



The Science of Mindfulness: A Research-Based Path to Well-Being

Ronald D. Siegel

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Have you ever noticed that trying to calm down before a high-stakes event often just produces more agitation? That trying to change troublesome habits can seem difficult or impossible? Or that real fulfillment and well-being can be elusive, despite living a successful life?

A surprising number of such difficulties stem from an inherited propensity of the human brain—our automatic, hardwired tendency to seek pleasure and to anticipate and avoid pain. Modern science demonstrates that this mental hardwiring, traceable to the survival needs of our earliest ancestors, is at the root of many of the psychological and behavioral problems that we face today.

For thousands of years, people have used mindfulness practices—techniques to develop awareness of present experience with acceptance—to deal effectively with a wide range of life challenges. And, a large and fascinating body of scientific research now validates the remarkable benefits of mindfulness practice for psychological as well as physical health.

But how exactly does mindfulness work, in scientific terms? How can understanding the science and practice of mindfulness improve everyday life? And how can the human brain, whose very functioning gives rise to so many of the problems we struggle with, actually provide a solution?

Now, in the 24 fascinating lectures of *The Science of Mindfulness*, Professor Ronald D. Siegel, a clinical psychologist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School, reveals the science behind mindfulness in compelling detail and demonstrates its application to an extraordinary range of human problems—psychological, social, and medical. You'll closely examine the neurobiology involved, leaving you with a clear knowledge of the science underlying ancient practices that are now profoundly influencing the contemporary world. And you'll learn many practical ways you can use mindfulness techniques in your own life.

The Science of Mindfulness: A Research-Based Path to Well-Being Details

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From Reader Review The Science of Mindfulness: A Research-Based Path to Well-Being for online ebook

Keith Swenson says

Really loved this introduction to mindfulness, and I feel I got a lot of helpful information from it to help me cope with my otherwise hectic life.

Gary Beauregard Bottomley says

Buddhism was explained better in this lecture than I've ever seen elsewhere. Modern Psychology has immense value and all the old Freudian or Jungian or Skinner paradigms have been discarded and the lecture shows how the new psychological methods really do help people and how it works.

I am not interested in pursuing happiness or developing techniques for self awareness of the present. Happiness is just an experience that comes from our actions, feelings and sensations and necessarily constructed by what we call ourselves. It's not our doing but our being, the meaning, taking an understanding on our own understanding that gives me my purpose. The lecturer will even say that the more we pursue happiness the less we will acquire it. As for self awareness of the present it really doesn't interest me. The 'now' distracts me from my ultimate good and I will continue to construct my mythos as I see fit in order to be my ownmost authentic self.

I found that there was a big overlap with the beginning lectures and Hegel. Hegel can be tough reading for most people because of his abstract abstruse writing style. Hegel would say something like 'the I is the we and the we is the I and we need the other in order to have awareness of the spirit'. That sentiment overlaps with what the lecturer is getting at.

The mindfulness practices aren't my thing. I pretty much glossed over the techniques but I found enough worthwhile within this lecture to get value out of it overall and would easily recommend it to anyone who is not at peace and needs to re-find their center, or for people like me who wanted to learn about Buddhism and Modern Psychology practices.

Alex says

This was my introduction to mindfulness and meditation. I appreciate its practical meditation practices, which work wonderfully as an audiobook on your headphones, and the general message of preaching compassion and openness to your own experience and everything and everyone around you. I expect to return to this from time to time to remind myself to be grateful and to experience life with an alert attitude.

Laurel says

I'm torn on how to rate this course. I thoroughly enjoyed the majority of the 13 hours of lectures, but still find myself bothered by just one statement in all that material that is making me hesitant to recommend it. Which means I am experiencing negativity bias -- a phenomenon mentioned often in this course. As soon as Siegel made an insinuation that I knew to be false, I immediately began to question everything else he said. Still, I found the lectures engaging and otherwise helpful, and was particularly fascinated by the sections on how meditation/mindfulness changes the brain. The guided meditations at the end were also useful. I'm inspired to be more diligent in my own meditation practice now, and that alone made it worthwhile for me.

Jeff Yoak says

I'm a bit piqued by this being titled as it is. The "Science" aspect seems mostly to center around the lecturer mentioning a few parts of the brain by name, at least from the quarter or so of the course I got through. Aside from that, it mostly covers (admittedly adequately) some of the basics I've encountered in other places, while dipping more into mystical wawa than I'd prefer.

You may assume "wawa" to be a technical term with which you are unfamiliar or a polite euphemism for "nuttier than squirrel poo" as suits you.

Teo 2050 says

~6h @ 2x (+ meditation tracks). This was a really well-made course centered on mindfulness. It combines a scientific evolutionary worldview with studies from (clinical; positive; cognitive; ...) psychology as well as brain-imaging studies on more and less experienced mindfulness practitioners. It's also peppered throughout with interesting stories and anecdotes from both author Ronald D. Siegel's {life, friends, & colleagues} and the various relevant traditions from which the wisdom comes. Ideally, I'd add to the course more statistics (in reporting study findings) and expand on the {placebo / control groups / neuro-implementation} topics. Overall, a very good job; kept my interested attention, felt good, integrated important information, and made me laugh out loud many times.

Contents:

(view spoiler)

Phillip says

This is great.

Morgan Blackledge says

This is part of the great courses series. But it could have just as easily been a part of the really fuckin' incredibly good as fuck courses series if there were in fact such a thing.

Professor Ronald D. Siegel has seamlessly joined experimental and clinical psychology, neuroscience, evolutionary biology and contemporary secular mindfulness together (that's a lot right there) and then rather effortlessly spanned the chasm between the afore mentioned cludge and traditional Buddhist practice and philosophy in a way that has integrity and still manages to be (in my humble opinion) minimally offensive.

Again, he makes it look so easy that after listening to this course you may wonder what the big deal is. But trust me it's a really big deal.

Lots of other authors attempt to do the same thing, it's quite fashionable as of late, but thus far similar efforts have tended to be quite awkward and nearly always conveniently omit important parts of each of the conjoined domains.

Dr. Siegel (not to be confused with Dr. Danieal Siegel) leaves no stone unturned in this superb course. I'd be green with envy if I wasn't so busy trying to figure out how to best capitalize on this treasure trove of information, technique and wisdom.

wirrow wirrow says

best material i've experienced on mindfulness therapy/meditation. it goes through the science of what it does to various parts of our brains, as well as a lot of other stuff. the actual techniques are nothing new, you'll find them in most mindfulness based books.

this is the one, if ur interested in learning about mindfulness

edit 2018: also it's not cheesy, which is quite a find in mindfulness literature

Beverly Temporal says

I first listened to one of the lectures in channels on the audible app. I enjoyed it so much, I searched for the book. I've always seen a lot of treatment options as hit or miss as each person or client is different. And, in

the absence of really assessing or being good at assessment by so many therapists, one size fit's all therapy is often uselessly applied. Seeing this has always bugged me, and I doubt that it will change. But, for those that can assess where a client truly is, and realize more conventional treatment doesn't apply, how to help them is more of an issue. Meditation is a great alternative. And, this book talks about so many different types and approaches to do more than just tell someone to do breathing meditation. I love how he talks about comfort meditation vs trying to get the person to confront or stay with the uncomfortable sensations and knowing when the person is in a place to do either. It's creating that safe mental space that so many seem not to understand, regardless of what therapy is used. And, not pushing a patient to face things until they are ready, and feel safe enough in that mental space to do so. You don't tell someone in a free fall to face their demons. Choosing the right type of meditation, or treatment, for the situation is critical. And, I rarely hear people talking about that.

This is just a great course that should be required for all going into the field. I would have loved to have a course like this that really connected clinical psychology with meditation methods. Hopefully things have changed and it is part of the regular curriculum. And, I love Siegel's style. He keeps you engaged and is very relatable when he talks. Just one I know I will listen to over and over again. I almost never bookmark, but have done so repeatedly to revisit parts I wanted to revisit or explore further.

L.M. says

This was a fantastic great course on the science of mindfulness and Buddhist psychological thinking. I was already a fan of mindfulness going in, but this helped me to understand the workings of the brain in regard to it and why it is such a helpful tool for developing prolonged emotional wellbeing.

Jola Cora says

I cannot recommend this book strongly enough. Science is there to prove that some spiritual practices are not only good for us but necessary for humanity's betterment. This book will help you not only understand human nature better but will also give you some tools to help yourself. It's science, you can't argue with that! so let's all start meditating!

Amy Sturgis says

I was hoping for research findings about how different mindfulness practices affect the brain, and Dr. Ronald D. Siegel delivers this and much more. I greatly appreciated his cutting-edge, well-explained insights.

Siegel covers the following topics.

1. Why Mindfulness Matters
2. Our Troublesome Brains
3. Informal, Formal, and Intensive Practices
4. Who Am I - The Perils of Self
5. Mindfulness or Psychotherapy
6. Attention and Empathy in Relationships
7. The Science of Compassion and Self-Compassion

8. Tailoring Practices to Fit Changing Needs
9. Modifying Our Brain Function and Structure
10. Solitude - An Antidote to Loneliness
11. Connecting with Children and Adolescents
12. Seeing Sadness and Depression in a New Light
13. Befriending Fear, Worry, and Anxiety
14. Transforming Chronic Pain
15. Placebos, Illness, and the Power of Belief
16. Interrupting Addiction and Troublesome Habits
17. Overcoming Traumas Large and Small
18. Groundbreaking Mindfulness Programs
19. The Neurobiology of Self-Preoccupation
20. Growing Up Is Not Easy - Facing Impermanence
21. Toward a Science of Wisdom
22. The Promise of Enlightenment
23. Mindful Ethics as a Path to Freedom
24. The New Science of Happiness
25. Guided Meditation - Breath Awareness Practice
26. Guided Meditation - Loving-Kindness Practice
27. Guided Meditation - Mountain Meditation
28. Guided Meditation - Breathing Together
29. Guided Meditation - Stepping into Fear

I highly recommend this for anyone interested in how Western medicine is applying, adapting, and confirming the efficacy of Buddhist mindfulness practices (both with and without the Buddhism attached).

Mark says

For those who want to learn about mindfulness, I highly recommend this class. It was a great find for me because the approach mixes lessons of science and the learning from cultures that have practiced this for a very long time. This addresses research based aspects of mindfulness which is what I really wanted. While I'm relatively new at this, I find it very helpful. I especially value the connection to neuroresearch for many aspects of the practice. I also valued the applied research that verifies many of the specific types of benefits. One of the immediate results for me was increased ability to sleep and a genuinely calmer outlook that I noticed upon receiving bad news. I'm grateful for this course and for those who want to learn about mindfulness, I highly recommend this course. (For those who want a more religious approach - eastern religion, consider the book *The Power of Now*.)

Thanks Ronald Siegel, for a fantastically helpful course on a subject that has helped so many.

Tiana Warner says

Whelp, I'm convinced. *runs to start meditating*
