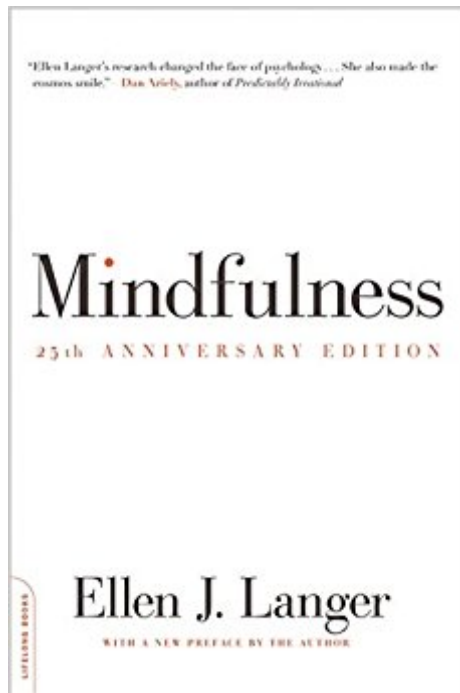




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Mindfulness, 25th Anniversary Edition (A Merloyd Lawrence Book)



Synopsis

In the years since it was first published, this influential book based on the highly innovative findings of social psychologist Dr. Ellen J. Langer and her team of researchers at Harvard made its mark for its unique concept of mindfulness, thoroughly adapted to contemporary life in the West.

Langer's theory has been applied to a wide number of fields, including health, business, aging, prejudice, and learning. There is now a new psychological assessment based on her work (called the Langer Mindfulness Scale) as well as an institute in Mexico founded to apply the concepts of mindfulness to health and wellness. In her introduction to this 25th anniversary edition, Dr. Langer outlines some of these exciting applications and suggests those still to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The mindless following of routine and other automatic behaviors lead to much error, pain and a predetermined course of life, contends Langer, Harvard professor of psychology, in this thought-provoking study in which she "translates" for lay readers the findings of her research, much of it among the elderly. With anecdotes and metaphors, she explains how the mindless--as opposed to the mindful--develop mindsets of categories, associations, habits of thought born of repetition in childhood and throughout schooling. To be mindful, she notes, stressing process over outcome, allows free rein to intuition and creativity, and opens us to new information and perspectives. Langer discusses the negative impact of mindsets on business and social relations, showing special concern for the elderly, who often suffer from learned helplessness and lack of options. Encouraging

the application of mindfulness to health, the author affirms that placebos and alternative, mind-based therapies can help patients and addicts move from unhealthy to healthy contexts. First serial to Health magazine; QPBC, Library of Science, Behavioral Science, Natural Science and Psychotherapy and Social Science Book Clubs selections. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Stretches our minds in startling new directions." —Howard Gardner; Ellen Langer has succeeded in writing a book that, in one bite, manages to be scientifically interesting, immensely practical, and dramatically absorbing. It is about the mindsets that lead human beings—even the smartest of them—to become stupid and mindless. Its power as drama in demonstrating that mindlessness leads not only to the banality of dullness, but to a giving up of life itself. In a series of fascinating research studies, Dr. Langer demonstrates that the young can be made more creative, the man in charge made more effective, and the elderly kept from giving in to and dying of their age. —Jerome Bruner, author of *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*; "One simply can't finish this book and not see the world in the same way." —Alan Dershowitz, Harvard Law School "A provocative, engaging essay on the relation between our mindstates and our actions, by an astute and irrepressible social scientist who obviously enjoys playing with bold ideas." —Jerome Kagan, Harvard University; "A landmark work of social psychology." —Booklist "Langer. . . has shown us the power of mindfulness." —Psychology Today

"One day, at a nursing home in Connecticut, elderly residents were each given a choice of houseplants to care for and were asked to make a number of small decisions about their daily routines. A year and a half later, not only were these people more cheerful, active, and alert than a similar group in the same institution who were not given these choices and responsibilities, but many more of them were still alive. In fact, less than half as many of the decision-making, plant-minding residents had died as had those in the other group. This experiment, with its startling results, began over ten years of research into the powerful effects of what my colleagues and I came to call mindfulness, and of its counterpart, the equally powerful but destructive state of mindlessness. Unlike the exotic 'altered states of consciousness' that we read so much about, mindfulness and mindlessness are so common that few of us appreciate their importance or make use of their power to change our lives. This book is about the psychological and physical costs we pay because of pervasive mindlessness and, more important, about the benefits of greater control,

richer options, and transcended limits that mindfulness can make possible." ~ Ellen Langer from Mindfulness

Ellen Langer is one of the world's leading research scientists, the first tenured female professor in Harvard's Psychology Department, and creator of what she calls the psychology of possibility--challenging the limits of what we perceive to be impossible. This book was published over 25 years ago in 1989--before the concept of "mindfulness" went mainstream. Ellen focuses on a Western orientation to mindfulness rather than the popular Eastern. As she says, "Meditation is a tool to achieve post-meditative mindfulness. Regardless of how we get there, either through meditation or more directly by paying attention to novelty and questioning assumptions, to be mindful is to be in the present, noticing all the wonders that we didn't realize were right in front of us."

I'm excited to share a few of my favorite Big Ideas:

1. False Limits - Let's not be deterred.
2. "How do I do it?" - vs. "Can I do it?"
3. Outcome vs. Process - Where's your focus?
4. Mindful of Depression - Notice the variability!
5. Work vs. Play - Makes a huge difference

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I like the clear explanations and examples of the difference between mindlessness and mindfulness. It helped me to better understand the actions taken by important people in my life. I got a bit bogged down in the experiments however, I quickly realized and appreciated the importance of sharing them as they added a fuller understanding of each of the topics being considered in each particular chapter.

Dr. Ellen Langer will greatly expand your understanding of the mind-body connection, when-why-how you go through life on auto-pilot using the directions that were programmed into you during your formative years. It explained for me why I see things differently than others as I typically and deeply see, hear and feel things around me that others do not even notice. Often, especially in the past, I was told, that because others do not see things mindfully, I must be imagining things or that I am too sensitive only to discover a short time later that I was right all along. This book has helped me understand that often I operate in a mindfulness mode. I loved the chapter on health. It confirmed what I have been teaching for years. You "Question Everything" when you go to the doctor. You do not go to the doctor and relinquish your responsibility for your own health. My goal in teaching my classes on How We Beat Diabetes is to share what my husband and I did in 2003 to literally beat the type 2 diabetes that he suffered with for over 25 years. Even more important I want to help people understand what is going on in their bodies, how positive thinking can change the course of their condition, and how they can and must become empowered patients and a proactive partner with their doctor in their own healthcare! It amazes me how many people place their lives into the hands of another person without ever knowing that the course you are given is truly the right

one for you. Research your condition and ask, ask, ask questions. Dr. Langer and I speak the same language and I truly appreciate her wisdom in this book.

For you lovers of Jon Kabat-Zinn and MBSR, you may want to forgo this approach toward mindfulness. It's not self-help, not a guide, not a set of tenets or steps. But, Langer is a Harvard research psychologist who has been working in this field a long time and who has taken the topic in important and interesting directions that are different from MBSR. I am involved in both psychology and mindfulness, teaching both at the college level. If, however, you happen to be open minded, intelligent and curious in understanding the logic of our psyches, this is a good read. It's not clinical, but also not written for dummies. Great book, glad I found it because Langer's work is informing my own now.

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