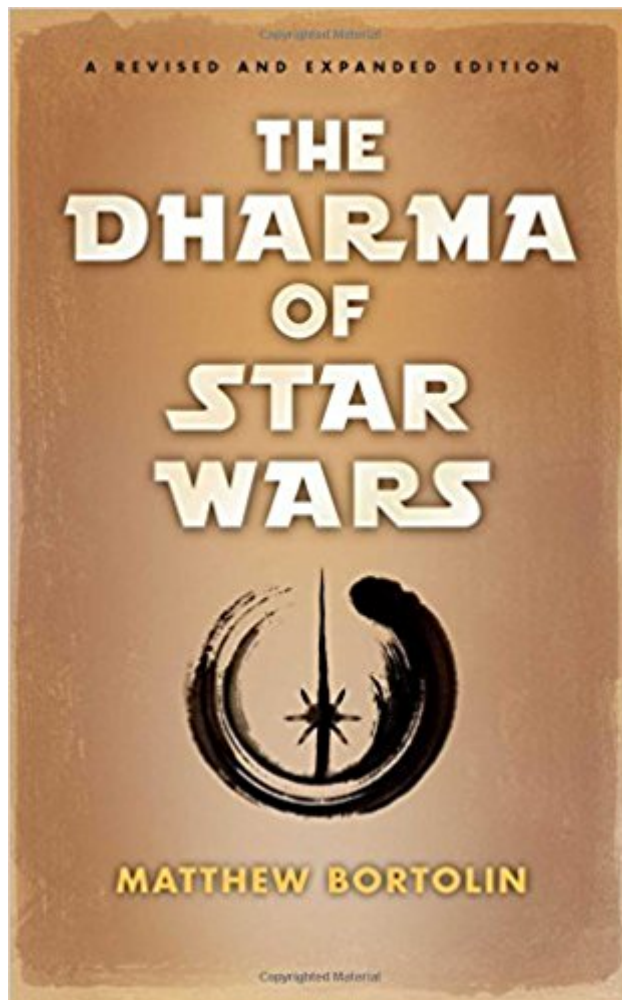


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# The Dharma Of Star Wars



## Synopsis

Is Yoda a Zen Master? Is the story of Luke Skywalker a spiritual epic? The answers, as well as excitement, adventure, and a lot of fun, are here! This revised and expanded edition of *The Dharma of Star Wars* uses George Lucas's beloved modern saga and the wise words of the Buddha to illuminate each other in playful and unexpectedly rewarding ways. Matthew Bortolin writes an inspiring and totally new take on this timeless saga, from *A New Hope* through *Revenge of the Sith* and television's *Clone Wars*. Great fun for any Star Wars fan. Includes an instruction in *The Jedi Art of Mindfulness and Concentration* and *The Padawan Handbook: Zen Contemplations for the Would-Be Jedi*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bortolin, an ordained member of Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist community, may be the ideal person to write about the Buddhist themes in *Star Wars*: he camped out for tickets to all of the movies "even the less than stellar ones" and possesses his very own set of Jedi robes. In short, consistent chapters, Bortolin explores themes such as suffering, mindfulness, karma and transcending the dark side. One especially helpful chapter examines what nirvana is, comparing it to the all-pervasive Force of *Star Wars*, and clarifying that nirvana isn't a sort of Buddhist heaven or a blissed-out mental condition. Rather, Bortolin asserts, it is "the very absence of ideas and conceptualization." Bortolin looks to Jedi meditation as a parallel discipline to the Buddhist practice of mindfulness meditation. In this state, Jedi knights "get in touch with reality as it truly is," observing their minds with calm compassion and allowing greater understanding of the present moment. One

of the book's greatest strengths is Bortolin's stubborn determination to find something redeeming about the two most recent Star Wars films, and he does actually recover enough of these nuggets to make some fans take a second look at those overhyped flicks. With humor, strong examples and timeless wisdom, Bortolin offers a new way to think about a pop culture phenomenon. Lead us to Yoda, he does. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A light-hearted exploration of the Star Wars movies, providing a new take on the six-part space fantasy epic." -- SFRevu "Bortolin helps readers understand the truth that Yoda speaks: 'Luminous beings are we; not this crude matter.'" -- Jana Riess, author of *What Would Buffy Do?* "Bortolin takes readers on a journey like no other -- into their own hearts, minds and spirits." -- Jeff Cioletti, producer/director, *Millennium's End: The Fandom Menace* "Lead us to Yoda, he [Bortolin] does." -- Publishers Weekly "Star Wars fans will find Bortolin's pleasant humor and simple directness immensely enjoyable and thought provoking" -- Robert A. Johnson, author of *He and She and We* and *Owning Your Own Shadow and Inner Work* and *Contentment: A Way to True Happiness* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I had a copy of the paperback, but the kindle version adds some great material. I've been studying *Easter Paths of Liberation* for almost 20 years, and I feel this does a great job of blending a contemporary view on Buddhism and the Saga. I hope you'll give it a try. I'm going to start rereading it for the 3rd time right now.

A dedicated Buddhist practitioner won't be offput by the news that author Matthew Bortolin owns a set of Jedi robes. It's hardly unusual for a Buddhist to own ritual attire anyway. Bortolin is a Jedihead. He's also a member of Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist community. At first it seems like *THE DHARMA OF STAR WARS* is short on Dharma and long on STAR WARS. There are 150 or so direct references to STAR WARS in the first thirty pages (count them!). Some of them are gratuitous ("Your mind, like an out-of-control podracer..."). By the end of the first chapter---Okay! We get it! This book uses the STAR WARS universe as a paradigm! It's clear that Mr. Bortolin must have written Chapter One last. A college student swigging caffeine drinks trying to stay awake all night to write a term paper will be as tweaked as Bortolin is seemingly tweaked on STAR WARS. It's understandable. Matthew Bortolin must have watched each STAR WARS movie scores of times and spent countless hours in study, in rewriting, and in meditation to create this book, which is

clearly a labor of love. Fortunately, Mr. Bortolin must have been drinking decaf throughout most of the writing process. His ability to tie sometimes unfamiliar Buddhist ideas to sometimes obscure incidents in the STAR WARS scripts is quite an accomplishment. Getting past the first chapter, we discover that THE DHARMA OF STAR WARS is a thoughtful, intelligent, well-written generalist explanation of basic Buddhist concepts. Bortolin uses well-chosen incidents from the STAR WARS films (and books) to colorfully illustrate and explain such Buddhist core concepts as Karma, Nirvana, meditation, Dharma, and the Five Aggregates (also known as the Five Conditions or Five Skandhas). Mr. Bortolin avoids using much "foreign" Buddhist terminology and doesn't reference the Heart Sutra or any of the other thousands of Buddhist writings. Far more importantly, he refuses to get lost in windy theoretical discussions. Sitting meditation (zazen) is referred to throughout as "sitting meditation." "Monkey Mind" becomes "Jar Jar Mind" (very appropriately!). Let us thank the Maker that Bortolin isn't interested in being a Buddhist recruiter. Rather, he wants the reader unfamiliar with Buddhism to use its concepts and precepts in a practical fashion to live mindfully. If references to Luke, Leia, Darth, and The Force do it, that's just fine by him. The end of THE DHARMA OF STAR WARS has a section called "The Padawan's Handbook." A collection of aphorisms, thoughts, affirmations, and Buddhist (and other) commentaries rewritten in the STAR WARS idiom, "The Padawan's Handbook" is an intelligent guidebook to issues confronting us all as human beings. Each line in "The Padawan's Handbook" is a meditation in and of itself. Perhaps Mr. Bortolin should consider expanding this section into an independent volume. And why hasn't George Lucas endorsed this project? Gassho, Mr. Bortolin, and I look forward to hearing from you again. FOUR AND A HALF STARS

Highly recommended reading. The examples are spot on and makes a lot of sense, explain sometimes complicated and deep buddhist concepts through the awesome Star Wars universe. Great teaching aid for anyone trying to understand buddhist concepts a bit more, and, IMHO, it inadvertently talks about mindfulness as well. The force is around all of us and in us! May the force be with you!

Good book, I used it for a Sunday Lesson at church. A fun read too!

Great book...even better if you are a huge Star Wars fan.

A gift for my sister

Wow! I purchased this book as a Star Wars fan. The author, who is very knowledgeable of Star Wars, discusses the life lessons one can learn from the series. The author is a Buddhist and discusses the events in the saga from a practical and non dogmatic Buddhist perspective (reducing suffering), but the book is not preachy. Actually, not preachy at all. After reading this book, I began to see things/world in different ways. Personally, this book changed my life. If you like Star Wars, are interested in Jedi philosophy or eastern philosophy, you will not be disappointed.

Anyone who is lured to Star Wars due to the mythic/supernatural allure will love this book. It was extraordinarily helpful during my own transformative experience and it will be for you. Also look into Joseph Campbell's "The Hero with a Thousand Faces"

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