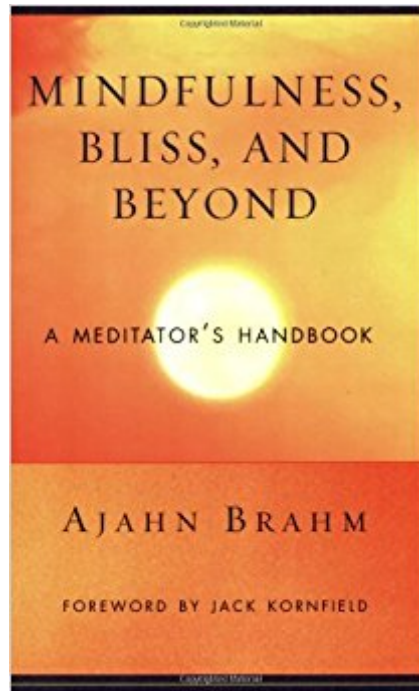




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Mindfulness, Bliss, And Beyond: A Meditator's Handbook



Synopsis

Meditation: it's not just a way to relax, or to deal with life's problems. Done correctly, it can be a way to radically encounter bliss and to begin - and sustain - real transformation in ourselves. In *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond*, self-described meditation junkie Ajahn Brahm shares his knowledge and experience of the jhanas - a core part of the Buddha's original meditation teaching. Never before has this material been approached in such an empowering way, by a teacher of such authority and popularity. Full of surprises, delightfully goofy humor, and entertaining stories that inspire, instruct, and illuminate, *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond* will encourage those new to meditation, and give a shot in the arm to more experienced practitioners as well.

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Customer Reviews

Most Buddhist writers are not often lighthearted or zesty, but the British-born monk Ajahn Brahm is a delightful exception. Even though meditators are taught to not expect anything, since that represents an attachment, meditation should bring you joy and bliss, according to Brahm. The bliss states of meditation (jhanas) are little-taught, so this book is an addition with value in a crowded niche. Trained in the Thai forest tradition by the Buddhist master Ajahn Chah, Brahm is a clear communicator of the ineffable. He is able to write about a variety of mental states and visualizations with precision and discrimination, drawing on his own experience. He is step-by-step systematic, which helps demystify what happens in meditation. Also useful is the specificity with which he describes the kinds of problems meditators encounter and what to do to resolve them. Meditation is

difficult to teach on the page, but Brahm, who began life as an academic at Cambridge, fulfills his calling as teacher. He projects both energetic conviction and calm equanimity. The promise of bliss he describes in this excellent manual is elusive, but remains a compelling goal. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"This book is the kind of work that comes around once in a lifetime. I cannot recommend it more highly than that, and encourage anyone with a serious interest in the meditative disciplines taught by the Buddha to buy this book - now!" (BuddhaSpace)"This clear and accessible book describes meditative absorption states (jhana) and how to attain them. An excellent road map to the the development of jhana, which, as the title suggests, is beyond bliss." (Inquiring Mind)"Most Buddhist writers are not often lighthearted or zesty, but the British-born Ajahn Brahm is a delightful exception. Brahm is a clear communicator of the ineffable and projects both energetic conviction and calm equanimity. The promise of bliss he describes in this excellent manual is elusive, but remains a compelling goal." (Publishers Weekly)"Like a broom through cobwebs, Ajahn Brahm here sweeps away the mysteries surrounding the jhanas. Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond is salted with the illustrative, often witty life stories that Brahm is well known for, and he uses readily understandable language to explain what some teachers shy from. Finding this book is like finding an operator's manual for one's practice. Raising the bar for those serious about their practice, he scolds those who would 'dumb-down' nibbana and challenges us to reach for the ultimate happiness. Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond is a bold book, sure to be controversial." (John Roberts, Buddhist Council of the Northwest)"From the first word (meditation) to the last (Parinibbana), Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond is riveting, rollicking, and uncompromisingly "real". Ajahn Brahm's voice is utterly fresh. But watch out! In the greatest tradition of our beloved roshis and bhikkhus, it is also compelling and commanding. Readers seeking a sure guide to 'the bliss better than sex' will find it in this wonderful book." (Glenn Wallis, translator of The Dhammapada: Verses on the Way)"Ajahn Brahm is the Seinfeld of Buddhism." (Sumi Loundon, editor of Blue Jean Buddha)"Ajahn Brahm is originally from London, and his working-class humor and cockney turns of phrase can be charming. Readers will see why so many people are drawn to hear him." (Shambhala Sun)"Ajahn Brahm has not only provided great leadership for the Buddhist community, but has dedicated much of his time to helping the wider community with a strong sense of compassion, understanding and humour." (Vice-Chancellor Professor Lance Twomey, Curtin University)"One can never be bored by Ajahn Brahm. Newcomers to Buddhism are always fascinated by how he easily he is able to explain difficult concepts in ordinary language the mind can grasp." (Eastern Horizon)

For those who are interested in easy to understand instructions about meditation, this is the book. The author is a famous Buddhist monk who has been meditating for over 40 years. He gets into very deep meditative states and explains how anyone who wants to reach those same states of immense calm can do the same. For those who like the book, there are over 1000 YouTube videos with talks given by Ajahn Brahm on many different life topics. He adds humor to most of his talks and is an excellent speaker able to explain things very clearly.

I've read quite a few meditation "handbooks" and this for me is hands down the most practical. It addresses not just the "how to's" but perhaps far more importantly the "what to do you when get stuck or are confused". Meditation often seems to be an impossibly wishy washy, hard to grasp thing but this book addresses meditation in a programmatic way building from the first attempt through to the most deep experiences. Best book on the topic I've ever read.

The clearest roadmap to enlightenment I've encountered. Through following its instructions seriously for a time, I was able to achieve the first jhana. I haven't progressed beyond that stage due to my own lack of focus in the last few years, not because of this book's instruction. I have no personal experience to back up its claims about the remaining jhanas. But my intuition tells me that this book is correct. One feels, in reading it and following its very practical advice, like an arrow speeding toward the target.

This is a GREAT book. It is the best one I have come across on the development of Jhana. Jhana is a practice that leads to perfect serenity of mind. As my dear friend Jack Kornfield wisely mentioned in his foreword, the development of Jhana is just one of many beautiful and excellent paths towards liberation. However, it is also true that Jhana is one of the most important practices in all of Buddhism. Jhana was mentioned often by the Buddha, it was the practice that directed his mind towards Enlightenment when he sat under the bodhi tree, and very last meditation he did right before he passed away. Even the Chinese word for Zen (Chan) derives from the Chinese word for Jhana (Chan-na). Given the importance of this practice, it is very useful for every Buddhist practitioner to at least learn about it, and if nothing else, at least for the historical context and as a basis of comparison to one's own chosen practices. And for that, Ajahn Brahmin has done a brilliant job in describing the practice of Jhana in detail, plus how this practice relates to more advanced Buddhist topics such as no-self and the different stages of Enlightenment. Simply put, if you are a

practicing Buddhist, I strongly encourage you to read this book. Also relevant: For the theoretical context behind Jhana (and some well-informed points of controversy), I also highly recommend Richard Shankman's excellent book, *The Experience of Samadhi: An In-depth Exploration of Buddhist Meditation*. Related: I had the honor of meeting and hanging out with Ajahn Brahm this year. I quickly came to admire him greatly. I am convinced that he's the real deal. (Reviewer is the author of *Search Inside Yourself*).

This is the single best book on meditation I've read so far. It's practical, engaging and "easy" to apply. It's changed the way I look at meditation.

Another great book by Ajahn Brahm. I would recommend it for anyone wanted a more peaceful approach to their life.

Ajahn Brahm's books as well as his youtube talks are always inspiring, practical and humorous. I really enjoyed this book and find it tremendously helpful. I have flagged numerous pages that I refer to regularly. This is in my rotation as a book to re-read in a few months.

its very helpful to develop my meditation. i am reading this book and practicing meditation everyday at my home. i am not yet experienced the jhana, someday it will be true.

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