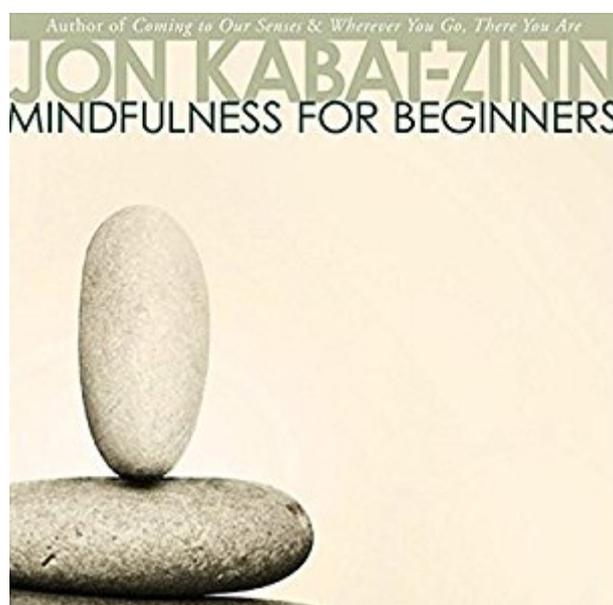


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# Mindfulness For Beginners



## Synopsis

We may long for wholeness, suggests Jon Kabat-Zinn, but the truth is that it is already here and already ours. The practice of mindfulness holds the possibility of not just a fleeting sense of contentment, but a true embracing of a deeper unity that envelops and permeates our lives. With *Mindfulness for Beginners* you are invited to learn how to transform your relationship to the way you think, feel, love, work, and play—and thereby awaken to and embody more completely who you really are. Here, the teacher, scientist, and clinician who first demonstrated the benefits of mindfulness within mainstream Western medicine offers a book that you can use in three unique ways: as a collection of reflections and practices to be opened and explored at random; as an illuminating and engaging start-to-finish read; or as an unfolding lesson-a-day primer on mindfulness practice. Beginning and advanced meditators alike will discover in these pages a valuable distillation of the key attitudes and essential practices that Jon Kabat-Zinn has found most useful with his students, including:

- Why heartfulness is synonymous with true mindfulness
- The value of coming back to our bodies and to our senses over and over again
- How our thoughts self-liberate when touched by awareness
- Moving beyond our story into direct experience
- Stabilizing our attention and presence amidst daily activities
- The three poisons that cause suffering and their antidotes
- How mindfulness heals, even after the fact
- Reclaiming our wholeness, and more

The prescription for living a more mindful life seems simple enough: return your awareness again and again to whatever is going on. But if you've tried it, you know that here is where all the questions and challenges really begin. *Mindfulness for Beginners* provides welcome answers, insights, and instruction to help us make that shift, moment by moment, into a more spacious, clear, reliable, and loving connection with ourselves and the world. Includes a complete CD with five guided mindfulness meditations by Jon Kabat-Zinn, selected from the audio program that inspired this book.

Contents

Part I: Entering Beginner's Mind

- The Breath Who Is Breathing?
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- A Grounding in Science
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- Awareness Is a Big Container
- The Objects of Attention Are Not as Important as the Attending Itself

Part II: Sustaining Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

A World-Wide Phenomenon

An

Affectionate Attention Mindfulness Brought to All the Senses Proprioception and Interoception The Unity of Awareness The Knowing Is Awareness Life Itself Becomes the Meditation Practice You Already Belong Right Beneath Our Noses Mindfulness is Not Merely a Good Idea To Come Back in Touch Who Am I? Questioning Our Own Narrative You Are More Than Any Narrative You Are Never Not Whole Paying Attention in a Different Way Not Knowing The Prepared Mind What Is Yours to See? Part III: Deepening No Place to Go, Nothing to Do The Doing That Comes Out of Being To Act Appropriately If You Are Aware of What Is Happening, You Are Doing It Right Non-Judging Is an Act of Intelligence and Kindness You Can Only Be Yourself "Thank Goodness! Embodied Knowing Feeling Joy for Others The Full Catastrophe Is My Awareness of Suffering Suffering? What Does Liberation from Suffering Mean? Hell Realms Liberation Is in the Practice Itself The Beauty of the Mind That Knows Itself Taking Care of Your Meditation Practice Energy Conservation in Meditation Practice An Attitude of Non-Harming Greed: The Cascade of Dissatisfactions Aversion: The Flip Side of Greed Delusion and the Trap of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies Now Is Always the Right Time The "Curriculum" is "Just This" Giving Your Life Back to Yourself Bringing Mindfulness Further Into the World Part IV: Ripening The Attitudinal Foundations of Mindfulness Practice Non-Judging Patience Beginner's Mind Trust Non-Striving Acceptance Letting Go Part V: Practicing Getting Started with Formal Practice Mindfulness of Eating Mindfulness of Breathing Mindfulness of the Body as a Whole Mindfulness of Sounds, Thoughts, and Emotions Mindfulness as Pure Awareness --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This CD is an introduction to mindfulness that is aimed at an audience of Westerners who are not familiar with Eastern philosophy. This audio provides the foundational concepts necessary to have a meditation practice and gives a taste of several different types of practice. The first CD covers concepts such as the present moment, the definition of mindfulness as attending to what is arising in the moment, awareness, the relationship between mind and heart, etc. It also covers the importance of openness and curiosity vs. judgment and identification with what is going on. That is to say, it distinguishes between a witness of what is arising and the phenomena in question. In other words, it makes the point that there is something standing behind the mind, emotions, sensations, etc. and that this something is a type of consciousness called witness consciousness. This CD also goes into the importance of allowing (non-striving) vs. a desire that pushes toward achieving something. In the last section of CD Zinn contrasts awareness which is passive and accepting with thinking which arises out of desire. The second CD provides an introduction to some mindfulness practices such as mindful eating, breath meditation, mindfulness of the body as a whole, mindfulness of objects such as sounds, thoughts and emotions. It also introduces the notion of meditation as pure awareness without judgment. One might compare this to pure experience without desire or aversion. Although one is given a taste of each of these practices, none of them are comprehensively covered and the guided meditations are not long enough for practice purposes except for a complete beginner. In general, meditative practices are divided into concentration practices (narrowing the attention) and mindfulness practices (awareness is expanded in a detached way). On this CD, all of the practices are termed mindfulness practices, but the CD actually contains both types which in essence are about attending to different aspects of reality in different ways. As someone who teaches meditation to Westerners myself, I find this an excellent, gentle and easily accessible introduction. It achieves what it sets out to do, which is to provide a philosophical framework for a meditation practice and the very basics of starting one. If you enjoy this tape and you want to take things deeper, then *Guided Mindfulness Meditation (Guided Mindfulness)* by the same author would be a logical continuation. The book *Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation* would also be a great next step. Something complimentary that builds on it, but is a bit more heart-centered would be *Meditation for Beginners*. There is also a listmania list on my profile for meditation that has other recommendations.

Unlike many who reviewed this book, I have no experience with meditation, so *Mindfulness for Beginners* promised to be a great introduction, particularly given the stellar reputation of the author. Now that I've read it, however, I don't think it is the optimal book for those with no knowledge of or

experience with meditation. I found the book to be a scattered collection of somewhat random reflections on mindfulness that seem more appropriate for those who have already started a meditation practice. Even though the author writes "we will be exploring together the subject of mindfulness as if you'd never heard about it and had no idea what it is or, for that matter, why it might be worth integrating into your life," the book lacked the structure and organization to meet that goal. The author points out that everything is explained in much greater detail in some of his previous books, and I am thinking about turning to them in search of a more coherent presentation. Although the entire book can be read in an hour (most chapters are only one or two pages), I don't think there would be much benefit from reading it in one sitting. The book seems designed to be read a brief chapter or two at a time, followed by reflection. From my perspective, the chapters do not always seem sequentially or logically linked. They are more like mindfulness devotionals. I found some of the chapters thought-provoking, but not consistently so. I would have preferred a more organized book that started by laying out a foundation for how and why meditation is helpful, followed by instruction for getting started. The enclosed CD is a very nice bonus. I used it to guide my first-ever attempt at meditation, and I felt very good about the process and the outcome. If I continue to meditate, I may refer to various chapters in this book for inspiration, but I am more likely to use the recommended reading list to find books that help make meditation more accessible to a true beginner.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is a program used in hospitals and medical clinics around the world. Jon Kabat-Zinn teaches a foundation for mindfulness that encourages healing. He is the founding director for the Stress Reduction Clinic and Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. The first CD explores the philosophy and practice of mindfulness. It is entertaining and I love Jon Kabat-Zinn's sense of humor. This is the section where you learn about positive qualities you can cultivate to enhance your life and negative aspects that can be poison to the body and heart. The second CD then explores an actual practice session where you experience keeping your attention on the moment. Paying attention on purpose can be enlightening all on its own as you awaken to a more compassionate moment and unveil inner wisdom. Meditation is a universal practice and you don't need to belong to any specific religion to experience the benefits of exploring moments of relaxing peace. Jon Kabat-Zinn's calming voice is wonderful to listen to and his guided meditation sections explore a variety of essential principles needed to enjoy a meditation session. Eventually you start to breathe more deeply, relax into not thinking and happiness rises from within. It is truly a beautiful way to reconnect with who you truly are and while

you may assume sitting quietly is hardly doing anything at all, it is amazing what can be accomplished in silence. Meditation strengthens you so you walk through the earth with a different focus, more awareness and even more confidence. This CD does focus on the basics of meditation and therefore is perfect for anyone who wants to heal the mind, body and spirit.~The Rebecca Review

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