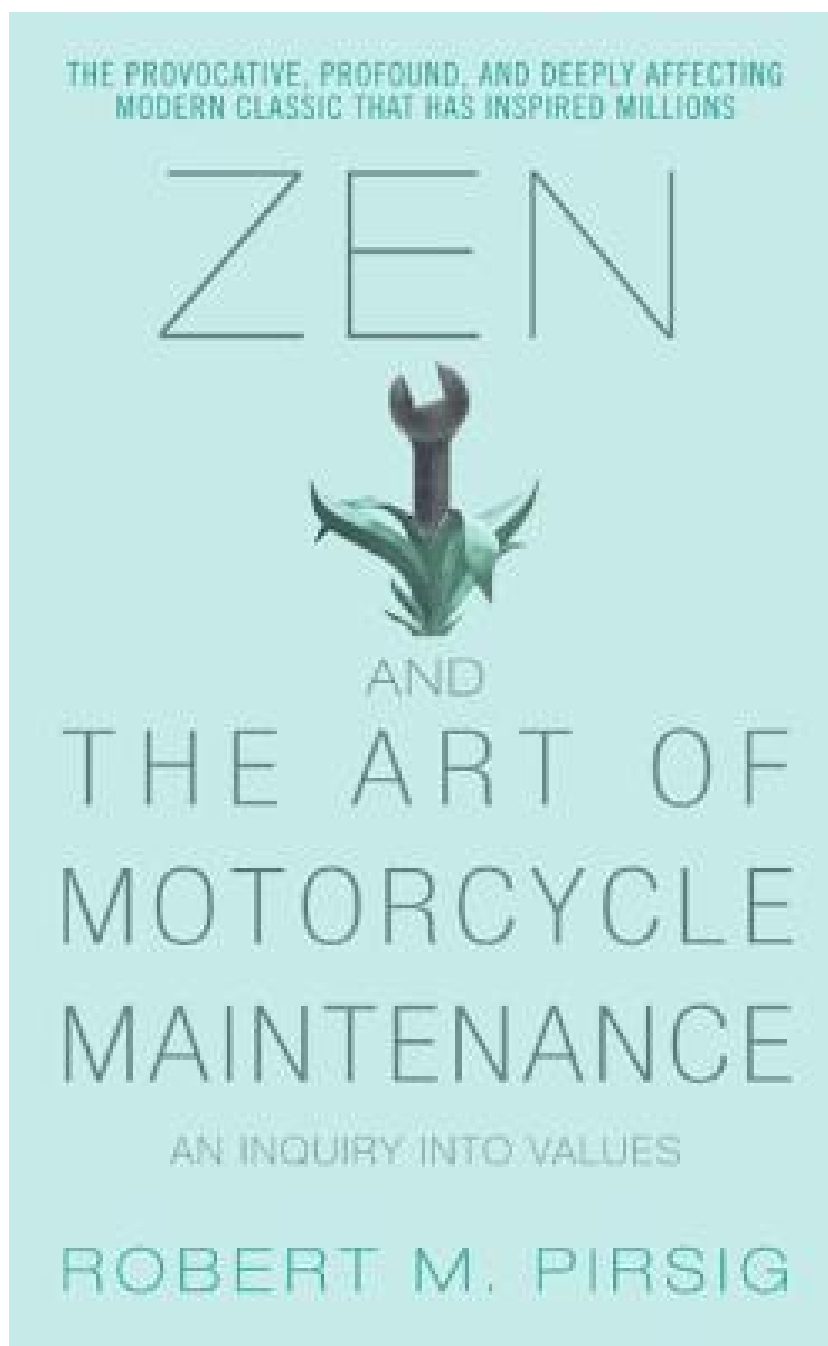


Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values Book PDF Download



By:
Robert M. Pirsig

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What people Say:

Christy

Maybe it's unfair to give a poor rating to a book I read in high school. However, I like to think that I was wise beyond my years and knew a phony, self-congratulatory, pretentious buffoon when I saw one. On the other hand, I did wear baggy overalls with Birkenstocks every day back then and wondered why I didn't have a boyfriend, so clearly I didn't know everything.

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Maybe it's unfair to give a poor rating to a book I read in high school. However, I like to think that I was wise beyond my years and knew a phony, self-congratulatory, pretentious buffoon when I saw one. On the other hand, I did wear baggy overalls with Birkenstocks every day back then and wondered why I didn't have a boyfriend, so clearly I didn't know everything.

But as I read through the reviews here, I am confronted by a rush of unpleasant memories about this particular reading experience. The narrator did indeed seem like a dick. And he may have been okay with that, because I got the impression that he's one of those guys who doesn't care if he comes off as a dick, because his purpose in life is to Figure It All Out, and disseminate his impressive knowledge to the masses of sheep-like mouth-breathers who wandered into Waldenbooks and picked up a mass-market paperback copy of his masterpiece. Their lives will be changed! The narrator is too busy unraveling the mysteries of the universe to bother with being likable. It's a sacrifice, but someone has to do it. We should be thanking him!

And this is just an aside, but part of me always wonders if there is something wrong with me, or if I'm an elitist or delusional because I've never read a "life-changing" book. That's right: a book has never changed me. I read as a kind of re-affirmation of what I think I already know, somewhere deep down. Or I simply read to experience the pleasure of a good story. I've put a book down and thought to myself, "Boy, that was a good book. I'm in such a pleasant/ponderous/gloomy mood now. Well done!" But never have I put down a book and thought, "Before I read this, I was wandering around on this thing we call Earth with the wrong ideas about life/people/religion/mechanical engineering, but now I have been enlightened. From this point forward, my life will be different. I will be a better person." I don't know. Maybe I just have a bad attitude, or think that I'm smarter than everyone else. Maybe I'm no better than our friend Mr. Pirsig. If you think that may be the case, I suppose you can just ignore this review completely and read Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.

But! If you think I'm just like Pirsig, you would want to heed my advice about this book and avoid it, wouldn't you? Aha! You see, you can't like us both, otherwise the universe will implode.

Or will it? Perhaps it is no more than a conundrum I have devised out of sheer malice and a masturbatory sense of self-importance. Perhaps I am full of shit. Youâ€™ll never know for sure.

You canâ€™t escape this philosophy-ninjaâ€™s intellectual trap. Donâ€™t even try.

Clinton

I feel like Robert M. Pirsig has wronged me personally.

Petra Eggs

When I was quite young my brain said to me, after a particularly long and stoned session listening to Pink Floyd and discussing philosophy, 'oh give me a break'. So I said to my brain, 'there's no need

to be so rude,' and my brain said, 'no seriously, I can't handle this anymore, really, let me take a break'. So it did and I've been operating on brain-stem alone ever since. I don't know it's made that much difference.

I wonder if the author's brain was thinking like mine was?

Certainly when I was

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Certainly when I was reading this book and sort of enjoying it (2 stars-worth), I was also thinking I am just too old to be reading this sort of cod-philosophy, too old and not stoned enough. I read other people's reviews and have to conclude that they all saw something in this book that impressed them as deep and me as deeply populist. Either way, I didn't really enjoy it and it only gets two stars because the writing was ok, the book wasn't arduous to read, some parts of it were interesting and enjoyable.

I wasn't that keen on the author's exploration of his mental breakdown either. I find when other people tell me the dreams they had last night, or I have to read them in a book I turn off as well. I really don't know why, nor do I know if others also feel this way. When telling last night's major really interesting dream to someone else, I've never said, "Do you find this as boring as I would if it was you telling me?" Actually that's a load of guff, I don't tell other people my dreams because I suspect they would be bored rigid and neither do I tell them about my mental breakdown when I saw three rainbows in the sky and didn't kill myself because I couldn't find a nightie that was suitable. See, boring!

I kept thinking that Roberts (the author of

) and Pirsig would get on really well. They could sit in cafes in foreign parts swapping tales of derring-do, drugs and their fascinating insights whilst waiting for an audience to join them. That's a bit mean-spirited as Pirsig is a great deal more appealing as an author and person than the somewhat sleazy Roberts, but I think you get what I mean. And I will say that it's quite readable, the travel descriptions are very well done, the characters, apart from the hero, are in general interesting but... I still couldn't get into it.

Anyway, it's a Sunday, much love and an extra star!

Katherine

After years of people saying, "Oh, you're a philosophy major? Have you heard of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance? You should read it!" I finally broke down and bought a copy. I am usually wary of books that seem to hold promises of sweetness and light and spiritual awakening, in this age of

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My thoughts on the book, even months after reading it, are still mixed. Artistically, I do think it's a polished and respectable piece of literature. It's

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My thoughts on the book, even months after reading it, are still mixed. Artistically, I do think it's a polished and respectable piece of literature. It's well-written and compelling. But my philosophy major side is hesitant about it. I don't know much about Zen Buddhism, so I can't speak for how Pirsig treated

aspect, but the rundowns on philosophy made me anxious in the way that "Philosophy for Dummies" makes me anxious: you have to assume that the author's interpretation is one that is valid. And sometimes there was enough value judgment language that it felt like the text was "conveniently" interpreting the philosopher at hand, as opposed to fairly.

It's a good book, and I recommend it, but I also recommend reading more about the philosophies Pirsig touches on, eg Kant, Hume, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, etc. Anything that turns people on to philosophy can't be all bad, after all.

Richard

There are three threads weaving through this book (none of which, as is pointed out, has much to do with either eastern philosophy or with motorcycle maintenance.)

The first is a straightforward narration by a man riding across the country with his young son and two friends (a married couple). This evocative travelogue is by far the most enjoyable aspect of the novel.

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The first is a straightforward narration by a man riding across the country with his young son and two friends (a married couple). This evocative travelogue is by far the most enjoyable aspect of the novel.

The second element is a sort of mystery as that man struggles with his memory; it's gradually revealed that he's on the road both to escape his past and to attempt to remember it.

The last thread is where the book just falls apart. Through the narrator's dialogue with himself, Pirsig puts forward his ludicrous "philosophy of quality," which essentially holds that "quality," whatever that might be, is somehow the fundamental reality of the universe. If that sounds like nonsense then you understand it perfectly.

When we find out why the narrator had lost his memory in the first place, the answers don't live up to any expectations we might have been unfortunate enough to have developed.