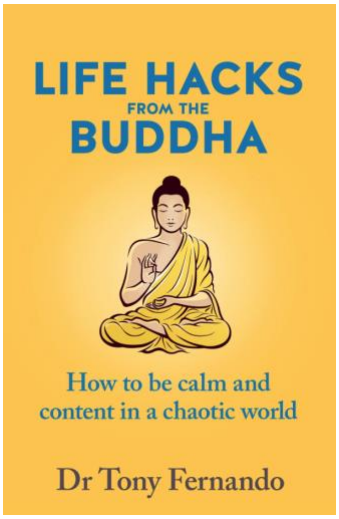
Book review

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand
mauri tū, mauri ora



Author: *Dr Tony Fernando*
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Mindfulness is something we hear a lot about these days, particularly in conversations about mental health and wellbeing. We're encouraged to slow down, be present and pay attention to our thoughts and feelings. But these ideas aren't new. Many have their roots in Buddhist philosophy, which has long explored the nature of the mind, suffering and contentment. In Life Hacks from the Buddha, Auckland-based psychiatrist and sleep specialist Dr Tony Fernando draws on this wisdom, looking at how some of these teachings might be applied to the challenges we face in everyday life.

The book brings together 50 lessons inspired by Buddhist teachings, covering everything from managing stress and our expectations to developing compassion and letting go of things we cannot control. Some are simple reminders, while others invite a little more reflection. One lesson, for example, encourages us to treat everyone we meet as a friend by looking for what we have in common rather than focusing on our differences. It's a small shift in perspective, but one that could make a difference in how we relate to others.

I particularly like how the author explores mindfulness as more than just being present or finding ways to calm the mind. In Buddhist philosophy, awareness is also closely connected to kindness, compassion and how we treat others. Drawing on both his medical experience and understanding of Buddhist teachings, Dr Fernando makes connections between these ideas and familiar experiences such as feeling overwhelmed, struggling with sleep or getting caught up in our own thoughts and expectations. It also serves as a reminder that looking after our wellbeing doesn't always mean doing more or trying harder. Sometimes it means learning to accept what we cannot change, being a little less hard on ourselves and showing more understanding towards others.

The book doesn't offer a formula for overcoming life's difficulties, nor will every lesson resonate with everyone. It offers another way of looking at some of the things we all experience and gently invites us to consider whether a little more awareness, acceptance and compassion might change how we respond to them. For anyone curious about mindfulness, Buddhist philosophy or simply looking for a different perspective on everyday life, there are plenty of thoughtful ideas to take away and reflect on from this book.

Review by Caryn Yachinta, Research and Archives Specialist at the Mental Health Foundation

Disclaimer: Please note these reviews are not intended as endorsements or recommendations from the Mental Health Foundation. This feature introduces resources that may be useful for individuals with an interest in mental health and wellbeing topics.