

SOME BASIC GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AMAZON REVIEWS OF DAWN HORSE PRESS PRODUCTS

Dear Friends,

Here are some recommendations to help guide you in writing reviews on Amazon.com. These are not comprehensive. They are simply based on extensive experience writing reviews. Our aim is to connect with public people exploring the spiritual literature available on Amazon. Over time, as we learn more through practice, we should be able to add more suggestions for one another.

1. ***Remember why they came looking.***

As you compose your review, bear in mind that people are suffering and are looking for help. They wouldn't be browsing Bhagavan's books and CDs otherwise. Thus, the tone of your review should not be merely enthusiastic, but sober, depthful, thoughtful, and sincere.

2. ***Speak as yourself personally.***

Do not identify yourself as a follower of Adi Da—in most people's minds, this makes you a less reliable source of guidance.

3. ***Write in a conversational tone.***

Use standard English (or whatever language you are writing in).

4. ***Don't follow the capitalization conventions used by Adi Da.***

Use standard capitalization.

5. ***Use words that an average high school student would know.***

Avoid "in-house" terminology.

6. ***Stick to your native language.***

Do not use Sanskrit words.

7. *Remark on what Adi Da says that sets Him apart, not on Who He Is.*

Avoid sweeping statements that suggest that Adi Da is superior to all other teachers and emphasize instead, in concrete terms, what is unique and interesting about his observations and insights.

8. *Select appropriate quotes.*

Feel free to choose brief and highly accessible excerpts from the material you are reviewing/endorsing.

9. *Mention people and topics that Adi Da mentions.*

It appears to be the case that when you search for something on Amazon their search apparatus will take you to reviews that mention the item you are searching for. So, if you are reviewing a book of Bhagavan's about art, for example, feel free to mention relevant artists or art books, as that might bring more potential readers to your book.

10. *Mention theme/content.*

Remembering that Bhagavan's book titles are sometimes cryptic, include what the book is about.

11. *Get real.*

Speak about your own real experience. For example, in the following review of *The Knee of Listening*, the writer identifies as someone who explored quite a bit of literature before discovering Adi Da, thus allowing others with similar experience and backgrounds to relate to her more readily:

When I first began to try to understand something about life, I read, among many other things, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *Daughter of Fire*, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, and the collected works of Carl Jung. Each of these books and authors--each in their own unique way -- spoke to my

intuition of what is real and great. When, some years later, I came upon the works of Adi Da, I encountered an even larger and more remarkable comprehension of reality. Adi Da is not "easy", because he is very critical of so much that we take for granted, but I heartily recommend any of his books to you, and *The Knee of Listening* is perhaps the best one to start with. It contains not only his early-life story, but some amazing essays about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and Ramana Maharshi, the different “degrees” of realization, the fundamental inconclusiveness of both mystical experience and non-dual absorption in the "self"--and much more.

11. *Content and length of review*

Although Amazon calls them “reviews”, they can be, and often are more like endorsements. Amazon only requires a minimum of 20 words. So although we can write lengthy, scholarly reviews, a relatively short endorsement is probably better than nothing at all. And an endorsement can certainly make one or more points about why this is a recommended title. The object being to consider our resources: most of us aren’t scholars or professional writers so it’s helpful to have realistic goals about the level of review/endorsement we’re capable of writing. There’s also the resource of time, so it’s good to balance out the need to increase the overall quantity of positive ratings vs. perfecting reviews on any given title.

12. *Headlines*

Amazon also requires a headline for the written review and they are important as they can summarize and crystallize the review's message.

13. *Stars*

It's good to remember that many people don't necessarily read the review, but use stars to filter out products below a certain star rating. We had a devotee reviewer recently give a number of Bhagavan's titles 4 stars—why? I don't know. Perhaps they felt they were being more honest by giving 5 stars to the titles they really liked and 4 stars to the ones they liked a little less. My feeling is we shouldn't rate His titles unless we're prepared to give them 5 stars. We may like some titles more than others, but since His Gifts are always perfect (albeit they may not be presented that way) we should give them perfect ratings.