

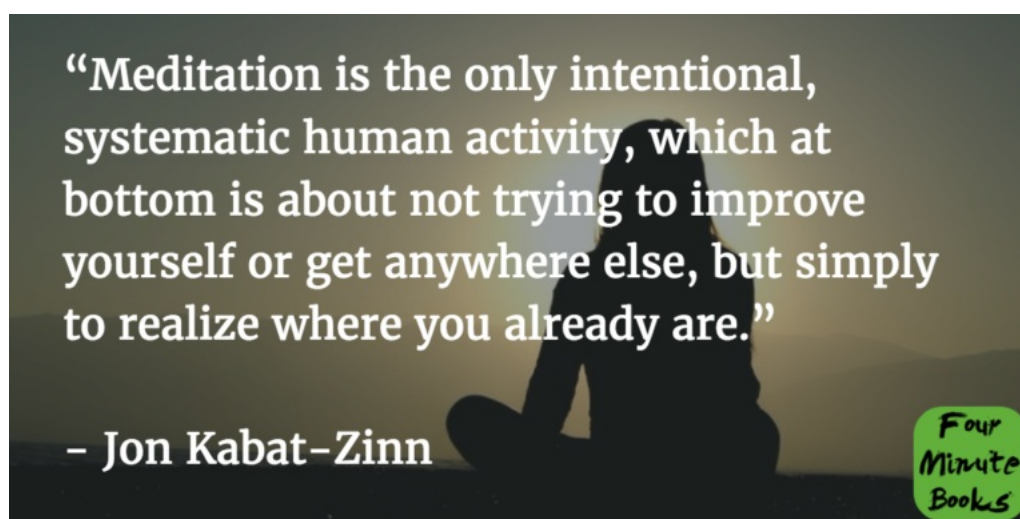
Wherever You Go, There You Are Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/wherever-you-go-there-you-are-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Wherever You Go, There You Are* explains what mindfulness is and why it's not reserved for Zen practitioners and Buddhist monks, giving you simple ways to practice it in everyday life, both formally and informally, while helping you avoid the obstacles on your way to a more aware self.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Even though I just started learning about Jon Kabat-Zinn, I like him already. He's a professor of medicine emeritus (that means retired, but still active) from the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Since I went to UMASS Dartmouth for two semesters, I can't help but relate

You can consider him a founding father of modern mindfulness, having studied under the greats, such as Thích Nhất Hạnh and being a founding member of the Cambridge Zen Center. His mission being to connect mindfulness with science, *Wherever You Go, There You Are* was one of the major milestones of this quest.

He claims that mindfulness is for everyone, which is why I picked 3 things from the book, which I think everyone can try today:

1. Deliberately ignore your phone.
2. If someone takes something from you, don't let them take your mind too.
3. Focus on your body and senses during automatic behaviors.

Ready to infuse your day with a sense of calmness? Time to make it mindful!

Lesson 1: Ignore your phone – on purpose.

I could really relate to this, especially today. Jon calls it practicing **voluntary simplicity**. Nope, this isn't about minimalism, it just means to **engage with one activity or thought at a time**.

For example, if you're playing a game of Chutes & Ladders (seriously, how great is that game?) with your daughter or son, chances are your phone will make a noise before you're finished. When that text notification sound or vibration grabs your attention, you have two choices:

1. Say "Sorry sweetie, I gotta take this real quick!", hectically scramble to get up and reach for your phone, completely losing the present moment and trading it for living by someone else's agenda.
2. Accept that you have a desire to check your phone, but **deliberately decide to ignore it** in favor of fully savoring this incredibly precious moment with your kid.

Option #2 will not only make your child happier, it'll also be a great mindfulness exercise for you, helping you to consciously direct your attention in the future.

This spoke to me today, because this morning I decided to leave my phone at home (I spend my days at a café recently) and fully focus on writing.

Lesson 2: If someone takes something from you, don't let them take your mind too.

Today our patience is tested on a constant basis. Much of life is spent waiting – be it in line at the grocery store, in front of the cinema for a friend, or for an email response to a potentially life-changing application.

But because we're always "on" (whether that's *on* our smartphones or having music *on* or just thinking *on* and *on*), our patience runs thin, and therefore, it runs out quite fast. When it does, what you're left with is anger. But anger is one of the most pointless feelings you can have.

Choosing patience is better for your health, environment and sanity, which makes it a cornerstone of mindfulness.

Think of it this way: **If someone or something has already taken your time, money, resources or health, don't let them take your mind too.**

The Dalai Lama has all the reason in the world to be extremely angry at the Chinese – they've killed over a million Tibetans less than half a century ago. But he's not. They've taken a lot from him, but he won't let them have his mind too, just because he's being angry. He puts his time to much better use by practicing patience and understanding.

Lesson 3: Take the smallest step by focusing on your body and senses during automatic behaviors.

In the end, mindfulness is a permanent practice. Sometimes I'm better at being aware of what's going on, sometimes I'm worse, but as long as I keep practicing it, this ability slowly grows over time, and it's made my life a lot better.

The smallest step I could find in this book to help you get started is this: **focus on your senses and body as you do something on auto-pilot.**

For example, climbing the stairs is such an easy activity that we usually don't interrupt our stream of thinking while doing it. But if you do, you'll arrive a lot calmer at the top of the stairs.

As you place your foot on the next step, can you feel the surface of the cold stone your shoe touches? What does it feel like when you bend your knee? How far are your arms swinging back and forth?

Asking yourself simple questions about the present moment will help you stay in it and feel more in charge with whatever activity you're going to do next. It's a great way to start overriding your autopilot behavior and improving your self-awareness without practicing formal meditation.

Wherever You Go, There You Are Review

Many small, incremental takeaways make *Wherever You Go, There You Are* a stash of hidden gems. Of course it's been updated over the years (it was published in 1994), but even if it hadn't been you could still open this and learn something that's just as valuable today.

Even if you're a bit scared of meditation, this is a good place to start learning about it. Probably even more so. Thumbs up for Mr. Kabat-Zinn.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why mindfulness isn't necessarily about relaxation, stress-relief and self-development
- The difference between doing-mode and being-mode
- Why non-doing isn't doing nothing
- How you can be generous without actually giving away stuff
- Which approach you can (and should) take to formal meditation
- Three types of informal meditation (walking, standing, sitting)
- What selfing is and how it can get in the way of your mindfulness practice

Who would I recommend the Wherever You Go, There You Are summary to?

The 18 year old D student, who's frustrated with studying and studying and studying, without seeming to get anywhere, the 44 year old construction worker, who's often too tired to think after coming home from work and just zones out, and anyone, who bites their nails or picks their nose without noticing.