



Maturity: The Responsibility of Being Oneself (Osho Insights for a New Way of Living)

By Osho

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In a culture infatuated with youth and determined to avoid old age at all costs, this book dares to raise a question that has been all but forgotten in the age of Viagra and cosmetic surgery. What benefits might lie in accepting the aging process as natural, rather than trying to hold on to youth and its pleasures all the way to the grave?

Osho takes us back to the roots of what it means to grow up rather than just to grow old. Both in our relationships with others, and in the fulfillment of our own individual destinies, he reminds us of the pleasures that only true maturity can bring. He outlines the ten major growth cycles in human life, from the self-centered universe of the preschooler to the flowering of wisdom and compassion in old age.

Osho's sly sense of humor runs like a red thread through the book, along with a profound compassion and understanding of how easy it is to be distracted from the deeper meaning and purpose of our lives—which is, ultimately, to flower into our own individual uniqueness and maturity with an attitude of celebration and joy.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This wise and witty book is the baby boomers' bible! It offers hot tips on maturity as the path to wisdom, the art of transcending problems rather than having to solve them, and the secret of transforming a midlife crisis into a creative explosion." --*Margot Anand, author of The Art of Sexual Ecstasy and The Art of Everyday Ecstasy*

About the Author

Osho is one of the best-known and most provocative spiritual teachers of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1970s he captured the attention of young people from the West who wanted to experience meditation and transformation. More than 20 years after his death, the influence of his teachings continues to grow, reaching seekers of all ages in virtually every country of the world.

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Maturity

DEFINITIONS

FROM IGNORANCE TO INNOCENCE

Maturity means the same as innocence, only with one difference: it is innocence reclaimed, it is innocence recaptured. Every child is born innocent, but every society corrupts him. Every society, up to now, has been a corruptive influence on every child. All cultures have depended on exploiting the innocence of the child, on exploiting the child, on making him a slave, on conditioning him for their own purposes, for their own ends--political, social, ideological. Their whole effort has been how to recruit the child as a slave for some purpose. Those purposes are decided by the vested interests. The priests and the politicians have been in a deep conspiracy, they have been working together.

The moment the child starts becoming part of your society he starts losing something immensely valuable; he starts losing contact with God. He becomes more and more hung up in the head, he forgets all about the heart--and the heart is the bridge that leads to being. Without the heart you cannot reach your own being--it is impossible. From the head there is no way directly to being; you have to go via the heart, and all societies are destructive to the heart. They are against love, they are against feelings; they condemn feelings as sentimentality. They condemned all lovers down the ages for the simple reason that love is not of the head, it is of the heart. A man who is capable of love is sooner or later going to discover his being--and once a person discovers his being he is free from all structures, from all patterns. He is free from all bondage. He is pure freedom.

Every child is born innocent, but every child is made knowledgeable by the society. Hence schools, colleges, universities exist; their function is to destroy you, to corrupt you.

From the head there is no way directly to being, you have to go via the heart--and all societies are destructive to the heart.

Maturity means gaining your lost innocence again, reclaiming your paradise, becoming a child again. Of course it has a difference--the ordinary child is bound to be corrupted, but when you reclaim your childhood you become incorruptible. Nobody can corrupt you, you become intelligent enough--now you know what the society has done to you and you are alert and aware, you will not allow it to happen again.

Maturity is a rebirth, a spiritual birth. You are born anew, you are a child again. With fresh eyes you start looking at existence. With love in the heart you approach life. With silence and innocence you penetrate your own innermost core. You are no longer just the head. Now you use the head, but it is your servant. First you become the heart, and then you transcend even the heart.

Going beyond thoughts and feelings and becoming a pure *isness* is maturity. Maturity is the ultimate flowering of meditation.

Jesus says, "Unless you are born again you will not enter into the kingdom of God." He is right, you have to be born again.

Once Jesus was standing in a marketplace and somebody asked, "Who is worthy of entering into your kingdom of God?" He looked around. There was a rabbi, and the rabbi must have moved forward a little, thinking that he would be chosen--but he was not chosen. There was the most virtuous man of the town--the moralist, the puritan. He moved forward a little, hoping that he would be chosen, but he was not chosen. Jesus looked around--he saw a small child, who was not expecting to be chosen, who had not moved, not even an inch. There was no idea, there was no question that he would be chosen. He was just enjoying the whole scene--the crowd and Jesus and people talking, and he *was* listening. Jesus called the child, he took the child up in his arms, and he said to the crowd, "Those who are like this small child, they are the only ones worthy of entering into the kingdom of God."

Maturity means gaining your lost innocence again, reclaiming your paradise, becoming a child again. Of course it has a difference--the ordinary child is bound to be corrupted, but when you reclaim your childhood, you become incorruptible.

But remember, he said, "Those who are *like* this smallchild . . ." He didn't say, "Those who are small children." There is a great difference between the two. He did not say, "This child will enter into the kingdom of God," because every child is bound to be corrupted, he has to go astray. Every Adam and every Eve is bound to be expelled from the garden of Eden, they have to go astray. That is the only way to regain real childhood: first you have to lose it. It is very strange, but that's how life is. It is very paradoxical, but life is a paradox. To know the real beauty of your childhood, first you have to lose it; otherwise you will never know it.

Every Adam and every Eve is bound to be expelled from the garden of Eden, they have to go astray. That is the only way to regain real childhood: first you have to lose it.

The fish never knows where the ocean is--unless you pull the fish out of the ocean and throw it on the sand in the burning sun; then she knows where the ocean is. Now she longs for the ocean, she makes every effort to go back to the ocean, she jumps into the ocean. It is the same fish and yet not the same fish. It is the same ocean yet not the same ocean, because the fish has learned a new lesson. Now she is aware, now she knows, "This is the ocean and this is my life. Without it I am no more--I am part of it."

Every child has to lose his innocence and regain it. Losing is only half of the process--many have lost it, but very few have regained it. That is unfortunate, very unfortunate. Everybody loses it, but only once in a while does a Buddha, a Zarathustra, a Krishna, a Jesus regain it. Jesus is nobody else but Adam coming back home. Magdalene is nobody else but Eve coming back home. They have come out of the sea and they have seen the misery and they have seen the stupidity. They have seen that it is not blissful to be out of the ocean.

The moment you become aware that to be a part of any society, any religion, any culture is to remain miserable, is to remain a prisoner--that very day you start dropping your chains. Maturity is coming, you are gaining your innocence again.

MATURITY AND AGING

There is a great difference between maturity and aging, a vast difference, and people always remain confused about it. People think that to age is to become mature--but aging belongs to the body. Everybody is aging, everybody will become old, but not necessarily mature. Maturity is an inner growth.

Aging is nothing that you do, aging is something that happens physically. Every child born, when time passes, becomes old. Maturity is something that you bring to your life--it comes out of awareness. When a person ages with full awareness, he becomes mature. Aging plus awareness, experiencing plus awareness, is

maturity.

You can experience a thing in two ways. You can simply experience it as if you are hypnotized, unaware, not attentive to what is happening; the thing happened but you were not there. It didn't happen in your presence, you were absent. You just passed by, it never struck any note in you. It never left any mark on you, you never learned anything from it. It may have become part of your memory, because in a way you were present, but it never became your wisdom. You never grew through it. Then you are aging.

But if you bring the quality of awareness to an experience the same experience becomes maturity.

Aging is nothing that you do, aging is something that happens physically. Every child born, when time passes becomes old. Maturity is something that you bring to your life-it comes out of awareness.

There are two ways to live: one, to live in a deep sleep--then you age, every moment you become old, every moment you go on dying, that's all. Your whole life consists of a long, slow death. But if you bring awareness to your experiences--whatever you do, whatever happens to you, you are alert, watchful, mindful, you are savoring the experience from all the corners, you are trying to understand the meaning of it, you are trying to penetrate the very depth of it, what has happened to you, you are trying to live it intensely and totally--then it is not just a surface phenomenon. Deep down within you something is changing with it. You are becoming more alert. If this is a mistake, this experience, you will never commit it again.

A mature person never commits the same mistake again. But a person who is just old goes on committing the same mistakes again and again. He lives in a circle; he never learns anything. You will be angry today, you were angry yesterday and the day before yesterday, and tomorrow you are going to be angry and the day after tomorrow also. Again and again you get angry, again and again you repent, again and again you make a deep decision that you are not going to do it again. But that decision makes no change--whenever you are disturbed the rage takes over, you are possessed; the same mistake is committed. You are aging.

If you live an experience of anger totally, never again will you be angry. One experience will be enough to teach that it is foolish, that it is absurd, that it is simply stupid--not that it is a sin, it is simply stupid. You are harming yourself and harming others, for nothing. The thing is not worth it. Then you are getting mature.

Tomorrow the situation will be repeated but anger will not be repeated. And a man who is gaining in maturity has not *decided* that he will not be angry again, no--that is the sign of a man who is not getting mature. A man of maturity never decides for the future; the maturity itself takes care. You live today--that very living will decide how the tomorrow is going to be; it will come out of it.

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