

On Mindfulness
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I don't know if it's the biggest choice we make in our lives, but a crucially important choice is to be happy. Very late in life, I've decided that I don't want to live whatever time I have left stressed, anxious, and unhappy. I'm doing whatever I can think of to move myself in that direction, and it's working.

Three things are proving to be particularly helpful to me. The first, and I'm serious, is getting my apartment clean and making my bed every morning, and keeping my fingernails filed and clean. The second is getting in the best physical shape I can—diet, proper weight, and getting toned and flexible and standing up straight and tall. The third is living moment-to-moment in a state of mindfulness. This third one that is the topic of this thought.

My impulse is to now give a basic definition of mindfulness. I've decided not to do that. Mindfulness is something you have to discover for yourself, not hear about from me. I'll leave it with this quote from Ramana Maharishi (1879-1950): “A gently indrawn breath—with no thought—can bring the ecstasy of total awareness—beyond words.”

I don't think you have read books to achieve mindfulness, but I'm a bookish sort and tend to approach things through reading about them and then putting into practice what I read. Here are three books that have been helpful to me. You can look them up on Amazon or see if your public or university library has them or can get them for you:

- Michael Singer, *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself* (New Harbinger Publications, 2007).
- Ramana Maharishi, *The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharishi* (Shambhala, 2004).

- Bhante Henepala Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Wisdom Publications, 2011).

I'll leave it with the suggestion that, now, you decide whether you want to be happy. If the answer is yes, in your own way, look into the possibility of living more mindfully and take the first step in that direction.