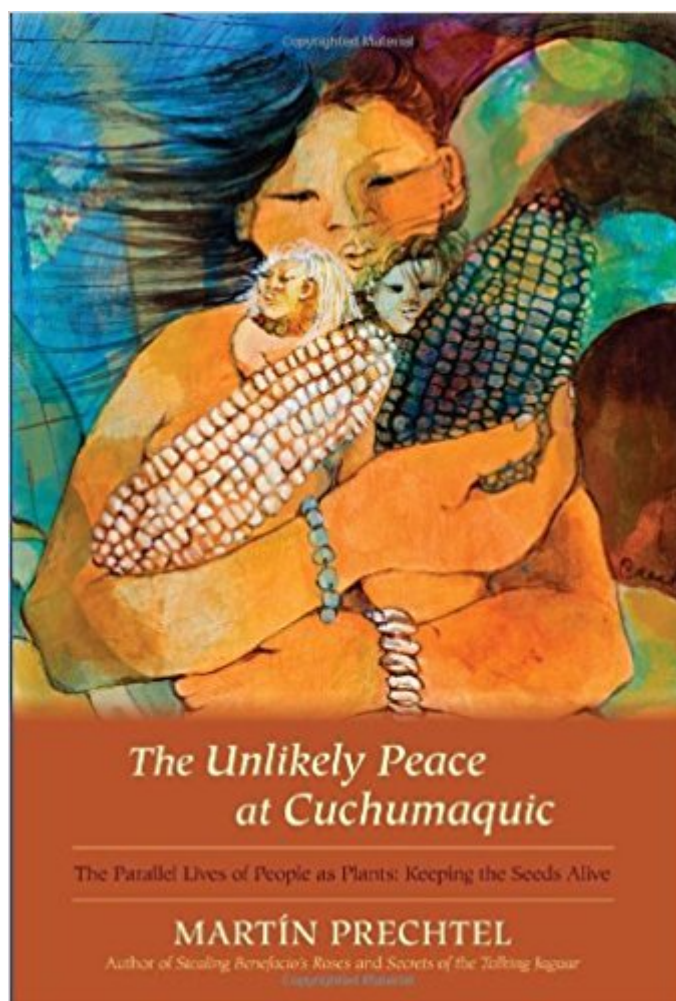


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# The Unlikely Peace At Cuchumaquic: The Parallel Lives Of People As Plants: Keeping The Seeds Alive



## Synopsis

Martín Prechtel's experiences growing up on a Pueblo Indian reservation, his years of apprenticing to a Guatemalan shaman, and his flight from Guatemala's brutal civil war to life in the U.S. inform this lyrical blend of memoir, cultural commentary, and spiritual call to arms. *The Unlikely Peace at Cuchumaquic* is both an epic story and a cry to the heart of humanity based on the author's realization that human survival depends on keeping alive the seeds of our "original forgotten spiritual excellence." Prechtel relates our current state of ecological crisis to the rapid disappearance of biodiversity, indigenous cultures, and shared human values. He demonstrates how real human culture is exterminated when real (not genetically modified) seeds are lost. Like plants that become extinct once their required conditions are no longer met, authentic, unmonetized human cultures can no longer survive in the modern world. To "keep the seeds alive" — both literally and metaphorically — they must be planted, harvested, and replanted, just as human culture must become truly engaging and meaningful to the soul, as necessary as food is to the body. The viable seeds of spirituality and culture that lie dormant within us need to "sprout" into broad daylight to create real sets of cultures welcome on Earth.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Unlikely Peace at Cuchumaquic is like one of the seeds Martín Prechtel describes. When planted in fertile ground, the words and thoughts and images and prayers will grow

into a life-giving complexity. This is a wondrous and powerful book.

—Derrick Jensen, activist and author of *Dreams and Endgame*

“A brilliant writer, Marten Prechtel bears gifts from our ancestors, gifts that are essential to awaken a wayward humanity to the need for a spiritual ecology.”

—Michael Harner, author of *The Way of the Shaman*

“Prechtel’s words are like the wildly colored heirloom kernels of corn born of ancestral knowledge that traditional Maya farmers prayerfully place into the holy earth. Once planted, the author waters these sacred seeds of the Indigenous Soul with heartfelt compassion for a spiritually disconnected humanity in this period of global transformation. May these sprouts of indigenous awareness flourish and produce vital seeds for a collective return to an awareness of our oneness with nature.”

—Robert Sitler, director of Latin American Studies at Stetson University, Florida, and author of *The Living Maya*

“A haunting and enchanting prose poem that encompasses a shattering earthquake, the rapacious disaster capitalism that fed on it, and the resilience of an indigenous culture whose authenticity carried it through those dark times.”

| Marten Prechtel’s deep wisdom has given us a model that can be replicated everywhere, so that from the moral bankruptcy and collapse of global capitalism a true human culture, in union with the wild, can emerge.

—Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia’s Garden*

“It is very important, especially nowadays in the face of the monsters of GMO agribusinesses, that someone speaks out so clearly and eloquently about saving the pure and strong seeds that nature itself brought forth. And, of course, Marten Prechtel is also right about the seeds we carry within us, given to us from our age-old culture.”

—Wolf D. Storl, author of *The Herbal Lore of Wise Women and Wortcunners*

Marten Prechtel has seen it all: He grew up on a Pueblo Indian reservation, was apprenticed to a Guatemalan medicine man and settled in the United States after fleeing the Guatemalan civil war. *The Unlikely Peace at Cuchumaquic: The Parallel Lives of People as Plants: Keeping the Seeds Alive* (North Atlantic Books) relates the preservation of seeds and plant life to the similar seeds of spirituality in human life as he chronicles his own life journey.”

—Indian Country

*The Unlikely Peace at Cuchumaquic: The Parallel Lives of People as Plants: Keeping the Seeds Alive* reflects the author’s experiences growing up on a Pueblo Indian reservation and his years of apprenticing to a Guatemalan shaman, returning to the U.S. after fleeing the country’s civil war ... Real human culture is exterminated when the non-genetically modified seeds of plants that feed us are lost - and this approaches the issue both metaphorically and spiritually, discussing how such seeds of spirituality and culture need to be cherished, replanted, and harvested. Collections strong in tribal insights, ecology, spirituality, and autobiography alike will find this a moving, passionate work.”

A master of eloquence and innovative language, Martin Prechtel is a writer, artist, and teacher who, through his work both written and spoken, hopes to promote the subtlety, irony, and premodern vitality hidden in any living language. A half-blood Native American with a Pueblo Indian upbringing, he left New Mexico to live in the village of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, eventually becoming a full member of the Tzutujil Mayan community there. For many years he served as a principal in that body of village leaders responsible for instructing the young people in the meanings of their ancient stories through the rituals of adult rites of passage. Once again residing in his native New Mexico, Prechtel teaches at his international school, Bolad's Kitchen. Through music, ritual, farming, sacred architecture, ancient textiles, tools, and story, Prechtel helps people in many lands to remember their own sense of place in the daily sacred through the search for the Indigenous Soul.

First of all, I would have rated it as 5 STARS if Martin had listened to his editor(s) and shortened some of his sentences to a more reasonable length. Since the end of his sentences relate to how they started, I found myself getting lost and having to go back to the beginning of many sentences to figure out what the end of the sentence was talking about. Martin just puts way too many "and"s in his sentences, making them go on and on and on until a sentence becomes an entire paragraph and the paragraph fills an entire page. Aside from that, Martin Prechtel has something very worthwhile to say. If you're on a spiritual path, you'll just have to remain tolerant and patient until you finally "get it". Hang in there, because you will. Just like many native teachers, Martin talks in circles. In this book, Martin speaks in circles within circles within circles. One story may begin with something and goes off on what appears to be a tangent, only to return to the initial subject in a way where the "tangential" information makes a lot of sense. He does the same thing in linking one story to another with "tangential" stories in between. By the time you get to later chapters, the stories told there relate back to the first chapter and you finally "get it" and you understand why he brought up seemingly unrelated threads within his stories. EVERYTHING IS RELATED. Martin's perspectives on seeds and how they relate to humans and vice versa are very eye opening and explain a lot regarding the indigenous mind and their way of thinking. He even explains some of the ceremonies and traditions described in his previous books and how they came to be. The birth and death rituals are a case in point. There's way too much for me to give detailed examples, and attempting to give any would short change what Martin was saying. Note that I did not say "what Martin was \*trying\* to

say." Martin said it in multiple ways that did not come across as redundant, so if one story or explanation confused you, another one will relieve your confusion."The Unlikely Peace at Cuchumaquic" is going to occupy a special place in my life and on my bookshelf, and I'm going to buy more copies for special spiritual friends who can appreciate what Martin Prechtel has to say.I can hardly wait for spring -- seed planting season !FYI, "Cuchumaquic" is the name of a Mayan village in Guatemala that was destroyed by an earthquake. Even though the survivors were starving, they were unwilling to eat their last remaining pouch of seed corn.

Now and then when you read something, you just know that the information is deep and clear. There is great wisdom here to help us heal as a society. The challenge is in internalizing the wisdom through action and reflection, not just reading the book. It comforts my soul to know that this source is here for those ready to do the work and heal themselves and and their people.

Martin's writings stir emotional response and are akin to creating psychological compost with words. In essence, he is a master "gardener" as he cultivates our inner soil. At times his wording creates heat (ignorant anger) in response to what seems like a never-ending barrage of attacking current day ways of living. His words cut deep into the roots of modernities problems--severing ego response in the process. No mercy! Martin's mesmerizing and hypnotically lengthy sentences, as if by magic, pull the reader's sensibilities into another dimension. Buried beneath this compost of wordiness are seeds of wisdom and truth that pop through the book's pages like newly born sprouts. Some are hidden beneath seemingly "dead leaves" and if one is alert and attentive--they startle the reader into moving toward the Light.

This is an amazing book for people who like to feel the spirit speaking through the words. The author uses his "delicious words" to share the lives and reality of a people and mindset that we could all benefit from living. It's a beautifully written book as are all of his other books. I highly recommend all of Martin Prechtel's books.

I did not like this book and have not been able to finish it. The style of writing is very difficult to read, with long rambling sentences. I found myself reading some of the sentences two or three times to parse the meaning. There are some good thoughts here, but from what I have read so far they could have been said more succinctly and more effectively.

This may be the best book I have ever read, and contains some important things any person needs to know about how to be a human being on the earth at this time. Everyone should read this book, and let the words and poetry of this man's courageous sharing of his one-of-a-kind life experience rearrange your molecules and set your soul on fire.

Brilliant, should be required reading to save the planet. A seed for expanded consciousness. A shamanic indigenous soul experience and reflection in the Mayan village. Planting a seed in dysfunctional America.

Though barely 4 chapters in, this seed book less than 12 dark hours in my hands, I am again stunned and changed by Martin's way of story telling, and fed by the story itself. This book... The Unlikely Peace, is, as intended, a seed for our time... already it has germinated what was waiting in the cold darkness of me, and started it to swell... moving me beyond my small ways of thinking and being, and pushing it out of its shell to greet the world in my own running way. As Martin's previous books have awakened my sleeping and shuttering yet hungry ways over the years, this one too, I know, will have its way. Already I am grateful for the timing of this seed being dropped into my fertile soil at a time when the world's soils are mostly depleted and desperately in need of a way of metabolizing the world that infuses them with that same ecstatic life flow that causes evolution. Martin's timing is impeccable and the gracious impact of his words from the start have inserted themselves as infusion of truth into my body and psyche... it is time and past time, personally and collectively, for as many of us who have the ears to hear, to read and translate these stories into our life as food for the world. I am unutterably grateful to Martin for changing my life by repeatedly, through undeniable beauty... turning me towards Home and a life worth living... one that is rooted in being the food that grows that very same blossoming nourishment. ~jade

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