

Presence: how mindfulness and meditation shape your brain, mind, and life

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Abstrak

Mindfulness and one of the roads to it, meditation, have become increasingly popular as a way to promote health and well-being. Research on their beneficial effects has boomed over the past decade. This volume is the first book-length review of this body of research: how the effects of mindfulness practice flow from brain to mind to life. It is aimed specifically at the nonspecialist reader who is looking for a scientific perspective on mindfulness practice. The book reviews how meditation calms the body and what its effects are on brain functioning-how it impacts control over attention, awareness of the body, and the experience of self-and how these in turn leave telltale lasting traces in brain structure. It investigates the resulting effects on mind and life, showing that mindfulness and meditation make people feel less stressed, boost immune function, make people less anxious and less depressed, dampen negative emotions, amplify positive emotions, help regulate emotions, make people less ruminative, take the edges off negative personality traits, strengthen self-concept, and make people more empathic and compassionate. It digs into the mechanisms behind those changes-the application of mindfulness during meditation gives birth to mindfulness in daily life, which becomes an ingrained habit, and this, in turn, enhances ones well-being. It also examines how mindfulness can be useful as a therapy, alleviating depression, anxiety, worry, and pain. A final chapter provides advice on how to meditate and practice mindfulness in a scientifically sound way.