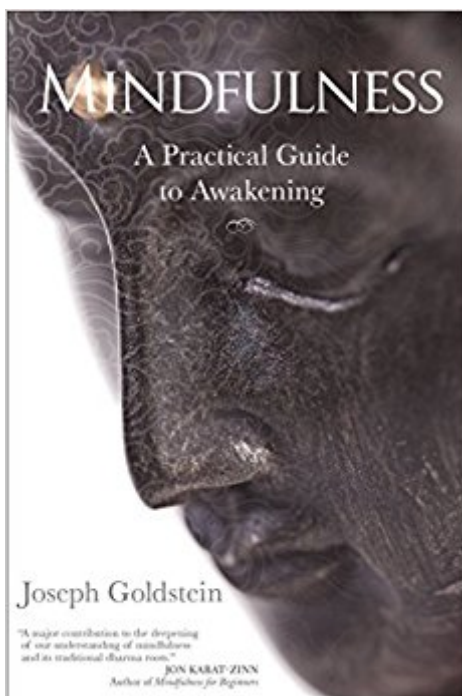


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# Mindfulness: A Practical Guide To Awakening



## Synopsis

The mind contains the seeds of its own awakening—seeds that we can cultivate to bring forth the fruits of a life lived consciously. With *Mindfulness*, Joseph Goldstein shares the wisdom of his four decades of teaching and practice in a book that will serve as a lifelong companion for anyone committed to mindful living and the realization of inner freedom. Goldstein's source teaching is the Satipatthana Sutta, the Buddha's legendary discourse on the four foundations of mindfulness that became the basis for the many types of Vipassana (or insight meditation) found today. Exquisite in detail yet wholly accessible and relevant for the modern student, *Mindfulness* takes us through a profound study of: Mindfulness of body, including the breath, postures, activities, and physical characteristics; Mindfulness of feelings—how the experience of our sense perceptions influences our inner and outer worlds; Mindfulness of mind—learning to recognize skillful and unskillful states of mind and thought; Mindfulness of dhammas (or categories of experience), including the Five Hindrances, the Six Sense Spheres, and the Seven Factors of Awakening. “There is a wealth of meaning and nuance in the experience of mindfulness that can enrich our lives in unimagined ways,” writes Goldstein. In *Mindfulness* you have the tools to mine these riches for yourself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A major contribution to the clarifying and deepening of our understanding of mindfulness

and its traditional dharma roots.

• Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of *Mindfulness for Beginners* “Joseph Goldstein is one of our most brilliant teachers. This is a masterwork of wisdom, depth, and experience, combining careful analysis, meditative guidance, and great love.”

• Jack Kornfield, author of *A Lamp in the Darkness* “Author Joseph Goldstein—one of the most wise, lucid, and experienced teachers of our times—has written a book on mindfulness that calls forth the depth and power of classical Buddhist teachings. If you are drawn to meditation out of a longing to realize spiritual freedom, this book will be a cherished resource on your path.”

• Tara Brach, PhD, author of *True Refuge* “Joseph Goldstein has written an immensely clear, practical, and accessible guide to living a mindful life. From examining its roots to exploring its manifold expressions, this deeply significant work shows the path for mindfulness to become our closest friend. I feel like I’ve waited a long time for a book just like this, and here it is!”

• Sharon Salzberg, author of *Real Happiness* “In eloquent and compelling detail by a master of the art, Goldstein’s new book shows how mindfulness leads to calm, well-being, and the joy of self-realization. The most complete and understandable book on mindfulness in print.”

• Reggie Ray, author of *Touching Enlightenment and Mahamudra for the Modern World*

Joseph Goldstein Joseph Goldstein has been leading insight and lovingkindness meditation retreats worldwide since 1974. He is a cofounder of the Insight Meditation Society, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, and the Forest Refuge. Since 1967, he has studied and practiced different forms of Buddhist meditation under eminent teachers from India, Burma, and Tibet. His books include *A Heart Full of Peace*, *One Dharma*, *Insight Meditation*, and *The Experience of Insight*.

I believe this to be the magnum opus of Joseph Goldstein’s writings. This book is physically exquisite. Sounds True did a fine job of editing and publishing this book. The book is derived from a series of lectures on a particular sutta (talk) of the Buddha, the Satipatthana Sutta, which is found in a collection of talks called the Majjhima Nikaya. (The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, edited by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications). However, the sutta itself is also to be found as an appendix in Goldstein’s new book. Goldstein’s lectures were given at the Forest Retreat of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts. Goldstein used, for these lectures, a recent interpretation of this sutta by a Buddhist monk Analayo, named *Satipatthana: the Direct Path to Realization*, Windhorse Publications. Over a series of retreats Goldstein

systematically commented on every verse of the sutta, using the Venerable Analayo's commentary as a comparative guide for his own commentary. This kind of commentary is a classical method of working with a sutta in the Buddhist world. (Also, Sounds True has issued the actual talks as a three part cd series, *Abiding in Mindfulness*.) The Satgipatthana Sutta is meant to be a complete and sufficient description of a particular form of meditation that is called vipassana or Insight Meditation. (This meditation has also just been called Mindfulness and has become increasingly popular as a means for reducing stress.) The Buddha says that if this sutta's methodology is strictly adhered to, it will lead to realization or Enlightenment. Goldstein takes that claim very seriously. His book reflects a careful, years long, relationship to both this sutta and to the meditations revealed by the Buddha. I believe Goldstein's work to be one of the most complete and beautifully written books about Buddhist meditation, I have read in the fifty years of my own Buddhist practice. So what thematic concerns drive the content of Goldstein's commentary? He addresses four major foundations of inquiry for this form of Buddhist meditation. These four are mindfulness of Body, Feelings, Mind, and the Dhammas. 'Body' is here understood as physical reality, the actual physical basis of the phenomena given to consciousness. 'Feelings' include the whole range of emotive reactions to the phenomena being investigated. 'Mind' describes the vehicle for consciousness and its characteristics which help and also hinder realization. Finally, the larger part of Goldstein's book considers the fourth foundation, the Dhammas. This word is from Pali which is the language which the Theravadin school of Buddhism used for its texts. "Dhammas" includes an encyclopedic collection of all those conceptual factors which the Buddha considered necessary for the complete liberation from suffering. Such factors include both negative hindrances and positive aids in one's meditative investigation of Liberation. Goldstein says four qualities of mind are necessary for this investigation: Ardency, Clearly Knowing, Mindfulness, and Concentration. Briefly these qualities of mind can be described as dedication, a deep knowing of that which is being investigated, a consistent and close awareness of all phenomena being investigated, and, finally, a capacity for single pointed or intense concentration of the subject being examined. In other words, one dedicates to a level of realization which is purified by a complete examination of the subject under consideration, and which is also characterized by deep and undistracted attention. Okay, why is this book so good? First, because it is complete. Goldstein has been practicing for years, and he has studied with most of the major living Theravadin teachers. In addition he has gone to monasteries, temples, and centers in India and Southeast Asia to study. His knowledge and practice are nuanced and thorough. Second, he is vulnerable. He has learned from his "mistakes". He is open about his limitations and clearly expresses his gifts and learning. Third, he is a very advanced practitioner. He

has become truly wise from his experience. I was asked once at a retreat by a well known Theravada monk, Bhante Gunaratana (author of Mindfulness in Plain English), if I had a teacher and who was it? I said Joseph Goldstein. Bhante Ji (as he is sometimes called affectionately) said, "You could not do better!" You can not do better than with this book if you are serious about Buddhist meditation. The book is not meant to be read straight through. Rather, it should be considered in the context of one's own meditation practice. When used as a commentary to your own practice, it will reveal how truly comprehensive and cogent the Buddha's teaching was. In the end, the Buddha's Teaching is a radical method to confront and heal your suffering. The Dharma will reveal the true basis of your suffering. It will show the way out of it. It will reveal the very real possibility of a wise, compassionate, and peaceful life. Joseph Goldstein's new book is fully adequate to the challenge of revealing just what meditation can do in one's life. We live together now in a time when real wisdom and peace is possible. I very much believe that the deepest realization of what it means to be fully human is now available. For the sake of ourselves and for one another, please consider using Joseph's new book as a valuable resource in your own spiritual journey.

This is a great follow up to Joseph Goldstein's (and Jack Kornfield's) "Seeking the Heart of Wisdom". This book repeats some of the finer points of the aforementioned book and goes into more detail than his other works. I have been meditating for a few years and there were certain sections that discussed problems that I am currently facing. This definitely isn't a beginner's book so if you are new to Buddhism / meditation you may be better off starting with "One Dharma". I would recommend this book to someone who has taken a meditation retreat before or someone who is already familiar with some of the content in this book. It is definitely not an easy read, as the other reviewer pointed out, although the information contained is definitely priceless. Would recommend to everyone who is interested in learning more about Buddhist meditation from the Theravada tradition.

My practice over the past few years parallels that of the Dullard who was a practitioner in the time of the Buddha who wasn't very good at it... practicing that is. The other monks made fun of him and he was quite desperate when the Buddha gave him a white handkerchief and told him that his practice was to just rub the handkerchief. This he could do. Soon his defilements symbolically and literally stained the handkerchief and eventually he became awakened. It was in one of Joseph's lectures where I first heard of my good friend the Dullard. I identify with the Dullard because I am not that good at practicing and I have to keep coming back to it and being reminded over and over to bring

the mind back to awareness. Joseph in one of his lectures gave me the symbolic white handkerchief. Reading his stuff over the years has given me insight into the formal Dharma. My handkerchief was completely stained with obscurations of the mind when a Dharma Brother told me of his new book. In just the first few pages I felt as if I had a completely clean handkerchief upon which to rub and let mind hindrances go. Obscurations arose and landed on the clean kerchief in huge chunks. The words as Joseph gives in his book continue to clear my mind. Each word of Dharma as he writes them is alive and to me it is a direct transmission. So, my fellow Dullards if you read this. Take courage and realize that the words in this book will purify your mind even if you are not a model practitioner. Each microsecond of insight will come closer and soon there will be more clarity than darkness in your mind. Awakening is not too far from this so read each word of this book with mindfulness and keep rubbing that handkerchief. If you keep clearing your mind and absorbing each word of truth as it is written by Joseph it can be no other way. Complete awakening is the result of reading and practicing at whatever level of practice you are in, even at the Dullard level.

This is my third book on this subject, and the most indepth and informative book on the subject. I've taken my time reading it as there is so much information contained in this book and the occasional Hindu, Indian, words included. I really like the Kindle edition as the definition of unusual words are always handy. The more that I read on this subject and philosophy the more fascinating I find it. Buddha knew far more about the human condition than Freud by far. I can't help but think that as a applied philosophy this is by far a more superior technique than medications and therapy in dealing with depression, anxiety, host of other neurosis. I see this as a book that will reread and use for references for years to come.

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