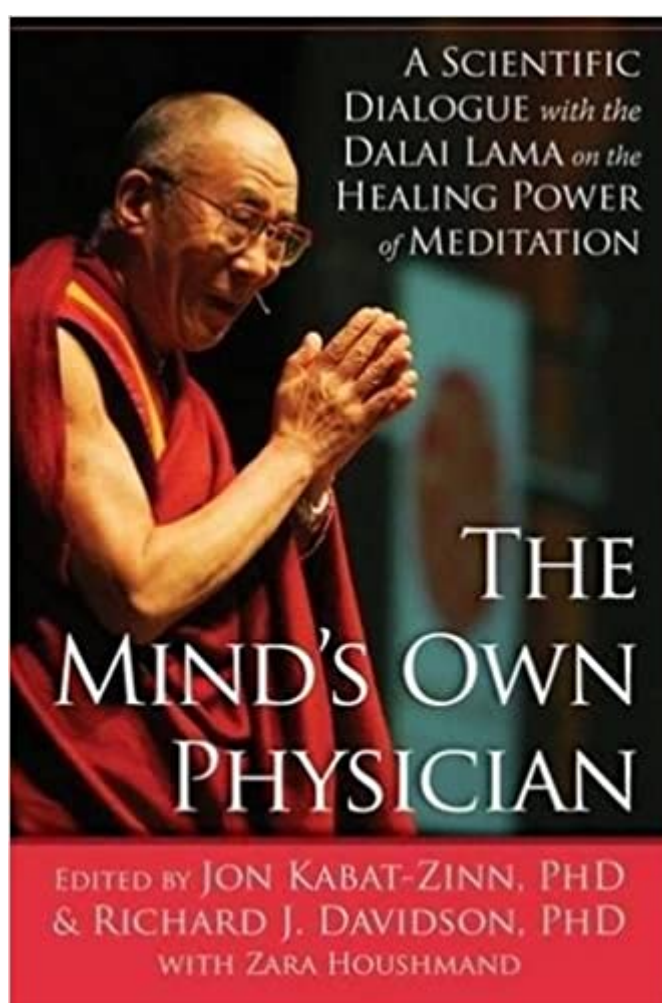


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# The Mind's Own Physician: A Scientific Dialogue With The Dalai Lama On The Healing Power Of Meditation



## Synopsis

By inviting the Dalai Lama and leading researchers in medicine, psychology, and neuroscience to join in conversation, the Mind & Life Institute set the stage for a fascinating exploration of the healing potential of the human mind. *The Mind & Life Institute's Own Physician* presents in its entirety the thirteenth Mind and Life dialogue, a discussion addressing a range of vital questions concerning the science and clinical applications of meditation: How do meditative practices influence pain and human suffering? What role does the brain play in emotional well-being and health? To what extent can our minds actually influence physical disease? Are there important synergies here for transforming health care, and for understanding our own evolutionary limitations as a species? Edited by world-renowned researchers Jon Kabat-Zinn and Richard J. Davidson, this book presents this remarkably dynamic interchange along with intriguing research findings that shed light on the nature of the mind, its capacity to refine itself through training, and its role in physical and emotional health.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“The Mind & Life Institute's Own Physician is a journey of understanding, in which an integrative dialogue unfolds between the spiritual leaders of contemplative meditation and scientists at the forefront of mind-body medicine. This transformative conversation provides valuable insight into how meditative practices can balance the mind with effects on the body, as well as, potential benefits for human health. This blending of contemplative traditions with Western science opens a mindful

awareness that has the empowering capacity to fully engage people in their health, and more broadly, in the well-being of our societies.

•Michael R. Irwin, MD, Cousins Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles

“The Mind’s Own Physician offers us a precious portal into the seminal conversations that gave birth to the nascent field of contemplative neuroscience. The issues digested, debated, and ignited in its pages will serve as a road map and inspiration for my students and their students over the coming decades.

•Amishi P. Jha, PhD, contemplative neuroscientist, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Miami

“If you want to see how to build bridges between the deepest wisdom of the heart and the highest standards of contemporary neuroscience, look no further. This series of meetings between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Western scientists and meditation teachers will prove to be epoch-changing, and this book shows why. Here, you will find interior and exterior empiricism in exquisite dialogue. Drink it all in. The brilliance of the participants shines through on every page.

•Mark Williams, PhD, Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Oxford, Director, Oxford Mindfulness Centre

“Can meditation improve your health? This question is just the starting point for a series of innovative exchanges across different ways of knowing among first-ranked clinicians, scientists, Buddhist teachers, and the Dalai Lama. Thoughtful, rigorous, and surprising by turns, this dialogue reminds all of us who care about the effects of the mind on health just how much more thinking remains to be done.

•Anne Harrington, PhD, Professor of the History of Science, Harvard University, author of *The Cure Within*

“Our thoughts can seem too real, giving our imaginings about tomorrow the power to create chronic stress and unhealthy changes in our bodies. Our sense of self can seem too fixed, creating a cage where our habitual worries can run in depressing circles. In the moment that we recognize our thoughts as thoughts and our habits as habits, new and liberating possibilities emerge for the way we live our lives. Contemplative traditions such as Buddhism have long seen the transformative power of that simple moment of recognition, and more recently, clinicians in various domains have discovered the potential that this contemplative insight offers for the treatment of chronic stress, depression, and other especially modern maladies. Yet the potential of interventions based on contemplative approaches has only begun to emerge. The full realization of that potential requires a careful, critical, and honest dialogue among contemplatives and scientists so as to allow research and clinical practices to develop effectively. This remarkable book provides a fresh and clear record of such a dialogue. Informative and highly accessible, *The Mind’s Own Physician* is a groundbreaking moment in the development of contemplative science.

•John D.

Dunne, Associate Professor of Religion, Emory University

“A must-read for anyone interested in understanding how Buddhist contemplative traditions and Western scientific traditions can work together to uncover the complexities of the human mind. Mind and Life has done it again: engaged a group of distinguished contemplative scholars, clinicians, and scientists in a lively, productive, and inspiring dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama that furthers our understanding of meditation and its potential to heal.”

• Jeanne Tsai, Associate Professor of Psychology, Stanford University, Director, Stanford Culture and Emotion Laboratory

“This book marks a milestone in the emerging field of contemplative sciences. Within its pages, you can relive a seminal 2005 Mind and Life conference that brought together world-famous neuroscientists, clinicians, and contemplative scholars in a dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This groundbreaking work explores the development of scientifically based tools and programs aimed at creating more balanced and healthy lives. How does stress evolve? What does it do to our minds and bodies? How can we use ancient mindfulness and meditative practices in our everyday, modern lives and also in clinical settings to reduce stress and cultivate healthier minds? This book is a must for everyone who is interested in making this world a more human place.”

• Tania Singer, PhD, Director, Department of Social Neuroscience, Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig, Germany

“Jon Kabat-Zinn and Richard Davidson bring together an internationally acclaimed cast of neuroscientists and scholars for a stimulating dialogue with the Dalai Lama. They weave a rich tapestry of information on how meditation can be useful for a wide variety of conditions, ranging from depression and stress to anxiety and psoriasis. In easy-to-understand, conversational style, the experts lay out how the mind’s powerful healing effects can be harnessed in ways that are becoming increasingly illuminated by scientific discoveries.”

• Stuart J. Eisendrath, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco, Director of the UCSF Depression Center

“It is most befitting that this wonderful book, composed from Mind and Life dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, would appear after the tenth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 tragedy. Accompanied by greatly increasing psychophysiological stress, anxiety, and depression, the post-9/11 decade has yielded an auspicious upsurge of rigorous scientific and clinical research on mindfulness meditation and other systematic methods of mental training that may help transcend the pain and suffering caused by such harmful afflictions. The Mind and Life Own Physician highlights these exciting advances through a series of insightful discussions between His Holiness and a diverse group of stellar contemplative scholars, scientists, and physicians who are leaders in the field of integrative mind-body-brain medicine. Everyone who

wishes to cultivate a sound body and sane, healthy mind in these turbulent times will welcome the publication of these inspiring conversations. •David E. Meyer, PhD, Clyde H. Coombs, and J. E. Keith Smith Professor of Mathematical Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Michigan

“The Mind’s Own Physician brings you straight into the heart of a remarkable interchange between His Holiness the Dalai Lama, renowned contemplative teachers from Buddhist and Christian traditions, and world leaders in neuroscience, psychiatry, stress physiology, and clinical medicine. Jon Kabat-Zinn and Richard Davidson guide the reader through an authentic chronicle of a landmark meeting of extraordinary minds as it unfolds through a series of crystalline presentations and probing dialogues about the nature of mind, meditation, and brain function. These dialogues provide the foundation for discussion on the biological effects of chronic stress, treatment and relapse prevention in depression, and the historical and evolutionary roots of Western medicine’s struggle to understand and care for the whole person. The highly accessible and rich treatment of each of these areas is fascinating to read. The constant presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s deeply engaged attention, teaching, and critical ear reverberates throughout. The participants’ common commitment to fostering the conditions necessary for human flourishing through intercultural and interdisciplinary inquiry is truly inspiring. In capturing this arc of information and intent, The Mind’s Own Physician becomes an essential treatment of one of the most hopeful directions in thought alive today: the human capacity to ease our suffering through introspective insight and our growing scientific investigation into how this may occur.”

•Clifford Saron, PhD, Associate Research Scientist, University of California, Davis Center for Mind and Brain

In Washington, DC, the Dalai Lama met with Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of *Full Catastrophe Living*, Richard Davidson, and other leading meditation researchers to explore the intersection between ancient meditation techniques and modern neuroscience. The result is a fascinating and revealing conversation about the potential of the human mind to heal itself through mindfulness meditation, transcribed and presented to the public for the first time in *The Mind’s Own Physician*.

A continuing series of books from the Mind Life Institute and Western Science (I’ve read two of the prior publications, *Healing Emotions* and *Destructive Emotions*). This book elaborates upon the others with more up-to-date scientific evidence for mindfulness-based stress reduction and cognitive-behavioral therapy. I also bought *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*...by Richard Davidson, Ph.D. and Sharon Begley. The two books are very complementary. A must read for those interested

in the intersection of science and the Eastern Wisdom tradition of Buddhism.

This book does not focus on religious beliefs, but does show how religion can view and use meditation techniques to improve their teaching and belief structure. Mostly it encompasses the scientific findings and continuing research which has brought about amazing results that solidify the benefits of meditation, and show the value in continued research and practice. This book is a validation in scientific terms of meditation as a medical treatment.

I have had the pleasure of hearing live, both Jon Kabat-Zinn and Richard Davidson, so was very interested in this work. As I work my way through the book, it is like "being there" and listening to this very powerful dialogue. I find myself re-reading pages, and then turning back to the index, and looking for links and connections that add to my understanding. This is going to be on my must read list for individuals in my meditation and mindfulness experiences from cancer survivors to employees. Enjoy and grow!

Mental training/ mind training should be a required activity in schools and this method seems creditable to me. Those of us in the western tradition are far too "external" in our way of thinking and living. It's no wonder we have so many physical and mental problems.

This is a fascinating book with a spiritual lift, and wonderful medical/scientific studies which support the best effects of mindfulness and centering. Includes a chapter by Fr. Thomas Keating - developer of "Centering Prayer" which offers techniques of contemplative prayer for the present-day lay person.

Having read several of HH The Dalai Lama's books, I was ready for the more research-based material in this book. While I found it desirable to reread some material, I gained a better understanding as a result. It is a very helpful book that expands the applications of Buddhist philosophy in everyday life.

These top dogs in meditation enlighten you with personal accounts that will at once, open your mind yet quiet it, too. Having heard renown researcher Richie Davidson and the Honorable Dalai Lama speak in Madison, WI, this book captures their amazing essences. You will delight in this book. Lovely and fascinatingly engaging.

I have followed the Mind and Life Institute for many years now and after reading this book on my Kindle I purchased it and re-read it. So bought this copy as a gift for my Neurosurgeon for Christmas - - he now wants to do more research on my brain :):) Highly recommend this to anyone! And also to follow up with the other videos and books.

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