

Harold Ramis' 5 Minute Buddhist

Though born and raised Jewish, successful comedy actor and filmmaker Harold Ramis famously followed Buddhist teachings and once visited with the Dalai Lama.

The influence of Buddhist thought can be seen in several of his films, most notably "Groundhog Day" starring Bill Murray, directed by Ramis and co-written with Danny Rubin.

Ramis was known by his friends and colleagues to carry a pocket "Buddhist primer" he created himself, which he would occasionally copy and give to friends such as Judd Apatow.

I carefully reproduced this PDF of his personal primer – font, spacing and all – from an online photograph of a laminated, autographed version Mr. Ramis provided for the annual Shambhala Sun Foundation auction in 2009.

Print, laminate and tri-fold it "like a Chinese takeout menu" for ultimate authenticity.

by Todd Kuhns

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toddkuhns.com

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Background

"Before I left home for Shreveport, I received a surprise from Ramis - a laminated red page folded in three, with lists on it.

'The idea was to present a simple Buddhist primer on something the size of a Chinese takeout menu,' he wrote in an accompanying note.

Instead of a guide to putting together a dinner by choosing, say, the five spice tofu from column A and the egg drop soup from column B, this menu was called *The Five-Minute Buddhist*.

It listed the five aggregates, the four noble truths, the eightfold path, the seven factors of enlightenment, the four sublime states, the five hindrances, and the five precepts, ending with a quote from Thich Nhat Hanh: 'The miracle is not to walk on water. The miracle is to walk on the green earth, dwelling deeply in the present moment, feeling fully alive.'"

- Perry Garfinkel,
[Shambhala Sun Magazine](http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=3379), July 2009

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Harold Ramis Selected Filmography

- ❖ Meatballs (1979)
- ❖ Stripes (1981)
- ❖ Caddyshack (1980)
- ❖ National Lampoon's Vacation (1983)
- ❖ Ghostbusters (1984)
- ❖ Club Paradise (1986)
- ❖ Ghostbusters II (1989)
- ❖ Groundhog Day (1993)
- ❖ Airheads (1984)
- ❖ Stuart Saves His Family (1995)
- ❖ Multiplicity (1996)
- ❖ As Good As It Gets (1997)
- ❖ Analyze This (1999)
- ❖ Bedazzled (2000)
- ❖ High Fidelity (2000)
- ❖ Analyze That (2002)
- ❖ The Ice Harvest (2005)
- ❖ The Office (2006) (TV)
- ❖ Knocked Up (2007)
- ❖ Year One (2009)

Animal House, *Caddyshack*, *Ghostbusters*, and *Groundhog Day* are on the American Film Institute's "100 Years, 100 Laughs" list

The Miracle is not to walk on water. The Miracle is to walk on the green Earth,
dwelling deeply in the present moment, feeling truly alive.

–Thich Nhat Hanh

THE 5 MINUTE BUDDHIST

- ❖ Man is supreme and responsible for his own thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and actions.
- ❖ All existence is conditioned, relative, interdependent, and based on cause and effect.
- ❖ The self, the soul, the ego are mental projections, false beliefs—*Anatta* (no-self, no-soul). They exist as conventional truth but not as ultimate truth.

The Five Aggregates

“Being” is experienced as:

1. Matter
2. Sensation
3. Perception
4. Mental Formation
5. Consciousness

The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is characterized by impermanence and suffering, or *Dukkha* (insatiable thirst).
2. The Origin of *Dukkha* (suffering) is attachment to desire.
3. The Cessation of *Dukkha* is achieved, not by belief, but by the contemplation, understanding, and elimination of desire and attachment.
4. The Noble Eight-fold Path is the way to achieve the cessation of *Dukkha*.

The Noble Eight-fold Path

1. Right Understanding
2. Right Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Resulting in:

Ethical Conduct – speech, action, livelihood

Mental Discipline – effort, mindfulness, concentration

Wisdom – understanding and thought

To create:

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

1. Mindfulness
2. Investigation and research
3. Energy
4. Joy
5. Relaxation
6. Concentration
7. Equanimity

Which result in:

The Four Sublime States

1. Unlimited universal love and good will
2. Compassion for all suffering beings
3. Sympathetic joy for the success and well-being of others
4. Equanimity

The Five Hindrances

1. Sensual lust
2. Ill-will
3. Physical and mental languor and torpor
4. Restlessness and worry
5. Doubt and skepticism

The Five Precepts

The moral obligations of a lay Buddhist:

1. Not to destroy life
2. Not to steal
3. Not to commit adultery
4. Not to lie
5. Not to take intoxicating drink

- ❖ Don't know.
- ❖ Only go straight for 10,000 years.
- ❖ Save all sentient beings from suffering.

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dwelling deeply in the present moment, feeling truly alive.

–Thich Nhat Hanh