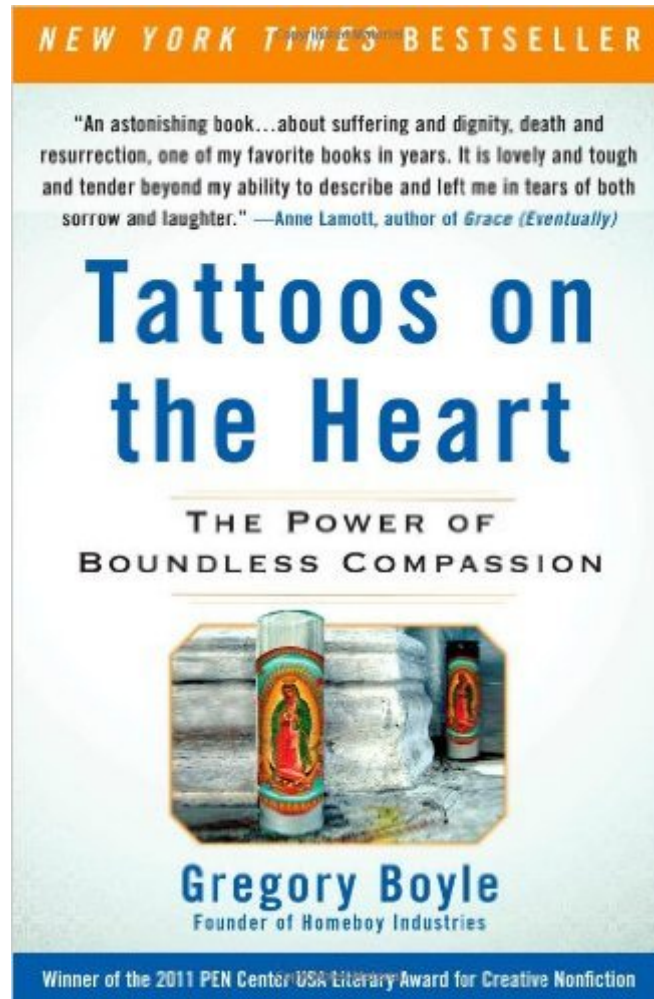


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# Tattoos On The Heart: The Power Of Boundless Compassion



## Synopsis

For twenty years, Gregory Boyle has run Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention program located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, the gang capital of the world. In *Tattoos on the Heart*, he distills his experience working in the ghetto into a breathtaking series of parables inspired by faith. Arranged by theme and filled with sparkling humor and glowing generosity, these essays offer a stirring look at how full our lives could be if we could find the joy in loving others and in being loved unconditionally. From giant, tattooed Cesar, shopping at JCPenney fresh out of prison, we learn how to feel worthy of God's love. From ten-year-old Lula we learn the importance of being known and acknowledged. From Pedro we understand the kind of patience necessary to rescue someone from the darkness. In each chapter we benefit from Boyle's gentle, hard-earned wisdom. These essays about universal kinship and redemption are moving examples of the power of unconditional love and the importance of fighting despair. Gorgeous and uplifting, *Tattoos on the Heart* reminds us that no life is less valuable than another.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's about what it means to be human, to seek the goodness within ourselves and everyone and everything around us. It is thoroughly entertaining, instructional, thought-provoking, inspirational, faith-restoring... I am halfway through the book and torn between devouring the rest in one sitting or drawing it out as long as possible. It's one of those books that you know you will be sad when you reach the end because you loved it so much.

I heard Fr. Greg Boyle speak a few years ago at a conference in Los Angeles and he is without question the best speaker I have ever heard. What is so impressive about his faith journey is that it is lived. The stories of human transformation described in the book are some of the most moving and inspiring spiritual narratives that I have encountered. At a time when it is so easy to become so cynical about institutional faith his writing breaks through with a spiritual force that reminds us of true meaning of faith.

Whenever Fr. quotes one of the "homies," I cannot help but cry. The simple yet deep wisdom they speak makes this very slow and prayerful reading. I have to stop and meditate. It is hard only because I also want to rush through the pages. The writing is fascinating and inspired! It's on my kindle, but know it's a book I want on my shelves. This is gospel!

Tattoos of the Heart by Father Gregory Boyle is the kind of book I want to press into the hands of everyone I know to make them read it and love it as I do. Boyle is the creator of Homeboy Industries which employs gang members in Los Angeles. Originally a bakery, it has grown to a silk screening business, graffiti removal business, plus more. They provide counseling, tattoo removal, and a wide range of other services for the entire community. Boyle fills the book with an assortment of anecdotes from the hilarious to the outrageous to the tragic. While reading, I kept sharing different stories aloud with my husband, because they are so stunning, I just had to share them. The message that Boyle wants his readers to get is that every single one of these gangbangers, no matter how hardcore, are in need of love, and to know that they have personal worth and value. He has faced a lot of prejudice in his dealings with them, and to the average reader, some of these people are truly frightening, but Boyle makes them always human and fragile. He speaks their language and gives them the opportunity to get a job, and to shatter the limitations imposed upon them by a variety of societal conditions. Boyle doesn't just share the "success" stories, but he wants to change the reader's definition of success. It can't be measured by a number of jobs or education, but by the number of hearts changed permanently by an organization who pours out the unconditional love of God. I dare you to read this book and not be moved by the stories within. Try not to cry as a mother loses yet another son to senseless violence. Don't smile when reading as a former gangbanger shares how he reads stories with his children each night before bed. These stories will tattoo themselves onto your heart.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I opened up the book, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of

Boundless Compassion by Gregory Boyle, a Jesuit Priest and Founder/Executive Director of Homeboy Industries, an organization that provides jobs, job training, and encouragement to those wanting to remove themselves from gang participation. Although there were certain areas I disagreed with Boyle regarding his view of scripture, the book as a whole was well worth the read. Pastor Gregory Boyle has a very witty way of telling stories of his involvement with gang members and their families. His stories about suffering are both full of laughter and sorrow. The message of this book is bold: Everyone of us - whether gang member, flight attendant, or car shop owner; can break down walls and be a part of the same "jurisdiction". His stories grabbed at my heart and pulled me in as if I was there. The book challenged me to think outside of my box and reconsider the unlovely among me. How can I show them love? The thing I loved the most about this book is the revealing nature of these gangsters, or as Boyle calls them, "Homies". When you stripped away the anger and pain, you got a view of the things they carry so close to them: shame, defeat, loss, fear, and a basic need to be loved. It would be easy to judge such people as "lost causes" or "hopeless", but Boyle allows us to see things in his world and the view is amazing. Boyle has chosen to "live among them" and lets us into his sorrowful, violent, and sometimes comical world. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to see the world through compassionate eyes, at the same time being able to laugh at some of the hilarious stories that Boyle tells. All proceeds from the sale of this book go back to Homeboy Industries where "homies" are given the tools to get on their feet and leave their life of violence. It's one more reason I applaud Gregory Boyle and his ever-growing compassionate heart.

Greg Boyle is one of the greatest persons I've ever known. The stories are riveting along with the spiritual insight. I was impressed how he wrote the short story about the passing of his own father and how his mother's pillow played a part of that same story. My wife and I also breathe in the scents of each other when the other is not there. Tattoos on the Heart is all about the kinship we should all be sharing with each other, and that God asks us to be kind, loving and compassionate with each other. This book helps to reaffirm the ultimate goal in life.

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