

Synopsis

Meetings with Remarkable Men, G. I. Gurdjieff's autobiographical account of his youth and early travels, has become something of a legend since it was first published in 1963. A compulsive read in the tradition of adventure narratives, but suffused with Gurdjieff's unique perspective on life, it is organized around portraits of remarkable men and women who aided Gurdjieff's search for hidden knowledge or accompanied him on his journeys in remote parts of the Near East and Central Asia. This is a book of lives, not doctrines, although readers will long value Gurdjieff's accounts of conversations with sages. Meetings conveys a haunting sense of what it means to live fully with conscience, with purpose, and with heart. Among the remarkable individuals whom the reader will come to know are Gurdjieff's father (a traditional bard), a Russian prince dedicated to the search for Truth, a Christian missionary who entered a World Brotherhood deep in Asia, and a woman who escaped white slavery to become a trusted member of Gurdjieff's group of fellow seekers. Gurdjieff's account of their attitudes in the face of external challenges and in the search to understand the mysteries of life is the real substance of this classic work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gurdjieff's "meetings" shaped his life and his "Work". He gives us a fascinating insight into those people who were responsible for his development and approach to breaking through the "sleeping man". Anyone who reads this book will not only be amused by Gurdjieff's "wicked" sense of humor, they will be touched by his compassion for our suffering whether "intentional or not. I ordered it a month ago to read again after having done so 38 years ago. I also recommend James Moore's book, "Gurdjieff: A Biography - The Anatomy of a Myth". While at times a little difficult to read because of some of the "British English" idioms and such, Moore's book tries to paint a picture of Gurdjieff in relation to the times and people that were drawn to him. Drawn from interviews and documents, Moore succeeds in giving us insight to the man who still is a Myth and legend and whose influence still resonates around the world.

I read this book many years ago, and was absolutely captivated by the book. I read it again after I bought it on the Kindle, and was a bit less captivated by the book. The section that I liked the most, was the one about his father. The four commandments of his father captured the crux of what we should all be about, as people. The next section that I liked, was the one about his teacher. The rest of the sections are fantastic tales in themselves, and are very well told. This is why I give the book a four star rating. The writing style is much more accessible than the way that he wrote about Beelzebub's tales, and this is something that I like. I think that he made Beelzebub a bit too complex, that he made it complex for the sake of complexity. I cannot say that I learned much from the book, barring the section on his father and teacher. But, the book is a joyous ride indeed. It is the story of a life fully lived.

Opening the book Meetings with Remarkable Men by Gurdjieff I remember at once Voltaire, whose collected works I am also reading. In his best philosophic writings he is heavily whipping Catholic Church, so heavily that I lost my confidence to the belief that any-one of the existing religions would know anything about God and the relationship between God and man. But Gurdjieff seems to surpass even Voltaire in satir, not even needing to rise above man or go into the world of fantasy. He speaks of the contemporary phenomenons. I just wonder, of which time? It seems to be of the period about hundred years ago. So I also at once am ready with the opinion that it did not at all turn

out that way. Any way, Gurdjieff's thoughts are dew fresh. Full of (in)sane self-confidence. Gurdjieff's wordings are finger-licking full of all kinds of peculiarities which emanate from his gospel, which he in turn with all powers keeps skin-close to familiar things and authorities. This I mean when he speaks of the 'lawful cosmic consequences flowing to him constantly'. Lawful, that is personally obliging, and cosmic at the same time. That is: exactly what all religions tell. A further example of his fresh linguistic inventions is his allegory of 'swing of thought'. That is: the complete methodology of modern science! No more, no less. The double-ended sledge-hammer of empiricism and rationalism, the two-way sawing of building rational hypotheses and testing them empirically to find out the 'truth'. The 'swing of thought', delicious, delicious! Did I become Gurdjian by one stroke. Yet, there is another aspect in the gospel of Gurdjieff. His fabulous and limitless exaggeration. Another great writer pops up in my mind, the famous author of the tales of baron von Münchhausen, not actually at all the author, but the canon ball rider Münchhausen himself. And still another predecessor of Gurdjieff, the French master Jules Verne. Gurdjieff is like Verne a master of mixing real science with fantasy so that the reader gets completely confused, but that in a very pleasant way. I even suspect that Gurdjieff has literally and intentionally used Verne's approach. The reader cannot but start questioning. Is it really possible to ride on the shoulders of an ostrich (Verne)? Is it really possible to somehow (if not directly by stilts) rise above the lethal layer of poisonous gas in the desert of Gobi (Gurdjieff). Reader's fantasy gets working, fresh ideas may emerge. That is how the progress of science takes place!

The book can be hard to read at times as it was written in a foreign language and translated into English. Having studied the Fourth Way for 6 years and practiced in Fourth Way groups, I find this is still one of the best and most motivating books on the subject. Gurdjieff goes over his life as a kid and people who had influence over him as he was growing up as well as into his travels throughout Asia searching for Truth. It is a fascinating adventure book discussing his travels, triumphs, failures, and personal weaknesses along the way. I appreciate the honesty in the book, as he doesn't pretend like most religious figures to be all perfect and show no faults. He comes across as very human with a lot of street smarts. You really need a lot of street smarts to survive out there, be it in the business world or whenever you have to run your own business. A number of people call him a con man, however I would like for naysayers to name one human on this earth who has never done a wrong thing. Of course, it would be some President in their totally deluded minds. The point is everyone has done wrong things and Gurdjieff was very honest with his readers and it was good to see inside his psyche. Without this understanding, one can misinterpret his teachings in the wrong

way.

Highly thought-provoking and original. To call this book unique would be an understatement.

My 5th copy. Great read for men and women. The best of Gurdjieff!

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