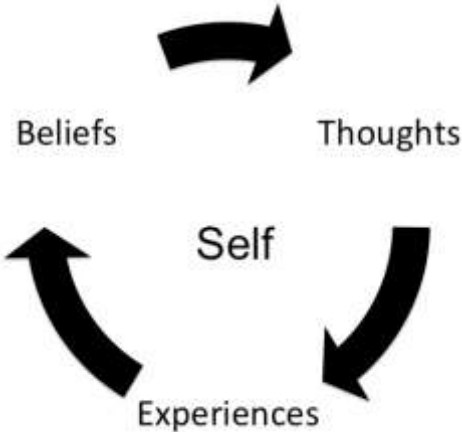
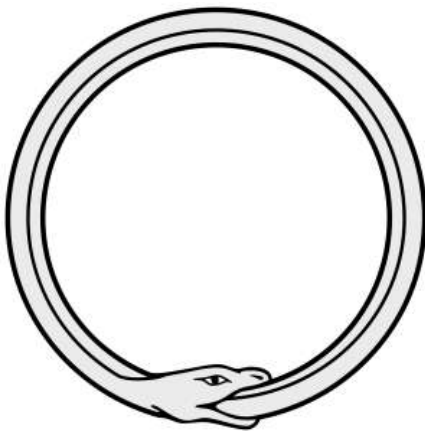


A Journey Through Western Philosophy, Eastern Wisdom, and Modern Secular Mindfulness.



What is modern Western secular mindfulness?

From *daoscape.com*:

“Mindfulness practices are not about filling the mind, but about the mind filling the present moment. Gentle attention is placed on a point of focus in the here-and-now, and each unique and changing moment is witnessed, or 'surfed', without inviting judging thoughts or rumination. Whatever has already arrived and is necessary on the broader scale of things is met with an open and accepting awareness - with an open heart. In this way it delivers long-term inner peace as it enables people to gain a tolerance for the constantly changing and unpredictable natural world they live in. These practices have been present within different cultures at different times around the world; especially in Asia - perhaps most famously in ancient China as 'Zen', which was then carried over to Japan, and also in ancient India as yoga. Now mindfulness has a modern Western form - secular mindfulness, which is rooted in scientific understanding.

Western scientists have extracted the basic mindfulness meditation method from various global religious and cultural frameworks and have studied and reframed it so that it can be secular, non-mystical, and grounded in a combination of neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, biological systems theory, and the known psycho-physiological effects of the stress response.

Secular mindfulness is being used in the West to enhance human performance by lowering stress within all spheres of society, and to even help people with clinical depression. Some of the most famous areas where mindfulness is being used is in the workplace (for example, Google, Apple Computers, General Mills, Intel, have all offered mindfulness training to their busy employees), in sports and fitness (NBA, Tennis, American Football, and many more), and even education (many British schools are bringing mindfulness into their classrooms).

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction was made popular in the West by the work of [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#); an MIT graduate who is now Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. In 1998 [he published a paper](#) in the peer-reviewed journal *Psychosomatic Medicine* which showed that secular mindfulness meditation increased the healing of psoriasis skin lesions compared to a control group who received a normal treatment for the condition. After this evidence, many other scientists became interested in the applications of mindfulness and now an increasing number of top Western universities have departments dedicated to researching the potential of mindfulness meditation. See the dedicated mindfulness websites for [Oxford University](#), [Harvard Medical School](#), and [University of Massachusetts Medical School](#) for examples.

Mindfulness brings in a different way of dealing with boredom and necessary stressful situations - it encourages us to expose ourselves to any necessary stressors while distracting our attention from our judging thoughts as we relax into the innate positive intelligence of our bodies in the here-and-now. Our innate intelligence can anchor us in a more peaceful place - the place our energetically-conservative body always wants to be in - allowing us to bring finer clarity of perception and better physical coordination to our situation. This means that we can gain more of a tolerance for the inevitable pains in life - things like getting ill, becoming older, and losing loved ones; all natural and normal events that every person must face.

The Traditional Chinese Three Main Philosophical Schools, Zen/Ch'an (禪), and Mindfulness

The Third Patriarch of the Chinese Zen school, Jiànzhì Sēngcàn 鑑智僧璨, who died in 606AD, wrote a teaching called 'Xìnxīn míng' 信心銘 Here are two paragraphs from that teaching:

至道無難
唯嫌棄擇
但莫憎愛
洞然明白

The Perfect Way knows no difficulties
Except that it refuses to make preference:
Only when freed from hate and love,
It reveals itself fully and without disguise.

大道體寬
無易無難
小見狐疑
轉急轉遲

The Great Way is calm and large-minded,
Nothing is easy, nothing is hard:
Small views are irresolute,
The more in haste the tardier they go.

Many scholars have noted the use of the word 'Dào' - 道 - in the above text, meaning 'way' in Chinese, apparently describing the Buddhist path – a word the author did not necessarily have to use. It points to a situation in ancient China where philosophical schools were mixing terms and creating a new synthesis from the three main guiding practical philosophies – namely Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism - [儒释道](#). rúshìdào.



“此出自【南怀瑾参悟人生】佛为心，道为骨，儒为表，大度看世界。技在手，能在身，思在脑，从容过生活。三千年读史，不外功名利禄；九万里悟道，终归诗酒田园。”

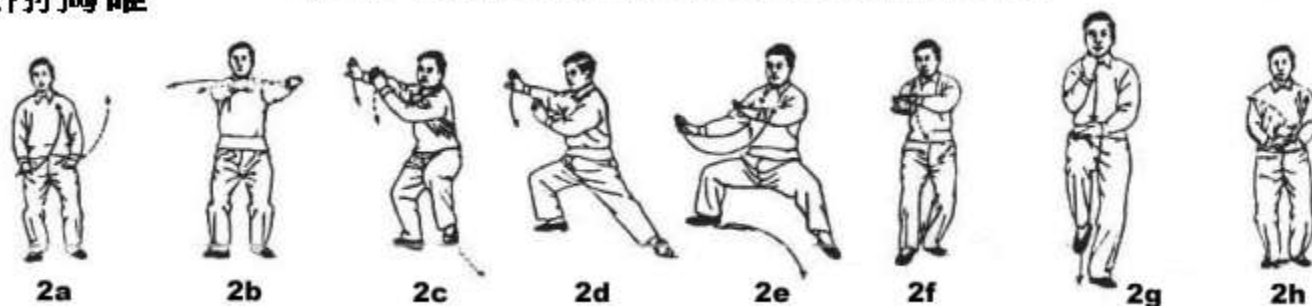
Thus, Zen/Ch'an (禪) is not considered 'pure' Buddhism, in the sense that it adheres strictly to original Buddhist scriptures and methodology. It apparently took the overlapping, useful aspects of Confucianism, Buddhism, and

Daoism, and allowed for such practices as ‘Kungfu Tea’ (Gōngfūchá 功夫茶) and Tai Chi (tàijí quán 太极拳) to manifest - containing values appealing to, and associated with all of the three main traditional Chinese philosophical schools.



金剛搗碓

2a - 2h Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds Mortar



The core of the overlapping values common to Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism appears to be the discernible heart or mind (心). The practical aspects of these philosophies encourages one to use skill to access the positive heart, which manifests as a Person of Virtue in Confucianism, a Buddha in Buddhism, and a person in touch with True Nature in Daoism. Western secular mindfulness recognises such ideas as being in harmony with its aim to unite mind and body as one whole. This should not be surprising, since traditional Chinese Zen and Daoist practices were majorly influential when Western mindfulness was being researched and established in the USA.

As much as Zen was a synthesis of practical Eastern wisdom in ancient China (namely the three main schools of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism), Western secular mindfulness could be said to be a new synthesis of Zen, Indian yoga, traditional South Asian Buddhism, and Western science and psychology. It has apparently been the secular and practical nature of the modern Western science involved which made way for this new perspective to emerge – allowing for peripheral, mystical ideas unique to each ancient tradition to be discarded as unnecessary, while championing the core aim of making contact with, and following the heart.

The Flow State and Mindfulness

Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Ronald D. Siegel, describes the 'flow state' as follows:

"We all have moments in which we are fully involved in what we're doing. Athletes describe this as being in the *zone*; artists describe it as finding their muse or creative energy. The Hungarian psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi coined the term *flow* to describe these moments of full involvement. At these times self-consciousness drops away and we're free from our judging mind — we are fully engaged. We are alert, awake, and attentive. You can identify flow experiences with a simple checklist:

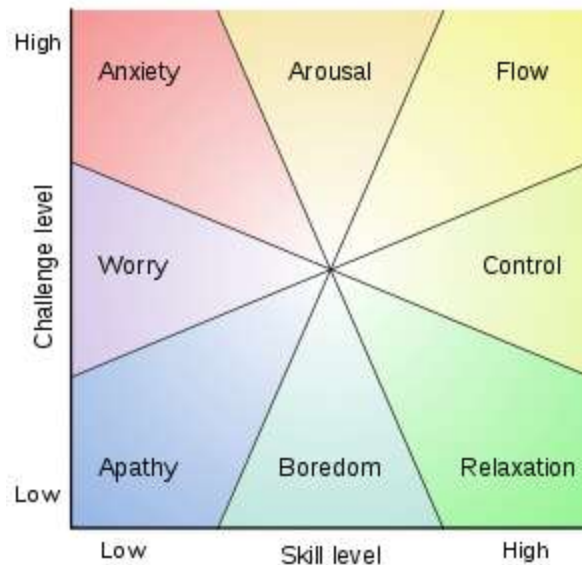
FLOW CHECKLIST

- You lose awareness of time.
- You aren't thinking about yourself.
- You aren't distracted by extraneous thoughts.
- You're focused on the process rather than only on the end goal.
- You're active.
- Your activity feels effortless even if it's challenging.
- You would like to repeat the experience.

These moments of flow involve being mindful *while accomplishing something*. We tend to experience flow when our talents are optimally engaged. Whatever they might be — athletic, interpersonal, artistic, or intellectual — when our abilities are challenged fully but not overwhelmed, we experience flow. It is not surprising that mindfulness practice increases our ability to have flow experiences. By practicing being aware of present experience with acceptance, we engage more fully in everything we do. Research suggests that these moments of flow are themselves fully satisfying. They don't lead us to want more and more or bigger and better experiences. While engaged in flow, we aren't thinking how much nicer it is elsewhere. Like other moments of mindfulness, moments of flow involve reduced self-preoccupation — they connect us to the world outside ourselves." - [The Mindfulness Solution](#) (2010), p321-322.

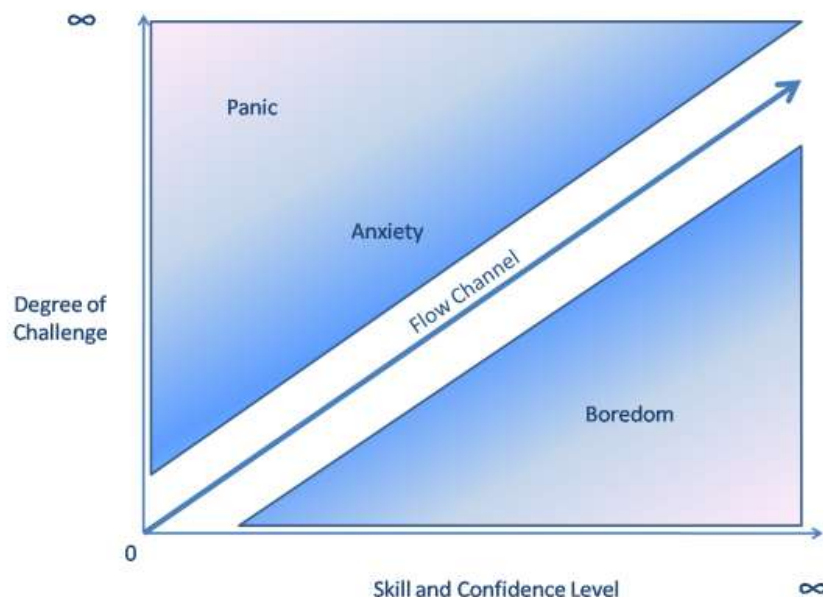
Hungarian psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi writes how flow states arise, satisfy us, and can be created, in his book [Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life](#) (1997), p32-33:

"It is the full involvement of flow, rather than happiness, that makes for excellence in life. When we are in flow, we are not happy, because to experience happiness we must focus on our inner states, and that would take away attention from the task at hand. If a rock climber takes time out to feel happy while negotiating a difficult move, he might fall to the bottom of the mountain. The surgeon can't afford to feel happy during a demanding operation, or a musician while playing a challenging score. Only after the task is completed do we have the leisure to look back on what has happened, and then we are flooded with gratitude for the excellence of that experience-then, in retrospect, we are happy. But one can be happy without experiencing flow. We can be happy experiencing the passive pleasure of a rested body, a warm sunshine, the contentment of a serene relationship. These are also moments to treasure, but this kind of happiness is very vulnerable and dependent on favorable external circumstances. The happiness that follows flow is of our own making, and it leads to increasing complexity and growth in consciousness."



“Suppose a person is in the area marked "Arousal" on the [above] graph. This is not a bad condition to be in, in arousal a person feels mentally focused, active, and involved-but not very strong, cheerful, or in control. How can one return to the more enjoyable flow state? The answer is obvious: by learning new skills. Or let us look at the area labeled "Control." This is also a positive state of experience, where one feels happy, strong, satisfied. But one tends to lack concentration, involvement, and a feeling that what one does is important. So how does one get back to flow? By increasing challenges. Thus arousal and control are very important states for learning. The other conditions are less favorable. When a person is anxious or worried, for example, the step to flow often seems too far, and one retreats to a less challenging situation instead of trying to cope.”

"Flow is generally reported when a person is doing his or her favorite activity - gardening, listening to music, bowling, cooking a good meal. It also occurs when driving, when talking to friends, and surprisingly often at work. Very rarely do people report flow in passive leisure activities, such as watching television or relaxing. But because almost any activity can produce flow provided the relevant elements are present, it is possible to improve the quality of life by making sure that clear goals, immediate feedback, skills balanced to action opportunities, and the remaining conditions of flow are as much as possible a constant part of everyday life."



Mindfulness and Traditional Western Philosophy: Introduction

Founder of Western Secular Mindfulness [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The spirit of inquiry is fundamental to living mindfully. Inquiry is not just a way to solve problems. It is a way to make sure you are staying in touch with the basic mystery of life itself and of our presence here. Who am I? Where am I going? What does it mean to be? What does it mean to be a ... man, woman, child, parent; a student, a worker, a boss, an inmate; a homeless person? What is my karma? Where am I now? What is my way? What is my job on the planet with a capital J? Inquiry doesn't mean looking for answers, especially quick answers which come out of superficial thinking. It means asking without expecting answers, just pondering the question, carrying the wondering with you, letting it percolate, bubble, cook, ripen, come in and out of awareness, just as everything else comes in and out of awareness." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (1994), p6.

Question 1: Do you often think about who or what you truly are? What answer, if any, do you settle with?

Question 2: Where do you think you are going in life?

Question 3: Do you feel you have found your job on this planet “with a capital J”?

Question 4: Can you feel comfortable in life without having answers to the above questions?

Teachers Along the Way:

The founder of Western Secular Mindfulness, [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#), acknowledges the following mindfulness teachers and writers – many of whom are responsible for most of the quotes in this document, via the following quotes:

“I am greatly indebted to many other teachers as well:... to **Philip Kapleau**, for *The Three Pillars of Zen* and for coming to MIT to conduct meditation retreats among the scientists, where he influenced at least one; ...to **Suzuki Roshi** for his beginner's mind and his cow pasture; to Zen Master **Seung Sahn**, who, as **Stephen Mitchel** says in the dedication to his book of sacred poems, *The Enlightened Heart*, also taught me everything I don't know; ...to **Thich Nhat Hanh** for his gentleness of being, for his unwavering and total commitment to healing the deep psychic wounds of the Vietnam' War and those we incur simply in being alive, for the title of Chapter 8, which comes from *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, and for his gentle teachings of mindfulness and peacefulness...” - Jon Kabat-Zinn, [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p.xxi.

““Practice not-doing and everything will fall into place.” - **Lao-tzu**, *Tao Te Ching*” - Jon Kabat-Zinn, [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p349.

“...someone approached **the Buddha**, who was considered a great sage and teacher, and asked him, "Are you a god?", or something to that effect, to which he replied, "No, I am awake." The essence of mindfulness practice is to work at waking up from the self-imposed half sleep of unawareness in which we are so often immersed.” - Jon Kabat-Zinn, [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p365.

"Midnight. No waves, no wind, the empty boat is flooded with moonlight. – **Dogen**." - Jon Kabat-Zinn, [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p232.

“**Joko Beck**, a wonderful American Zen teacher and grandmother, now in her late eighties, opens her book *Nothing Special* with a powerful image emphasizing the transitory and fleeting character of our lives as individual entities in the larger stream of life...” - Jon Kabat-Zinn, [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p174.

Mindfulness and Traditional Western Philosophy Part 1: The Ancient Greek Pre-Socratics

Thales, Mindfulness, and Water

Thales of Miletus (624-545 BC)

- ‘Natural philosopher’.
- Astronomer.
- Water as essence.

“**Thales, the founder of this type of philosophy, says the principle [*archê*] is water.**” – Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (350 BC), 983 b21-22 (translated by W. D. Ross (Digireads.com: 2006), p6).

- Daoist Sage LaoZi (5th Century BC):

“The supreme good is like water, which nourishes all things without trying to. It is content with the low places that people disdain. Thus it is like the Tao.” – *Tao Te Ching*, 8. (Stephen Mitchell Translation)

老子:

“上善若水。水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾於道。”

- Zen Hermit Hanshan (9th Century AD):

“For an image of life and death
consider ice and water
water freezes into ice
ice melts back into water
what dies must live again
what lives is bound to die
ice and water don't harm each other
both life and death are fine” - *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain* (2000, Red Pine Translation), No.100, p105.

寒山子:

“欲识生死譬，且将冰水比。水结即成冰，冰消返成水。已死必应生，出生还复死。冰水不相伤，生死还双美。”

- Confucian Scholar Zhu Xi (1130-1200):

“A small square pond an uncovered mirror
where sunlight and clouds linger and leave
I asked how it stays so clear
it said spring water keeps flowing in” – *Flashes of Inspiration from Reading* (12th Century AD), (translated by Red Pine).

觀書有感二首 – 朱熹: “半畝方塘一鑿開，天光雲影共徘徊。
問渠哪得清如許？為有源頭活水來。”

- Sufi Muslim scholar and poet Rumi:

"This world-river has no water in it. Come back, spring. Bring water more fresh than Khidr or Elijah knew, from the fountain that pulses in the well of the soul. Where water is, there bread arrives. But not the reverse. Water never comes from loaves. You are the honored guest. Do not weep like a beggar for pieces of the world. The river vanishes because of that desiring. Swim out of your little pond. That water rises in the date tree and in the roses in your cheek. When it flows toward you, you will feel a deep contentment. The nightwatchman shakes his rattle as part of his

fear. You will not need him anymore. Water itself guards the fish that are in it." – *Water from the Well of the Soul*, [Rumi: Bridge to the Soul](#) (2007 eBook) (translated by Coleman Barks), p56.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

“The energy of the river of life forms living things—a human being, a cat or dog, trees and plants — then what held the whirlpool in place is itself altered, and the whirlpool is swept away, reentering the larger flow. The energy that was a particular whirlpool fades out and the water passes on, perhaps to be caught again and turned for a moment into another whirlpool. We’d rather not think of our lives in this way, however. We don’t want to see ourselves as simply a temporary formation, a whirlpool in the river of life. The fact is, we take form for a while; then when conditions are appropriate, we fade out. There’s nothing wrong with fading out; it’s a natural part of the process. However, we want to think that this little whirlpool that we are isn’t part of the stream. We want to see ourselves as permanent and stable. Our whole energy goes into trying to protect our supposed separateness. To protect the separateness, we set up artificial, fixed boundaries; as a consequence, we accumulate excess baggage, stuff that slips into our whirlpool and can’t flow out again.” - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p3.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"Even though waves arise, the essence of your mind is pure; it is just like clear water with a few waves. Actually water always has waves. Waves are the practice of the water.. To speak of waves apart from water or water apart from waves is a delusion. Water and waves are one." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p35.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...drop below the surface agitations of the mind into relaxation, calmness, and stability. The agitation is still at the surface just as the waves are on the surface of the water. But we are out of the wind and protected from their buffeting action and their tension-producing effects when we shift our attention to the breath for a moment or two." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p52-53.

Anaximander, Mindfulness and Infinity

Anaximander of Miletus (610-545 BC)

- ‘Natural philosopher’.
- Monistic cosmology.
- Symmetry.

"What is infinite is something other than the elements, and from it the elements arise." – Aristotle, *Physics* (350 BC). 204 b 22, (transcribed in *Early Greek Philosophy* (1892), p51).

- Daoist Sage LaoZi (5th Century BC):

“There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born. It is serene. Empty. Solitary. Unchanging. Infinite. Eternally present. It is the mother of the universe. For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao.” – *Tao Te Ching*, 25. (Stephen Mitchell Translation)

老子:

“有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，字子曰道，強為之名曰大”

- The Buddha (~5th Century BC):

"There is that dimension, monks, where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind; neither dimension of the infinitude of space, nor dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, nor dimension of nothingness, nor dimension of neither perception nor non-perception; neither this world, nor the next world, nor sun, nor moon. And there, I say, there is neither coming, nor going, nor staying; neither passing away nor arising: unestablished, unevolving, without support [mental object]. This, just this, is the end of stress." - *Nibbāna Sutta: Unbinding (1)*, (translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

- Vietnamese Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh:

"The teachings of Interdependent Co-Arising (pratitya-samutpada), when developed to their highest level, become the teaching of infinite layers of causes and conditions." - *Understanding Our Mind* (2001), p314.

- American Zen teacher Charlotte Joko Beck:

"...true self - call it the infinite energy potential - knows no separation. True self forms into different shapes but essentially it remains one self, one energy potential." - *Everyday Zen* (1997), p98.

- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"Wholeness experienced first hand cannot be tyrannical, for it is infinite in its diversity and finds itself mirrored and embedded in each particular, like the Hindu goddess Indra's net, a symbol of the universe, which has jewels at all the vertices, each one capturing the reflections of the entire net and so containing the whole." - *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (2004), p230.

- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"...since we are completely embedded in the warp and woof of the universe, there is really no boundary this benevolent gesture of awareness, no separation from other beings, no limit to either heart or mind, no limit to our being or our awareness, or to our openhearted presence. In words, it may sound like an idealization. Experienced, it is merely what it is, life expressing itself, sentience quivering within infinity, with things just as they are." - *Coming To Our Senses* (2005), p70.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Lao Tzu, Mindfulness, and Paths

[LaoZi](#) (~6th Century BC)

- Natural order.
- Reversion of natural order.
- Softness brings success.
- Non-assertiveness.

“A way becoming a prescribed way is not an absolute way.” – *Tao Te Ching*, 1, (translated by Tristan Petts).

老子：“道可道，非常道。”

- The Sixth Zen Patriarch [HuiNeng](#) (638–713 AD):
“Whether there might be two or three or an infinite number of expedient means, with various stories, metaphors, and sayings, these teachings all constitute the one buddha vehicle.” – [Platform Sutra](#), Chapter 7: Encounters (机缘·第二节), (translated by John R. McRae (Numata Center: 2000), p59)
惠能：“若二若三，乃至无数方便，种种因缘，譬喻言词，是法皆为一佛乘故。”
- Islamic Sufi Scholar [Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī](#) (1207 – 1273):
“Today like every other day
We wake up empty and scared.
Don’t open the door of your study
And begin reading.
Take down a musical instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel
And kiss the earth.” – *Let the Beauty We Love Be What We Do*, (translated by Coleman Barks and published in [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p66).
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
“Words are necessary, but even though they are necessary, you shouldn’t think they are complete. We should make constant effort to produce new dharma, new precepts. We say, “This is human life.” But this human life is for today, not tomorrow. Tomorrow we must have better ways to live. This kind of effort should be continued. When we feel bad it means we should improve our way. But you should not expect a perfect dharma that says clearly “you should” or “you shouldn’t.”” - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p106-107.
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
“Each teacher was suggesting the true teaching, in his own way, from the same source that was transmitted from Buddha. To stick to words without knowing the source of the teaching is wrong, and that is what many teachers and students... were doing. ...If you receive words, you should understand the source of the teaching that is transmitted from Buddha and is beyond each teacher’s own way of expressing or suggesting the truth.” - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p154.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
“There are many different ways to practice being in your body. All enhance growth and change and healing, especially if they are done with meditative awareness.” - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p95.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Mindfulness practice provides an opportunity to walk along the path of your own life with your eyes open, awake instead of half unconscious, responding consciously in the world instead of reacting automatically, mindlessly. The end result is subtly different from the other way of living in that we know that we are walking a path, that we are following a way, that we are awake and aware. No one dictates to you what that path is. No one is telling you to follow "my way." The whole point is that there is only one way, but that way manifests in as many different ways as there are people and customs and beliefs. Our real job, with a capital J, is to find *our own way*..." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p442.

Anaximenes, Mindfulness, and Air

Anaximenes of Miletus (580-500 BC)

- ‘Natural philosopher’.
- Air as essence.

“Just as our soul, being air, holds us together, so do breath and air encompass the whole world.” - *Aetius* I.3.4 (1st/2nd Century BC), (transcribed in *Symbolism and Belief* (2014), p154).

- Islamic Sufi Scholar [Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī](#) (1207 – 1273):
“We have become drunk and our heart has departed, it has fled from us—whither has it gone?
When it saw that the chain of reason was broken, immediately my heart took to flight.
It will not have gone to any other place, it has departed to the seclusion of God.
Seek it not in the house, for it is of the air; it is a bird of the air, and has gone into the air.
It is the white falcon of the Emperor; it has taken flight, and departed to the Emperor.” – *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, Poem 89, (translated by A. J. Arberry (University of Chicago Press: 2006), p113).
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"Our body is not limited to what is inside the boundary of our skin. It is much more immense. It includes even the layer of air around our Earth; for if the atmosphere were to disappear for even an instant, our life would end." - *Peace is Every Step* (2010), p104.
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
"Without air, we cannot breathe. Each one of us is in the midst of myriads of worlds. We are in the center of the world always, moment after moment. So we are completely dependent and independent. If you have this kind of experience, this kind of existence, you have absolute independence; you will not be bothered by anything. So when you practice zazen [seated mindfulness meditation], your mind should be concentrated on your breathing. This kind of activity is the fundamental activity of the universal being." - *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (1995), p31.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"It can feel as if there is nothing but breath flowing freely across all the boundaries of the body. ... we let ourselves dwell in silence and stillness, in an awareness that may have by this point gone beyond the body altogether." - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p77.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"The air, the air, the air. Once you begin paying attention to it, loving the air, you can easily understand why it was elevated and revered as a primordial element by ancient civilizations. The air! The air! As I look out at the stand of hemlocks, they are swaying, playing at their tai chi. I feel the same air that is moving them moving now across my back and shoulders and neck. In this, we are united, touched by the very same wave, each moved and moving in our own ways, and also, amazingly, joined in an exchange that is larger than us both, in which all life, plant and animal, is participating in every moment around the entire planet, a giving and receiving between these large living kingdoms on a cosmic scale, a recycling and revitalizing of the air that also recycles and revitalizes us." - *Coming To Our Senses* (2006), p213-214.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Confucius, Mindfulness, and The Golden Rule

Confucius (551–479 BC)

- Restoration of traditional values.
- Affective concern for others.
- Filial piety.
- Loyalty to rulers.
- Non-coercive transformative power over others (lead by example).

“Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire.” – [The Analects](#), Yan Yuan (Book 12), 2, (translated by Edward Slingerland (2003), p126).

子曰：“己所不欲，勿施於人”

- [Thales of Miletus](#) (624-545 BC):

"How shall we lead the best and most righteous life? By refraining from doing what we blame in others." - Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd Century AD), Book I, Chapter 1, 36, (translated by R.D. Hicks, 1972).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

“The Master has no mind of her own. She works with the mind of the people. She is good to people who are good. She is also good to people who aren’t good. This is true goodness. She trusts people who are trustworthy. She also trusts people who aren’t trustworthy. This is true trust.” – *Tao Te Ching*, 49. (Stephen Mitchell Translation).

老子：

“聖人無常心，以百姓心為心。善者，吾善之；不善者，吾亦善之；德善。信者，吾信之；不信者，吾亦信之；德信。”

- [The Buddha](#) (~5th Century BC):

"Searching all directions with your awareness, you find no one dearer than yourself. In the same way, others are thickly dear to themselves. So you shouldn't hurt others if you love yourself." – [Udana – Exclamations](#), [5] Sonavagga — The Chapter About Sona, [1] Rājan Sutta — The King {Ud 47}, (translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

- [Mo Tzu](#) (470 – 391 BC):

"When every one regards other families as his own family, who will steal? When every one regards other persons as his own person, who will rob?" – [Book 4: Universal Love](#), I, 4, (translated by W. P. Mei).

墨子：“故視人之室若其室，誰竊？視人身若其身，誰賊？”

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#) (1200 - 1253):

"This Intelligence, which is clear in its functions yet whose substance is mysterious and beyond our grasp, is referred to as the nature of those who are spiritually awakened and wise. We also call it 'Buddha', as well as 'enlightenment'. We ourselves, as well as all others, are equally endowed with it; the deluded and the enlightened are both permeated with it." - [Shobogenzo](#) (translated by Hubert Nearman (2007), p47).

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"We begin to see not only how we have been sacrificed, but also how we have sacrificed others. ... Especially when we act on our anger and resentment and try to get even, it begins to dawn on

us that we are now sacrificing others, just as we have been sacrificed. ... When our sorrow begins to be as great for what we do to others as for what has been done to us, our practice is maturing." - [*Nothing Special - Living Zen*](#) (1995), p42.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...being willing to visit and hold our own pain and suffering as a nation and as a species with awareness, compassion, and some degree of non-reactivity, letting them speak to us and reveal new dimensions of interconnectedness that increase our understanding of the roots of suffering, and extend our empathy out beyond only those people we are closest to." - [*Coming To Our Senses*](#) (2006), p508.

- Oxford University Psychiatry [Professor Mark Williams](#):

"Scientific research using brain imaging (fMRI) has shown that the insula becomes energised through meditation. This is hugely significant because this part of the brain is integral to our sense of human connectedness as it helps to mediate empathy in a very real and visceral way. Empathy allows you to see into another's soul, as it were, helping you to understand their predicament 'from the inside'. With it comes true compassion, true loving-kindness. If you looked inside your brain using a scanner you would see this area buzz with life when you are feeling empathy for another person. Meditation not only strengthens this area, but also helps it to grow and expand. But why is this important? Apart from being good for society and all of humanity, empathy is good for *you*. Empathy and feeling genuine compassion and loving-kindness towards yourself and others have hugely beneficial effects on health and wellbeing. The longer a person has meditated, the more highly developed is the insula. But even eight weeks of mindfulness training is sufficient to show changes in the way in which this critical area of the brain functions." - [*Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world*](#) (Rodale: 2011), p49.

Heraclitus, Mindfulness, and Change

[Heraclitus of Ephesus](#) (540-480 BC).

- Universal flux.
- ‘Unity-in-opposites’.
- Introspection.

“**The sun is new every day.**” - Aristotle, *Meteor.* ii. 2. (350 BC), (transcribed in *Early Greek Philosophy* (1892), p136).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

“Man comes in to life and goes out to death. Three out of ten are companions of life. Three out of ten are companions of death. And three out of ten in their lives lead from activity to death. And for what reason? Because of man's intensive striving after life.” – *Tao-te Ching (The Way of Lao-Tzu)*, 50. (Wing-Tsit Chan Translation (1963))

老子:

“出生入死。生之徒，十有三；死之徒，十有三；人之生，動之死地，十有三。夫何故？以其生，生之厚。”

- [The Buddha](#) (~5th Century BC):

"When one perceives with wisdom that all conditioned things are impermanent, then one turns away from suffering." - *Dhammapada*, Verse 277.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of transiency, or change. That everything changes is the basic truth for each existence. [...] This teaching is also understood as the teaching of selflessness. Because each existence is in constant change, there is no abiding self. In fact, the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself, the self-nature of all existence. There is no special, separate self-nature for each existence. This is also called the teaching of Nirvana. When we realize the everlasting truth of "everything changes" and find our composure in it, we find ourselves in Nirvana. Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it." - *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (1995), p102-103.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"When we look deeply enough we can see that all material and psychological phenomena are evolving and changing in every moment. Then we see the substance of reality, and our insight into impermanence and nonself will prevent us from being caught in illusion. The fifth century B.C.E. Greek philosopher Heraclitus reached a similar conclusion when he observed that the water of the river he had swum in five minutes earlier was not the same water he was standing in five minutes later. “We can never step into the same river twice,” he said. Heraclitus’ observation was an insight into impermanence and nonself, although he did not use those terms.” - *Understanding Our Mind* (2001), p252.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"Impermanence is, in fact, just another name for perfection. Leaves fall; debris and garbage accumulate; out of the debris come flowers, greenery, things that we think are lovely. Destruction is necessary. A good forest fire is necessary. The way we interfere with forest fires may not be a good thing. Without destruction, there could be no new life; and the wonder of life, the constant

change, could not be. We must live and die. And this process is perfection itself." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p110.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"I am impermanence itself in a rapidly changing human form that appears solid. I fear to see what I am: an ever-changing energy field. I don't want to be that. So good practice is about fear. Fear takes the form of constantly thinking, speculating, analyzing, fantasizing. With all that activity we create a cloudy cover to keep ourselves safe in a make-believe practice. True practice is not safe; it's anything but safe. But we don't like that..." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p114.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...on the average, every seven years all the atoms in our body have come and gone, replaced by others from outside of us. This in itself is interesting to think about. What am I if little of the substance of my body is the same in any decade of my life? One way this exchange of matter and energy happens is through breathing. With each breath, we exchange carbon dioxide molecules from inside our bodies for oxygen molecules from the surrounding air. Waste disposal with each outbreath, renewal with each inbreath." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p47

Parmenides, Mindfulness, and Non-Death

Parmenides of Elea (515-430 BC)

- Being and not being.
- Reality as object of its own thought.

"How could *what is* perish? How could it have come to be? For if it came into being, it is not; nor is it if ever it is going to be. Thus coming into being is extinguished, and destruction unknown." – *On Nature* (5th Century BC), B 8.20–22, (transcribed in *The Study of Philosophy* (2015), p19).

- Daoist Sage LaoZi (5th Century BC):

"From the time of old until now, its name (manifestations) ever remains. By which we may see the beginning of all things. How do I know that the beginning of all things are so? Through this (Tao)." – *Tao-te Ching (The Way of Lao-Tzu)*, 21. (Wing-Tsit Chan Translation (1963))

老子:

“自古及今，其名不去，以閱衆甫。吾何以知衆甫之狀哉？以此。”

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master Eihei Dōgen (1200-1253):

"...do not hang onto 'beginning, middle, and end'. By not being hindered by 'arising and disappearing', you can make arisings and disappearings arise and disappear. They arise within Unbounded Space and they disappear within Unbounded Space; they arise within that which is out of focus and they disappear within that which is out of focus; they arise within flowering and they disappear within flowering, and so on..." - *Shobogenzo* (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p557.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh:

"Most people view themselves as waves and forget that they are also water. They are used to living in birth-and-death, and they forget about no-birth-and-no-death. A wave also lives the life of water, and we also live the life of no-birth-no-death. We only need to know that we are living the life of no-birth-no-death. All is in the word "know." To know is to realize. Realization is mindfulness. All the work of meditation is aimed at awakening us in order to know one and only one thing: birth and death can never touch us in any way whatsoever." - *The Sun My Heart* (1988), p133.

- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"Seeing with eyes of wholeness means recognizing that nothing occurs in isolation, that problems need to be seen within the context of whole systems. Seeing in this way, we can perceive the intrinsic web of interconnectedness underlying our experience and merge with it. Seeing in this way is healing. It helps us to acknowledge the ways in which we are extraordinary and miraculous, without losing sight of the ways in which we are simultaneously nothing special, just part of a larger whole unfolding, waves on the sea, rising up and falling back in brief moments we call life spans." - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p166-167.

- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"Your ears *already* hear, your eyes *already* see, your body *already* feels. It is only when we turn them into concepts that we *de facto* sever them from the body of our being, which by its very nature is undivided, already whole, already complete, already sentient, already awake." - *Coming To Our Senses* (2006), p66.

Anaxagoras, Mindfulness, and Non-Separation

[Anaxagoras of Clazomenae](#) (500-428)

- Infinitely mixed matter 'field theory'.
- Teleological universe.

“All things were originally together until Mind came and set them in order” - Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd Century AD), Book I, Prologue, 4, (translated by R.D. Hicks, 1972).

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Meditators who realize the interpenetration and interbeing of things also undergo a change in themselves. Former concepts of "one's self" and "objects" dissolve and they see themselves in everything and all things in themselves. This transformation is the primary goal of meditation. [...] The notion of inter-origination (paratantra) is very close to living reality. It annihilates dualistic concepts, one/many, inside/outside, time/space, mind/matter, and so forth, which the mind uses to confine, divide, and shape reality." - [The Sun My Heart](#) (1988), p88.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"One whole being is not an accumulation of everything. It is impossible to divide one whole existence into parts. It is always here and always working. This is enlightenment. So there actually is no particular practice. In the sutra it says, "There are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body or mind. . . ." This "no mind" is Zen mind, which includes everything." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p114-115.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Nothing is separate and isolated. There is no absolute, end-of-the-line, the-buck-stops-here root cause. If someone hits you with a stick, you don't get angry at the stick or at the arm that swung it; you get angry at the person attached to the arm. But if you look a little deeper, you can't find a satisfactory root cause or place for your anger even in the person, who literally doesn't know what he is doing and is therefore out of his mind at that moment." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p48.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The practice of yoga is the practice of yoking together or unifying body and mind, which really means penetrating into the experience of them not being separate in the first place. You can also think of it as experiencing the unity or connectedness between the individual and the universe as a whole" - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p101.

Empedocles, Mindfulness, and Love

Empedocles of Agrigentum (495-435 BC)

- Four elemental ‘roots’ of material reality.
- Forces of love vs. strife.
- Ox-progeny and biological evolution.

“...these (elements) never cease changing place continually, now being all united by Love into one, now each borne apart by the hatred engendered of Strife, until they are brought together in the unity of the all, and become subject to it.” – *Fragments and Commentary* (5th Century BC), 167, (translated by Arthur Fairbanks in *The First Philosophers of Greece*, 1898).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

“He who knows does not speak; He who speaks does not know. Fill up its apertures, Close its doors, Dull its edges, Untie its tangles, Soften its light, Submerge its turmoil, - This is the Mystic Unity. Then love and hatred cannot touch him. Profit and loss cannot reach him. Honor and disgrace cannot affect him. Therefore is he always the honored one of the world.” – *The Wisdom of Laotse*, 56, (Lin Yutan Translation (1994)).

老子:

“知者不言，言者不知。塞其兑，閉其門，挫其銳，解其分，和其光，同其塵，是謂玄同。故不可得而親，不可得而踈；不可得而利，不可得而害；不可得而貴，不可得而賤。故為天下貴。”

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"...this mind isn't somewhere outside the material body of four elements. Without this mind we can't move. The body has no awareness. Like a plant or stone, the body has no nature. So how does it move? It's the mind that moves." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#).

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"The kind of love that the Buddha teaches is a love that is very wide and inclusive. Thanks to his great love, the Buddha could embrace the whole world. When Siddhartha became a Buddha, he didn't cease to be a person who needed to give and receive love." - [Fidelity: How to Create a Loving Relationship That Lasts](#) (2011), p9.

- Biologist, Neuroscientist, and Buddhist Philosopher [Francisco Varela](#):

" Biology... shows us that we can expand our cognitive domain. This arises through a novel experience brought forth through reasoning, through the encounter with a stranger, or, more directly, through the expression of a biological interpersonal congruence that lets us see the other person and open up for him room for existence beside us. This act is called *love*, or, if we prefer a milder expression, the acceptance of the other person beside us in our daily living. This is the biological foundation of social phenomena: without love, without acceptance of others living beside us, there is no social process and, therefore, no humanness." – [The Tree of Knowledge](#) (1998), p246.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Observe the colors and textures of your food. Contemplate where this food comes from and how it was grown or made. [...] Can you see the natural elements, the sunlight and the rain, in your vegetables and fruits and grains?" - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p408.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The energy that feeds this ongoing connectedness, of course, is love." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p224.

Zeno of Elea, Mindfulness, and Paradoxes

Zeno of Elea (495-435 BC)

- Support for Parmenides.
- Infinite regress.
- Conceptual paradoxes.

"The hypothesis of the many, if examined sufficiently in detail, leads to even more ridiculous results than the hypothesis of the One." – Plato, *Parmenides* (4th Century BC), 128 b, (translated by F. C. Copleston in *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. I : Greece and Rome (1953), p54).

- Daoist Sage LaoZi (5th Century BC):

“Looked at, but cannot be seen - That is called the Invisible (yi). Listened to, but cannot be heard - That is called the Inaudible (hsi). Grasped at, but cannot be touched - That is called the Intangible (wei). These three elude our inquiries And hence blend and become One. Not by its rising, is there light, Nor by its sinking, is there darkness. Unceasing, continuous, It cannot be defined, And reverts again to the realm of nothingness. That is why it is called the Form of the Formless, The Image of Nothingness. That is why it is called the Elusive: Meet it and you do not see its face; Follow it and you do not see its back.” – *The Wisdom of Laotse*, 14, (Lin Yutan Translation (1994)).

老子:

“視之不見，名曰夷；聽之不聞，名曰希；搏之不得，名曰微。此三者不可致詰，故混而為一。其上不皦，其下不昧。繩繩不可名，復歸於無物。是謂無狀之狀，無物之象，是謂惚恍。迎之不見其首，隨之不見其後。”

- The First Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma (early 5th century AD):

"...focusing on a mind, a power, an understanding, or a view is impossible for a Buddha. A Buddha isn't one sided. The nature of his mind is basically empty, neither pure nor impure. He's free of practice and realization. He's free of cause and effect." - *Bloodstream Sermon* (Red Pine Translation).

- Vietnamese Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh:

"...the separation of one and many is a measurement made by perception. As long as we are prisoners of that separation, we are prisoners of the arithmetical paradox. We can only be free when we see the interbeing and interpenetration of everything. Reality is neither one nor many." - *The Sun My Heart* (1988), p104.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher Shunryu Suzuki:

"You are independent, and I am independent; each exists in a different moment. But this does not mean we are quite different beings. We are actually one and the same being. We are the same, and yet different. It is very paradoxical, but actually it is so. Because we are independent beings, each one of us is a complete flashing into the vast phenomenal world. When I am sitting, there is no other person, but this does not mean I ignore you, I am completely one with every existence in the phenomenal world." - *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (1995), p106.

- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"...ultimately meditation...has no goal other than for you to be yourself. The irony is that you already are. This sounds paradoxical and a little crazy. Yet this paradox and craziness may be pointing you toward a new way of seeing yourself, one in which you are trying less and being more." - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p37.

Protagoras, Mindfulness, and Measuring

[Protagoras of Abdera](#) (490-420 BC)

- Agnosticism.
- Doctrine eliminates objectivity.

"Man is the measure of all things." – *Fragment I* (5th Century BC), 1, (translated by F. C. Copleston in *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. I : Greece and Rome (1953), p87).

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Rightness or wrongness is not objective. It is subjective. Relatively speaking, there are right views and there are wrong views. But if we look more deeply, we see that all views are wrong views. No view can ever be the truth. It is just from one point; that is why it is called a "point of view." If we go to another point, we will see things differently and realize that our first view was not entirely right. Buddhism is not a collection of views. It is a practice to help us eliminate wrong views. The quality of our views can always be improved. From the viewpoint of ultimate reality, Right View is the absence of all views." - [The Heart of Buddha's Teaching](#) (2008), p56.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"When we say something, our subjective intention or situation is always involved. So there is no perfect word; some distortion is always present in a statement. [...] Through the study of Buddhism, you will understand your human nature, your intellectual faculty, and the truth present in your human activity. And you can take this human nature of yours into consideration when you seek to understand reality." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p87.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"According to David Bohm, a theoretical physicist whose work involves exploring wholeness as a fundamental property of nature, the words medicine and meditation come from the Latin *mederi*, which means "to cure." *Mederi* itself derives from an earlier Indo-European root meaning "to measure." [...] ...the concept of "measure" has another, more Platonic meaning. This is the notion that all things have, in Bohm's words, their own "right inward measure" that makes them what they are, that gives them their properties. "Medicine," seen in this light, is basically the means by which right inward measure is restored when it is disturbed by disease or illness or injury. "Meditation," by the same token, is the process of perceiving directly the right inward measure of one's own being through careful, non-judgmental self-observation. Right inward measure in this context is another way of saying wholeness." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p163.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...focusing on the breath at your belly is so useful. Your belly is literally the "center of gravity" of your body, far below the head and the turmoil of your thinking mind. For this reason we "befriend" the belly right from the beginning as an ally in establishing calmness and awareness. Any moment during the day that you bring your attention to your breathing in this way becomes a moment of meditative awareness. It is an effective way of tuning in to the present and orienting yourself to your body and to what you are feeling, not only while you are "meditating" but also while you are going about living your life." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p5.

- Oxford University Psychiatry [Professor Mark Williams](#):

"...deepen your capacity to see the mind's reactivity by learning to pay mindful attention to the body. Here, you can feel the first stirrings of emotionally charged thoughts. Instead of your body acting as an amplifier, it can become a sensitive emotional radar; an early warning system that

alerts you to unhappiness, anxiety and stress almost before they arise.” - [*Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world*](#) (2011), p95.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: The Buddha, Mindfulness, and Awakening

[Siddhārtha Gautama Buddha](#) (~480 – 400 BC)

- Rational reflection; clear-headed experience of the world and oneself.
- Rejects so-called unanswered questions.
- The Four Noble Truths concerning suffering.
- Mindful experience essential to proper understanding of truth.

“Like a blue lotus, rising up, unsmearred by water, unsmearred am I by the world, and so, brahman, I'm awake.” - [Dona Sutta](#), (translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

- Daoist Sage [Zhuangzi](#) (3rd Century BC):

“...when he awakes, he knows that he has been dreaming. Only after he is totally awakened does he realize that all was a grand dream. All the while, the fool thinks that he himself is awake, seemingly aware of everything: who is the lord, who is the shepherd, how stupid! Confucius and you are both dreaming, and I too am dreaming when I say that you are dreaming. These words seem to be a paradox, but after ten thousand generations there might appear a sage who knows how to explain them...” – Chapter 2 (The Adjustment of Controversies - 齊物論), [paragraph 12](#), (translated by Wang Rongpei (Library of Chinese Classics: 1999), p37).

“If we resign ourselves to the natural transformation, we shall enter the boundless realm of nature and Tao.” – Chapter 6 (The Great and Most Honoured Master - 大宗師), [paragraph 7](#), p109.

- Ancient Greek philosopher [Socrates](#) (469-399 BC):

"...when a man's pulse is healthy and temperate, and when before going to sleep he has awakened his rational powers, and fed them on noble thoughts and enquiries, collecting himself in meditation; after having first indulged his appetites neither too much nor too little, but just enough to lay them to sleep, and prevent them and their enjoyments and pains from interfering with the higher principle— which he leaves in the solitude of pure abstraction, free to contemplate and aspire to the knowledge of the unknown, whether in past, present, or future: when again he has allayed the passionate element, if he has a quarrel against any one—I say, when, after pacifying the two irrational principles, he rouses up the third, which is reason, before he takes his rest, then, as you know, he attains truth most nearly, and is least likely to be the sport of fantastic and lawless visions.” – Plato, *The Republic* (~380 BC), Book 9, (translated by Benjamin Jowett in *The Portable Plato* (Penguin Books: 1977)).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"Don't cling to appearances, and you'll break through all barriers. A moment's hesitation and you'll be under the spell of devils. Your real body is pure and impervious. But because of delusions you're unaware of it. And because of this you suffer karma in vain. Wherever you find delight, you find bondage. But once you awaken to your original body and mind," you're no longer bound by attachments." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine Translation).

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#):

"...the Tathagata has helped us to trust and awaken by inclining us towards our mind, by inclining us towards our body, by inclining us towards the whole universe, by inclining us towards the Buddhas and Ancestors, by inclining us towards all thoughts and things, by inclining us towards the True Form of all things, by inclining us towards skin and flesh, bones and marrow, and by inclining us towards birth and death, coming and going. These instances of

trusting and awakening are 'seeing Buddha'. Thus, we know that we can encounter a Buddha with the eyes of the mind and that we can see Buddha with the Eye of trusting and awakening." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p710.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"To reach the truth is not to accumulate knowledge, but to awaken to the heart of reality. Reality reveals itself complete and whole at the moment of awakening. In the light of this awakening, nothing is added and nothing is lost; but emotions that are based on concepts can no longer affect a man. If Bodhidharma is the ideal man, it is because his image is that of a hero who has broken the chains of illusion that enclose man in the world of emotions. The hammer that is used to break these chains is the practice of Zen. The moment of awakening is marked by an outburst of laughter. But this is not the laughter of someone who suddenly acquires a great fortune; neither is it the laughter of one who has won a victory. It is, rather, the laughter of one who, after having painfully searched for something for a long time, finds it one morning in the pocket of his coat." - *Zen Keys* (1974), p41.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"Suzuki Roshi once said, 'From the ordinary point of view, to be enlightened would seem pretty dull.' There's no drama in it whatsoever; there's just simply being here. We differ in our ability to be with our perception. But we all have the capacity. It may manifest at a slightly different rate, but we all have the capacity. Since we're human, we can be awake, and we can always increase the amount of time we are awake. When we're awake, the moment transforms: it begins to feel good; it gives us power to do the next thing. This capacity can always increase. We must be aware of what we are this second. If we're angry, we have to know this. We have to feel it. We have to see what thoughts are involved. If we're bored, this is definitely something to investigate. If we're discouraged, we need to notice this. If we're caught up in judgment or self-righteousness, we need to notice this. If we don't see these things, they rule the roost." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p238.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"As the story goes, someone approached the Buddha, who was considered a great sage and teacher, and asked him, 'Are you a god?', or something to that effect, to which he replied, 'No, I am awake.' The essence of mindfulness practice is to work at waking up from the self-imposed half sleep of unawareness in which we are so often immersed." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p365.

- Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Ronald D. Siegel:

"After growing up sheltered in the palace he [Siddhārtha Gautama] went on several unauthorized chariot rides and saw for the first time old age, illness, and death. These experiences were so disturbing that they inspired him to leave the palace to seek psychological awakening—to find a way to live in light of these realities. In a way, most of us play out the same story. As young people we don't fully grasp the reality of old age, illness, and death; but as we get older, they become clearer. Just as mindfulness practice helped the Buddha awaken, it can help us embrace the inevitable changes in our life and live more richly and fully with them." - [The Mindfulness Solution](#) (2010), p287-288.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Mo Tzu, Mindfulness, and The Importance of Love

Mo Tzu (470 – 391 BC)

- Impartial concern ('universal love').
- Defending weak states against aggressors.
- Social values imposed with laws and punishments.

“As he loves only his own person and not others, the robber does violence to others to profit himself. And the reason for all this is want of love.” – [Book 4](#), Universal Love I, 3, (translation by W. P. Mei).

墨子：“賊愛其身不愛人，故賊人以利其身。此何也？皆起不相愛”

- [The Buddha](#) (~5th Century BC):

“Wishing: In gladness and in safety, May all beings be at ease. ... Let none deceive another, Or despise any being in any state. Let none through anger or ill-will Wish harm upon another. Even as a mother protects with her life Her child, her only child, So with a boundless heart Should one cherish all living beings; Radiating kindness over the entire world: Spreading upwards to the skies, And downwards to the depths; Outwards and unbounded, Freed from hatred and ill-will. Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down Free from drowsiness, One should sustain this recollection. This is said to be the sublime abiding.” - [Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness](#) (translated by The Amaravati Sangha (2004)).

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"Someone may say, "I don't need it. I'm suffering too much. I don't know why. Right now to get out of the suffering is the most important thing for me. You can't help me, nothing can help me." When you hear this, you should be like Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva—you should become like the one who is suffering, and you should suffer as that person suffers. Because of your innate love, your instinctive love, you share the suffering. That is love in its true sense." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p45-46.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"It is indeed a radical act of love just to sit down and be quiet for a time by yourself. Sitting down in this way is actually a way to take a stand in your life as it is right now, however it is. We take a stand here and now, by sitting down, and by sitting up. It is the challenge of this era to stay sane in an increasingly insane world. How are we ever going to do it if we are continually caught up in the chatter of our own minds and the bewilderment of feeling lost or isolated or out of touch with what it all means and with who we really are when all the doing and accomplishing is sensed as being in some way empty, and we realize how short life is? Ultimately, it is only love that can give us insight into what is real and what is important. And so, a radical act of love makes sense—love for life and for the emergence of one's truest self." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p68.

- Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Ronald D. Siegel:

"It's remarkable that any kids grow up to like themselves. What balances our constant disapproval is love and the ability to separate the deed from the person. If we can maintain a deep sense of love and acceptance while working to correct our kids' behavior, the chances of their hating themselves are drastically reduced. It also helps to be really present when we read stories, play checkers, toss a ball, and cuddle. Regular mindfulness practice, including particularly the *Loving-Kindness Meditation*... and the *Breathing Together* practice... helps us do this." - [The Mindfulness Solution](#) (2010), p241.

Democritus, Mindfulness, and Atomic Existence

Democritus of Abdera (460-360 BC)

- Observable plurality.
- Eternal motion.
- Enlightened hedonism.
- Social cohesion and law.

" **The first principles of the universe are atoms and empty space; everything else is merely thought to exist.**" – Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd Century AD), Book IX, Chapter 7, 44, (translated by R.D. Hicks, 1972).

- The Buddha (~5th Century BC):

“...any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every form is to be seen as it actually is with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.' There are these five properties, Rahula. Which five? The earth property, the water property, the fire property, the wind property, & the space property.” - *Maha-Rahulovada Sutta* (translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2006)).

- The First Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma (early 5th century AD):

"If You don't see your own miraculously aware nature, you'll never find a Buddha even if you break your body into atoms. The Buddha is your real body, your original mind. This mind has no form or characteristics, no cause or effect, no tendons or bones. It's like space. You can't hold it. Its not the mind of materialists or nihilists. Except for a Tathagata, no one else- no mortal, no deluded being-can fathom it." - *Bloodstream Sermon*.

- American Zen teacher Charlotte Joko Beck:

"At a deeper level we are just atoms and atomic particles moving at enormous speed." - *Everyday Zen* (1997), p163.

- Mindfulness Teacher Shamash Alidina:

"You are not your body. Your body is made up of hundreds of millions of cells. Cells are dying and re-forming all the time. The cells are made up of atoms that are indistinguishable and are exchanging with all the atoms around you as you breathe, eat and excrete." - *Mindfulness for Dummies* (2010), p30.

- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"Someone once calculated that, on the average, every seven years all the atoms in our body have come and gone, replaced by others from outside of us. This in itself is interesting to think about. What am I if little of the substance of my body is the same in any decade of my life?" - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p47



One of the first representations of the Buddha, 1st-2nd century CE, Gandhara (Modern Pakistan/Aghansitan border region). Standing Buddha (Tokyo National Museum). Carved in the Greco-Buddhist style – meaning that his face and robes are shaped along traditional Greek guidelines.

The Buddha told his disciplines to never show him in human form. The heirs of Greek culture in northern India were the first people to make statues of the Buddha.

Mindfulness and Traditional Western Philosophy Part 2: The Ancient Greek Socratics

Socrates, Mindfulness, and Not Knowing

[Socrates](#) (469-399 BC)

- Inductive arguments.
- Virtue is wisdom.
- Sophistry.
- Co-operative critical inquiry.

"... I am certainly wiser than this man. It is only too likely that neither of us has any knowledge to boast of; but he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite conscious of my ignorance. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know." - Plato, *Apology* (4th Century BC), 21d, (translated by H. Tredennick and H. Tarrant, in Plato: The Last Days of Socrates (1993), p42)

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

“Knowing that one knows is best; Thinking that one knows when one does not know is sickness. Only when one becomes sick of this sickness can one be free from sickness. The Sage is never sick; because he is sick of this sickness, therefore he is not sick. ” – *Tao Te Ching*, 71. (Ch'u Ta-Kao Translation (Mandala Books: 1982)).

老子:

“知不知上；不知知病。夫唯病病，是以不病。聖人不病，以其病病，是以不病。”

- Chinese Philosopher [Confucius](#) (551–479 BC):

“The Master said, "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; - this is knowledge." - *The Analects of Confucius*, 2-17, (Arthur Waley translation).

子曰：「由！誨女知之乎？知之為知之，不知為不知，是知也。」

- Daoist Sage [ZhuangZi](#) (3rd Century BC):

“The Tao that is manifest is not Tao; the words that are used in arguments do not suffice; humaneness that is constantly exercised does not work; integrity that is openly professed cannot be believed; courage that is violent will not succeed. The above five cases are like excessive roundness tending to be square. Therefore, one who knows to stop at where he does not know has attained perfection. Who knows an argument beyond words or Tao beyond description? If a man knows it, he may be called the Reservoir of Heaven.” – Chapter 2 (The Adjustment of Controversies - 齊物論), [paragraph 10](#), (translated by Wang Rongpei (Library of Chinese Classics: 1999), p37).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"...we know that delusion and awakening are one road, that stupidity and wisdom are not different. In a place of namelessness they mistakenly think of erecting names, and because of these names, is and is-not are born. In a place without principles they mistakenly think of creating principles, and because of these principles, disputations flourish therein. Illusionary transformations are not real, so who is right and who wrong? Falsity is unreal, so what exists and what does not exist? One should know that obtaining is having nothing to obtain and losing is having nothing to lose. Having not yet been able to talk with you, I have composed these lines,

but how can one discuss the dark purport?" –*Text No.4: Second Letter* (translated by J. L. Broughton in *The Bodhidharma Anthology* (1999), p14).

- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):

"The emperor said, "Who is facing me?" Bodhidharma said, "I don't know."'" - p15.

- Korean Zen teacher [Seung Sahn](#) (1927-2004):

"Many centuries ago, the Greek philosopher Socrates used to walk through the streets and marketplaces of Athens, teaching his students. He would say to them, "You must understand yourself! You must understand yourself! You must understand yourself." Then one day a student said, "Sir, you always say we must understand ourselves. But do you understand your self?" "No, I don't know myself," Socrates replied. "But I understand this 'don't know.'" This is very interesting teaching. Buddhist practice points at the same experience...[...] One night, Siddhartha left the palace. He left his family, his beautiful wife, and his infant child, cut off all his hair, and became a monk. Then he went to the mountains. For six years he practiced very, very hard. "What am I? Don't know . . ." He courageously kept this question with one-pointed determination. Then one morning, while sitting in meditation under the Bodhi tree, he saw the morning star in the eastern sky. At that moment—BOOM!—Siddhartha and this star completely became one." - [The Compass of Zen](#) (2012), p13-14.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"We will think, "Now it is raining, but we don't know what will happen in the next moment. By the time we go out it may be a beautiful day, or a stormy day. Since we don't know, let's appreciate the sound of the rain now." This kind of attitude is the right attitude. If you understand yourself as a temporal embodiment of the truth, you will have no difficulty whatsoever. You will appreciate your surroundings, and you will appreciate yourself as a wonderful part of Buddha's great activity, even in the midst of difficulties. This is our way of life." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p112-113.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Contemplating "What is my Way?" is an excellent element to inject into our meditation practice. We don't have to come up with answers, nor think that there has to be one particular answer. Better not to think at all. Instead, only persist in asking the question, letting any answers that formulate just come of themselves and go of themselves. As with everything else in the meditation practice, we just watch, listen, note, let be, let go, and keep generating the question, "What is my Way?", "What is my path?", "Who am I?". The intention here is to remain open to not knowing, perhaps allowing yourself to come to the point of admitting, "I don't know," and then experimenting with relaxing a bit into this not knowing instead of condemning yourself for it. After all, in this moment, it may be an accurate statement of how things are for you. Inquiry of this kind itself leads to openings, to new understandings and visions and actions. Inquiry takes on a life of its own after a while. It permeates the pores of your being and breathes new vitality, vibrancy, and grace into the bland, the humdrum, the routine. Inquiry will wind up "doing you" rather than you doing it. This is a good way to find the path that lies closest to your heart." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p132.

Antisthenes, Mindfulness, and Blind Faith

[Antisthenes](#) (445-365 BC)

- Relationships between names and things.

"[What learning is the most necessary?] How to get rid of having anything to unlearn." - Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd Century AD), Book VI, Chapter 1, 7, (translated by R.D. Hicks, 1972).

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"The mind of the beginner is empty, free of the habits of the expert, ready to accept, to doubt, and open to all the possibilities. It is the kind of mind which can see things as they are, which step by step and in a flash can realize the original nature of everything." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p13-14.

- Theravada Buddhist Monk Bhante Henepola Gunaratana:

"Our human perceptual habits are remarkably stupid in some ways. We tune out 99% of all the sensory stimuli we actually receive, and we solidify the remainder into discrete mental objects. Then we react to those mental objects in programmed habitual ways. [...] That which has been learned can be unlearned. The first step is to realize what you are doing, as you are doing it, and stand back and quietly watch." - [Mindfulness in Plain English](#) (2002), p23-24.

- [Zen Flesh, Zen Bones](#) (1998):

"Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!". "Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?" - p19.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"To cultivate the healing power of mindfulness requires much more than mechanically following a recipe or a set of instructions. No real process of learning is like that. It is only when the mind is open and receptive that learning and seeing and change can occur." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p31.

Plato (1), Mindfulness, and Essence

[Plato](#) (428-347 BC)

- Dim recollections of Forms (unambiguous examples of phenomena).
- Cave of ignorance.
- Philosopher kings.

"...essence or true existence - whether essence of equality, beauty, or anything else ... having the same simple, self-existent and unchanging forms, not admitting of variation at all ... must be always the same..." – *Phaedo* (4th Century BC), (translated by Benjamin Jowett (2005), p55).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):
"Its names vary but not its essence. Buddhas vary too, but none leaves his own mind. The mind's capacity is limitless, and its manifestations are inexhaustible. Seeing forms with your eyes, hearing sounds with your ears, smelling odors with your nose, tasting flavors with your tongue, every movement or state is your entire mind. At every moment, where language can't go, that's your mind." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine Translation).
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
"Even though the ways we feel are different, they are not really different, in essence they are the same. This is the true understanding transmitted from Buddha to us." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p121.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"If we do not see the essence of something, our seeing still has leaks." - [Understanding Our Mind](#) (2001), p95.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"...it is important to emphasize that paying attention does not mean "thinking about." It means directly perceiving what you are attending to. Your thoughts will only be a part of your experience. They may or may not be an important part. Awareness means seeing the whole, perceiving the entire content and context of each moment. We can never grasp this entirely through thinking. But we can perceive it in its essence if we get beyond our thinking, to direct seeing, direct hearing, direct feeling." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p438.

Plato (2), Mindfulness, and Laws

[Plato](#) (428-347 BC)

- Dim recollections of Forms (unambiguous examples of phenomena).
- Cave of ignorance.
- Philosopher kings.

"Laws are made to instruct the good, and in the hope that there may be no need of them; also to control the bad, whose hardness of heart will not be hindered from crime." – *Laws* (4th Century BC), (translated by Benjamin Jowett in *Dialogues of Plato* (2010), p128).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

"If you want to be a great leader, you must learn to follow the Tao. Stop trying to control. Let go of fixed plans and concepts, and the world will govern itself. The more prohibitions you have, the less virtuous people will be. The more weapons you have, the less secure people will be. The more subsidies you have, the less self-reliant people will be. Therefore the Master says: I let go of the law, and people become honest. I let go of economics, and people become prosperous. I let go of religion, and people become serene. I let go of all desire for the common good, and the good becomes common as grass." – *Tao Te Ching*, 57, (Stephen Mitchell translation).

老子:

“以正治國，以奇用兵，以無事取天下。吾何以知其然哉？以此：天下多忌諱，而民彌貧；民多利器，國家滋昏；人多伎巧，奇物滋起；法令滋彰，盜賊多有。故聖人云：我無為，而民自化；我好靜，而民自正；我無事，而民自富；我無欲，而民自樸。”

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"If you really want to find the Way, don't hold on to anything. [...] Understanding comes naturally. You don't have to make any effort." - *Bloodstream Sermon*.

- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):

"Zen master Shishuang entered the hall and addressed the monks, saying, "Each of you has what is fundamental. There's no point searching for it. It's not to be found in right or wrong, nor in anything you can talk about. The entire source of the teaching of a lifetime, capable of setting people's lives to order, all comes down to this very moment..." - p211.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"...as we pay attention to our thoughts and the tension in our body, we begin to see more clearly how to act." - *Nothing Special - Living Zen* (1995), p63.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"In practicing mindfulness, you are practicing taking responsibility for being yourself and learning to listen to and trust your own being. The more you cultivate this trust in your own being, the easier you will find it will be to trust other people more and to see their basic goodness as well." - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p36-37.

- Mindfulness Teacher Shamash Alidina:

"Using the body as an emotional gauge. Practising the body scan and becoming increasingly aware of your body enables you to become more sensitive to how your body reacts in different situations throughout the day. If you become stressed or nervous about something, you may be able to notice this earlier through the body, and so be able to make an informed choice as to what to do next." - *Mindfulness for Dummies* (2010), p94.

Diogenes, Mindfulness, and Self-Taught Poverty

Diogenes of Sinope (404-323 BC)

- Lived an impoverished life on the streets.
- Mischievous.
- Distinguished between virtue and vice.
- The Cynics

"Self-taught poverty is a help toward philosophy, for the things which philosophy attempts to teach by reasoning, poverty forces us to practice." - Stobaeus, *Florilegium* (5th Century AD) iv. 32a. 11.

- Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings (2000):
"As told in the Platform Sutra, Huineng [638–713 AD] lost his father at the age of three and was forced as a youngster to support his widowed mother by selling firewood in ancient Guangzhou City. He is said to have gained enlightenment instantly as he overheard someone reciting the Diamond Sutra." – p43.
- Zen Hermit Hanshan (9th Century AD):
"A mountain man lives under thatch
before his gate carts and horses are rare
the forest is quiet but partial to birds
the streams are wide and home to fish
with his son he picks wild fruit
with his wife he hoes between rocks
what does he have at home
a shelf full of nothing but books." – *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain* (2000, Red Pine Translation), No.31, p57.
寒山子：
“茅栋野人居，门前车马疏。 林幽偏聚鸟，溪阔本藏鱼。
山果携儿摘，皋田共妇锄。 家中何所有，惟有一床书。”
- American Zen teacher Charlotte Joko Beck:
"Life presents us with lessons all the time. It's better if we can learn each one, including the small ones. [...] When we refuse to learn from the smaller problems, we're forced to confront bigger ones. Practice is about learning from each thing as it comes up, so that when bigger issues confront us, we're more able to handle them." - *Nothing Special - Living Zen* (1995), p65-66.
- Mindfulness teacher Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:
"A back problem almost forces you to be mindful because the results of being unaware of your body and what you are doing can be so debilitating. In order to work systematically around the edges of your limitations, in order to get stronger and healthier and to be able to do at least some of the things you want to do, mindfulness becomes absolutely essential." - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p301.
- Oxford University Psychiatry Professor Mark Williams:
"...we either run out of steam or the difficulty we're facing is truly intractable. When we reach this fork in the road we have two options. We can carry on and pretend that nothing is wrong (and lead an increasingly miserable existence), or we can embrace a different way of relating to

ourselves and the world. This different approach is one of acceptance of ourselves and of whatever is troubling us. It means turning towards it, befriending it, even when – indeed, especially when – we don't like it or it scares us." – [*Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world*](#) (2011), p163.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"There is an art to facing difficulties in ways that lead to effective solutions and to inner peace and harmony. [...] You will have to learn how to handle yourself under all kinds of stressful conditions, not just when the weather is sunny and the wind blowing exactly the way you want it to." - [*Full Catastrophe Living*](#) (2005), p3.

Aristotle, Mindfulness, and Knowing Oneself

[Aristotle](#) (382-322 BC)

- Intellectual contemplation is a virtuous life.
- Names bring essences.
- Metaphysical account of substances, species, and essence.
- Thoughts and perceptions give rise to substances and kinds.

"...we do not regard any of the senses as wisdom; yet surely these give the most authoritative knowledge of particulars." – *Metaphysics*, Book I(A), (translated by Jonathan Barnes in *The Complete Works of Aristotle* – Volume 2 (1995)).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (~5th Century BC):

"Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power." – *Tao Te Ching*, 33, (Stephen Mitchell translation).

老子:

“知人者智，自知者明。勝人者有力，自勝者強。”

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"Dogen said, "To learn something is to know yourself; to study Buddhism is to study yourself." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p120.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"The Zen Master Thuong Chieu wrote, "If the practitioner knows his own mind clearly he will obtain results with little effort. But if he does not know anything about his own mind, all of his effort will be wasted." If you want to know your own mind, there is only one way: to observe and recognize everything about it. This must be done at all times, during your day-to-day life no less than during the hour of meditation." - [The Miracle of Mindfulness](#) (1987), p37-38.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Nisargadatta: By being with yourself... by watching yourself in your daily life with alert interest, with the intention to understand rather than to judge, in full acceptance of whatever may emerge, because it is there, you encourage the deep to come to the surface and enrich your life and consciousness with its captive energies. This is the great work of awareness; it removes obstacles and releases energies by understanding the nature of life and mind." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p10.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Mencius, Mindfulness, and The Good Heart

Mencius (372 – 289 BC)

- Confucian scholar.
- Human nature is good.
- Self-cultivation and nurturing of universal human ethical predispositions.

“Men at their birth are naturally good. Their natures are much the same; their habits become widely different.” – *Three Character Classic*, 1, (translation by Herbert Giles).

三字經: “人之初，性本善。性相近，習相遠。”

- Daoist Sage LaoZi (5th Century BC):

“...in the government of the Sage: He keeps empty their hearts Makes full their bellies, Discourages their ambitions, Strengthens their frames; So that the people may be innocent of knowledge and desires. And the cunning ones shall not presume to interfere. By action without deeds May all live in peace.” – *The Wisdom of LaoTse*, 3, (Lin Yutan Translation (1994)).

老子:

“是以聖人之治，虛其心，實其腹，弱其志，強其骨。常使民無知無欲。使夫1知者不敢為也。為無為，則無不治。”

- The First Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma (early 5th century AD):

"A Buddha doesn't do good or evil. A Buddha isn't energetic or lazy. A Buddha is someone who does nothing, someone who can't even focus his mind on a Buddha. A Buddha isn't a Buddha. Don't think about Buddhas. If you don't see what I'm talking about, you'll ever know your own mind." - *Bloodstream Sermon* (Red Pine translation).

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master Eihei Dōgen (1200-1253):

" The Buddha.. [...] ..then composed the following poem:
*Even a hundred thousand carts filled with pure gold
Brought here as an alms offering
Do not equal an offering of flowers and incense
By one of good heart.*" - *Shobogenzo* (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p998.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh:

“Even those who have a good heart and don't want to hurt others sometimes allow toxic words to escape from their lips. In our mind are seeds of Buddha and also many fetters or internal formations (samyojana). When we say something poisonous, it is usually because of our habit energies.” - *The Heart of Buddha's Teaching* (1999), p83.

- Theravada Buddhist monk Henepola Gunaratana:

"A person may use very harsh words for others, yet sometimes still act with compassion and kindness. In spite of her words, her deeds may be good. The Buddha compared this kind of person to a pond covered by moss. In order to use that water, you must brush the moss aside. Similarly, we sometimes need to ignore a person's superficial weaknesses to find her good heart. But what if a person's words are cruel and her actions too are unkind? Is she rotten through and through? Even a person like this may have a pure heart." – *Mindfulness in Plain English* (2011), p178.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

" If we look at human history, we will find that a good heart has been the key in achieving what the world regards as great accomplishments: in the fields of civil rights, social work, political liberation, and religion, for example. A sincere outlook and motivation do not belong exclusively to the sphere of religion; they can be generated by anyone simply by having genuine concern for others, for one's community, for the poor and the needy. In short, they arise from taking a deep interest in and being concerned about the welfare of the larger community, that is, the welfare of others. Actions resulting from this kind of attitude and motivation will go down in history as good, beneficial, and a service to humanity." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p502.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Chuang Tzu, Mindfulness, and Skillful Flow

[Chuang Tzu](#) (369 – 286 BC)

- Daoist relativist.
- No neutral ground between opposing judgements.
- Spontaneous response as an ideal.

“I do well with my hands and feel it in my heart. I cannot put it into words, but there is indeed some know-how in it.” – [Zhuangzi](#), Chapter 13 (The Way of Heaven - 天道), (translated by Wang Rongpei (Library of Chinese Classics: 1999), p219-221)

莊子: “得之於手而應於心, 口不能言, 有數存焉於其間。”

- [The Buddha](#) (~5th Century BC):

“Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, discerns, 'I am making a long turn,' or when making a short turn discerns, 'I am making a short turn'; in the same way the monk, when breathing in long, discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long'.” - [Satipatthana Sutta](#), A, (translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2008)).

- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):

"Vinaya master Yuan asked Great Pearl, “When you practice the Way, do you use a special skill?” Great Pearl said, “I do.” Yuan asked, “What is it?” Great Pearl said, “When I’m hungry I eat. When I get sleepy I sleep.” Yuan said, “Everyone does these things. Do they not have the same skill as you?” Great Pearl said, “They do not have the same skill.” Yuan said, “Why is it not the same?” Great Pearl then said, “When they eat it can’t be called eating, since they do so [while involved] with a hundred entanglements. When they sleep it can’t be called sleeping, since their mind is beset with worries. Thus they are not the same.” The Vinaya master was silent.” – p97.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"We must have beginner's mind, free from possessing anything, a mind that knows everything is in flowing change. Nothing exists but momentarily in its present form and color. One thing flows into another and cannot be grasped. Before the rain stops we hear a bird. Even under the heavy snow we see snowdrops and some new growth. In the East I saw rhubarb already. In Japan in the spring we eat cucumbers." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p138.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"If we don't taste the fruits of practice, we won't see what practice is and we'll complain: “I don't understand practice; I can't see what it's all about.” The fact is, I can't tell you what it's all about; what I'm trying to explain really cannot be talked about. Fundamentally, practice is different from improving a skill such as tennis or golf; much of such learning can be described in words. But we can't explain our zazen practice in words.” - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p181.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"We already know ourselves by heart in every sense of the word, but we may have forgotten that we do. Arriving at our own door is all in the remembering, the re-remembering, the reclaiming of that which we already are and have too long ignored, having been carried, seemingly, farther and farther from home, yet at the same time, never farther than this breath and this moment. Can we

wake up? Can we come to our senses? Can we be the knowing, and at the same time keep don't know mind and honor the not-knowing?" - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p479.

- Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Ronald D. Siegel:
" These moments of flow involve being mindful *while accomplishing something*. We tend to experience flow when our talents are optimally engaged. Whatever they might be — athletic, interpersonal, artistic, or intellectual — when our abilities are challenged fully but not overwhelmed, we experience flow. It is not surprising that mindfulness practice increases our ability to have flow experiences. By practicing being aware of present experience with acceptance, we engage more fully in everything we do. Research suggests that these moments of flow are themselves fully satisfying. They don't lead us to want more and more or bigger and better experiences." - [The Mindfulness Solution](#) (2010), p321-322.

Pyrrho, Mindfulness, and Suspending Judgement

[Pyrrho](#) (360-270 BC)

The following quotes are from [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) (Fall 1999 Edition):

- "Pyrrho appears to have lived from around 365-360 BC until around 275-270 BC... . We have several reports of philosophers from whom he learned, the most significant (and the most reliable) of which concern his association with Anaxarchus of Abdera. Alongside Anaxarchus (and several other philosophers) he accompanied Alexander the Great on his expedition to India. We are told that in the course of this expedition he encountered some "naked wise men" (gymnosophistai); Diogenes Laertius (9.61) claims that his philosophy developed as a result of this meeting, but it is not clear what basis, if any, he has for this assertion. In any case, after his return to Greece Pyrrho did espouse a philosophy that attracted numerous followers..."
- "...as noted at the outset, Pyrrho was associated with Anaxarchus and was reported to have encountered some unnamed Indian thinkers. The little that we know of Anaxarchus seems to suggest that his philosophy had a good deal in common with Pyrrho's. Diogenes Laertius (9.60) ascribes to him an attitude of apatheia and eukolia, 'freedom from emotion' and 'contentedness'; apatheia is used in some sources to describe Pyrrho's attitude as well, and the combination of the two terms seems to describe something close to the state cultivated by Pyrrho. We also hear from Sextus Empiricus that Anaxarchus "likened existing things to stage-painting and took them to be similar to the things which strike us while asleep or insane" (M 7.88). This has often been taken as an early expression of a form of epistemological scepticism. But it may also be taken as an ontological comment on the insubstantiality of the world around us; it is things (as opposed to our impressions of things) that are assimilated to stage-sets and the contents of dreams and fantasies."
- "We do not know the identity of the "naked wise men" whom Pyrrho met in India, or what they thought. There are reports of other meetings between Indian and Greek thinkers during Alexander's expedition, and these tend to emphasize the Indians' extraordinary impassivity and insensitivity to pain and hardship. It is not unlikely that Pyrrho, too, was impressed by traits of this kind. Though precedents for his ideal of ataraxia exist in earlier Greek philosophy as well, his reported ability to withstand surgery without flinching is exceptional in the Greek context (and quite distinct from anything in later Pyrrhonism); if we believe this story, it is tempting to explain it by way of some form of training from the Indians. Some scholars have sought to establish more detailed links between the thought of the Aristocles passage and various currents in ancient Indian philosophy. But it is not clear how far these similarities really go..."
- Scepticism.
- Indifference to disaster.
- Learned from Indian 'naked philosophers'.
- Envious lives of animals.
- Live by the appearances.

"As to what is true, then, let suspension of judgement be our practice." - Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd Century AD), Book IX, Chapter 11, 84, (translated by R.D. Hicks, 1972).

- The Third Chinese Zen Patriarch [Sēngcàn](#) (5th Century AD):

"The Perfect Way knows no difficulties, Except that it refuses to make preferences; Only when freed from hate and love, It reveals itself fully and without disguise" - [Faith in Mind](#) (translated by D.T.Suzuki), 1st paragraph.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"Without stopping to reflect on our selfish judgment we say "He is good" or "He is bad." But someone who is bad to me is not necessarily always bad. To someone else, he may be a good person. Reflecting in this way we can see things-as-it-is. This is buddha mind." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p30.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"We simply observe every occurrence in our body and mind with our mindfulness, and greet whatever arises without praise, reprimand, or judgment. This is called "mere recognition." Mere recognition does not take sides. The object of recognition is not our enemy. It is none other than ourselves." - [Understanding Our Mind](#) (2001), p357.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"From the time we get up in the morning to the time we go to sleep, we are doing something; we are pushing our boulder all day long. It's our judgment about what we're doing that is the cause of our unhappiness." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p21.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"This habit of categorizing and judging our experience locks us into mechanical reactions that we are not even aware of and that often have no objective basis at all. These judgments tend to dominate our minds, making it difficult for us ever to find any peace within ourselves. It's as if the mind were a yo-yo, going up and down on the string of our own judging thoughts all day long.[...] If we are to find a more effective way of handling the stress in our lives, the first thing we will need to do is to be aware of these automatic judgments so that we can see through our own prejudices and fears and liberate ourselves from their tyranny." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p33-34.

Epicurus, Mindfulness, and Living and Dying

Epicurus (341-270 BC)

- Self-sustaining educated communities of like-minded people.
- Slaves, men and women, rich and poor, all equal.
- Search for happiness and a peaceful mind.

"The art of living well and the art of dying well are one." – *Letter to Menoikeus*, 126-27a, (translation by Russel M. Geer in *Epicurus: Letters, Principal Doctrines, and Vatican Sayings* (1964), p54)

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dōgen](#) (1200-1253):

"...the reason why we need not fear life and death is that even before we have abandoned this life, we are already encountering death in the present. And even before we have abandoned death, we are already encountering life in the present. [...] Life is not one sort of thing, and death is not another, second sort of thing. Never does death stand against life: never does life stand against death." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p499.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"We see that life and death are but two faces of Life and that without both, Life is not possible, just as two sides of a coin are needed for the coin to exist. Only now is it possible to rise above birth and death, and to know how to live and how to die. The Sutra says that the Bodhisattvas who have seen into the reality of interdependence have broken through all narrow views, and have been able to enter birth and death as a person takes a ride in a small boat without being submerged or drowned by the waves of birth and death." - [The Miracle of Mindfulness](#) (1987), p51.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"When we light a stick of incense, if we look at it deeply, the incense will teach us a lot. The smoke will be transformed into a cloud and continue its life as a cloud. The heat of the incense penetrates into our body and becomes part of ourselves. The fragrance penetrates into the room and many other people enjoy the fragrance, and it also becomes part of everything around it. And what is left is the ash, and that ash, we think it's dead, but it's not dead. Ash is also a form of life. Nothing is dying, life is just transforming into something else, and it's just playing a game of hide and seek. When I hold up this flower, you can see the flower in front of me, but if I put it behind my back, you may think it's no longer there — that's how we see birth and death with our ordinary eyes. But the flower is still there, behind me." – [One Buddha Is Not Enough](#) (2013), p145.
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"When you do not realize that you are one with the river, or one with the universe, you have fear. Whether it is separated into drops or not, water is water. Our life and death are the same thing. When we realize this fact we have no fear of death anymore, and we have no actual difficulty in our life." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p94.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"In good practice we are always transforming from being personally centered (caught in our personal reactions) to being more and more a channel for universal energy, this energy that shifts the universe a million times a second. In our phenomenal lives what we see is impermanence; the other side is something else; we won't give it a name. When we practice well we are increasingly a channel for this universal energy, and death loses its sting." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p113.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The funny thing about stopping is that as soon as you do it, here you are. Things get simpler. In some ways, it's as if you died and the world continued on. If you did die, all your responsibilities and obligations would immediately evaporate. Their residue would somehow get worked out without you. No one else can take over your unique agenda. It would die or peter out with you just as it has for everyone else who has ever died. [...] Maybe you don't need to read something just now, or run one more errand. By taking a few moments to "die on purpose" to the rush of time while you are still living, you free yourself to have time for the present. By "dying" now in this way, you actually become more alive now." - [*Wherever You Go, There You Are*](#) (2004), p12.

Zeno of Citium, Mindfulness, and Aversion

[Zeno of Citium](#) (334-262 BC)

- Stoicism.
- Epistemology.
- Political philosophy.
- Law.

"...Zeno's definition of an emotion (which he calls a *pathos*): "a movement of mind contrary to nature and turned away from right reason." – Cicero (~45 BC), *Tusculanae Quaestiones*, Book 4, 11, (translated by Margaret Graver in *Cicero on the Emotions* (2002), p43)

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"There are good and bad tastes, good and bad feelings, agreeable and disagreeable ideas. It is our attachment to them that creates suffering. When you hear something good you will enjoy it. When you hear something bad you will be annoyed or disturbed. But if you understand reality completely you will not be bothered by things." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p75.

- Korean Zen teacher [Seung Sahn](#) (1927-2004):

"...you may suddenly experience extreme anger, or some very strong desire-mind or bad feeling that appears out of a memory. "I don't like this meditation. I want to eat some food now." But you are sitting, and you cannot eat for another half hour, so you suffer. The minutes pass by like hours and days! That is suffering. Maybe you remember someone you don't like, and you fight with them in your mind. [...] Many people attach to their animal-minds of desire and hatred. If you keep this mind, this mind controls you." - [The Compass of Zen](#) (2012), p181.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"If we want a life that's peaceful and productive, what do we need? We need the ability (which we learn slowly and unwillingly) to be the experience of our life as it is. Most of the time I don't want to do that, and I suspect that you don't either." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p118.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"When we are able to recognize and name the seeds of greediness or craving, however subtle, in the mind's constant wanting and pursuing of the things or results that we like, and the seeds of aversion or hatred in our rejecting or maneuvering to avoid the things we don't like, that stops us for a moment and reminds us that such forces really are at work in our own minds to one extent or another almost all the time. It's no exaggeration to say that they have a chronic, viral-like toxicity that prevents us from seeing things as they actually are and mobilizing our true potential." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p57.

Seneca, Mindfulness, and Anger

[Seneca the Younger](#) (Lucius Annaeus Seneca) (4 BC – 65 AD)

- Stoicism.
- Tutor to Roman Emperor Nero.
- Enthusiastic writer.

“So it is with anger, my dear Lucilius; the outcome of a mighty anger is madness, and hence anger should be avoided, not merely that we may escape excess, but that we may have a healthy mind.” - *Moral Letters to Lucilius* (64 AD), (translated by Richard Mott Gummer).

- [The Buddha](#) (~5th Century BC):

"Entangled by the bonds of hate, he who seeks his own happiness by inflicting pain on others, is never delivered from hatred." - [Pakinnakavagga: Miscellaneous](#), (translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

- Daoist Sage [Zhuangzi](#) (3rd Century BC):

“His mind is pure and simple; his spirit is staunch and tireless. In emptiness and indifference, he conforms to the virtue of the heaven.” Therefore, it is said, “Sorrow and joy are deviations from virtue; happiness and anger are violations of Tao; likes and dislikes are offenses against the true nature. Freedom from anxiety and joy is the perfection of virtue; concentration and steadfastness are the perfection of stillness; isolation from worldly things is the perfection of indifference; freedom from antagonism is the perfection of purity.” - Chapter 15 (Ingrained Ideas -刻意), [paragraph 2](#) (translated by Wang Rongpei (Library of Chinese Classics: 1999), p249).

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"Being what we are at each moment means, for example, fully being our anger when we are angry. That kind of anger never hurts anybody because it's total, complete. We really feel this anger, this knot in our stomach, and we're not going to hurt anybody with it. The kind of anger that hurts people is when we smile sweetly and underneath we're seething." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p12.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"We know that when anger is present in us we should refrain from reacting, namely from speaking, or doing anything. To say something, to do something while you are angry is not wise. We are urged to go back to ourselves in order to take good care of our anger. Anger is a zone of energy in us. It is part of us. It is a suffering baby that we have to take care of. The best way to do this is to generate another zone of energy that can embrace and take care of our anger. The second zone of energy is the energy of mindfulness." - [Anger - Wisdom for Cooling the Flames](#) (2001), p67.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Every time we get angry we get better at being angry and reinforce the anger habit. When it is really bad, we say we see red, which means we don't see accurately what is happening at all, and so, in that moment, you could say we have "lost" our mind." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p70-71.

Marcus Aurelius, Mindfulness, and Mental Attitude

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD)

- The last 'good' Roman Emperor.
- Stoicism.

"...the happy life depends on very little. [...] It is wholly possible to become a 'divine man' without anybody's recognition." – *Meditations*, 67, (translated by Martin Hammond (2006), p68).

- Chinese Philosopher Confucius (551–479 BC):

"Eating plain food and drinking water, having only your bent arm as a pillow—certainly there is joy to be found in this!" – *The Analects*, Shu Er (Book 7), 16, (translated by Edward Slingerland (2003), p69).

子曰：“飯疏食飲水，曲肱而枕之，樂亦在其中矣。”

- The Buddha (~5th Century BC):

"Ah, happily do we live without hate amongst the hateful; amidst hateful men we dwell unhating. Ah, happily do we live in good health amongst the ailing; amidst ailing men we dwell in good health. Ah, happily do we live without yearning (for sensual pleasures) amongst those who yearn (for them); amidst those who yearn (for them) we dwell without yearning." – *Dhammapada* (Narada Translation, 1959), Chapter 15, Verse 197-199.

- Zen Hermit Hanshan (9th Century AD):

"When hermits hide from society
most retire to the hills
where green vines veil the slopes
and jade streams echo unbroken
where happiness reigns
and contentment lasts
where pure white lotus minds
aren't stained by the muddy world" – *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain* (2000, Red Pine Translation, p225), No.265.

寒山子：

“隱士遁人間，多向山中眠。青萝疏麓麓，碧涧响联联。
腾腾且安乐，悠悠自清闲。免有染世事，心静如白莲。”

- Vietnamese Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh:

"Our way of acting depends on our way of thinking, and our way of thinking depends on our habit energies. When we recognize this, we only need to say, "Hello, habit energy," and make good friends with our habitual patterns of thinking and acting. When we can accept these ingrained thoughts and not feel guilty about them, they will lose much of their power over us. Right Thinking leads to Right Action." – *The Heart of Buddha's Teaching* (2008), p62.

- Mindfulness MBSR founder Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn:

"Dr. Seligman and his colleagues have shown that people who have a highly pessimistic attributional style are at significantly higher risk for becoming depressed when they encounter a bad event than are people who have the optimistic way of thinking." – *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p200.

- Oxford University Psychiatry Professor Mark Williams:

“...nobody broods over problems because they believe it’s a toxic way of thinking. People genuinely believe that if they worry enough over their unhappiness they will eventually find a solution. They just need to make one last heave – think a little more about the problem ... But research shows the opposite: in fact, brooding reduces our ability to solve problems; and it’s absolutely hopeless for dealing with emotional difficulties.” – [*Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world*](#) (2011), p30.

"The Hellenistic regimes in Afghanistan and the Indo-Greek states east of the Hindu Kush Mountains had... been familiar with South Asian traditions, especially Buddhism. Indeed, the Greek king Menander [165-130 BC] was hailed in Buddhist tradition as a great patron of Buddhism." - Xinru Liu, [*The Silk Road in World History*](#) (Oxford University Press, 2010), p44.



From left to right, a Kushan devotee, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and a Buddhist monk. 2nd-3rd century CE, Gandhara. All carved in ancient Indo-Greek style.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Rumi, Mindfulness, and Honouring Thoughts and Feelings

Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207 – 17 December 1273)

- Muslim scholar.
- Spiritual evolution of the Ego from animal to divine through ‘creative love’.
- Spiritual vision included pagans.
- Followers founded Mewlewī Sufi order.

“This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor. Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they are a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whatever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.” - *The Guest House*, [The Essential Rumi](#) (1997) (translated by Coleman Barks with John Moyne), p109.

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):
“Be one with failure, for the Way fails too.” – *Lao-tzu’s Taoteching*, [23](#). (Red Pine Translation (1996), p46)
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
“...to find pleasure in suffering is the only way to accept the truth of transiency. Without realizing how to accept this truth you cannot live in this world. Even though you try to escape from it, your effort will be in vain. If you think there is some other way to accept the eternal truth that everything changes, that is your delusion. This is the basic teaching of how to live in this world. Whatever you may feel about it, you have to accept it. You have to make this kind of effort.” - *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* (1995), p103-104.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
“Everyone has a seed of faith, or confidence, for example. If you have friends who water this seed in you, it will grow strong. But if you meet only favorable conditions, you will not realize how precious this seed is. Obstacles along the path can help our determination and compassion grow. Obstacles teach us about our strengths and weaknesses, so that we can know ourselves better and see in which direction we truly wish to go. One could say that the Buddha’s practice of austerity was unfavorable to the development of his path, but if he had not undertaken those practices and failed in them, he would not have learned and later taught the Middle Way.” - *The Heart of Buddha’s Teaching* (2008), p56.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
“...we begin to enjoy serving others and are less interested in whether serving others interferes with our own personal welfare. We begin to search for life conditions — such as a job, health, a partner — that are most fruitful for such service. They may not always be pleasing for us; what is more important to us is that they teach us to serve life well. A difficult relationship can be extremely fruitful, for example.” - *Nothing Special - Living Zen* (1995), p58.
- Theravada Buddhist Monk Bhante Henepola Gunaratana:
“The unpleasant experience that you have been trying to avoid could be almost anything: guilt, greed, or other problems. It could be low-grade pain or subtle sickness or approaching illness. Whatever it is, let it arise and look at it mindfully. If you just sit still and observe your agitation, it will eventually pass. Sitting through restlessness is a little breakthrough in your meditation

career. It will teach you a lot. You will find that agitation is actually rather a superficial mental state. It is inherently ephemeral. It comes and it goes. It has no real grip on you at all." - [*Mindfulness in Plain English*](#) (2011), p106.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"These moments of pain are as much moments to be lived fully as are any others, and they can actually teach us a great deal, although few of us would seek out these lessons willingly. But relating to your pain consciously, as long as it is here anyway, allows you to be a participant with your feelings rather than a victim of them. And even though the pain you feel may be as great as if there were no seeing, no conscious awareness of a larger picture at all, this bringing of attention to emotion allows you to see your feelings with a certain degree of wisdom. The pain may be as great, but at least the edge comes off the suffering when we inquire into who is suffering, when we observe our mind flailing about, rejecting, protesting, denying, clamoring, fantasizing, hurting. Mindfulness allows us to see more clearly into the nature of our pain." - [*Full Catastrophe Living*](#) (2005), p321.

Mindfulness and Traditional Western Philosophy Part 3: Renaissance and The Enlightenment

Ockham, Mindfulness, and Simplicity

[William of Ockham](#) (1288-1348)

- Nominalism.
- Hylomorphism.
- Franciscan.
- Sensory and intellectual soul.
- Franciscan Friar.
- Ockham's razor (after Aristotle).

"Plurality is never to be posited without necessity." - *Quaestiones et decisiones in quattuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* [Questions and the decisions of the Sentences of Peter Lombard] (1495), i, dist. 27, qu. 2, K.

- Daoist Sage [ZhuangZi](#) (3rd Century BC):
"...things in the world live naturally without knowing why they are alive and gain something naturally without knowing why they have gained it. Past and present, the truth is the same; it has never been violated. Why should humaneness and righteousness have been used as glue or lacquer and string or cord between Tao and virtue to confuse the world? People with a mild confusion may change his direction of life; people with a serious confusion may change his inborn nature." - Chapter 8 (Webbed Toes - 駢拇), [paragraph 2](#) (translated by Wang Rongpei (Library of Chinese Classics: 1999), p129).
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
"The most important thing is to express your true nature in the simplest, most adequate way and to appreciate it in the smallest existence." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p48.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"Our practice is simple: mindfulness in our daily life. We practice the meditation techniques of stopping and looking deeply. We do this to keep from being pulled along in many directions." - [Understanding Our Mind](#) (2001), p383.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"Awareness is completely simple; we don't have to add anything to it or change it. It is unassuming or unpretentious; it can't help but be that way. Awareness is not a thing, to be affected by this or that. When we live from pure awareness, we are not affected by our past, our present, or our future. Because awareness has nothing it can pretend to, it's humble. It is lowly. Simple. Practice is about developing or uncovering a simple mind." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p255.
- Theravada Buddhist monk [Henepola Gunaratana](#):
"The mind is tricky. Thought is an inherently complicated procedure. By that we mean that we become trapped, wrapped up, and stuck in the thought chain. One thought leads to another, which leads to another, and another, and another, and so on. Fifteen minutes later we suddenly wake up and realize we spent that whole time stuck in a daydream" - [Mindfulness in Plain English](#) (2011), p64.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The knowing is skylike, airlike. Like space, it is everywhere, boundless. It is nothing other than awareness itself. Pure. Utterly simple. It is also utterly mysterious for it is not something that I am creating but rather a quality not separate from being..." - [*Coming To Our Senses*](#) (2006), p207.

Bacon, Mindfulness, and Empiricism

[Francis Bacon](#) (1561-1626)

- Anti-idol-perceptual illusions.
- Anti-personal biases.
- Anti-linguistic confusions.
- Anti-dogmatic philosophical systems.

“Man... can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of nature. Beyond this he neither knows anything nor can do anything.” - [The New Organon](#) (1620), Book I, Aphorism I.

- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):

"Zen master Panshan entered the hall and addressed the monks, saying, [...] Transcendent wisdom is not clear. True emptiness leaves no trace. 'True thusness,' 'mundane,' and 'sacred,' are all just talk within a dream. 'Buddha' and 'nirvana' are just extra words. "Zen worthies! Directly observe for yourself! No one can do it for you!" - p105.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Our faith is always based on empirical evidence. We do not believe it just because it has been repeated many times by others." - [Fidelity: How to Create a Loving Relationship That Lasts](#) (2011), p98.

- Theravada Buddhist monk [Henepola Gunaratana](#):

"...the fundamental attitude of Buddhism is intensely empirical and antiauthoritarian. Gotama the Buddha was a highly unorthodox individual and a real antitraditionalist. He did not offer his teaching as a set of dogmas, but rather as a set of propositions for each individual to investigate for him- or herself." – [Mindfulness in Plain English](#) (2011), p28.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"...what must be increased is the ability to observe. What we observe is always secondary. [...] As the ability grows first to observe, and second to experience, two factors simultaneously increase: wisdom, the ability to see life as it is (not the way I want it to be) and compassion, the natural action which comes from seeing life as it is." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p51-52.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"In some ways it is appropriate to characterize dharma as resembling scientific knowledge, ever growing, ever changing, yet with a core body of methods, observations, and natural laws distilled from thousands of years of inner exploration through highly disciplined self-observation and self-inquiry, a careful and precise recording and mapping of experiences encountered in investigating the nature of the mind, and direct empirical testing and confirming of the results." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p136.

Descartes, Mindfulness, and the Mind-Body Connection

[René Descartes](#) (1596-1650)

- Mechanical principles.
- Homogenous universe.
- Misleading senses.
- The 'ontological argument'.
- Power of Deity.
- Mind-body dualism.

"I think, hence I am." – *Meditations* (1641), (translated by John Veitch (2008), p31)

- Korean Zen teacher [Seung Sahn](#) (1927-2004):

"...the Buddha showed that this "I" does not exist: you cannot find it anywhere. This "I" appears only through thinking. Descartes wrote, "I think, therefore I am." When you completely cut off all thinking, where is this "I"? [...] ...every thought that appears in our mind is conditioned or formed by other thoughts. What we believe is "I" is just the coming together of various habit energies. There is no concrete, unmoving "I" behind it all. Thoughts are always appearing and... What we think is our self is just a collection of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousnesses that are constantly revolving around and around and around." - [The Compass of Zen](#) (1997), p47.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"As long as mind and body are not together, we get lost and we cannot really say that we are here. [...] Thinking has two parts — initial thought (vitarka) and developing thought (vichara). [...] In the first stage of meditative concentration (dhyana), both kinds of thinking are present. In the second stage, neither is there. We are in deeper contact with reality, free of words and concepts." - [The Heart of Buddha's Teaching](#) (2008), p59.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"As far as thoughts themselves are concerned, through mindfulness we can cultivate a new and very different *relationship* to them, allowing thoughts simply to be here instead of analyzing them, trying to work out where they came from, or trying to get rid of them in any way. In awareness, we see them immediately for what they actually are: constructions, mysterious creations of the mind, mental events that may or may not accurately reflect reality. We come to realize that our thoughts are not facts. Nor are they really "mine" or "me."" - [The Mindful Way Through Depression](#) (2007), p164.

- Oxford University Psychiatry [Professor Mark Williams](#):

"You will gradually come to learn that your thoughts are not you – you do not have to take them so personally. You can simply watch these states of mind as they arise, stay a while, and then dissolve. It's tremendously liberating to realise that your thoughts are not 'real' or 'reality'. They are simply mental events. They are not 'you'." - [Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world](#) (2011), p64.

Spinoza, Mindfulness, and Perfect Nature

[Baruch Spinoza](#) (1632 - 1677)

- One substance uniting all nature.
- God as infinite substance and thought.
- Understand god in ourselves.

"Nothing comes to pass in nature, which can be set down to a flaw therein; for nature is always the same, and everywhere one and the same in her efficacy and power of action...." – [Ethics](#) (1677), Part 3, Preface.

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

“Solid virtue appears as if unsteady. True substance appears to be changeable. The great square has no corners. The great implement (or talent) is slow to finish (or mature). Great music sounds faint. Great form has no shape. Tao is hidden and nameless. Yet it is Tao alone that skillfully provides for all and brings them to perfection.” – [Tao-te Ching \(The Way of Lao-Tzu\)](#), 41. (Wing-Tsit Chan Translation (1963))

老子:

“建德若偷；質真若渝；大方無隅；大器晚成；大音希聲；大象無形；道隱無名。夫唯道，善貸且成。”

- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):

"Zen master Xiqian entered the hall and addressed the monks, saying, "[...] You should each recognize your miraculous mind. Its essence is apart from temporary or everlasting. Its nature is without pollution or purity. It is clear and perfect. Common people and sages are the same. [This mind] reaches everywhere without limit. It is not constrained by the limits of consciousness." - p81.

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#):

"When your whole being exists, your whole being has no impediments: it is perfect in its completeness and is everturning, like the rumbling on of cart wheels." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p40.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"When reality is experienced in its nature of ultimate perfection, an almond tree that may be in your front yard reveals its nature in perfect wholeness. The almond tree is itself truth, reality, your own self." - [The Miracle of Mindfulness](#) (1987), p58.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"We aren't practicing to make things perfect or to do things perfectly. Rather, we practice to grasp and realize (make real for ourselves) the fact that things already are perfect, perfectly what they are. This has everything to do with holding the present moment in its fullness without imposing anything extra on it, perceiving its purity and the freshness of its potential to give rise to the next moment." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (1994), p45.

John Locke, Mindfulness, and Peaceful Society

[John Locke](#) (1632-1704)

- Duty to God to not harm.
- Social authority by consent.
- Blank slate.

"...being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions..." - *The Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690), Chapter 2, 6. (Barnes and Noble (2004), p4).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

"Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone. If kings and barons can keep it, all things will transform spontaneously. If, after transformation, they should desire to be active, I would restrain them with simplicity, which has no name. Simplicity, which has no name, is free of desires, Being free of desires, it is tranquil. And the world will be at peace of its own accord." - *Tao-te Ching (The Way of Lao-Tzu)*, 37. (Wing-Tsit Chan Translation (1963))

老子:

“道常無為而無不為。侯王若能守之，萬物將自化。化而欲作，吾將鎮之以無名之樸。無名之樸，夫亦將無欲。不欲以靜，天下將自定。”

- Gomyō Bodhisattva:

"Being compassionate is a gate to what the Dharma illumines, for thereby we do not kill or harm any living being." - *Scriptural Collection of the Past Deeds of the Buddha*, after Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dōgen](#) (1200-1253), [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p40.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"If men and women are the same, then the distinctions between men and women have no value. Because men and women are different, men are valuable as men and women are valuable as women. To be different is to have value. In this sense all things have equal, absolute value. Each thing has absolute value and thus is equal to everything else." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p41.

- American Zen author Jan Chozen Bays:

"The two hands work together effortlessly to accomplish many wonderful things and they never harm each other. Could this become true for any two human beings?" - [How to Train A Wild Elephant: And Other Adventures in Mindfulness](#) (2011), p32.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Why not try to live so as to cause as little damage and suffering as possible? If we lived that way, we wouldn't have the insane levels of violence that dominate our lives and our thinking today. [...] The willingness to harm or hurt comes ultimately out of fear. Non-harming requires that you see your own fears and that you understand them and own them. Owning them means taking responsibility for them. Taking responsibility means not letting fear completely dictate your vision or your view. Only mindfulness of our own clinging and rejecting, and a willingness to grapple with these mind states, however painful the encounter, can free us from this circle of suffering. Without a daily embodiment in practice, lofty ideals tend to succumb to self-interest." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p217.

Leibniz, Mindfulness, and Patterns of Change

[Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz](#) (1646-1716)

- Monads.
- Simple substance.
- God programmed each monad at creation.
- Principle of sufficient reason.

"...besides the principle of the change, there must be a particular series of changes, which constitutes, so to speak, the specific nature and variety of the simple substances." - *The Monadology* (1714), 12, (translated by Robert Latta (1898)).

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dōgen](#) (1200-1253):

"The Buddha once said in verse:

Merely of various elements is this body of Mine composed.

The time of its arising is merely an arising of elements;

The time of its vanishing is merely a vanishing of elements.

As these elements arise, I do not speak of the arising of an 'I',

And as these elements vanish, I do not speak of the vanishing of an 'I'.

Previous instants and succeeding instants are not a series of instants that depend on each other;

Previous elements and succeeding elements are not a series of elements that stand against each other.

To give all of this a name, I call it 'the meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean'.

We need to make a diligent effort to fully explore these words of the Buddha." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p436.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Meditate on the sun in every cell of your body. Meditate to see the sun in plants, in each nourishing morsel of the vegetables you eat. Gradually you will see "the body of ultimate reality" (Dharmakaya) and recognize your own "true nature."" - [The Sun My Heart](#) (1988), p99.

- Theravada Buddhist monk Bikkhu Bodhi:

"The cosmos is beginningless, and in its movement from phase to phase it is governed only by the impersonal, implacable law of arising, change, and passing away." - [Dhammapada](#): Introduction, p19.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Everything is related to everything else and, in a way, simultaneously contains everything else and is contained by everything else. What is more, everything is in flux. Stars are born, go through stages, and die. Planets also have a rhythm of formation and ultimate demise. New cars are already on their way to the junk heap even before they leave the factory. This awareness might truly enhance our appreciation of impermanence..." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (2004), p214.

Voltaire, Mindfulness, and Tolerance

[Voltaire](#) (1694-1778)

- Freedom of thought.
- Natural religion.
- Judicial reform.

"...whether you wear green robes, turbans, black robes or surplices, cloaks and neckbands, never seek to use authority where there is question only of reason." - [The Philosophical Dictionary](#) (1764), Chapter: Authority, (translated by H.I. Woolf (2010), p46).

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"Even though you try to put people under some control, it is impossible. You cannot do it. The best way to control people is to encourage them to be mischievous. Then they will be in control in its wider sense. To give your sheep or cow a large, spacious meadow is the way to control him. So it is with people: first let them do what they want, and watch them. This is the best policy. To ignore them is not good; that is the worst policy. The second worst is trying to control them. The best one is to watch them, just to watch them, without trying to control them." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p32.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Free from attachment to wrong views and prejudices, you are filled with tolerance. The door of your compassion is wide open, and you also suffer the sufferings of all living beings. As a result, you do whatever you can to relieve these sufferings." - [The Sun My Heart](#) (1988), p121.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Cambodians, Bosnians, Palestinians, Israelis, Tibetans, all of us suffer from injustice and intolerance. Instead of being brothers and sisters to each other, we aim guns at each other. When we are overtaken by anger, we think that the only response is to punish the other person. The fire of anger continues to burn in us, and it continues to burn our brothers and sisters. This is the situation of the world, and it is why deep looking is needed to help us understand that all of us are victims." - [The Heart of Buddha's Teaching](#) (2008).

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"When we feel that our interests or our social status is threatened, we are capable of reacting unconsciously to protect or defend our position before we know what we are doing. Usually this behavior compounds our problems by increasing the level of conflict. [...] But since we also have the ability to reflect, think, and be aware, we have a range of other options available to us that go well beyond our most unconscious and deeply ingrained instincts. But we need purposefully to cultivate these options. They don't just magically surface, especially if our mode of interpersonal relating has been dominated by automatically defensive or aggressive behavior that we have not really bothered to look at. Again, it is a matter of choosing a response rather than being carried away by a reaction." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p369.

Hume, Mindfulness, and Selfhood

[David Hume](#) (1711-1776)

- A 'science of man'.
- Scepticism.
- Miracles.
- Naturalism.

"For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist." - *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), BOOK I: Of The Understanding, Part IV, (L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford University Press: 1896), p252).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):
"The reality of your own self-nature the absence of cause and effect, is what's meant by mind. Your mind is nirvana. You might think you can find a Buddha or enlightenment somewhere beyond the mind, but such a place doesn't exist." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine Translation).
- Korean Zen teacher [Seung Sahn](#) (1927-2004):
"If you are impermanent, you do not exist. What you are composed of is always changing and moving, nonstop—there is no thing that permanently “exists.”" - [The Compass of Zen](#) (1996), p125.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"I am here because you are there. If anyone of us does not exist, no one else can exist either. Reality cannot be confined by concepts of being, non-being, birth, and death. The term "true emptiness" can be used to describe reality and to destroy all ideas which imprison and divide us and which artificially create a reality. Without a mind free from preconceived ideas, we cannot penetrate reality." - [The Sun My Heart](#) (1988), p94.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"The list of complex cellular processes and their seamless integration into a society we call the living organism is a long one... [...] ... and that process, when you look deeply into it, is also somehow empty of any fixed, enduring selfhood. There is no "us," no "somebody" in it that can be identified, no matter how hard we look. [...] It is a mystery, as is every other phenomenon that emerges through our senses, including our mind and our sense of being a separate existing self. Our senses build a world for us and situate us within it. This constructed world usually has a high degree of coherence and a strong sense of there being a perceiver and whatever is being perceived, a thinker and whatever is being thought, a feeler and whatever is being felt. It is all impersonal process, and if there can be said to be a product, it is nowhere to be found in the parts themselves." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p177-178.

Mindfulness and Traditional Western Philosophy Part 4: Romantics and Idealists

Rousseau, Mindfulness, and Returning to Nature

[Jean-Jacque Rousseau](#) (1712-1778)

- Man is by nature good.
- Education key to social progression.

“Cities are the abyss of the human species. At the end of a few generations the races perish or degenerate. They must be renewed, and it is always the country which provides for this renewal. Send you children, then, to renew themselves, as it were, and to regain in the midst of the fields the vigor that is lost in the unhealthy air of the overpopulated places.” - *Emile: or, On Education* (1762), (translated by Alan Bloom (Basic Books: 1979), p59).

- The Buddha (~5th Century BC):
"Forests are delightful where other people do not because the one who is free from passion rejoices therein seeking no sensual pleasure." - [Dharmapada Sutra](#) (Narada Translation, 1959), Chapter 7, Verse 99.
- Daoist Sage [ZhuangZi](#) (3rd Century BC):
“Those who are cultivating their inborn nature through worldly learning, with the vain hope of restoring their original state, and those who disturb their minds with worldly concepts and with the vain hope of attaining enlightenment those people may be said to be blind and ignorant. The men of old who practised Tao nurtured their intelligence through tranquility; they were intelligent but did not resort to their intelligence. Such people may be said to have nurtured their tranquility through intelligence. When intelligence and tranquility nurture each other, harmony and order grow out of their inborn nature.” - Chapter 16 (Correcting the Nature -繕性), [paragraph 1](#) (translated by Wang Rongpei (Library of Chinese Classics: 1999), p37).
- [Zen Hermit Hanshan](#) (9th Century AD):
"When I can't bear to watch birds play
I lie inside my thatched hut
the cherry trees are bright pink
the willows beginning to sway
the rising sun swallows blue peaks
clearing clouds wash a green pool
who thinks of leaving the dusty rut
and heading south for Cold Mountain?" - *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain* (2000, Red Pine Translation), No.133, p127.
寒山子：
“鸟语情不堪，其时卧草庵。樱桃红烁烁，杨柳正毵毵。
旭日衔青嶂，晴云洗绿潭。谁知出尘俗，驭上寒山南。”
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"Prince Siddhartha retired to the forest to sit beside a stream for many years before returning to the world of people. Today we live in noisy and polluted societies, filled with injustice, but we can take refuge in a public park or along a river bank for a moment." - [The Sun, My Heart](#) (1988), p38-39.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...when we seek calmness so many of us find it in nature. The natural world has no artifice. The tree outside the window, and the birds in it, stand only in the now, remnants of what was once pristine wilderness, which was and is, where it is still protected, timeless on the scale of the human. The natural world always defines now." - [*Coming To Our Senses*](#) (2006), p146.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Our psychological well-being may depend on being able to find someplace in nature where we can go and just hear the sounds of the world itself, without the sounds of human activity, of airplanes, cars, and machines." - [*Full Catastrophe Living*](#) (2005), p413.

Kant, Mindfulness, and Appearances

[Immanuel Kant](#) (1724-1804)

- Synthetic and *a priori* knowledge.
- ‘Copernican revolution’.
- Transcendental idealism.
- Categorical imperative.

“...my existence always remains only sensibly determinable, i.e., determinable as the existence of an appearance.” – *Critique of Pure Reason* (1785), B 158, (translated by P. Guyer & Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press: 2000), p260).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"If you seek direct understanding, don't hold on to any appearance whatsoever, and you'll succeed. I have no other advice. The sutras say, "All appearances are illusions." They have no fixed existence, or constant form. They're impermanent. Don't cling to appearances and you'll be of one mind with the Buddha. The sutras say, "That which is free of all form is the Buddha." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine Translation).
- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#):

“Shakyamuni Buddha, in addressing His great assembly, once said, “When you see all material forms, which are provisional, as being part of That which goes beyond such appearances, you will then be seeing the Tathagata.” To see the forms of things and to see That which goes beyond such appearances is a realization experienced bodily, one which will free you from delusion. As a consequence, you will meet the Tathagata." - [Shobogenzo](#) (translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p703.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"If you see a flower only as a flower and don't see the sunshine, clouds, earth, time, and space in it, you are caught in the sign of the flower. But when you have touched the nature of interbeing of the flower, you truly see the flower. If you see a person and don't also see his society, education, ancestors, culture, and environment, you have not really seen that person. Instead, you have been taken in by the sign of that person, the outward appearance of a separate self. When you can see that person deeply, you touch the whole cosmos and you will not be fooled by appearances." - [Understanding Our Mind](#) (2001), p397.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...language itself forces us to speak of a separate 'I' who has a body. We wind up sounding hopelessly dualistic. And yet, in a way there certainly is a separate I who "has" a body, or at least, there is a very strong appearance of that being the case and we have spoken of this as being the level of conventional reality, the relative, the level of appearances. In the domain of relative reality, there is the body and its sensations (object), and there is the perceiver of the sensations (subject). These appear separate and different." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p383.

Hegel, Mindfulness, and Awareness of the Absolute

[Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel](#) (1770-1831)

- Historical progress.
- Individual thinking and freedom.
- 'Geist' as the collective mind of God coming to know itself.

"The absolute is mind. This is the highest definition of the absolute." – *Philosophy of Mind* (1807), (translated by W. Wallace & A.V. Miller (Oxford University Press: 2010), p18).

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dōgen](#) (1200-1253):
"...the manifestation of the Spiritual Body is one's giving voice to Buddha Nature, for It is unbounded radiance and It is absolute." - [Shobogenzo](#) (translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p262.
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
"Even though you observe just one flower, that one flower includes everything. It is not just a flower. It is the absolute, it is Buddha himself. We see it in that way. But at the same time, that which exists is just a flower, and there is no one to see it and nothing to be seen. That is the feeling we should have in our practice and in our everyday activity." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p88-89.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"This is the absolute: call it God, Buddha-nature, whatever you wish. This experience, filtered through my particular human mechanism, makes my world. We cannot point to anything in the world, seemingly inside or outside ourselves, which is not experiencing. But we couldn't have what we call a human life unless that experiencing were transformed into behavior." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p90.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"When you have an experience of rotating in consciousness so that your world does all of a sudden feel bigger and more real, you are catching a glimpse of what Buddhists refer to as absolute or ultimate reality, a dimensionality that is beyond conditioning but that is capable of recognizing conditioning as it arises. It is awareness itself, the knowing capacity of mind itself, beyond a knower and what is known, just knowing." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p350-351.

Schopenhauer, Mindfulness, and Pain

[Arthur Schopenhauer](#) (1770-1831)

- Inspired by the Upanishads.
- 'Will to Live' is more basic than thought.
- Drive to satisfaction.
- Moral goodness is universal compassion.

"...every satisfaction is only the removal of a pain, and brings no positive happiness." – *The World as Will and Idea* (1819), Vol I (Translated by R.B. Haldane (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 1909), p230).

- The Buddha (~5th Century BC):

"When a man tastes the flavor of seclusion and the flavor of quietness, he is then free from anguish and stain, enjoying the taste of the Dharma." - [Dharmapada Sutra](#) (Narada Translation, 1959), Chapter 15, Verse 205.
- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"Your real body has no sensation, no hunger or thirst', no warmth or cold, no sickness, no love or attachment, no pleasure or pain, no good or bad, no shortness or length, no weakness or strength. Actually, there's nothing here. It's only because you cling to this material body that things like hunger and thirst, warmth and cold, sickness appear. Once you stop clinging and let things be, you'll be free, even of birth and death. You'll transform everything. You'll possess Spiritual powers that can't be obstructed. And you'll be at peace wherever you are." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine translation).
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"We learn in our guts, not just in our brain, that a life of joy is not in seeking happiness, but in experiencing and simply being the circumstances of our life as they are; not in fulfilling personal wants, but in fulfilling the needs of life; not in avoiding pain, but in being pain when it is necessary to do so." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p44-45.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"Freedom is closely connected with our relationship to pain and suffering. I'd like to draw a distinction between pain and suffering. Pain comes from experiencing life just as it is, with no trimmings. We can even call this direct experiencing joy. But when we try to run away and escape from our experience of pain, we suffer. Because of the fear of pain we all build up an ego structure to shield us, and so we suffer. Freedom is the willingness to risk being vulnerable to life; it is the experience of whatever arises in each moment, painful or pleasant. This requires total commitment to our lives. When we are able to give ourselves totally, with nothing held back and no thought of escaping the experience of the present moment, there is no suffering. When we completely experience our pain, it is joy." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p191.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...it is not always the pain *per se* but the way we see it and react to it that determines the degree of suffering we will experience. And it is the suffering that we fear most, not the pain." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p285-286.

Kierkegaard, Mindfulness, and Finding Purpose

[Søren Kierkegaard](#) (1813-1855)

- His mother and five siblings died before he was 21.
- Sought a career in the Church.
- Human avoidance of reality.
- Rejection of mainstream social institutions.

"What I really need is to get clear about what I must do, not what I must know, except insofar as knowledge must precede every act. What matters is to find a purpose, to see what it really is that God wills that I shall do; the crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die." - *Journals & Papers, Gilleleie* (1835), IA. (translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers* (1967), p34).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (~6th Century BC):

"Other people are bright; I alone am dark. Other people are sharper; I alone am dull. Other people have a purpose; I alone don't know. I drift like a wave on the ocean, I blow as aimless as the wind." – [Tao Te Ching](#), 20, (Stephen Mitchell translation).

老子：

“俗人察察，我獨悶悶。澹兮其若海，颺兮若無止，衆人皆有以，而我獨頑似鄙。”

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#):

"the entanglements involved in cases of completely becoming a Buddha are, beyond doubt, directly related to 'completely becoming a Buddha', and, in every single case, they are due to having a goal. We should not try to avoid having a purpose. When we try to avoid having a purpose, we grieve for ourselves and lose our very life, and when we grieve for ourselves and lose our very life, it is due to our entanglement with having a goal." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p339.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"...if you make your best effort just to continue your practice with your whole mind and body, without gaining ideas, then whatever you do will be true practice. Just to continue should be your purpose. When you do something, just to do it should be your purpose." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p43.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"We meditate not to attain enlightenment, because enlightenment is already in us. We don't have to search anywhere. We don't need a purpose or a goal. We don't practice in order to obtain some high position. In aimlessness, we see that we do not lack anything, that we already are what we want to become, and our striving just comes to a halt. We are at peace in the present moment, just seeing the sunlight streaming through our window or hearing the sound of the rain." - [The Heart of Buddha's Teaching](#) (1998), p153.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Almost everything we do we do for a purpose, to get something or somewhere. But in meditation this attitude can be a real obstacle. That is because meditation is different from all other human activities. Although it takes a lot of work and energy of a certain kind, ultimately meditation is a non-doing. It has no goal other than for you to be yourself. The irony is that you already are. This sounds paradoxical and a little crazy. Yet this paradox and craziness may be

pointing you toward a new way of seeing yourself, one in which you are trying less and being more. This comes from intentionally cultivating the attitude of non-striving." - [*Full Catastrophe Living*](#) (2005), p37.

Marx, Mindfulness, and The Elevated Individual

[Karl Marx](#) (1818-1883)

- Social theorist.
- Historical materialism.
- Free social self-expression.
- Promethean drive to develop our 'essential human powers'.
- Abolishment of class society.
- Religion as indulgence in illusions.
- Scientific self-understanding.

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." - *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy Of Right'* (1843), (CUP Archive Edition (1977), p131).

- The Buddha (~ 5th Century BC):

"I do not call him a holy man because of his lineage or his high-born mother. If he is full of impeding attachments, he is just a supercilious man. But who is free from impediments and clinging - him do I call a holy man." - [Dhammapada](#) (Translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita, 1985), Chapter 26, Verse 396.

- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#):

"It has been said that, according to the understanding of non-Buddhists, the self that has not yet sprouted up [the soul] is taken to be what is fundamental. According to the Buddha's Teaching, it will not be like this. [...] If you are confused about what thoughts and things are, you will become confused as to what the true appearance of thoughts and things are. If you are confused about their true appearance, you will be confused about what the saying 'each Buddha on His own, together with all Buddhas' is pointing to." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p788.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Because you believe in a self, you compare that self with other selves. Out of it come the superiority complex, the inferiority complex, the equality complex. If you touch the truth of non-self in you, you are free." - [MindfulnessBell.org: Question and Answer Session with Thich Nhat Hanh and Monastic Brothers and Sisters](#), European Institute of Applied Buddhism, Waldbrol, Germany, May 20, 2011.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"Through practice we wear out the fantasies we have about running out the door to something somewhere else. We put most of our effort into maintaining and protecting the ego structure created out of the ignorant view that "I" exists separately from the rest of life. We have to become aware of this structure and see how it works because — even though it is artificial and not our true nature — unless we understand it, we will continue to act out of fear and arrogance. By arrogance I mean the feeling of being special, of not being ordinary." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p191.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

".the great delusion of separateness that we indulge in, coupled with our deeply conditioned habits of mind, the scars we carry, and our general level of unawareness, can result in particularly toxic and disregulating consequences for both our body and our mind." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p231.

- Oxford University Psychiatry Professor Mark Williams:

"... if mind and body are one, then to treat the body as somehow separate from us is to perpetuate a profound sense of dislocation, right at the heart of our being. If there is one thing that we need to learn in order to bring peace and 'ease of being' into our lives in the midst of a frantic world, it is how to 'come home' to this part of ourselves that we have ignored for too long." -

[*Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world*](#) (2011), p93.

Nietzsche (1), Mindfulness, and Increasing Resilience

[Friedrich Nietzsche](#) (1844-1900)

- New affirmation and enhancement of life.
- Diverse reflections on problems.
- ‘De-deification of nature’.
- ‘Translating man back into nature’.
- A higher humanity and ‘over-man’ (Übermensch).
- A naturalistic value-theory.
- ‘Slave and master moralities’.
- Art as the creative transformation of the world as we find it.

"What doesn't kill me makes me stronger." - *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), (translated by Richard Polt (Hackett Publishing Edition: 1997), p6).

- The Sixth Zen Patriarch [HuiNeng](#) (638–713 AD):
“That which causes the mouth suffering is good medicine. That which offends the ears is loyal speech.” – [Platform Sutra](#), Chapter 3: Questions (决疑 • 第二节), (translated by John R. McRae (Numata Center: 2000), p41)
惠能：“苦口的是良药，逆耳必是忠言。”
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"When we take hold of our afflictions and use them as compost, the flowers of joy, peace, liberation, and happiness will grow. We must accept what is here and now, including our suffering and our delusion. Accepting our suffering and delusion already brings us some peace and joy. This is the beginning of practice." - [Understanding Our Mind](#) (2001), p331-332.
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
"We say, "Pulling out the weeds we give nourishment to the plant." We pull the weeds and bury them near the plant to give it nourishment. So even though you have some difficulty in your practice, even though you have some waves while you are sitting, those waves themselves will help you. So you should not be bothered by your mind. You should rather be grateful for the weeds, because eventually they will enrich your practice." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1995), p36.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"...what really is, at a Zen sesshin, is often fatigue, boredom, and pain in our legs. What we learn from having to sit quietly with that discomfort is so valuable that if it didn't exist, it should. When you're in pain, you can't spin off. You have to stay with it. There's no place to go. So pain is really valuable." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p11.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"...the mindfulness approach ...involves, above all, a willingness to open up to pain and learn from it instead of closing off from it and trying to make it go away." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p290-291.
- Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Ronald D. Siegel:
"...paradoxically, even though mindfulness practices are very effective at alleviating suffering, they require that we be willing to experience pain more vividly. It's the same way that it hurts to clean out an infected wound, even though this allows the wound to heal and ultimately leaves us

feeling better. In both situations, we need faith and courage to move forward, trusting that our overall well-being is worth enduring short-term discomfort." - [*The Mindfulness Solution*](#) (2010), p98

Nietzsche (2), Mindfulness, and Living Artfully

[Friedrich Nietzsche](#) (1844-1900)

- New affirmation and enhancement of life.
- Diverse reflections on problems.
- ‘De-deification of nature’.
- ‘Translating man back into nature’.
- A higher humanity and ‘over-man’ (Übermensch).
- A naturalistic value-theory.
- ‘Slave and master moralities’.
- Art as the creative transformation of the world as we find it.

“Without art we would be nothing but foreground and live entirely in the spell of that perspective which makes what is closest at hand and most vulgar appear as if it were vast, and reality itself.” - *The Gay Science* (1882), (translated by Walter Kaufmann (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group Edition:2010), p133).

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
" The heart of an artist may be more sensitive; hopefully he or she will be able to see the tree in a deeper way than many others. Because of a more open heart, a certain communion already exists between the artist and the tree." - *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (1987), p58.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
“When we do not trouble ourselves about whether or not something is a work of art, if we just act in each moment with composure and mindfulness, each minute of our life is a work of art. Even when we are not painting or writing, we are still creating. We are pregnant with beauty, joy, and peace, and we are making life more beautiful for many people. Sometimes it is better not to talk about art by using the word “art.” If we just act with awareness and integrity, our art will flower, and we don’t have to talk about it at all. When we know how to be peace, we find that art is a wonderful way to share our peacefulness. Artistic expression will take place in one way or another, but the being is essential. So we must go back to ourselves, and when we have joy and peace in ourselves, our creations of art will be quite natural, and they will serve the world in a positive way.” - *Peace is Every Step* (1991), p40.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
“Effortless activity happens at moments in dance and in sports at the highest levels of performance; when it does, it takes everybody's breath away. But it also happens in every area of human activity, from painting to car repair to parenting. [...] We thrill in watching a superb performance, whether athletic or artistic, because it allows us to participate in the magic of true mastery, to be uplifted, if only briefly, and perhaps to share in the intention that each of us, in our own way, might touch such moments of grace and harmony in the living of our own lives.” - *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (1994), p44.
- [Mindfulness: Diverse Perspectives on Its Meanings, Origins and Applications](#) (2013):
“Like an artist, a Buddha sees beauty in the world. His or her delight naturally flows into an expression that automatically shares that vision and delight with others.” – p189.

Husserl, Mindfulness, and Thoughts

[Edmund Husserl](#) (1859-1938)

- Founder of phenomenology.
- Psychologism.
- Suspend, or 'bracket', the 'natural attitude' to the world.
- Philosophy 'as rigorous science'.
- 'Transcendental subjectivity' and 'Life-world'.

"We ask now: It is really worth while to hunt for an eternal significance belonging to these thoughts or to some clarifiable core that may be contained in them?" - *Cartesian Meditations* (1929), (Kluwer Academic Publishers Edition: 1999), p4).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):
"As long as you're troubled by the three poisons or by thoughts of yourself, your deluded mind will keep you from seeing the Buddha and you'll only waste your effort." - [Breakthrough Sermon](#) (Red Pine translation).
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"Understanding does not arise as a result of thinking. It is a result of the long process of conscious awareness. Sometimes understanding can be translated into thoughts, but often thoughts are too rigid and limited to carry much understanding. Sometimes a look or a laugh expresses understanding much better than words or thoughts." - [The Sun My Heart](#) (1988), p48.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"...thoughts are our attempt to protect ourselves. None of us really wants to give them up; they are what we are attached to. The way we can eventually see their unreality is by just letting the movie run. After we have seen the same movie five hundred times it gets boring, frankly!" - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p7.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"...the simple act of recognizing your thoughts as thoughts can free you from the distorted reality they often create and allow for more clear-sightedness and a greater sense of manageability in your life." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p70.
- Professor Mark Williams:
"...understand a profound truth: that your mind has a mind of its own You will gradually come to learn that your thoughts are not you – you do not have to take them so personally. You can simply watch these states of mind as they arise, stay a while, and then dissolve. It's tremendously liberating to realise that your thoughts are not 'real' or 'reality'. They are simply mental events. They are not 'you'." - [Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world](#) (2011), p64.

Eastern Philosophy Detour: Gandhi, Mindfulness, and Non-Violence

[Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](#) (1869 – 1948)

- Hindu political activist against racism, colonialism, and untouchability.
- Non-injury is the only means to truth ('zest for truth').
- Non-violent mass civil-disobedience movements.
- Means and ends form a continuum (killing is never a means to an end).
- Win over others through persuasion and self-suffering.
- Active love and self-control.

"...nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment, forgiveness adorns a soldier." – [The Doctrine Of The Sword](#) (in *Young India*, August 1920).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (5th Century BC):

"Fine weapons are instruments of evil. They are hated by men. Therefore those who possess Tao turn away from them. [...] Weapons are instruments of evil, not the instruments of a good ruler. When he uses them unavoidably, he regards calm restraint as the best principle. Even when he is victorious, he does not regard it as praiseworthy, For to praise victory is to delight in the slaughter of men. He who delights in the slaughter of men will not succeed in the empire." – [Tao-te Ching \(The Way of Lao-Tzu\)](#), 31. (Wing-Tsit Chan Translation (1963))

- The Buddha (~ 5th Century BC):

"Though one may conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself." - [Dhammapada](#) (Translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita, 1985), Chapter 8, Verse 103.

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"You shouldn't have to fight with anyone. If you have that much understanding of what you are doing, that is good—the way is there." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p105.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"I have to deal with my anger with care, with love, with tenderness, with nonviolence. Because anger is me, I have to tend my anger as I would tend a younger brother or sister, with love, with care, because I myself am anger, I am in it, I am it. In Buddhism we do not consider anger, hatred, greed as enemies we have to fight, to destroy, to annihilate. If we annihilate anger, we annihilate ourselves. Dealing with anger in that way would be like transforming yourself into a battlefield, tearing yourself into parts, one part taking the side of Buddha, and one part taking the side of Mara. If you struggle in that way, you do violence to yourself. If you cannot be compassionate to yourself, you will not be able to be compassionate to others." – [Being Peace](#) (2005), p47.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Imagine utilizing our power in such conscious ways in the face of aggression and challenges of all kinds, at all levels in our world, predicated on the recognition that an attacker or potential attackers have already demonstrated a huge weakness and imbalance by the aggressive and therefore irrational or deluded nature of their very act or intention. That is, if we don't lose our own minds as a reaction to others losing theirs, as so often happens, and which is how anger begets anger, and violence more senseless violence." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p532.

Mindfulness and Traditional Western Philosophy Part 5: Existentialism and Contemporary Philosophy

Bertrand Russell, Mindfulness, and Humane Acts

[Bertrand Russell](#) (1872-1970)

- Anti-war activist.
- Logical atomism.
- ‘Animal expectation’
- Meaning and quantification.
- ‘Material events’.

"We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death." - *The Russell-Einstein Manifesto* (1955).

- The Buddha (~ 5th Century BC):

"Let one not neglect one's own welfare for the sake of another, however great. Clearly understanding one's own welfare, let one be intent upon the good." - [Dhammapada](#) (Translated by Acharya Buddhharakkhita, 1985), Chapter 12, Verse 166.
- Japanese 'Soto Zen' Founder Master [Eihei Dogen](#):

"When ordinary humans become Buddhas, they take up their humanity to harmonize their humanity and become a Buddha." - [Shobogenzo](#) (Translated by Hubert Nearman, 2007), p785.
- [Zen Masters](#) (2010, Oxford University Press):

"...Bodhisattva Functioning (bosatsu-gyō), in which the actor is no ordinary ego but a “transcendent Person or transcendent humanity,” operating on the basis of “the whole of mankind as width and such transcendent humanity as depth.” And as indicated by the “Vow of Humankind,” Hisamatsu argues that humans must transcend their differences and work together to solve not only the fundamental religious problems of sin and death, value and existence, but also the various other forms of suffering in the world." - p229-229.
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"...all human beings are friends, we should help them even if it means violating a Buddhist precept." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p102.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"We have to continue to practice mindfulness and reconciliation until we can see a child's body of skin and bones in Uganda or Ethiopia as our own, until the hunger and pain in the bodies of all species are our own. Then we will have realized nondiscrimination, real love. Then we can look at all beings with the eyes of compassion, and we can do the real work to help alleviate suffering." - [Peace is Every Step](#) (1991), p121.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

“As human beings we see life by means of a certain sensory apparatus and because people and objects seem external to us, we experience much misery. Our misery stems from the misconception that we are separate. Certainly it looks as though I am separate from other people and from all else in the phenomenal world. This misconception that we're separate creates all the difficulties of human life." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p75.

- [*The Mindfulness Revolution*](#) (2011):

"If we include in our own pursuit of happiness an understanding of the need for others' happiness, we will practice "wise self-interest" and ultimately act according to the mutual interest of all humanity." - p.xvii.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The world itself is weeping and begs for us to bring an entirely different level of attention and resolve to its suffering, based on our inherent beauty, goodness, and creative imagination as human beings. Perhaps mindfulness can play a significant role in the healing not only of ourselves but also of our world in ways little and big, and yet to be imagined." - [*Full Catastrophe Living*](#) (2005), p.XXXII.

Wittgenstein, Mindfulness, and Words

[Ludwig Wittgenstein](#) (1889-1951)

- Metaphysical utterances are violations of the bounds of sense.
- World is the totality of facts, not things.
- The necessary truths of logic are tautologies: bipolar content cancels out.
- There are no philosophical propositions.
- Philosophy monitors the bounds of sense.
- Philosophical problems stem from entanglement in linguistic rules (e.g. '...red and green all over').

"Philosophical troubles are caused by not using language practically but by extending it on looking at it. We form sentences and then wonder what they can mean." - *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935* (1979), Ludwig Wittgenstein and Alice Ambrose (Editor), p15.

- The Buddha (~5th Century BC):
"...the nature of all things is like illusion, like a magical incarnation. So you should not fear them. Why? All words also have that nature, and thus the wise are not attached to words, nor do they fear them. Why? All language does not ultimately exist, except as liberation. The nature of all things is liberation." - [Vimalakirti Nirveda Sutra](#) (Translated by Robert A. F. Thurman, 1976), Chapter 9.
- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):
"Understanding comes in midsentence. What good are doctrines? The ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They're not the Way. The Way is wordless. Words are illusions. They're no different from things that appear in your dreams at night, be they palaces or carriages, forested parks or lakeside lions. Don't conceive any delight for such things." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine Translation).
- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):
"When we say something, our subjective intention or situation is always involved. So there is no perfect word; some distortion is always present in a statement." - [Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) (1957), p87.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"Talks like these are not words to ponder; we get something from them and then throw them away and return to simple, direct practice." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p231.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"During the hour-long discussion there are frequent stretches of silence in the group, as if we have collectively gone into a state beyond the need for talk. It feels as if the silence is communicating something deeper than what we are able to express with words. It binds us together. We feel peaceful in it, comfortable." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2003), p128.

Heidegger, Mindfulness, and Being

[Martin Heidegger](#) (1889-1976)

- Links with Nazism (not rooted in anti-Semitism).
- Sense of being: 'Dasein'.
- *Alleged hidden Daoist influences.*

"We do not "have" a body; rather, we "are" bodily." - *Nietzsche* (1961), (Translated by D. F. Krell (New York: 1991), p99).

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):
"...this real body is your mind. And this mind, through endless kalpas without beginning, has never varied. [...] You can't possess it and you can't lose it." - [Bloodstream Sermon](#) (Red Pine Translation).
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"When we meditate on our body, we are our body; we limit our observations to our body, even though we realize that our body is not separate from the rest of the universe." - [The Sun My Heart](#) (1988), p43.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"When we give up this spinning mind, even for a few minutes, and just sit with what is, then this presence that we are is like a mirror. We see everything. We see what we are: our efforts to look good, to be first, or to be last. We see our anger, our anxiety, our pomposity, our so-called spirituality. Real spirituality is just being with all that." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p13.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"Learning how to stop all your doing and shift over to a "being" mode, learning how to make time for yourself, how to slow down and nurture calmness and self-acceptance in yourself, learning to observe what your own mind is up to from moment to moment, how to watch your thoughts and how to let go of them without getting so caught up and driven by them, how to make room for new ways of seeing old problems and for perceiving the interconnectedness of things, these are some of the lessons of mindfulness. This kind of learning involves settling into moments of being and cultivating awareness." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p20.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"The ways we use language tell us a lot about the automatic way we personalize our symptoms and illnesses. For instance, we say "I have a headache" or "I have a cold" or "I have a fever," when it would be more accurate to say something like "the body is headaching" or "colding" or "fevering." [...]. By seeing the headache or the cold as a process, we are acknowledging that it is dynamic and not static, that is not "ours" but is rather an unfolding process that we are experiencing." - [Full Catastrophe Living](#) (2005), p282.
- Professor Mark Williams:
"Doing mode needs to think. It analyses, recalls, plans and compares. That's its role and many of us find we're very good at it. We spend a great deal of time 'inside our heads' without noticing what's going on around us. The headlong rush of the world can absorb us so much that it erodes our sense of presence in the body, forcing us to live inside our thoughts, rather than experience the world directly.[...] The Doing mode involves judging and comparing the 'real' world with the world as we'd like it to be in our thoughts and dreams. It narrows attention down to the gap between the two, so that you can end up with a toxic variety of tunnel vision in which only

perfection will do. Being mode, on the other hand, invites you temporarily to suspend judgment. It means briefly standing aside and watching the world as it unfolds, while allowing it to be just as it is for a moment." - [*Mindfulness: A practical guide to peace in a frantic world*](#) (2011), p38-39.

Sartre, Mindfulness, and Social Responsibility

[Jean-Paul Sartre](#) (1905-1980)

- Existential freedom.
- Imagination.
- Consciousness is always constituted by a tacit self-consciousness.
- Historical materialism.
- Reflexive self-negation is the core of human freedom and human life.

"The first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men." - *Existentialism Is a Humanism* (1946), (translated by Philip Mairet (Yale University Press Edition: 2007), p23).

- Theravada Buddhist monk Bikkhu Bodhi:

"Seeking happiness, afraid of pain, loss and death, man walks the delicate balance between good and evil, purity and defilement, progress and decline. His actions are strung out between these moral antipodes, and because he cannot evade the necessity to choose, he must bear the full responsibility for his decisions. Man's moral freedom is a reason for both dread and jubilation, for by means of his choices he determines his own individual destiny... If he chooses wrongly he can sink to the lowest depths of degradation, if he chooses rightly he can make himself worthy even of the homage of the gods. The paths to all destinations branch out from the present, from the ineluctable immediate occasion of conscious choice and action." - [Dhammapada: Introduction](#), p19-20.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"...in totally owning the pain, the joy, the responsibility of my life—if I see this point clearly—then I'm free. I have no hope, I have no need for anything else." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p68.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"...our responsibility is always right here, right now, to experience the reality of our life as it is. And eventually to blame no one. If we blame anyone we know we're caught; we can be sure of that." - [Everyday Zen](#) (1997), p142.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"If we can submit to an authority, have it tell us what to do, then we can give someone else the responsibility for our lives and we don't have to carry it anymore. We don't have to feel the anxiety of making a decision." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p11.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"...when all is said and done, the responsibility to preserve our humanity sits squarely on each one of us, no matter what our rank or status in society." - [Coming To Our Senses](#) (2006), p105.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"The whole point of mindfulness based stress reduction — and for that matter health promotion in its largest sense — is to challenge and encourage people to become their own authorities, to take more responsibility for their own lives, their own bodies, their own health. I like to emphasize that each person is already the world authority on him - or herself, or at least could be if they started attending to things mindfully. A great deal of the information each of us needs to learn more about ourselves and our health — information we desperately need in order to grow

and to heal and to make effective life choices — is already right at our fingertips, at the tips of, or rather, right beneath, our noses." - [*Wherever You Go, There You Are*](#) (1994), p191-192.

Foucault, Mindfulness, and Names

[Michel Foucault](#) (1926-1984)

- Madness.
- Cultural archaeology.
- The formation of discourse.

"Classificatory thought gives itself an essential space, which it proceeds to efface at each moment." - *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), (translated by A. M. Sheridan (Vintage Books Edition: 1994), p9).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (~6th Century BC):
"A name becoming a prescribed name is not an absolute name." – *Tao Te Ching*, 1, (Tristan Petts translation).
老子：
“名可名，非常名。”
- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):
"Zen master Panshan [720–814] addressed the congregation, saying, “When there are no affairs in the mind, the myriad things are not born. In the inconceivable mysterious function, where would a speck of dust alight? The Way itself is formless, but because of form, names are established. The Way itself is nameless, but because of names, there is classification. “If you say, ‘Mind is Buddha,’ then you still haven’t entered the mystery. If you say, ‘No mind, no Buddha,’ then you’re just pointing at the traces of the ultimate. Even a thousand saints can’t transmit the higher road to others. You students are tormented by form. You’re like apes grabbing at shadows.”” - p114.
- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):
"Who we are is beyond words — just that open power of life, manifesting constantly in all sorts of interesting things, even in our own misery and struggles." - [Nothing Special - Living Zen](#) (1995), p116.
- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):
"We use words to point to something — an object or a concept — but they may or may not correspond to the “truth” of that thing, which can only be known through a direct perception of its reality. In our daily life we rarely have a direct perception. We invent, imagine, and create perceptions based on the seeds of the images that we have in our store consciousness." - [Understanding Our Mind](#) (2001), p12-13.
- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):
"If you observe this process of Selfing with sustained attention and inquiry, you will see that what we call "the self is really a construct of our own mind, and hardly a permanent one, either. If you look deeply for a stable, indivisible self, for the core "you" that underlies "your" experience, you are not likely to find it other than in more thinking. You might say you are your name, but that is not quite accurate. Your name is just a label. The same is true of your age, your gender, your opinions, and so on. None are fundamental to who you are." - [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) (1994), p237.
- [Cold Mountain Poems](#) (2009), *Introduction*:
"Every time the word “sit” appears in a poem by Han Shan or Shih Te, it means to sit, cross-legged on the ground or on a simple straw mat, in meditation. For the Taoist, it is the “sitting

forgetting” that is intended to free him of the memory of words, the memory which separates him from the Tao, which, according to Lao Tzu, cannot be described in words." - p8.

Baudrillard, Mindfulness, and Consumption of Symbols

[Jean Baudrillard](#) (1929-2007)

- Subject dominated by object through consumption.
- 'Hyper-reality'.
- Lost historical contexts.

“For me it's useless to attempt to artificially perpetuate a system, because culture became a system of values, it's no more an organic, symbolic organization of sociality, now it's a system of market values, but of aesthetic values, not so much economic values. As a system of aesthetic values it is a very antinomic proposition, because culture perishes from this mixture of the symbolic and of values.” - *Between Difference and Singularity* - An open discussion with Jean Baudrillard (June 2002).

- Daoist Sage [LaoZi](#) (~6th Century BC):

"If you over-estimate great men, people become powerless. If you over-value possessions, people begin to steal." – *Tao Te Ching*, 3, (Stephen Mitchell translation).

老子：

“不尚賢，使民不爭；不貴難得之貨，使民不為盜；不見可欲，使心不亂。”

- [Zen's Chinese Heritage - The masters and their teachings](#) (2000):

"...the tradition attributed to Bodhidharma of not relying on scripture but instead on “turning the light inward.” ...this approach naturally led to a de-emphasis or outright rejection of religious symbolism and to iconoclastic tendencies..." - p85.

- The First Zen Patriarch [Bodhidharma](#) (early 5th century AD):

"Because mortals have shallow minds and don't understand anything deep, the Buddha used the tangible to represent the sublime. People who seek blessings by concentrating on external works instead of internal cultivation are attempting the impossible. [...] The people I meet nowadays are superficial. They think of merit as something that has form. They squander their wealth and butcher creatures of land and sea. They foolishly concern themselves with erecting statues and stupas, telling people to pile up lumber and bricks, to paint this blue and that green. They strain body and mind, injure themselves and mislead others. And they don't know enough to be ashamed. How will they ever become enlightened? They see something tangible and instantly become attached. If you talk to them about formlessness, they sit there dumb and confused." - [Breakthrough Sermon](#) (Red Pine translation).

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"...the absolute, where there is no exchange value or materialistic value or even spiritual value — the world that our words and thinking mind cannot reach. Living in the realm of duality, we must have a good understanding of the absolute..." - [Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness](#) (1999), p111.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"We try not to consume things that nurture our anger, frustration, and fear. To consume more mindfully, we need to regularly discuss what we eat, how we eat, how to buy less, and how to have higher-quality food, both edible and the food we consume through our senses." - [Anger - Wisdom for Cooling the Flames](#) (2001), p22.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"It is amazing to me that we can be simultaneously completely preoccupied with the appearance of our own body and at the same time completely out of touch with it as well. This goes for our

relationship to other people's bodies too. As a society we seem to be overwhelmingly preoccupied with appearances in general and appearance of bodies in particular. Bodies are used in advertisements to sell everything from cigarettes to cars. Why? Because the advertisers are capitalizing on people's strong identification with particular body images." - [*Full Catastrophe Living*](#) (2005), p75.

Derrida, Mindfulness, and Context

[Jacques Derrida](#) (1930-2004)

- Continental philosophical tradition.
- Literary criticism.
- Deconstruction.

"You record it, but then you'll re-write it, re-frame it, build a new context, and perhaps, my sentence will sound different. So, I trust you but I know that it is impossible to control the publication of everything I say." - *An Interview with Jacques Derrida* (1997), Nikhil Padgaonkar (Interviewer).

- Japanese Soto Zen teacher [Shunryu Suzuki](#):

"A translation cannot be perfect. It is difficult, almost impossible, to translate because there are no exact equivalents." - *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness* (1999), p116.

- Vietnamese Zen teacher [Thich Nhat Hanh](#):

"Understanding, in humans, is translated into concepts, thoughts, and words. Understanding is not an aggregate of bits of knowledge. It is a direct and immediate penetration. In the realm of sentiment, it is feeling. In the realm of intellect, it is perception. It is an intuition rather than the culmination of reasoning. Every now and again it is fully present in us, and we find we cannot express it in words, thoughts, or concepts. "Unable to describe it," that is our situation at such moments. Insights like this are spoken of in Buddhism as "impossible to reason about, to discuss, or to incorporate into doctrines or systems of thought." - *The Sun My Heart* (1988), p51.

- American Zen teacher [Charlotte Joko Beck](#):

"All thoughts occur in a specific context. That's the whole point: to see the specific context, not just the general thought. Our reaction to a person or thought will be different today than next week, depending on each situation. If you had a million dollars in the bank, you probably wouldn't care whether you got that job or not. You'd sail in calmly and just enjoy the interview. All reality is specific, immediate. We can meet the same people and have one thought about them today, yet next week (depending on the changing personal situation) they'll look different to us." - *Nothing Special - Living Zen* (1995), p178.

- Mindfulness teacher [Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn](#):

"Awareness means seeing the whole, perceiving the entire content and context of each moment. We can never grasp this entirely through thinking. But we can perceive it in its essence if we get beyond our thinking, to direct seeing, direct hearing, direct feeling." - *Full Catastrophe Living* (2005), p438.

References and Useful Links:

- [*The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*](#) - Second Edition (2005, Oxford University Press), Edited by Ted Honderich.
- The European Graduate School Online Philosophy Resource:
<http://www.egs.edu/library/>