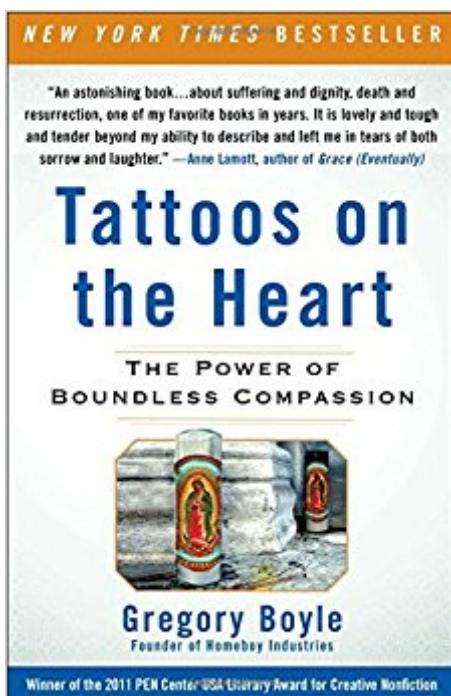


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# Tattoos On The Heart: The Power Of Boundless Compassion



## **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**

Starred Review. In this artful, disquieting, yet surprisingly jubilant memoir, Jesuit priest Boyle recounts his two decades of working with homies in Los Angeles County, which contains 1,100 gangs with nearly 86,000 members. Boyle's Homeboy Industries is the largest gang intervention program in the country, offering job training, tattoo removal, and employment to members of enemy gangs. Effectively straddling the debate regarding where the responsibility for urban violence lies, Boyle both recounts the despair of watching the kids you love cooperate in their own demise and

levels the challenge to readers to stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it. From moving vignettes about gangsters breaking into tears or finding themselves worthy of love and affirmation, to moments of spiritual reflection and sidesplittingly funny banter between him and the homies, Boyle creates a convincing and even joyful treatise on the sacredness of every life. Considering that he has buried more than 150 young people from gang-related violence, the joyful tenor of the book remains an astounding literary and spiritual feat. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

âœDestined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality.â•â""The Los Angeles Times ""Incandescent, always hope-filled and often hilarious. Boyle somehow maintains an exuberant voice that celebrates the strength, compassion and humanity of people often demonized. He simply highlights charity and goodness wherever they are found. Boyle intersperses his narratives about gang members and his work with them with theological and spiritual reflections from a variety of theologians, poets and other writers. By introducing book-buying, highly educated readers to people we may never otherwise encounter, Boyle aspires to "broaden the parameters of our kinship."--"The Christian Century""Father Boyle reminds us all that every single child and youth is a part of God's 'jurisdiction'--and when they know that we are seeing them as God does, they are capable of great things. Father Boyle is a national treasure." --MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, PRESIDENT, CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND"A spiritual masterpiece touching the innermost sanctum of the human soul. Boyle approaches each person as a child of God and fully deserving of love and compassion. His capacity to reach the heart of the most hardened, and to see the best in everyone, inspires. I laughed, wept, and underlined on virtually every page." --KERRY KENNEDY, FOUNDER OF THE RFK CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS"One of the bravest, most humane, heartbreaking, brilliant, and hopeful stories I've read in ages. Father Greg, the Gandhi of the Gangs, fills *Tattoos* with unquenchable soul force and down-to-earth love." --JACK KORNFIELD, AUTHOR OF *A PATH WITH HEART*"*Tattoos* on the Heart is an astounding book and a remarkable testament. No one brings more triumph and tragedy to the street gang story than Greg Boyle. No one brings more conviction and compassion than Greg Boyle. And no one writes the gang story more beautifully." --MALCOLM KLEIN, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA"Sometimes we are allowed to see in our own lifetimes what we were supposed to see in the life and ministry of Jesus. Read, and let your life be changed!" --FATHER RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M., CENTER FOR ACTION AND

CONTEMPLATION, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO "Destined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality." --"The Los Angeles Times""An astonishing book . . . about suffering and dignity, death and resurrection, one of my favorite books in years. It is lovely and tough and tender beyond my ability to describe and left me in tears of both sorrow and laughter."--ANNE LAMOTT, AUTHOR OF GRACE (EVENTUALLY)"Tattoos on the Heart is an honest, raw, and compelling collection from Father Greg Boyle's life and work with gang-involved youth. His commitment should teach us all a lesson in compromise, sharing, learning, loving, and, most important, living life to the fullest." --ANJELICA HUSTON"An extraordinary reflection of a life totally committed to reshaping and redirecting the lives of countless young gang members (from L.A.'s gang culture), Greg Boyle's Tattoos on the Heart proves one man with courage is a majority." --MARTIN SHEEN"Destined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality." --"The Los Angeles Times"

A different perspective on ministry. I felt it was worthwhile donating my copy to the local seminary so that the seminarians could get some knowledge of the costs and contributions afforded them in this particular area of ministry. Working with people, i.e., young men and women, who have chosen a wrong road and need to be set on a more productive path has its costs and rewards. This presentation, and life itself, is not a perfect balance of good and bad. Successes are to be celebrated, but it takes time and effort. The cost of laying 180 of your parish members, in this case warehouse employees, to rest is heart wrenching, meaning successes are that much more precious.

Author is a GENUINE Christian who has been extremely effective in showing love to those never loved in childhood (IF they want help from theirself-destructive lifestyles), AND he helped them create highly successful work settings for themselves (largest tattoo removal center in the world,silkscreen business, a bakery, cafe and ? more ). He has focused on L.A. gang members, men and women. He is now internationally known where he speaks all over the world, and a large number of American cities with gang problems have tried to create similar programs in the USA. He is also a well-read Jesuit who quoted more than 90 philosophers, etc in his book.

Heart-warming autobiography of a priest who meets young gang members of LA on their turf and has supported them in many ways to change their lives. Very real. I learned a lot about the challenges these young people face and what they need to have a different kind of life.

I was sad when I came to the last page. I read a story every night, and went to sleep with a hopeful heart. I am waiting for Stephen Boyle's next book to be published.

This book was selected as the mandatory summer read by a local Catholic High School. It is a powerful description of life and quite often death in one of America's toughest neighborhoods. The Jesuit priest who wrote the book, talks about his seemingly futile efforts to change the outcome. The characters he encountered wanted change but had no idea how to start. Some of them changed, but often died, but not without achieving a spiritual success. The scary part is relating it to the life we have in our protected world of suburban America. The author shows us how.

This will make you laugh and cry, sometimes at the same time. Have tissues nearby because you will likely need them. The stories gave me new appreciation for what it must be like to live in and near gang culture and for how fragile life is. I loved seeing the shift in Fr. Greg Boyle as he moved from his world and learned how to become most effective in his very important work. Would it be fair to call him the Mother Teresa of gangs in LA? Homeboy Industries/Homegirl Cafe also sells their cookbook which my daughter loves. She volunteered with them during 2 spring breaks in college and loved the food and experience. I look forward to the sequel of *Tattoos on the Heart*.

This is a wonderful story of faith struggling with reality and the dogged determination of a priest who absolutely will not give up. He does an amazing job of taking the reader into the streets of East L.A., Boyle Heights and the surrounding area. He is a fascinating emissary of God. He never waivers in his convictions although driven to his knees in a desperate struggle to save just one more soul before gang violence steals what he has tried to save. He knows gang members and understands their philosophy. I spent 28 years as an L.A. County Deputy Sheriff. I'm familiar with the streets and the people the priest writes about. Listen to it on CD or you'll miss the voice inflection, jargon, and verisimilitude that is truly East L.A.

This is a very moving story of Greg Boyle's work with gang members who want a better life for themselves and their families. His love, acceptance, and encouragement help them to make the journey. Very inspirational.

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