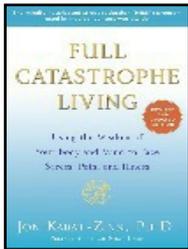


# Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



## JON KABOT ZINN:FULL CATASTROPHE LIVING-MINDFULNESS

*Regular Mindfulness practices as identified in Jon Kabot Zinn's book "Full Catastrophe Living" promotes significant benefits to health wellbeing. Today in 2020 clinical health practices, organisations, employers, exercise trainers, education institutions, and individuals apply mindfulness on a regular basis.*

*Zinn is considered a leading exponent of mindfulness, breath control, and related practices to reduce physical and mental stress. Applying breath control techniques with a purpose, being non-judgemental can assist in reducing life's stresses. The Mind-Body Stress Reduction, MBSR practices developed by Zinn for use in his clinical settings have been used widely by thousands of people across the globe.*

*People who regularly meditate, participate in tai chi or yoga practices, singers, actors or performers are all cognisant of Zinn's and similarly related practises for maintaining positive breathing techniques. Zinn also suggests mindfulness body-scan techniques which can be applied prior to sleep, or lying down in the day comfortably. I first came across Zinn's early book titled, "Wherever You Go There You Are" in the 1980s, since then it has remained on my book-shelf. In 2017 whilst facilitating a soul pathways meditation-discussion group read the above book and suggested to participants they also access mindfulness resources. An extract from Zinn's inspirational book follows.*

*–Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

## INTRODUCTION TO JON KABOT ZINN

'The landmark work on mindfulness, meditation, and healing, now revised and updated after twenty-five years. Stress. It can sap our energy, undermine our health if we let it, even shorten our lives. It makes us more vulnerable to anxiety and depression, disconnection and disease.'

Based on Jon Kabat-Zinn's renowned mindfulness-based stress reduction program, this classic, groundbreaking work--which gave rise to a whole new field in medicine and psychology--shows you how to use medically proven mind-body approaches derived from meditation and yoga to counteract stress, establish greater balance of body and mind, and stimulate well-being and healing.

**By engaging in these mindfulness practices and integrating them into your life from moment to moment and from day to day, you can learn to manage chronic pain, promote optimal healing, reduce anxiety and feelings of panic, and improve the overall quality of your life, relationships, and social networks.'**  
[Cited: *Book Depository*].



**MINDFULNESS KEYS: PURPOSE - PRESENT MOMENT - NON JUDGEMENTAL**

**[PP: 45-46] MIND BODY STRESS REDUCTION, BREATH CONTROL**

In MBSR [*Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction*], we generally focus on the sensations of breathing at the belly rather than the nostril or in the chest. This is partly because doing so tends to be particularly relaxing and calming in the early stages of practice. All professionals who make special use of their breathing as part of their work, such as opera singers, wind instrument players, dancers, actors, and martial artists, know the value of breathing from the belly and of “grounding” or anchoring their awareness in this region. They know from first hand experience that they will have more breath and be better able to modulate it effectively if the breath comes from the belly.

**Focusing on the breath at your belly can be calming.** Just as the surface of the ocean tends to be choppy when the wind is blowing, so too the “atmospheric conditions” in our own mind can influence the waves of the breath. Our breathing tends to be reactive and agitated when either the outside environment or the inner environment is not calm and peaceful.

In the case of the ocean, if you go down ten or twenty feet, there is only a gentle undulation; there is calm even when the surface is agitated. Similarly, when we focus on our breathing down in the belly, **we are tuning in to a region of the body that is far from the head and thus far below the agitations of our thinking mind. It is intrinsically calmer.**

So tuning in to the breath at the belly is a valuable way of reestablishing inner calmness and balance in the face of emotional upset or when you have a lot on your mind. **In meditation, the breath can serve as a reliable and ever-present anchor for our attention.** Tuning to the sensations of breathing anywhere we can them in the body allows us to drop below the surface agitations of the mind into relaxation, calmness, and stability, without having to change anything at all. The agitation and choppiness may still be at the surface of the mind, just as the waves and turbulence are at the surface of the water during stormy conditions.

But in resting in awareness of the breath sensations, even for a moment or two, we are out of the wind and protected from the buffeting action of the waves and their tension-producing effects. This is an extremely effective way to reconnect with the potential for calmness within you.



It enhances the overall stability of your mind, even in very difficult moments, when you most need some stability and clarity of mind. **When you touch base in any moment with that part of your mind that is already calm and stable**, your perspective immediately changes. You can see things more clearly and act from inner balance rather than being tossed about by the agitations of your mind.'

**JOHN KABOT ZINN: MINDFULNESS - FULL BODY SCAN EXERCISE**

**[PP: 95-97] MIND BODY SCAN 1-13**

- (1) Lie down on your back in a comfortable place**, such as on a foam mat or pad on the floor or on your bed. Keep in mind from the very beginning that in this lying down practice, the intention is to “fall awake” rather than to fall asleep. Make sure that you will be warm enough. You might want to cover yourself with a blanket or do it in a sleeping bag if the room is cold.
  
- (2) Allow your eyes to gently close**, But if and when you find any drowsiness creeping in, feel free to open your eyes and continue with them open.
  
- (3) Gently let your attention settle on your abdomen, feeling the rising and falling** of your belly with each inbreath and each outbreath; in other words, “riding the waves” of your own breathing with full awareness for the full duration of each inbreath, and the full duration of each outbreath.
  
- (5) Take a few moments to feel your body as a whole, from head to toe**; the “envelope” of your skin; the sensations associated with touch in the places you are in contact with the floor or the bed.
  
- (6) Bring your attention to the toes of the left foot. As you direct your attention to them, see if you can direct or channel your breathing to them as well**, so that it feels as if you are breathing *to* your toes and *out* from your toes. It may take a while for you to get the hang of this so that it doesn't feel effortful or contrived.



It may help to imagine your breath travelling down the body from your nose into the lungs and continuing through the torso and down the left leg all the way to the toes, and then back again an out through your nose. Actually, the breath does take this and every other route in the body, through the blood stream. **Allow yourself to *feel* any and all sensations from your toes, perhaps distinguishing between them** and watching the flux of sensations in this region. If you don't feel anything at the moment, that is fine too. Just allow yourself to feel **“not feeling anything.”**

- (7) **When you are ready to leave the toes and move on, take a deeper, more intentional breath in all the way down to the toes and, on the outbreath, allow them to “dissolve” in your mind’s eye.** Stay with your breathing for a few breaths as least, and then move on in turn to the sole of the foot, the heel, the top of the foot, and then the ankle, continuing to breathe in *to* and out *from* each region as you observe the sensations that you are experiencing, and then letting go of that region and moving on.
- (8) As with the awareness-of-breathing exercise (Chapter 3) and the sitting meditation practices (Chapter 4), bring your mind back to the breath and to the region you are focusing on each time your notice that your attention has wandered off, after first taking note of what carried you away in the first place of what is on your mind when you realize it has wandered away from the focus on the body.
- (9) In this way, as described in the text of this chapter, **continue moving slowly up your left leg and through the rest of your body as you maintain the focus of the breath and on the sensations within the individual regions** as you come to them. If you are experiencing pain or discomfort of any kind, consult the sections in this chapter that suggest how to work with discomfort, as well as Chapters 22 and 23.



- (10) Practice the body scan at least once a day. Again, it helps to use the CD for guidance in the beginning stages of your practice so that the pace is slow enough, and to you remember the instructions and their tonal quality accurately.
- (11) Remember that the body scan is the first formal mindfulness practice that our patients engage in intensively and that they do it forty-five minutes a day, six days a week, for at least two weeks straight in the beginning of their training in MBSR [*Mind Body Stress Research*]. So when you are ready, that would be a good strategy for undertaking the next steps in your own developing meditation practice, especially if you want to follow the full curriculum of MBSR and give it and yourself a fair chance.
- (12) If you have trouble staying awake, try doing the body scan with your eyes open, as not is **step 2** above.
- (13) The most important point is to get down on the floor and practice. How much or for how long in not as important as that you make the time for it at all, every day if possible.



**Suggested resources:**

Full Catastrophe Living -Jon Kabot Zinn, 2013, Bantam Books Trade, USA Isbn:9780345536938. *Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, Illness.*

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Full-Catastrophe-Living-Jon-Kabat-Zinn-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/9780345536938?ref=grid-view>

<https://www.mindfulnesscds.com/>

[https://youtu.be/3nwwKbM\\_vJc](https://youtu.be/3nwwKbM_vJc)

[LINK TO MINDFULNESS INDEX](#)

