

MINDFUL LIVING



*Remembering to Remember
Who We Are and Where We
Are in Times of Uncertainty*

An eBook by
Dennis Merritt Jones

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This eBook is an excerpt from the award winning book

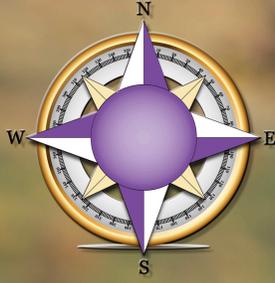
THE ART OF UNCERTAINTY

HOW TO LIVE IN THE MYSTERY OF LIFE AND LOVE IT

Published by Tarcher/Penguin Publishers in 2012

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Dennis Merritt Jones

*Guiding People
to Purpose*

MINDFUL LIVING

***Remembering to Remember Who We Are
and Where We Are in Times of Uncertainty***

From antiquity, master teachers have taught that we are on a sacred journey every moment of our lives. The questions we must fathom are these: What is the purpose of this journey, and how aware are we that every moment is an eternal continuum which links the past and future to the present? Mindful living invites us to confidently and faithfully step through a portal of uncertainty to a deeper understanding of these questions where we shall discover the amazing gifts only to be found in the present moment.

WHEN THE MOMENT OF AWAKENING COMES

The practice of mindfulness begins in the small, remote cave of your unconscious mind and blossoms with the sunlight of your conscious life, reaching far beyond the people and places you can see.

~ Earon Davis

From the perspective of a spiritual journey, it would appear that on the day of birth the soul's essence was instantly squeezed into a very small, dense physical container called a body, and that the individual was instantly labeled according to gender, ethnicity, name, and so on. As we aged, even more labels were acquired until now it seems that we have forgotten who we really are and why we are here. Instead, the focus has become living up to, or in some cases *down to* the labels that define us in the world. For many of us, however, one day something triggers a remembrance and we begin to recall, if only vaguely, what our purpose on this planet might be. In that moment of awakening, we begin peeling away the labels, and the journey into uncertainty takes on a new significance.

As we remember who we really are, we become aware that we *each* have a spiritual purpose. In her book *Unlimited Visibility*, Stephanie Sorensen writes, "Even though it may seem like it, it isn't that some people have a specific purpose in life while the rest of us are simply aimless extras. We all play an integral part in the Divine Picture of Creation." Mindful living is the art and practice of *remembering to remember* the role we play--*who* we are, *where* we are, and *why* we are on this journey. As we

venture into the mystery of it all with mindfulness, our journey takes us inward where we plumb the depths of Self, in addition to our outward exploration of our world. As we experience the journey in both directions, we will increasingly discover more of who we really are...and who we are not.

MINDFUL LIVING IS A LIFESTYLE

Our primordial purpose is to respond to the impulsion from within to solve the mystery of our individual existence, to find the authentic Self that is, has been and ever shall be.

~ Michael Bernard Beckwith

Mindful living is a lifestyle. It's a way of consciously walking a sacred earth experience, incorporating purpose and an awareness of Divine Presence in all that we say, think, and do on our journey in this lifetime. Discovering the authentic Self will never have a point of arrival because the Self we seek is Infinite. Talk about uncertainty! But, the deeper we go on the quest, the more peace we shall find as we discover more of who we truly are. This quest, if we are to honor the calling, will require us to continue to come to the edge of uncertainty time and time again. This doesn't mean every few years, or even in those times when we may experience those unavoidable life changing events; it means *every day* of our lives. It is only in the mystery of that which is yet to be that we shall find the authentic Self we have each come here to ultimately be.

As we awaken to our soul's purpose, we inherently know that it is found in our daily experience. In his book, *The Living Universe*, Duane Elgin describes our journey into the mystery of uncertainty this way: "We are spiritual beings having a bodily experience. Our bodies are biodegradable vehicles for acquiring soul-growing experiences. Every experience plants its feeling-knowing resonance in our soul." In other words, our reason for existing is right in front of us, in the mystery of every moment of every day. The mystery really does lie in every present moment because no one knows what it shall bring. However, the challenge for most of us is that our minds are often somewhere *other* than in the present moment.

The day we were born, life became a linear process where we learned *doing* was very important and *time* became a commodity. This is when we began to get "spiritual amnesia," and began forgetting who we really are. We were taught how to project ourselves into the future so we might one day create a life of meaning and purpose by accomplishing one goal after another, moving from one grade to the next, getting through school, acquiring a job, finding a partner, creating a home and so on--essentially acquiring even more labels as we went along. Indeed, we learned how to *do* life very well on this linear pathway and, in the process, most of us forgot how to *be*. Some say time is moving so fast that having a spiritual experience is very challenging; there's so much to do. In actuality, time is standing still because it's always *now*--*it* is *we* who are moving so quickly through time. Living mindfully can slow us down and bring us consciously and intentionally into the mystery of the present moment, which is where we find our spiritual experience *waiting for us* to open to its greatest gift: The peace that passes all understanding.

WITH MINDFULNESS LIFE BECOMES SEAMLESS

*Can you tell me where 'this' moment ends
and the 'next' begins? Where the subject
ends and the object begins? Where the
observer ends and the observed begins?
Where you end and the world begins? Where
is this dividing line?*

~ Dr. John Astin

Right now, if you intentionally take a deep breath, and focus on that breath, you will discover that your mind and your body are in the same place at the same time. The irony is, our body can't be any place other than in the present moment. But far too often, our mind is elsewhere. Mindfulness is the practice of calling the thinking mind back to where the body is so that the two become *as one* in the present moment. As you incorporate awareness of Infinite Presence in the moment, *doing* becomes seamlessly infused with *being as the activity at hand*. In *The Science of Mind*, Ernest Holmes writes, "A new light is coming into the world. We are on the borderland of a new experience. The veil between Spirit and matter is very thin. The invisible passes into visibility through our faith in it."

At this level of mindful living, the perceived dividing line between doing and being, matter and Divine essence, and you and your soul Self, begins to slowly blur and, ultimately, dissolve. This is when every action becomes a spiritual experience, be it driving

the car, mowing the lawn, changing the baby's diaper, selling real estate, performing brain surgery, or making love to your significant other. As you deepen your consciousness to fully embody the practice of mindful living, all of life becomes a sacred continuum. We might say that, in the mystery of the present moment, there are no dividing lines--there is only the One, in which we all live, move, and have our being.

BEING PRESENT WITH NON-JUDGEMENT OPENS THE PORTAL TO ONENESS

To further expand on what this experience of oneness feels like, I share a passage from my book, [*The Art of Being ~ 101 Ways To Practice Purpose In Your Life*](#): “What I have also discovered is that when that sense of seamless oneness does happen, there are always two specific points of awareness accompanying it: One, I notice that I am ‘being’ in the now moment. Regardless of what is going on, where I am, whom I am with, or what it looks like, I realize I am 100 percent present there, spiritually, mentally, and physically; my mind is not off, wandering around in the past or the future. Two, I have an overwhelming awareness that I am operating in a ‘non-judgment’ mode where the energy of unconditional love goes before me, filling in all the gaps and spaces between myself and the world and everyone in it, where my otherwise judgmental little self might be slapping labels all over my every experience, creating a sense of ‘two-ness’ or separation, rather than oneness.” My point is that mindfulness in the mystery of the moment is the portal to our oneness with Life. In other words, our bliss is right in front of our noses 24/7.

MINDFUL LIVING REMINDS US OF OUR BLESSINGS

When we have a toothache, we know that not having a toothache is happiness. But later, when we don't have a toothache, we don't treasure our non-toothache. Practicing mindfulness helps us learn to appreciate the well-being that is already there.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

As we master the art of uncertainty, we learn the value and meaning of being present because in every “Now” moment there lies a silent blessing we might have otherwise overlooked. Isn't it amazing how often we don't take time to truly appreciate something until it is gone? We get complacent and slip into a “take life for granted” mode; in other words, we get comfortable with perceived “certainties.” This happens many times in relationships, and often with our material status, but even more so with our physical well-being. Consider some of the “non-problems” you have in your life *at this moment*. When was the last time you appreciated your heart and liver for the great job they do at keeping you healthy and alive? What about the roof over your head? Do you ever take your body and home for granted? How about the relationships you have with your partner, family and friends that give deep meaning to your existence? Would this be a good day to call someone you love and tell them so? The wisdom found in the art of uncertainty affirms that every sacred second is a gift and that mindfulness can help us *remember* to remember to come back to the present and appreciate the blessings of the moment, taking nothing for granted. Don't wait until you have a toothache to be

appreciative of how good a “non-toothache” feels. Don’t wait until your coworker has gone home to say, “Good job.” Don’t wait until a loved one is no longer there to say, “I love you.” Don’t wait until you have “time” to be mindful. With mindfulness, we will remember that every moment *is* the time.

MINDFUL BREATHING ANCHORS US WHEN LIFE BECOMES TURBULENT

*Only let the moving waters calm down,
and the sun and moon will be reflected
on the surface of your being.*

~ Rumi

Often, when I am presenting a lecture or workshop, I will pause and say to everyone in attendance, “How are you breathing right now--and by that I don’t just mean, in and out.” They will chuckle, smile, and then realize that they really were not breathing all that deeply. Then, I will invite them to take a deep, intentional breath and witness the difference it makes in bringing them into the present moment. I now invite you to do the same thing--go to your breathe and witness how you are breathing--then take an intentionally deep breath and see the difference. When we breathe deeply, intentionally and mindfully, it anchors us in our bodies. My goal is to get people to be present enough *in* their body to fully *be* wherever they are, in spirit, mind and body. When we first become conscious of our breathing, we may be taken aback by how shallow or rapid it is at any given moment, especially those times when we are under stress or our minds are churning with everyday concerns. It’s difficult to be present in the Presence when daily life is full of

distractions. However, the waters of a turbulent mind will never reflect the light Rumi refers to, which is a metaphor for Infinite Presence.

Learning how to breathe consciously is an essential practice for mindful living because it can bring us back to the mystery of the present moment, which is where Life is waiting for us to fully engage. Mindful breathing is a key element in being present with “what is.” Our minds are always moving here and there--most often lingering in either the happenings of the past, be they ten minutes or ten years ago, or the concerns of the future, be they ten minutes or ten years from now. In either case, we have no power there, so we would be much better served by fully being where our true point of power lies: In the mystery of the present moment, where anything is possible. The question is, what can we do to calm the waters in the present moment?

LISTEN MINDFULLY TO THE SILENCE BETWEEN BREATHS

*Breathing in, I calm my body.
Breathing out, I smile.
Dwelling in the present moment
I know this is a wonderful moment.*

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

For many of us, the waters of our daily life are anything but calm because we don't create conscious space for intentional breathing or silence as part of our daily experience. When we stop to consider it, breathing is the most life-essential thing we do, and it is *always* a present moment experience. However, seldom are we

consciously aware that we are breathing. When we pause and breathe consciously, we open the portal to the Presence and enter a sacred silence where the waters are always calm.

Occasionally, early in the morning before I do my daily meditation, I go to my piano and sit quietly. With my eyes closed, I gently place my fingers on the keys and, when inspired, begin to slowly play only single notes with no song in mind, just allowing my fingers to go where they are led to go. For me, this is also an exercise in living in the uncertainty of what the next key I press shall be, and it is an appropriate metaphor for how we can approach every minute of the day when we are mindful in and of the moment. As a form of mindfulness practice, after each note I play, I mindfully draw in a deep breath and, while slowly releasing that breath, I listen to the silence that arises between each note played as it fades.

From a musician's perspective, the space between the notes is as important as the notes themselves. Without the silence (or gap) between the notes, there would be no music. Instead, it would be one long, continuous run-on noise that becomes meaningless. Likewise, the silent spaces between our breaths and thoughts are equally as important because the Infinite is ever waiting for us to create that sacred opening in the present moment into which It may flow. Again, the mystery of the moment invites us to breathe into it, merge with that which is yet to be, and witness the creative process as it unfolds. The good news is that you don't need a piano to create that sacred space. In the Mindfulness Practices at the end of this chapter I will offer you a breathing technique that will help you calm the waters of a turbulent mind.

REVERENCE IS SEEING THROUGH ALL APPEARANCES

By having a reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. By practicing reverence for life we become good, deep, and alive.

~ Albert Schweitzer

Living mindfully with reverence is remembering to remember that we live in a spiritual universe wherein everyone and everything is interconnected in a sacred web of oneness. Reverence is seeing through all appearances: The shell, the form, and the effect or condition, and then honoring the sacred at the center or all that is. When we activate reverence in our life, everything we do becomes a sacred act: Every relationship becomes another opportunity to see the face of the Beloved; every meal we eat becomes another way to affirm our unity with the Source from whence that meal came. In short, life becomes our pathway to being on purpose. Our purpose is to be the place where, metaphorically, heaven touches earth. In short, mindful living blesses each of us and our world. Living mindfully makes every relationship sacred, every challenge on our pathway a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block, and every day an opportunity to live with a sense of awe, meaning, and purpose. The journey of our soul really is the journey of a lifetime, and it's a journey we get to take whether we are aware or not. Mindful living brings awareness to the journey and frees us from the limitation of the labels that have defined us from the day we were born. With this in mind, as we continue our sojourn into the mystery of uncertainty, let us "remember to remember" that the best is yet to be.

POINTS TO PONDER

☑ Can you relate to the idea that your presence on the planet is not by mistake--that you are here “on purpose,” and that your body serves as the perfect vessel by means of which you acquire soul-growing experiences? If so, can you see how mindfulness will help you be more fully present with every experience you have, drawing maximum value and meaning from it? Does this awareness alleviate any fear or concerns regarding what lies ahead on the pathway of uncertainty? Knowing your life is on purpose will make the mystery of that which is yet to be an exciting journey.

☑ As you begin to practice mindfulness in every area of your life notice also how time appears to slow down in those moments. As you focus on the present moment, your experience of it will intensify because you are drawing nearer to Source. This is when the veil between form and the formless begins to disappear and life becomes a seamless flow of energy. This experience alone is part of the mystery of life you have come here to explore.

☑ There is no area of your life where mindful living will not benefit your well-being...and your world. Your physical body and the body of your affairs literally vibrate at a higher frequency when you are mindful of the Infinite Presence in the moment.

When you are guided to eat your meals mindfully, remembering the Source from whence it comes, food becomes a blessing to your body temple and you make wiser choices regarding what you put into your body.

Your relationships thrive when you are mindful of the presence of the Beloved because reverence and loving kindness becomes the practice with those with whom you interact. Likewise, at the workplace, mindful living blesses all of those with whom you work or serve.

When you are aware of the Presence, every transaction becomes a sacred act, and every product, customer and employee is blessed by your “remembering to remember.”

Lastly, when you enter into each day remembering that abundance is the natural out-picturing of one who lives mindfully aware of his or her connection and unity with the Source, you will tend to be more generous with your material good.

MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

Ultimately, every moment is the entry point into the mystery of uncertainty. No one knows what lies beyond the next breath, so why not take that breath mindfully? In doing so, we bring the power of Presence into the present. These Mindfulness Practices will assist you in remembering to remember who you really are, regardless of where you are. When coming to the edge of uncertainty, being mindful is a wise thing to be and practice.

1. This is a mindfulness practice using a silent mantra coupled with a breathing exercise:

- On a slow in-breath (focusing solely on the breath), silently affirm “Life is” (or, use whatever name for the nameless One that most resonates with you), then gently hold that breath for approximately six-seconds while mindfully observing the space created by non-breathing. Then on a *slow* out-breath silently affirm, “I am.”
- Repeat the cycle in a rhythm for ten minutes (longer, if possible) silently affirming “Life is...I am” and notice how a sense of inner peace rises in the field of your awareness and the waters are calmed.

2. When you eat your next meal, do so as a mindfulness practice.

- As you *slowly* chew your food consider the idea that you are not just eating fruit, lettuce, or a piece of bread, you are eating the energy of the Sun, the rain, and even the farmer who brought the crops to harvest.
- Put a single piece of fruit in your mouth and truly experience the taste, texture, and essence of that fruit. Allow your taste buds to report to you the experience they are having. Pay attention to nothing other than what is going on in your mouth in that moment. Does this experience enliven your sense of connectedness to the Source?

3. Instead of turning on your television tonight, go outside, sit down (or lie down if possible), and gaze at the moon or a bright star.

- As you soften your gaze, focus on your breathing and imagine the Infinite Intelligence at work in that holy instant, holding the entire universe in place in divine order and balance. Enjoy the awe of that realization and be with your breath.
- Then, gently close your eyes and turn within and imagine the same Infinite Intelligence maintaining your body with the same orderliness and balance—beating your heart, converting the food you had for dinner into the energy of skin, hair, organs, and so on. Enjoy the awe of that realization as well, realizing you are one with the universe.

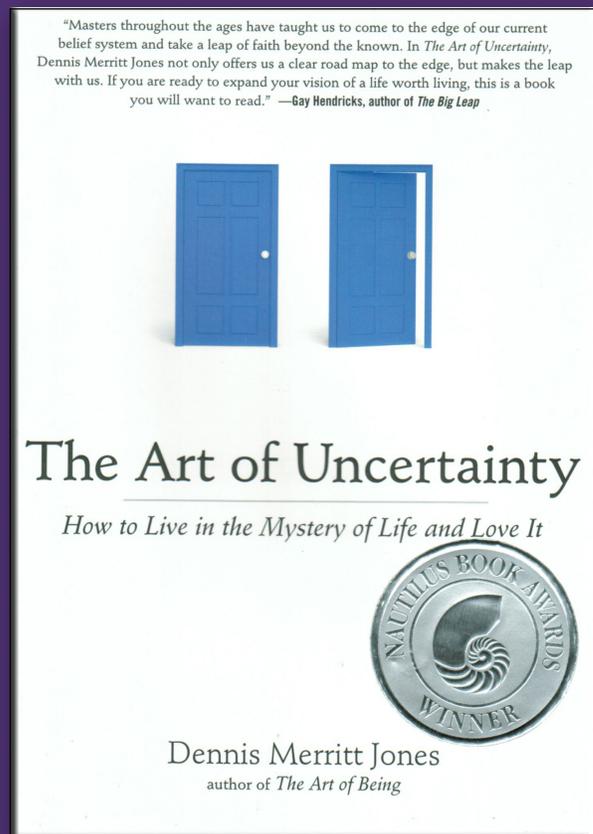
All the aforementioned are beneficent things to remember as we travel the pathway of uncertainty. It is much easier to live in the mystery of life and love it when we stay connected to our Source. Mindfulness, coupled with reverence, is the practice that connects us.

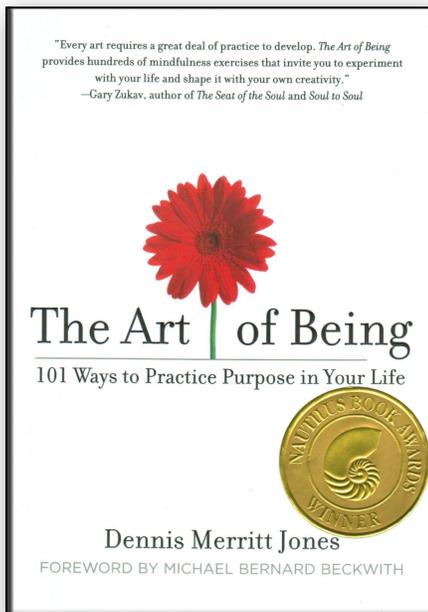
May your journey be a conscious one where the intention of your soul intersects with the intention of your human nature on a daily basis, bringing your Being into alignment with your *doing* every moment of your life; you deserve the peace and blessings this process provides and so does your world.

Peace,

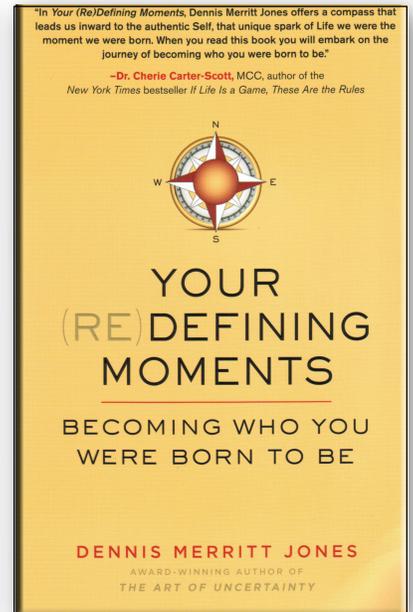
Dennis Merritt Jones

This eBook is a brief excerpt from Dennis' award winning book, *The Art of Uncertainty - How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*. If you enjoyed this eBook you'll find value and meaning in reading the full book because it is about learning to use our time spent in this Earth School wisely. Regardless of your level of education, the school of life itself is always in session and mindfulness is the main curriculum. As we make living in the mystery a daily practice, we prepare ourselves for the adventure regardless of whether we are pushed onto the pathway of uncertainty by inspiration or desperation, or by pleasure or pain. In either case, we shall discover it is a journey we can learn to love. With its "Points to Ponder" and "Mindfulness Practices" at the end of each chapter, you can consider *The Art of Uncertainty* the perfect guidebook on how to step into the mystery of life and love it.





Dennis is also the award winning author of *The Art of Being - 101 Ways to Practice Purpose in Your Life*, and, his most recent book, *Your (Re)Defining Moments - Becoming Who You Were Born to Be*. All of his books are published by Penguin/Random House.



Throughout his lifetime, Dennis Merritt Jones has been on a quest to inspire and lift people to a higher expression of life. His personal vision is to guide people to their purpose, knowing that when one fully awakens to who they are and why they are on the planet, they begin to naturally share their gift with humankind and, in the process, create an enriching life for themselves and the world around them.

In addition to his books, Dennis is a columnist for the [Huffington Post](#) and [Science of Mind](#) magazine. He is also a member of the Leadership Council for the [Association for Global New Thought \(AGNT\)](#), an organization whose mission is to consciously bring forth the evolving human and an awakened world through the practice of universal spiritual principles and the energy of unconditional love.

Dennis believes we each have the capacity and, ultimately, the responsibility to contribute something positive to this world, leaving it a better place than it was when we arrived. His teachings promote a contemporary, life-affirming, spiritually logical and positive outlook on life, which are reflected in his writings.

Dennis is a universal speaker who is equally comfortable speaking to an audience seeking spiritual inspiration or to those seeking a purely secular motivational message. He uses his understanding of universal principles to draw upon wisdom from both eastern and western philosophies. He believes that there is a deeper consciousness of unity, cooperation and reverence rising in humankind where the value of all life, regardless of ethnicity, geography, culture or sexual orientation, is considered sacred. He believes this consciousness of unity, cooperation and reverence for life and the planet will be one of the most significant influences upon society as we approach the challenges of 21st century living.

For information regarding booking Dennis as a [Keynote Speaker](#) or to inquire about his [Mentoring](#) program, please visit his website - www.DennisMerrittJones.com or eMail Info@DennisMerrittJones.com