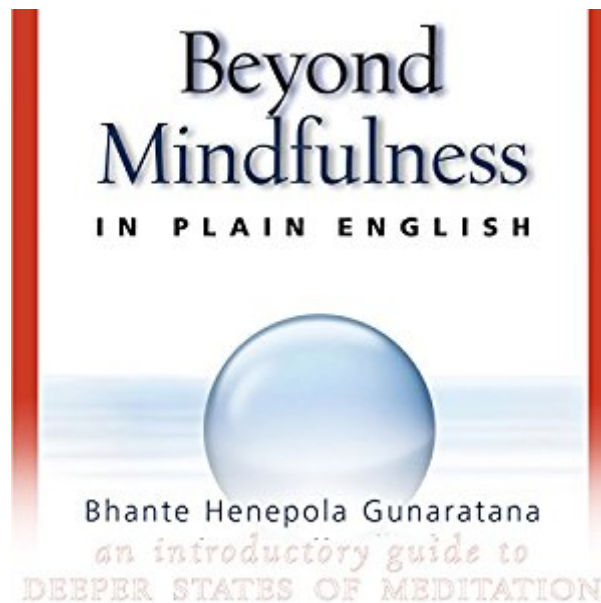


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Beyond Mindfulness In Plain English: An Introductory Guide To Deeper States Of Meditation



Synopsis

Countless people worldwide have made Mindfulness in Plain English a beloved and best-selling classic in almost a dozen languages. Now, after nearly two decades, Bhante helps meditators of every stripe take their mindfulness practice to the next level - helping them go, in a word, beyond mindfulness. In the same warm, clear, and friendly style, Bhante introduces the listener to what have been known for centuries as the jhanas - deeply calm, joyous, and powerful states of meditation that, when explored with the clearly presented tools in this book, can lead to a life of insight and unshakeable peace.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is truly helpful and the meditation states it describes (the eight jhana states) really are as good as they sound. I have ADHD so my attention span is normally very poor, but by following the instructions in this book I'm able to enjoy meditation and benefit from it. It took a lot of persistence before the jhana states began to work for me. The honest answer: two and a half years of off-and-on practice. If you add up only the months that I actually practiced meditation regularly, it was around a year's worth of steady practice. All that persistence, the slow-but-steady work of talking myself into meditating instead of procrastinating, staying on the cushion for the whole time period instead of leaving once I got bored, all the times I began my practice anew after I'd let it slip away... it was all so worth it. How was all that hard work worth it to me? I'll let the numbers explain it:

Since I've been meditating regularly, I've been able to cut my dose of ADHD medication in half. In other words, this jhana meditation helps me focus more easily during the day while taking LESS focus medicine! And, crucial to this review, the Beyond Mindfulness book (together with one other book, Who Is My Self by Ayya Khema) has made it possible for me to get to jhana. "Mindfulness Bliss and Beyond" by Ajahn Brahm simply didn't work for me. At all. "Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha" by Daniel Ingram explained what the jhanas were, but it didn't help me DO them. And Catherine Shaila's "Focused and Fearless" book was a great pleasure to read, full of interesting exercises, but those exercises didn't bring me any closer to jhana. Why buy a book about jhana if you're just going to read about them, without experiencing them? Only this book and Ayya Khema's book helped me develop access to the jhanas. One more note about the benefits of jhana meditation. Odd, random good things have happened to my mind, aside from the improved focus. For example, I don't dislike mowing the grass anymore. It's become an enjoyable form of exercise, whereas it used to seem like a bunch of boring, sweaty, dirty work. Also, the increased mental clarity makes me notice when others are being manipulative. Salespeople just don't have the sort of influence over me that they used to, and I've let some negative people out of my life because I can now see past their facades of niceness. Part of this may just be growing up, but if that's the case, I've never grown up so much in such a short period of time. Also, I have way more patience for my and others' mistakes now. My mind is just plain nicer than it used to be. Why would I be upset that some other person isn't making me happy? I can go sit down to meditate at any time and have extraordinary joy flooding my mind within 20 minutes, and then have the excitement and rush of joy slowly fade into a calm, satisfying feeling of peace over the next 20 minutes. That's a pretty significant realization, and it's the sort of thing "advanced" meditators talk about all the time. I'm not "advanced" by any means, but if these are the benefits of my "intermediate" meditation practice, I can't wait to see what will happen when I'm "advanced"! So that's why I like jhana. Why do I like the book? Because unlike most of the others, this one actually showed me how to do jhana, even despite my learning disability. But a word of caution: no meditation book will ever do the work for you, just like no physical fitness book will exercise for you. It just shows you how to use your practice time effectively. So if you're willing to put in the hours to learn about deeper forms of meditation than simple mindfulness, if you want to go Beyond Mindfulness, this book is a great choice!

This book is clearly aimed at people who have progressed well beyond the beginner level meditation. Therefore, if the reader is not so experienced or not curious enough, he or she may find

this "boring " or Useless" otherwise this is a truly accurate and rare book. For me this is an unimaginably 100% exact book I wanted. I began meditation without seriously reading any books. But I knew I got to watch my breath and eventually to be locked in to it in order to experience something. I tried very hard but I could not do that. Later I discovered that Metta meditation helps to concentrate, and I tried that and then continued in mindfulness meditation. One day it happened to me, suddenly felt that I just immersed into something I never experienced before, but continued some days without knowing what exactly it is (I had relatively lesser knowledge in Jhanas and deeper experiences) Then, I watched this video series: [...] and discovered that I have experienced a Jhana. I was really happy and I kept doing this regularly and I felt that I was becoming more aware and progressing on this. Then this book came across me, and I started to read it I could not believe my eyes, every word and every step it explained is exactly as I have experienced. I felt so grateful to this monk for writing this book. With this I discovered that I have almost gone beyond 2nd Jhana. This book has explained all accurately up to where I am now, therefore I can safely assume that rest of it accurate too. If you go beyond basics, this is a wonderful companion. I think this book assumes that you already know about mindfulness meditation and have some knowledge in Buddhism.

This book, the most recently published of Bhante G's is so clear, so comprehensive regarding Jhanas; the states of meditation through practice. There are so many books out there that are just gimmicks to the real thing. Bhante Gunaratana is so REAL that reading his words penetrate to carry you further on the path of insight; a critical key to our liberation along with practice of 8 Fold Path. People in our culture are suffering due to their lack of focus. This book can help anyone who is feeling scattered and needs a practice to calm their body and mind. There are so many benefits to concentration. Bhante G shows the way to practice best. He claims no superpowers. Although, in fact, he is the leading Theravada monk in the western world. Walk on with him; you are likely to find peace. He has paved the way with loving friendliness and diligent effort to make Buddhas teachings accessible to us all. He wrote his dissertation for his PHD on Jhanas and has come full circle with this publication. A Beautiful work.

This is the last book in Bhante Gunaratana's trilogy on Theravada buddhism. The first two books helped me get on the right path, which I read at least twice each. But then when I began reading this book I realized that I need another five years of practice before I can fully comprehend it. This is a very advanced book ladies and gentlemen that focuses on the deepest states of meditation called

"jhanas". It was too advanced for me and I would only recommend it to very experienced practitioners. For everyone else, just continue meditating and studying the eightfold path in your daily life until you naturally start to experience deep states of meditation, then you can pick this book up as a guide to navigate them.

I've got to tell you that I was thrilled that Gunaratana had written a follow-up to his wonderful "Mindfulness in Plain English." And I was very pleased at the opening few chapters of this book: they are clearly written and very instructive. I have to admit, though, that I have recently put the book down. When the author starts talking about the Jhanas in great detail, he gets a little more vague and frankly, boring. Still I think this is a worthwhile endeavor and worth taking a look at. Perhaps others may be more intrigued than I was.

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