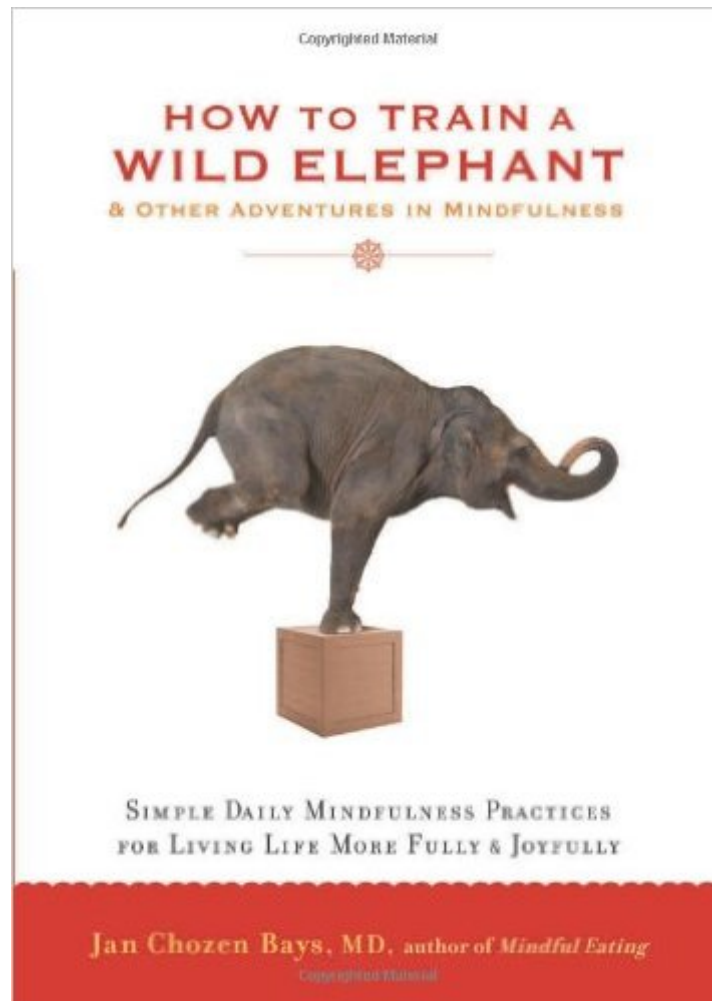


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# How To Train A Wild Elephant: And Other Adventures In Mindfulness



## Synopsis

A growing body of research is showing that mindfulness can reduce stress, improve physical health, and improve one's overall quality of life. Jan Chozen Bays, MD—a physician and Zen teacher—has developed a series of simple practices to help us cultivate mindfulness as we go about our ordinary, daily lives. Exercises include: taking three deep breaths before answering the phone, noticing and adjusting your posture throughout the day, eating mindfully, and leaving no trace of yourself after using the kitchen or bathroom. Each exercise is presented with tips on how to remind yourself and a short life lesson connected with it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Without any reliance on overly religious constructs, Bays provides a collection of exercises that will force a reader to reevaluate one's degree of engagement with oneself and the surroundings and improve one's mindfulness - the ability to be engaged without being critical or judgmental. (Review based on a review copy via NetGalley and adapted from my blog) Not surprisingly, the core message is similar to other Eastern thoughts - for example, Krishnamurti's "being engaged, but not attached". What Bays is able to accomplish in this book is to interpret rigorous philosophy, frame it using psychological studies and provide an actionable exercise with clear instructions on what to observe and anticipated impacts. In that sense, this book is deceptively simple - it can come across as an oversimplification of the mindfulness discipline but after practicing 4 exercises chosen from the book, its profoundness in simplicity is remarkable. Bays provides a series of 52 exercises (one for each week) for improving one's mindfulness. Each chapter provides a short description of the

exercise itself, the philosophical underpinnings, observations from those who practiced that exercise, and a 'deeper' interpretation ("what does this exercise really mean?"). The succinctness of each chapter is matched only by its simplicity. A reader will be tempted to be working on more than one exercise at a time...I think it is worthwhile to spend an entire week devoted to just one exercise - thereby achieving a degree of patience training as a bonus. For those more inclined to Eastern philosophy, pairing the exercise with a daily thought exercise based on Krishnamurthi's Book of Life is a good way to structure one's experiment with the exercises.

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