



## **The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness**

*Yongey Mingyur, Daniel Goleman (Foreword by), Eric Swanson*

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For millennia, Buddhists have enjoyed the limitless benefits of meditation. But how does it work? And why? The principles behind this ancient practice have long eluded some of the best minds in modern science. Until now.

In this groundbreaking work, world-renowned Buddhist teacher **Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche** invites us to join him in unlocking the secrets behind the practice of meditation. Working with neuroscientists at the Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior, Yongey Mingyur provides clear insights into modern research indicating that systematic training in meditation can enhance activity in areas of the brain associated with happiness and compassion. He has also worked with physicists across the country to develop a fresh, scientifically based interpretation of the Buddhist understanding of the nature of reality.

With an infectious joy and insatiable curiosity, Yongey Mingyur weaves together the principles of Tibetan Buddhism, neuroscience, and quantum physics in a way that will forever change the way we understand the human experience. Using the basic meditation practices he provides, we can discover paths through everyday problems, transforming obstacles into opportunities to recognize the unlimited potential of our own minds.

With a foreword by bestselling author Daniel Goleman, *The Joy of Living* is a stunning breakthrough, an illuminating vision of the science of Buddhism and a handbook for transforming our minds, bodies, and lives.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness for online ebook**

### **Jess says**

I was surprised by how much this book floored me. I hadn't thought of the intersections between Buddhism and scientific discoveries, but he made me see it. And he demystified a lot of what I find hard about meditating. The idea of meditating in shorter bursts; the notion of just relaxing your mind (instead of straining for focus); the making contemporary of ancient teachings - all of it made Buddhist teachings and meditation practice more vivid for me. And I needed to read it. I think this is one of those rare books I will dip into again and again for something new or rediscovered. Highly recommended to anyone who wants to learn about Buddhist teachings or meditation practice.

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### **Ariz Guzman says**

Buddhism is not a religion. To a trained Buddhist, "it is a type of science, a method of exploring your own experience through techniques that enable you to examine your actions and reactions in a nonjudgmental way" (11). This book was a good intro in training to achieve a "natural mind" or Enlightenment, a mind in its natural state, free from conceptual limitations. Supposedly, "the experience of natural peace is so far beyond what we normally consider relaxation that it defies description...beyond our capacity to express in words" (51), just like Fight Club. Yep. The book I read before this was Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club. I think this whole Enlightenment thing is like fight club. "You aren't alive anywhere like you're alive at fight club....Fight club isn't about words" (Palahniuk 51).

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on nothingness and emptiness as source for infinite possibilities.  
"it's only after you've lost everything, that you're free to do anything" (70)

on impermanence.  
fight club: "nothing is static. even the mona lisa is falling apart" (49), "nothing is static. everything is falling part" (108)

recognition that everyone and everything is a reflection of everyone and everything else.  
fight club: "everything is a copy of a copy of a copy. (21), "you are not a beautiful and unique snowflake. you are the same decaying organic matter" (134)

on suffering. The Four Noble Truths  
1. Ordinary life is conditioned by suffering  
2. Suffering results from causes  
3. The causes of suffering can be extinguished.  
4. There is a simple path through which the causes of suffering can be extinguished.  
fight club: "disaster is a natural part of my evolution. toward tragedy and dissolution" (110)

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The book did taught me to be a little bit mindful. Sometimes I think "emo" and I become emo. I often find

myself living in the past or projecting the future that has not happened yet which limits me from living the "now." It was my mind projecting limitations. It was my thoughts, my Tyler projecting a reality, a world to existence. I forgot to live in the present, which "exists only in the hours between when fight club starts and when fight club ends" (Palahniuk 48).

It's a great book to read with Fight Club.

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### **Tina Carstensen says**

This has been the most meaningful book I've read so far on Buddhism. There were a few times when tries at humor didn't work for me, but they were so sweet in their intention I almost blushed. Other than that it was just what I needed. Just enough over my head to make me want to read it again in a year or so and I'll read more by this author.

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### **Colleen says**

I wish every foray into religion was this enjoyable. Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche is a powerful writer with a gentle sense of humor, most notably about himself.

To any westerner looking to explore Buddhism, READ THIS BOOK. To any person who is feeling less than enthusiastic about getting up in the morning, ditto. To those who know they're missing something, but they can't quite... well, you get the point. Read the book.

Mingyur makes Buddhism conceptually accessible to Western readers. After being declared the reincarnation of several stellar Tibetan monks, he went to a monastery, which he lead after only three years. Now, he could have stopped there. After all, enlightenment was right in front of him. Nope. He chose to go across the pond to visit with our nation's finest quantum physicists and neurologists. He learned that the sharpest edge of science often folds neatly into Buddhism.

In the early chapters, you will find yourself turning constantly to the glossary to look up terms like "space foam" and "samsara." However, Mingyur emphasizes that the only true way to understand the mind-boggling tenets of his faith is to practice meditation. The second half of the book provides a down-to-earth description of how to do just that.

Please read this book. And then call me. We'll hang out in silence for a while together.

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### **Sarah Anne Grossman says**

This book was too many feel-good things at once. Pseudo-science meets religion justified by populist self-improving individualist crap equates to boring-ass writing. It took too long to read simply because it was so detestably practical I couldn't get myself to move through it. I don't care if he's a Rinpoche - he's catering to the all-consuming self-absorbed yuppie who would freak if you put milk in his/her latte but probably run you over with his/her Prius if you were jay-walking. He cited literature that was actually notably Buddhist

(Words of My Perfect Teacher) and relatively known in psychiatry (A General Theory of Love) and many scientific studies but the writing felt like a watered down syndicate. I couldn't trust anything I read I felt like I had to double-check all of his notes.

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### **Chris Etheridge says**

For anyone wishing to better their life both mentally and physically, this is a must-read book. For anyone who wants to learn meditation and understand more about it, this is a must-read book. As someone who has recently discovered meditation and has been meditating for a few months I can confirm that it indeed does work. This book covers the very basics from the origination of Buddhism, what meditation is (how it works and how to meditate) to even scientific proof of its benefits to the mind and body. Increased inner and outer joy, less stress and anxiety, lower blood pressure, even increased immunity and fertility to name a few. I can see myself reading this book again once or twice a year. It's a short book and a very easy read.

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### **Krys says**

I spent 2008 studying joyfulness as a practice and a discipline (like practicing the violin, only quieter). This was one of the most instructive, useful, practical, and successful books I found. Yongey Mingyur grew up in an environment that intersected Tibetan Buddhist meditation training and research into how the brain works, so he presents information about the theory and practice of joyfulness from a universal perspective.

The key to joyfulness, like anything else, is practice. This is a great book for learning how to do it.

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### **Heather says**

I thought this book was very insightful and so helpful to open my eyes to the power of meditation. It is not a book about becoming a Buddhist, but more a book of how the human brain responds to meditation. If you're interested in how Buddhism and Western Neurobiology mirror each other, this is a great reference. I loved that it wasn't just about Buddhism and meditation, but he included his experiences working with the Univ of Wisconsin in the brain imaging department and how they were able to observe his brain during meditation and saw a 700 percent increase in certain brain centers. It was fascinating to see modern science prove something that Buddhists have been doing for thousands of years.

From the book jacket: "A beautiful tapestry of Buddhist insight woven together with modern science, this book is a landmark in the development of a contemplative neuroscience. Written by a Tibetan Buddhist meditation master with a deep and abiding interest in science, this book is a must read for anyone interested in the causes and consequences of happiness." --Richard J. Davidson, William James and Vilas Research Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry Director, W.M. Keck Laboratory for Functional Brain Imaging and Behavior, Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience, Wisconsin Center for Affective Science, and Center for Mind-Body Interaction, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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## **Michael says**

This book does several nifty things. First, it shows how concepts from Buddhism and contemporary scientific studies agree with each other. Then, it discusses some studies on people in meditation. It turns out that meditation, when done by people who have done it for a long time and are good at it, makes people incredibly happy and peaceful. (This isn't big news, but it's cool to hear how science has proven this.)

Then, the book discusses meditation techniques with a level of detail and clarity that is unsurpassed in...well, in the five or six books on meditation that I've read. I'd never been given permission to meditate for two or three minutes before; I was always under the impression that meditation needed to be a half hour or so in order for it to be valid. According to Yongey, that's not true.

The Joy of Living is a quick, easy to read book that's highly informative. If the subject matter interests you, I'd recommend it.

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## **Sophie says**

*The Joy of Living* is a book on meditation that explains how it can help you achieve happiness and also why it works, according to modern science. The combination of Buddhist wisdom and science is very interesting, and Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche does a great job explaining both aspects in simple terms for laypersons.

While the first part of the book is more concerned with the whys and wherefores, the second part contains lots of different examples of meditation practices, some of which build on others. The third part deals with the possible results of the practice, as well as with possible problems one may encounter.

This was a joy to read and very helpful. The different anecdotes from the author's own life and from the people he has met are wonderful examples that not only illustrate the point he is trying to make, they often also make you either laugh or think or both.

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## **Velika says**

Took me forever to finish this book...almost a year. I just couldn't get into it, and his voice was very difficult for me to pay attention to. My mind would wander while reading this. Guess I missed the point of the book. :(

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## **Mohammad Ali Abedi says**

*“May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness. May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. May all sentient beings have joy and the causes of joy. May all sentient beings remain in great equanimity, free from attachment and aversion.”*

This is the best meditation book I have read. Maybe it's because it's by Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche, who seems like a pretty neat guy. Usually, we are exposed to books about meditation either by western authors

who basically turn everything into a neat, little commoditized packages, ready to be consumed by clients, or it is by eastern gurus that are fake and just are trying to sell their wares to a western community.

I'm not saying Yongey is definitely not like that, but there does seem to be a sincerity in this book, which is basically a transcription of his talk to the actual author, so it's like he is sitting behind a desk and writing a book. Also, the fact that Yongey in 2011 (a few years after this book) suddenly leaves his monastery and everything he has behind, and lives four years as a wandering yogi, makes me like him more.

This book is split into two parts. In the first part, he becomes scientific and tries to explain the scientific reasoning why meditation works. I like his approach, because even though he is like a super monk, he apparently seems to really like science, so he has educated himself in it, and tries to explain his practices wrapped in a scientific cloth to us.

The second part gets to the actual ways to practice, which was slightly more detailed than the usual podcasts and western books I read, which I liked. Nothing too ritual and complicated, but generally the importance of sitting and the different meditation techniques.

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### **Adrien Treuille says**

Looking for detailed meditation instructions? This book provides the best I've seen. Confused about the multitude techniques? This book provides an enlightening taxonomy.

I just wish the author didn't into magical claims -- flying, telepathy -- at the end of the book!

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### **Barbara says**

Some interesting parables here and good meditation techniques. I also enjoyed the author's references to Western science and research on meditation. Overall, though, not a lot of new material for me. Well written and engaging.

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### **DROPPING OUT says**

There are probably as many books about meditation as there are meditators, so what makes this book different and why does it earn five stars?

Mingyur Rinpoche is most unusual for many reasons, starting with his youth (b. 1975) and that he was already recognized as a Meditation Master while only a young teen. But he also has an insatiable curiosity and interest in Western studies in neurology, psychology, and philosophy, and he tries to synthesize what he learns with what he knows from his Buddhist tradition.

The first part of the book is an explanation (perhaps oversimplified) of what the West knows about the brain and the elusive "mind" and how it related to meditation. The second part of the book is about meditation and the techniques used. And the final is kind of "over to you" to the reader, encouraging her/him to engage in meditation, either formally and informally, and watch the transformation in her/him and the society around.

This may not sound like much, but the text reads almost like the transcription of pod-casts. It is informal, colloquial, and especially, funny. Not knee-slapping funny, but the kind of smile-giggle I associate with HH the Dalai Lama.

Spoiler alert: After reading and mulling it over, I believe that one can conclude that Rinpoche is saying that in the end meditation might be anything you want it to be, so long as it is done consistently and with compassion.

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