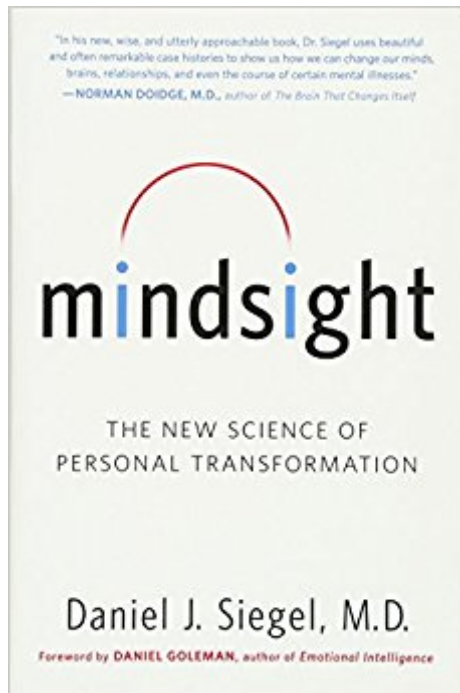




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# Mindsight: The New Science Of Personal Transformation



## Synopsis

This groundbreaking book, from one of the global innovators in the integration of brain science with psychotherapy, offers an extraordinary guide to the practice of “mindfulness” – the potent skill that is the basis for both emotional and social intelligence. From anxiety to depression and feelings of shame and inadequacy, from mood swings to addictions, OCD, and traumatic memories, most of us have a mental “trap” that causes recurring conflict in our lives and relationships. Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., a clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine and co-director of the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center, shows us how to use mindfulness to escape these traps. Through his synthesis of a broad range of scientific research with applications to everyday life, Dr. Siegel has developed novel approaches that have helped hundreds of patients free themselves from obstacles blocking their happiness. By cultivating mindfulness, all of us can effect positive, lasting changes in our brains – and our lives. A book as inspiring as it is profound, *Mindsight* can help us master our emotions, heal our relationships, and reach our fullest potential.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Siegel (*Parenting from the Inside Out*) combines Western neuroscience with Eastern meditation in an exciting exploration of how a troubled mind can right itself. Drawing on current science and case studies, Siegel, a clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA School of Medicine, reinforces the idea that the power of reflection allows us to approach, rather than withdraw, from whatever life brings

us. And learning to stay with a feeling, even a threatening one, is the beginning of discovering that this emotion is just a set of neural firings in our brain. There is enormous pain in the clinical cases: 31-year-old Allison's back pain conceals a painful memory; 12-year-old Sandy is stuck in a panic expressed in obsessive-compulsive behavior. But there is also enormous hope—that therapy, sometimes even without medication, can guide a patient through life. Siegel's method isn't a quick fix and doesn't sugarcoat reality: The mindful traits of serenity, courage and wisdom involve accepting our place in the order of things. He challenges his patients to a life of tough work and convincingly suggests it will be well worth the effort. (Dec. 1) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The concept of emotional intelligence, or EI, rather than IQ as the true barometer of social success has been a hot topic in psychological circles since Daniel Goleman's landmark *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). Yet, according to UCLA psychiatrist Siegel, Goleman's personal friend and fellow Harvard alum, the notion of "mindsight," or the mind's knack for stepping back and analyzing its own thought processes, is just as critical. Drawing on cutting-edge neurobiological research and Eastern meditation practices as well as studies conducted by his own, L.A.-based Mindsight Institute, Siegel presents a convincing case that mindsight's dual focus on mindfulness and empathy can literally rewire the brain and catalyze greater personal fulfillment. In 12 lucid yet scientifically grounded chapters, he provides the evidence for mindsight's powerful effect on human behavior and then presents a guidebook for developing and applying mindsight in one's life. Unlike his earlier, more academic works, *Mindsight* is refreshingly accessible, offering solid practical advice while avoiding the naive optimism of many mainstream self-help books. --Carl Hays --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, Polonius offers this advice to his son Hamlet before his departure for college: "This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." Urging the young man to be true to himself is sound advice but presupposes that Laertes knows who he is. For most of us, self-knowledge is immensely difficult to obtain and even more difficult to accept. However, Socrates insists that the unexamined life is not worth living. All this is relevant to Daniel Siegel's latest book, *Mindsight*, in which he discusses the core principles and potential significance of "the new science of personal transformation," a process

during which the brain creates itself or increases its capabilities "to promote physical, psychological, and interpersonal well-being." As Daniel Goleman correctly observes in an uncommonly enlightening Foreword, "Daniel Siegel's theory of mindsight -- the brain's capacity for both insight and empathy...makes sense for us out of the cluttered confusions of our sometimes maddening and messy emotions...Self-awareness and empathy are (along with self-mastery and social skills) domains of human ability essential for success in life...Of these four skills, self-awareness lays the foundation for the rest." There are several concepts or themes central to Siegel's narrative. For example, "The Triangle of Well-Being" reveals three aspects of our lives (i.e. relationships, mind, and brain) that "form the three mutual influencing points of the Triangle of Well-Being." Mindsight enables us to become aware of, indeed monitor and modify "the flow of energy and information within the Triangle of Well-Being." Two others are "A Window of Tolerance" (see Pages 137-139 and 269-270) and "The Wheel of Awareness" (91-93 and 95-96). Siegel explains why Goleman is dead-on: "self-awareness lays the foundation for the rest." That is not to suggest, however, that one's self-awareness must be total before the expanded and enlightened mindsight can be applied. There are several reasons why I think this is so. Here are the two I think are most important: first, all human beings change (for better or worse) as does the potential self-knowledge to be obtained; the process of self-examination to which Socrates refers is endless until death. My second reason is that, over time, during our personal transformation, others will interact with us differently as will we with them and adjustments must be made, thereby increasing the number and quality of opportunities for gaining new, valuable insights about ourselves, of course, but also about human nature. These are among the dozens of passages that caught my eye: o "Hand Model of the Brain" (Pages 14-22) o "The Mechanism of Mindlessness" (26-30) o "What Fires Together, Wires Together" (40-43) o "A healthy Mind: Complexity and Self-Organization (68-69) o "A Mindful Approach to Changing the Mind" (83-84) o "Awareness Training and Stabilizing the Mind" (93-98) o "Building Inner Resources" (135-137) o "Patterns of Attachment" (167-171) o "An Unresolved and Disorganized Mind" (182-188) o "Top-Down and Bottom-Up" (200-203) o "Making Sense of the Past to Free the Present" (217-220) Then in the Appendix, I especially appreciate the provision of "a dozen basic concepts and related terms and ideas that form a foundation for our approach of mindsight, integration, and well-being" (267-270) followed by extensively annotated Notes (271-300). When review key points later, I would begin with these two sections. No brief commentary such as mind can possibly do full justice to the scope and depth of material that Siegel provides in this volume. I conclude with three points that are of special importance to me and will be, perhaps, to many others who read this brilliant book. First, our mind is what the brain does and the brain

(viewed as a muscle) can be expanded and strengthened, with that process limited only by the nature and extent of our commitment to it. Second, the material Siegel provides has compelling and substantial importance to improving child development within and beyond their schools. Finally, I agree with Daniel Siegel that mindsight can allow us to "see the internal workings of our own minds," to be sure, but it can also help us to increase our understanding and appreciation others and -- through meaningful interaction with them -- increase their understanding and appreciation of us. That is indeed a compelling vision.

Very interesting book. As a medical professional, I enjoyed reading about the science behind mindfulness. This book helped me look at certain mental illnesses differently.

I found this book to be very interesting and helpful. The book was composed of a collection of stories from the author's work as a therapist. These stories captured my attention and pushed me to think deeply about the book's underlying message. This format was perfect, and the book was a much more enjoyable read than several other books I have read in the area. Personally, I find it much more interesting to hear about a client's life story and how they were able to work with their difficulties rather than to just be told directly different strategies for different problems. I've read several books in the area, and this was the first one which followed this format, which was very refreshing. The author has seemed to have tremendous success with his clients from using these techniques (though I wonder whether or not he has the successes he reports in this book with all of his clients). However, the book is not perfect. Siegel has invented several terms and ideas for very abstract concepts that he uses to understand the concept of a healthy mind. In particular, he uses the ideas of "integration," "differentiation," and "linkage" from systems theory and complexity theory. Although I don't know anything about these particular areas, I have some exposure to mathematics and am not sure how well these concepts really translate into the aspect of the brain. Usually before applying mathematical ideas, a very specific set of assumptions would need to be met. Even after reading the book, I did not understand how these concepts were at the core of what he was doing; it seemed like he really just had a specific set of treatment regimes for different types of emotional troubles, and found ways to fit these into his model of integration. Don't let this sway you from reading the book - the techniques and ideas he presents are practical regardless of this issue. It is definitely worth your time. One more thing: If you don't know anything about mindfulness already, you may want to pair this book with another book such as *The Mindfulness Solution* or *The Mindful Way to Self Compassion*. What Siegel calls mindsight is extremely similar to the concept

mindfulness, and he doesn't delve into a systematic way to apply it to your life like those books do. I think this book is best suited for someone who already has exposure to the concept of mindfulness and would like a look at a scientific psychologist's point of view.

One of the best books I've ever read. This author has helped me coach my way through some things and I'll just say it's like having your own personal counselor/coach/psychiatrist. He takes a non-conventional approach toward common problems that are not being solved by common treatment these days. More and more Dr's and authors are learning that the meds they all once swore by, and were their only go to, are screwing people up, or maybe helping temporarily. I don't take that stance on all meds. But many, are not making people better. So what can? You are your own best Dr. and too often you're left to chart your own course. Depression is one of the absolute worst illnesses one can endure....but we need to be fortunate enough to not have to chart this one alone. The prescription should be: "Take one friend in the morning, one family member in the afternoon, and one at night." Do something with each person; anything. Let others help you out of the darkness. Power to help someone out of a deep depression is great within family and friends. But this hasn't been "clinically" proven or tested so it's not taught in med school. He talks about our body-mind connection and what we can do with mindfulness, insight, etc. Read this and his other works too for a better life.

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