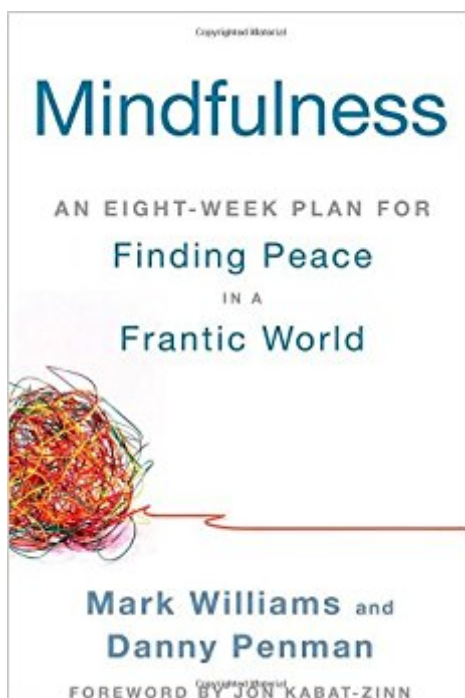


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# Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan For Finding Peace In A Frantic World



## Synopsis

THE LIFE-CHANGING INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER. MINDFULNESS reveals a set of simple yet powerful practices that you can incorporate into daily life to help break the cycle of anxiety, stress, unhappiness, and exhaustion. It promotes the kind of happiness and peace that gets into your bones. It seeps into everything you do and helps you meet the worst that life throws at you with new courage. The book is based on Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). MBCT revolves around a straightforward form of mindfulness meditation which takes just a few minutes a day for the full benefits to be revealed. MBCT has been clinically proven to be at least as effective as drugs for depression and is widely recommended by US physicians and the UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence - in other words, it works. More importantly it also works for people who are not depressed but who are struggling to keep up with the constant demands of the modern world. MBCT was developed by the book's author, Oxford professor Mark Williams, and his colleagues at the Universities of Cambridge and Toronto. By investing just 10 to 20 minutes each day, you can learn the simple mindfulness meditations at the heart of MBCT and fully reap their benefits. The book includes links to audio meditations to help guide you through the process. You'll be surprised by how quickly these techniques will have you enjoying life again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Want a happier, more content life? I highly recommend the down-to-earth methods you'll find in this book. Professor Mark Williams and Dr. Danny Penman have teamed up to give us

scientifically grounded techniques we can apply in the midst of our everyday challenges and catastrophes. — Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence — “Peace can’t be achieved in the outside world unless we have peace on the inside. Mark Williams and Danny Penman’s book gives us this peace. — Goldie Hawn — “This is an inspiring program for anyone caring about his or her own health and sanity. — Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mark Williams is a Professor of Clinical Psychology and a Research Fellow at Oxford and a founding fellow of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy. He is the author of *The Mindful Way Through Depression*. He lives in England. Danny Penman, Ph.D., is a feature and comment writer for the UK’s Daily Mail. After gaining a PhD in biochemistry, he worked for *The Independent* and the BBC. He lives in England.

Initial Review 12/14/2010: Let me begin by saying that I have always been a huge skeptic about mindfulness, meditation, and anything else along those lines. That is until I began seeing all of the new scientific research on the subject and the new theory of brain plasticity...how people can literally change their brains no matter how old they are. This research was enough to convince me to give mindful meditation a try. Staying with the theme of the science of meditation, I chose *The Frantic World* book because the program was created by a team of PhD scholars from respected universities, such as Oxford, Cambridge, UMass, etc. Interestingly, the main author of this book, Mark Williams, was a skeptic when he started researching the subject as well. Not any more. I am currently on week eight of the plan and I can tell you that I absolutely have noticed a difference. Not only do I feel calmer in situations that used to bother me the past physically, but I am also learning how to treat myself with more compassion, get out of autopilot and break many of my bad habits, and how to face my fears head on rather than avoiding them and actually making things worse. I have gone from a complete skeptic to someone who plans to continue to practice mindfulness for the rest of my life. I’m not going to sugarcoat things and say that it’s easy to find the time to meditate. It’s not. One has to work hard to make sure that they find the half hour or so per day that they need to dedicate to the practice. That’s not easy with work, kids, and life in general. I promise you though that it’s definitely worth the time that you put in. I’ve never written a product review about anything on or any other site for that matter before. I am writing this review in the hopes that others out there who are struggling with stress, anxiety, etc read it and give mindfulness shot. Incorporating it into my daily life passively as well as actively meditating for short periods of the day has helped me

tremendously. Update 1/17/12: Let's see if I can update my review using the comments section. Bear with me because I've never tried to do this before. I completed the entire Frantic World course several weeks ago. I definitely believe that it was beneficial. Do I still get stressed out from time to time? Of course. The idea behind mindfulness is not to make one live in some unrealistic, nirvana-like world...thought that would be nice :). To me it seems as though the goal of mindfulness is to help people deal with life's inevitably stressful situations more easily and quickly than they would have in the past. I think that incidents which would have dragged me down into a huge stressed-out mess for a prolonged period of time a year or so ago no longer seem to have the power to do so. I am still continuing to do the mindfulness practices that were outlined in the book, particularly meditations four and seven. The first being a more general meditation using breathing and sensing the body and the second directed towards self-compassion or as the book calls it "befriending." Those two are my favorite, though from time to time I do practice meditation one and two, which are essentially body scans. I plan to continue meditating. Though I rarely meditate for more than 20 to 30 minutes per day, I have not missed a single day since I started the practice. I believe that every little bit helps. It takes a long time to master any skill. Let's say that one meditated for 20 minutes every day for the entire eight week program. That seems like a long time right? Well, in reality one who has diligently done this meditation has actually only meditated for a total less than twenty hours. When one considers the popular modern-day theory that it takes 10,000 hours to truly be an expert at something, it looks like there is a long way to go. So what's my point in all of this rambling? I guess that my point is that mindfulness' benefits seem to accumulate over time. One will definitely benefit from taking the eight week Frantic World course, but don't just expect to do it for eight weeks and poof be magically stress free from then on. I'm sure that people who do this will experience some benefit, but I think that mindfulness is more of a life-long pursuit. The more one does it, the more benefit they will receive. Am I right? Who knows? I'm certainly not a psychologist or neuro-biologist. I'm just a normal family man who has read a lot on the subject of mindfulness over the past several months. Speaking about reading, here's a list of a couple of other books that I have found helpful in this process. They more emphasize the practice of mindfulness in every day life, rather than purposeful meditation. Hopefully anyone who is reading this will find them helpful as well: Just One Thing: Developing A Buddha Brain One Simple Practice at a Time - Rick Hanson How to Train a Wild Elephant: And Other Adventures in Mindfulness - Jan Chozen Bays Well, that's all for now. Perhaps I'll check back with another update and some more book suggestions some other time. Update 2/7/12: I have found that the new research on Positive Psychology meshes very well with mindfulness practices. I have been practicing and reading about both on a regular basis. Here's

a list of the best books that I have found on the subject for anyone who's interested: Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment by Martin E. P. Seligman - Dr. Seligman is basically the founder of the Positive Psychology movement. He established the school on the subject at U Penn. While older, Authentic Happiness seems better than his newer book on the subject because it contains more practical advice on how to incorporate positive psychology into your life, such as practicing forgiveness, gratitude, flow, etc... Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom by Rick Hanson - Dr. Hanson is another well known advocate of mindfulness, though his version of the meditations and his books seem to incorporate many elements of Positive Psychology as well. It's a nice blend of the two. Not just some random person off of the street, Hanson's work delves deep into the science of the mind. He is the founder of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley and has taught at Oxford, Stanford, and Harvard.

3/13/2012: Make sure to check out the new book by Richard Davidson, The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live--and How You Can Change Them . It's absolutely amazing.

Update 5/31/2012 Wow it's been awhile since my last update. I hope that everyone is doing well. I know that I am. I recently has an amazing revelation that I had to share with others who are in a similar situation to the one that I found myself in last year. I used to feel sorry for myself that I went through a period of significant depression and anxiety. Thinking why me? I now have come to realize that those few short months that I felt a little off were one of the best things that has ever happened to me in my life. Hitting bottom actually enabled me to push off and soar to the top. I honestly feel as though I am a better person today than I was before I went through that whole ordeal. I consider myself to be a reasonably smart individual and this enabled me to do the research that was necessary to not only break the cycle of negativity that I was stuck in, but to actually come out the other side a better, stronger, happier, healthier, more spiritual person than I have ever been in my life. I always considered myself to be a relatively happy individual, but I am now realizing just how unhealthy how some of the habits that I had in the past, like holding grudges, believing in jinxes, etc... really were. Not only was I able to become a better person, but even better I can now pass this gift onto everyone in my family...and elsewhere for that matter. I can now build a solid foundation of positivity and confidence for my children that I'm not sure I would have been able to give them in the past. Again, I have always considered myself to be a good father, but kids pick up on it when you're not feeling great, when you hold a grudge, when you say something negative...I think that I can provide them with the gift of positivity at one of the important times for the development of their minds. A gift that they can hopefully pass onto future generations. I never try to force religion upon anyone, but I

have been absolutely amazed by the significant links between modern psychology, particularly positive psychology and even mindfulness, and many forms of religion. I'm not sure if psychologists are borrowing from religion, if preachers are borrowing from modern psychology or if they both independently arrived at the same conclusions but the links are definitely there. If you are a religious person and you haven't ever listened to him, I suggest that you check out some of the works by Joel Osteen, especially his book "Every Day is a Friday" and some of his sermons that are available on iTunes such as "Good, Better, Blessed" and "Living in Favor Abundance and Joy." These are some of the most uplifting things that I have ever listened to. Joel Osteen is one of the most dynamic, charismatic speakers of our time. I'm sure that there are people who reject religion in general or Osteen in particular. I know that I certainly never thought that I would listen to a televangelist regularly, but trust me Joel Osteen and his uplifting message are a gift from God that everyone should listen to. I'm not trying to push my views on anyone, again I'm just here to try to help others by suggesting things that have worked for me. I hope that anyone who is reading this who feels that they need a little help because they are anxious, depressed or just thinks that they could be a little more positive or relaxed in life finds it helpful.

Update 4/30/2013: Hi everyone. I was on today looking for books on positive psychology and I noticed all of the wonderful comments that many people have made. Thank you so much for the kind words. My intention in writing this review was to try to help others improve their lives like I have been able to do through making changes, many of which were inspired by Mark William's brilliant work on the subject of Mindfulness. So, how have things been going? To sum them up in one word...Amazing. The changes that I started making in my life two and a half years ago have literally made these the best years that I have ever had. I like to think that one's mindset is sort of like a huge ship. Once the ship of emotions sets off in a negative direction, it's slow-going and it requires effort to turn it around, but it can be done. When you do get it pointed in the right direction the inertia works just as well that way. Positivity, faith, mindfulness all become easier and more natural with practice over time as the structure of the brain changes. It takes just as much energy to be positive and expect something good to happen as it does to be negative and expect something bad, but the former is a whole lot more fun and healthy than the latter. Here's a few random thoughts on what I have learned throughout this process:

1. Don't label yourself as having this or having that, being a positive person or a negative person, or being prone to this phobia or that condition. We're all people and we all have emotions. The people that you see walking down the street have the same feelings that you and I have. There's nothing wrong with you if you feel sad or anxious or whatever from time to time. Everyone does. As much as some people would like you to think that they're immune to feelings such as fear, etc...they're not.
2. The key is

not to avoid having negative emotions, it's to not let them spiral out of control. Recognize that a thought is just a thought. It can't hurt you. It's nothing more than a cloud passing through the sky of the mind. Trying to avoid anything just makes it worse. While it sounds funny, you have to face your fears in order to master them. Mindfulness has helped me tremendously with this one.<sup>3</sup> Always try to have as many positive thoughts as possible and to look at things in the most favorable light. I have tons of digital picture frames in my office and at home that constantly scroll (I had to change it to every 1/2 hour because every minute was becoming very distracting and not very mindful ;) ) pictures of happy times in my life. I also use the notepad in my phone to write down a couple of positive things that happened to me that day or recently when I have the time at work, such as a short break. The more you reinforce the positive, the more a part of your mindset it will become. Scientists have proven that neuroplasticity exists and that what you expose yourself to literally changes the physical structure of your brain.<sup>4</sup> I personally have found faith and religion to be very helpful in my life.<sup>5</sup> While I don't bury my head in the sand, I have significantly cut back on the news that I watch on television and read on the Internet. Why? The world is filled with millions and millions of people. The news will take the two or three people who have done something wrong and rub them in your face for hours at a time. The people who commit crimes, etc. represent less than one percent of the population but if you constantly think about the news you'll believe that it's everyone. No thanks. I'm looking for the good in people and you know something, if you walk around with a smile and a positive attitude, looking to help people and thinking the best I've found that you call in the best. I meet more nice people today than I ever did when I was looking for the worst in everyone. HA, I just read 's review guidelines..."Reviews must contain at least 20 words..." I've got that one covered. Well, that's all the time I have for now, but I wanted to provide an update for anyone who's interested. On a related note to steer things back towards the product, I corresponded with Dr. Williams via e-mail to thank him for all that his work has done for me and he told me that he is almost finished with a new workbook on the subject. I definitely plan on reading it when it's available. Take Care everyone! Jason

i took a free 8 week mindfulness course at my university where this book was used. i was coming off of prozac a few weeks before i started this program (i was on prozac for 2 years for anxiety & depression) and needless to say, i was a mess. i feel so doomed and sad; dreadful, is the only way to describe it. but this book, along with the group, changed my life. you have to practice EVERY DAY, but you will notice a difference after the first week. meditation changes your brain in so many ways, you'll never go back to the way you were. it's been a month or two now after the 8 week

program and i still meditate every day. i can't live without it, and i am still prozac free! don't let the amount of "time" you need to meditate for intimidate you. just sit down, and do it. whether it's 3 minutes or 55 minutes each day, just do it, don't judge yourself or say "i need to meditate 10,000 hours before i'm not anxious or depressed". no- that is just your worried thoughts getting in the way. i'm currently looking for the "next step" in this journey (book-wise), but i continue daily with my meditations and mindfulness. it's called a "practice" for a reason! stick with it. don't judge yourself. give it everything, as if your life depended on it, because it will change you.

I get lost in sad thoughts and tangled in my own stress, so I picked this book to help me out. I tried to follow their plan and I'm happy to report improvement! The book walks you through some common unhappiness pitfalls, all a result of ignoring the present by being too lost in the past, over-analyzation, etc. It teaches meditations to help you let go and find a peaceful place. I still listen to some of them at night to calm my racing thoughts. It's an eight week plan to de-stress your life and it works if you're committed and follow their instructions. This book opened my eyes and helped me help myself!

The book is very useful and can help significantly if you are interested in mindfulness practice. It is a good adjunct to practicing meditation, as it points out helpful tips across various categories of mindfulness. However, some of it feels like filler and my feeling is that the book could have been much shorter. You definitely want to focus on actually doing the meditations, but you don't necessarily have to do the "official" ones for this book (that are available for download online), as you can find many analogous ones. I have used the "Stop, Breathe, and Think" iOS app, which also charts your meditations, moods, etc. and syncs with your iPhone health apps.

Have been reading mindful-oriented books these past six month to help de-stress, make habit changes and live more in the present. I first checked this book out from our local library to see if I would like it and would want to own it. I do like it - very much so. The exercises are easy-to-do and logical, with a general lacing of common-sense. I find the exercises provoke contemplation and personal evaluation - easy to get lost in thinking. Also, one might think they could easily read the book quickly due to easy visual layout of the book and how the text is written. However, I challenge you to NOT be "caught" in what the authors are presenting in the hopes you become more mindful and present. Finally, I have yet to use the book as a straight-forward "8 week plan". So far, I've just opened the book and thought about what was the page(s). Often, I have to leave it for a few days or



week or to and practice."Mindfulness" has helped me and I'm only beginning to do the "plan". I highly recommend investing in the book for your personal library.

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