

# Book review

## Mindfulness

How to live well by paying attention

**Category:** Book Reviews / Self-help

**Author:** Ed Halliwell

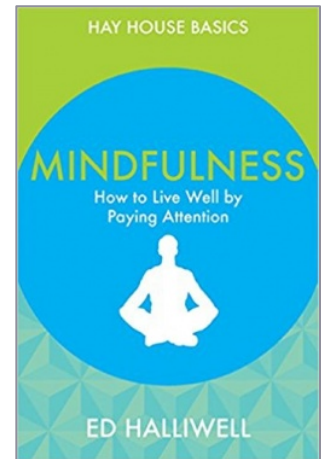
**Year:** 2015

**Publisher:** Hay House, UK

**ISBN:** 9781781802649

**Audience:** Supporting Myself

**Summary:** A comprehensive and accessible guide to the practise of mindfulness



Ed Halliwell has a list of impressive achievements to his name: he is co-author of *The Mindful Manifesto* and works with UK Parliamentarians to bring mindfulness into public policy. But, to me, his personal writing style is a stand-out.

He uses imagery to convey concepts that stays with you long after you finish reading the book. I can identify with the image of someone barely hanging on to a horse galloping along at a furious pace, with no idea where they are going. This book provides many practical tools to encourage you to take a closer look at how you react to events and emotions, and to take a wider look rather than focusing on immediate daily challenges. Perhaps taking time to slow down to a canter, and even rest your horse in a field, smell the flowers and as he states in the title, “live well by paying attention”.

### Fighting change blindness

I found his discussion of the concept of “change blindness” to be a real wake up call. Change blindness refers to how common it is to zone out or be on autopilot. Halliwell tells of an experiment where the majority of people being served did not notice the changeover of the assistant helping them at a desk, even though they looked quite different from the first assistant. This makes me wonder what I could be unknowingly missing, besides the drive home on autopilot.

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This book is considered - it does not overwhelm the reader, instead Halliwell advises you to not to be in a hurry to understand mindfulness. The chapters are bite-sized and he suggests taking a week to work through each one and its recommended practices, over a period of nine weeks. You also get a chance to see how the concepts can be adapted in real life scenarios through the journeys of five others. What really won me over was the generous font size and gaps between lines; effortless on the eyes how can you not relax into this book? Halliwell realistically advises there is only so much you can glean from a book and that face-to-face experience with an experienced teacher or group is vital to building a lifelong practice.

Mindfulness is a hot topic; there were multiple people who had reserved this book in the library. I would definitely put my name down on the list to read it again, it is a gentle but persuasive read.

**Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Officer at the Mental Health Foundation**

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