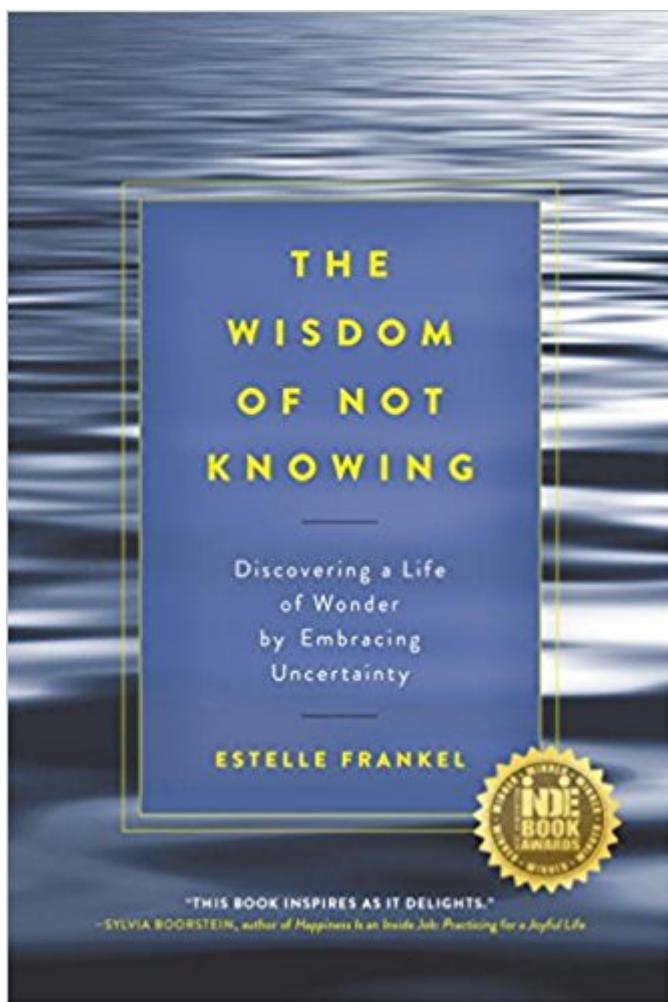


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# The Wisdom Of Not Knowing: Discovering A Life Of Wonder By Embracing Uncertainty



## Synopsis

A deeply affirming exploration of the challenges and possibilities of the unknown--with meditations and exercises that can help transform the fear and uncertainty of "not knowing" into a sense of openness, curiosity, and bravery. For most of us the unknown is both friend and foe. At times it can be a source of paralyzing fear and uncertainty, and at other times it can be a starting point for transformation, creativity, and growth. The unknown is a deep current that runs throughout all religions and mystical traditions, and it is also the nexus of contemporary psychotherapeutic thought and practice and a key element in all personal growth and healing. In *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, psychotherapist Estelle Frankel shows us that our psychological, emotional, and spiritual health is radically influenced by how comfortable we are at navigating the unknown and uncertain dimensions of our lives. Drawing on insights from Kabbalah, depth psychology, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and ancient myth, Frankel explores how we can grow our souls by tapping into the wisdom of not knowing. She also includes case studies of individuals who have grappled with their fears of the unknown and, as a result, have come out wiser, stronger, and more resilient. Each chapter includes experiential exercises and/or meditations for befriending the unknown. These exercises help convey how we must be willing to "not know" in order to gain knowledge and be able to bear uncertainty so we can be free to enjoy a healthy sense of adventure and curiosity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This book inspires as it delights. Estelle Frankel's graceful and authoritative

voice--fluent and informed as it seamlessly weaves together religion, psychoanalytic theory, literature, philosophy and modern science--recasts the unknown from, a situation of dread to an invitation to ever more liberating awareness.

•Sylvia Boorstein, author of *Happiness is an Inside Job: Practicing for a Joyful Life* "Drawing on insights from the Jewish mystical tradition, as well as Buddhism and psychoanalysis, Estelle Frankel demonstrates the surprisingly positive value of not knowing. This book is profound and clear. It will enable you to become more intimate with your own experience, to overcome fear, and to overcome the mental and emotional challenges of daily life.

•Daniel Matt, author of *The Essential Kabbalah, God and the Big Bang*, and *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* "This book bristles with depth and insight, practical stories, and humor as Estelle Frankel takes us on a deep and necessary journey into the via negativa, the land of unknowing. She urges us in a time of darkness and uncertainty to learn from the dark and to grow our courage and our creativity in the process.

•Rev Dr. Matthew Fox, author of *A Way to God* "As Americans leave traditional faiths, publishers release books to give them alternatives...In *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, Estelle Frankel--a therapist who also teaches Jewish mysticism--proposes that psychological, emotional, and spiritual health depend on accepting how much in life cannot be known, and that it is important to have the courage to face uncertainty and ambiguity...."

•Publishers Weekly "...As she demonstrated in *Sacred Therapy*, Frankel is a masterful meaning-maker. She skillfully marshals ideas and values from mystical Judaism and psychotherapy and then launches into astonishing intimations of the spiritual maturity that comes with quests, creativity, darkness, questions, and open-mindedness...."

•Spirituality & Practice "Frankel's path to embracing uncertainty has a certain resonance...."

•Experience Life "Psychotherapist and spiritual advisor Estelle Frankel, in her book, *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, explores the power of the unknown to be friend rather than foe..."

•Beliefnet

For most of us the unknown is both friend and foe. At times it can be a source of paralyzing fear and uncertainty, and at other times it can be a starting point for transformation, creativity, and growth. The unknown is a deep current that runs throughout all religions and mystical traditions, and it is also the nexus of contemporary psychotherapeutic thought and practice and a key element in all personal growth and healing. In *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, psychotherapist Estelle Frankel shows us that our psychological, emotional, and spiritual health is radically influenced by how comfortable we are at navigating the unknown and uncertain dimensions of our lives.

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The author's style makes you feel like your wisest friend is sitting across the kitchen table over tea, telling you inspiring stories, making you think profoundly, and opening a hidden window to the light.

Very interesting. Found the comparison of Buddhism and the Kabbalah enlightening

Great book!

Fantastic book from one of our great teachers.

Know author personally and she does not disappoint.

Estelle Frankel's book is pure music. It flows along with the modulated cadence of a Paul Simon song. The Wisdom of Not Knowing holds to its premise of exploring how the context of things, the unspoken, the dark, the uncertain, and the mysterious, feed us in profound ways. Like Simon, she too invokes the wisdom of various cultures and traditions outside of her own personal Jewish background and training. The work moves effortlessly from chapter to chapter, exploring the paradoxical twins of light and dark, sacred and profane, silence and sound, science and spirituality, intuition and predictability, in short, a dozen "verses" that challenge our notions of what it means to know or not know. In this book we hear teachings and tales of Zen Masters, Hasidic Rebbes, Sufi poets, Western physicists, philosophers, artists and movie-makers, and yet, Frankel always returns to the "chorus" of her own psychotherapeutic encounters as a healer and her personal Jewish mystical practice without a hint of dogmatism or stridency. At the core of the book are the woefully misconstrued notions about darkness and light that plague our culture and our world. This, I believe, is the most misunderstood and dangerous of all paradoxes that feed fear,

projection, racism and violence. Frankel's work artfully and methodically addresses this fundamental misconception by exploring the many traditions of "non-duality" with quotes, anecdotes, poems, and stories artfully presented. The book is so rife with such nuggets of wisdom that I've started utilizing it as an I Ching in my own counseling practice. I've dared to hand it to clients on the cusp of making daring life changes who then randomly open the work, and there to our shared amazement, we sit together, mouth agape, and the clients wonder if I've enacted some therapeutic slight of hand that led to the perfect passage that mirrors their struggle, question, or immanent transformation. Yes there are many works that attempt to synthesize the polarities of good and evil, science and religion, and doing and being, but Frankel's books (Sacred Therapy being her first) are certainly at or near the top of the heap in terms of depth, tone and especially, sheer humanity. This book is soothing to read as well as informative; you will smile, cry, and be moved by the writings of a master storyteller. The poet Rumi speaks of the "doorsill where the two worlds touch." Frankel effortlessly welcomes us at that gate, counseling mystery as well as planning, spontaneity as well as ritual observance, white space as well as the printed word, silence as well as speech, and yes, even the value of heartbreak and despair as well as good fortune. Even Paul Simon might be pleased a half century after penning the line: "Hello darkness my old friend" that those words had more essential truth and resonance than he might have intended.

I was drawn to this book by its title. For a long time, I have been interested in the Capacity to Not Know, first as a psychotherapy research tool and second as an important way to approach the mystery of death. I have been disappointed in the past by titles that promise one thing and then deliver something quite different, a literary bait and switch, as it were. The author provides the examples and amplifications of the wisdom of not knowing in the form of stories from Jewish mysticism, Zen, and her personal life as well as the lives of her patients. Estelle writes in a simple lyrical style. Reading the book and reflecting on the wisdom it contains is a real pleasure. Seth Isaiah Rubin, Ph.D Clinical Psychologist and Jungian Analyst

I figure anyone who is bothering to read reviews must be like I am...very careful about what they choose to read. And how in the world do I give you Estelle Frankel, and how do I give you this book? I think of the word, "beyond". I don't know Estelle, except through her books. I read her book "Sacred Therapy" years ago, and knew this book would be one I would read again and again. I

heard that she had a new book out, titled "The Wisdom of Not Knowing", and considering the author, and the subject, I left the book I was reading to finish another time, and pulled down "The Wisdom of Not Knowing". I'm only half way through it, planned on writing this when I finished, but I can't wait till then. Estelle Frankel is "beyond". She is a Psychotherapist and a scholar, but she is beyond that. I find with many scholars that what they write is true, but so often they tend to stretch their truth beyond its proper bounds. Estelle Frankel's writing is true, but fits in such a balanced way with all that is true. I've wondered why she can write like this, and it must be an aspect of nonduality that enables her conceptions to be not only true, but Wholey true. See if you don't agree, she writes the Truth with a capital T. So is this it? Have I given you Estelle Frankel and this book? No, far, far from it. We humans are multidimensional masterpieces of "being". So many books share concepts, and we do our best to read them and absorb. Estelle Frankel gives us stories, metaphorical stories, and allows the concepts to live and breathe in her books through these stories. We don't so much read a Frankel book as we open the pages and fall into them, walk around in them. She must have 10,000 stories in her mind, and they are each like spools of thread, each story with its own texture and color, and this author selects them one by one and weaves for us a book of metaphor giving us in the end a whole tapestry of truth we can touch and feel, and come to know to our very bones. THIS is the writing of Estelle Frankel. She is one of my very favorite authors, I cannot place a value on her work. Her books will also kindly challenge you, as "The Wisdom of Not Knowing is challenging me. Certainty has offered me the siren song of safety throughout my life, at the price of a life not fully lived. To say thanks for this book is not nearly enough, I wish everyone would read it.

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