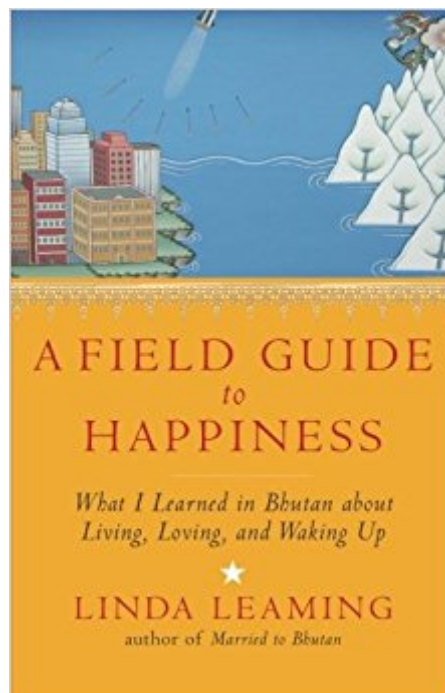




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# **A Field Guide To Happiness: What I Learned In Bhutan About Living, Loving, And Waking Up**



## Synopsis

“In the West, we have everything we could possibly need or want—except for peace of mind. So writes Linda Leaming, a harried American who traveled from Nashville, Tennessee, to the rugged Himalayan nation of Bhutan—sometimes called the happiest place on Earth—to teach English and unlearn her politicized and polarized, energetic and impatient way of life. In Bhutan, if I have three things to do in a week, it’s considered busy. In the U.S., I have at least three things to do between breakfast and lunch. After losing her luggage immediately upon arrival, Leaming realized that she also had emotional baggage—a tendency toward inaction, a touch of self-absorption, and a hundred other trite, stupid, embarrassing, and inconsequential things—that needed to get lost as well. Pack up ideas and feelings that tie you down and send you lead-footed down the wrong path. Put them in a metaphorical suitcase and sling it over a metaphorical bridge in your mind. Let the river take them away. Forced by circumstance and her rustic surroundings to embrace a simplified life, Leaming made room for more useful beliefs. The thin air and hard climbs of her mountainous commute put her deeply in touch with her breath, helping her find focus and appreciation. The archaic, glacially paced bureaucracy of a Bhutanese bank taught her to go with the flow—and take up knitting. The ancient ritual of drinking tea brought tranquility, friendship, and, eventually, a husband. Each day, and each adventure, in her adopted home brought new insights and understandings to take back to frantic America, where she now practices the art of “simulating Bhutan.” This collection of stories, impressions, and suggestions is a little nudge, a push, a leg up into the rarefied air of paradise—of bright sunlight and beautiful views.

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Hay House, Inc. (October 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401945090

ISBN-13: 978-1401945091

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.6 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 65 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #557,562 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Travel > Asia > Bhutan #3045 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Travelers & Explorers #3495 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Happiness

## Customer Reviews

"Now, you've gone and done it, Linda Leaming. This book has impelled me to add a whole new country to my already-overflowing bucket list. But either way, I'm grateful for this most excellent field guide to happiness. Thank you, my fellow traveler, for sharing the love." — Pam Grout, #1 New York Times best-selling author of *E-Squared* and *E-Cubed*

"Linda Leaming writes with a sweetness and an earned wisdom that goes down as smoothly as a good cup of tea. She is also very funny. If you are alive, or would like to be, read her *A Field Guide to Happiness* and find joy on every page." — Eric Weiner, author of *The Geography of Bliss*

"Linda Leaming offers us a fresh perspective of embracing life's challenges while pursuing our dreams. Delivered with down-to-earth wisdom and intelligent humor, *A Field Guide to Happiness* takes us on a Himalayan journey to Bhutan while never veering far from the heart." — Matteo Pistono, author of *Fearless in Tibet* and *In the Shadow of the Buddha*

"With Bhutan as a backdrop, Linda Leaming's intimate offering of life lessons in *A Field Guide to Happiness* encourages deep exploration in our own interior landscapes. This gem of a book is an invitation to know we have all we need to surrender in the arms of joy, and measure our aliveness with heartfelt connection instead of speed and productivity. Read it slowly and savor each morsel." — Nancy Levin, best-selling author of *Jump . . . And Your Life Will Appear*

LINDA LEAMING is a writer whose work has appeared in *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Mandala*, *Guardian UK*, *A Woman's Asia* (*Travelers' Tales*), and many other publications. Eric Weiner included her in his bestseller *The Geography of Bliss*. Originally from Nashville, she has an M.F.A. in fiction from the University of Arizona; and she regularly speaks about Bhutan at colleges, churches, seminars, and book groups. She is married to the renowned Bhutanese thangka painter Phurba Namgay. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Find her at: [www.lindaleaming.com](http://www.lindaleaming.com) and [www.twitter.com/lindaleaming](http://www.twitter.com/lindaleaming).

This is not exactly a sequel to Leaming's earlier memoir, *Married to Bhutan*, but it does cover the period following that book. And I wouldn't even go so far as to say it's not a memoir, but it's kind of

50:50, memoir:self-help. She uses anecdotes from her life in Bhutan and the USA to illustrate her 22 best pieces of advice for living a happier life. These are not earth-shattering ideas - in fact most if not all will have the reader nodding their head in agreement or recognition - but having them collected together in this highly readable package certainly makes them very accessible. Some of the tips are things like being kind, getting out into nature, eating well, compromise, and so on. I love Leaming's style; she's a very self-aware and self-deprecating, humorous writer, but she also knows when to dial it back. The chapter where she writes about the last days and death of her mother brought a lump to my throat, which had already had a workout from all the chuckling through the earlier chapters.

I LOVE her writing! I laugh out loud at so many of her stories, most of which are self-effacing. She is both an American born and bred, and a newly adopted Bhutanese. I have come to have great affection for the people and land of Bhutan through her writings. But it's also given me the chance to reconsider some of my self-criticisms and to think how I might react if I were in Bhutan and not subjecting myself to our arbitrary American standards. Pretty thought-provoking stuff. But that's not why you should read it. You should read it because every page is a joy and every story worthwhile.

I love this book so much, am re-reading it right away, in case I missed a few sentences of its deliciousness. Linda Learning is a very human writer, and shares intimately how she feels as she describes the scenery and events in her life. I bought more of her books, and even purchased 3 extra copies of this one for sharing with friends.

Not a self-help book but a wonderful funny life story about the authors' experience transitioning to a completely different culture in Bhutan. I just wanted to keep reading this book. The author is full of wisdom, marvelously wry and a great storyteller. She's the girlfriend you want to go on vacation with because you know she will be great company and full of observations! This is the perfect beach book, or the one you want to read on your travels.

What a delightful descriptive narrative Linda Leaming provides on the predicament of being a Westerner who moves to the ancient remote Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan. Having been there myself to investigate the Gross National Happiness program being instituted by the King, it was a true treat to read her perspective on their culture. She writes with honesty and humor and I found every single page to be enjoyable!

Charming book - more of a journal than a 'self-help' book. This is the first book I've read from this author, and I am impressed by her fun and often humorous take on Zen. This book could easily be read in a day, but I wanted to pace myself (and highlight many passages) because I enjoy reading her witty reflections on everyday life in Bhutan.

Love, love, love this book ! I will be passing this on to friends and family but only with the promise of return so I can loan it to as many people as possible!

I have been to Bhutan over 28 times since 1982 and both Linda Leaming's books give the reader a view inside the culture that would not be possible during a normal tourist visit. I recommend both of her books for anyone interested in this fascinating and complex country.

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