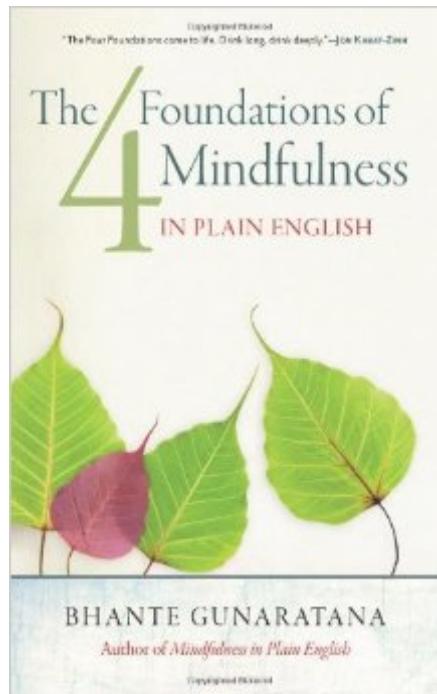


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# The Four Foundations Of Mindfulness In Plain English



## **Synopsis**

In simple and straightforward language, Bhante Gunaratana shares the Buddha's teachings on mindfulness and how we can use these principles to improve our daily lives, deepen our mindfulness, and move closer to our spiritual goals. Based on the classic Satipatthana Sutta, one of the most succinct yet rich explanations of meditation, Bhante's presentation is nonetheless thoroughly modern. The Satipatthana Sutta has become the basis of all mindfulness meditation, and Bhante unveils it to the reader in his trademark "plain English" style. Contemplating the Four Foundations of Mindfulness--mindfulness of the body, of feelings, of the mind, and of phenomena themselves--is recommended for all practitioners. Newcomers will find The Four Foundations of Mindfulness in Plain English lays a strong groundwork for mindfulness practice and gives them all they need to get started right away, and old hands will find rich subtleties and insights to help consolidate and clarify what they may have begun to see for themselves. People at every state of the spiritual path will benefit from reading this book.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

there are many books on the satipatthana sutta. however most are very much a focused interpretation of the sutta in light of a single teachers ideas about it. they may for example only focus on breathing or another of the practices and only vaguely touch on everything else in the sutta. some of these are wonderful books that surely can lead one to nibbana. but i have been searching

for one that details the whole sutta as there's a lot more to it than just a couple of practices. bhante covers everything from start to finish. it is still colored with his own interpretation of the sutta but it's not even possible to write a commentary on a sutta without personal interpretation and he sticks to fairly traditional explanations, keeping it largely impersonal. my only critiques are: 1. that he could have included the sutta itself but at least it's a widely available sutta. just web search "satipatthana" and you'll have no problem finding it. and 2. that he doesn't give a definitive answer to the question of how many of the exercises you are supposed to practice and when to do them. there are a ton of exercises in the sutta and i have yet to see an author explain this problem (although i imagine analayo covers it in "satipatthana")! the wikipedia page on the satipatthana sutta gives these options: "Single-focused, successive and simultaneous practices: There are a variety of ways that one could use the methods described in the Satipaññā-Ālāna Sutta including: 1. Focus on a single method. The method most written about in the English language is that of mindfulness of breath. 2. Practice the various methods individually in succession. 3. Maintain breath mindfulness as a primary object while using other methods to address non-breath stimuli. 4. Practice multiple methods either in tandem or in a context-driven manner." i would add to option three that there are other options of what to pick as the primary object (it doesn't have to be the breath if one is using this interpretation, for example one could use the modes of deportment as the primary object) and then use the other methods to address whatever else arises that is not the primary object. as is typical for the author he puts everything in very easily understood wording and easily digested logic. he talks you through how to use the methods found in the sutta to see impermanence, suffering, and not self in your own life, day by day. if you follow his instructions carefully and earnestly you will start to see light shining through the cracks in the walls that make up reality. and who knows, maybe this will lead you to full on nibbana! one note: on page 96 bhante writes "Remember that you do want to die with anger". knowing enough about buddhism i'm 99.9999% sure he meant "Remember that you do NOT want to die with anger". just so everyone is clear on that point. it would be VERY bad for the path to deliberately die with anger. we are supposed to make great efforts to die without anger. update: i contacted the publisher and they confirmed it is an error that will be fixed in later editions.

I am new to mindfulness. A recent trip to Myanmar and the death of my parent made me think deeper about life, about purpose and about myself. I wasn't really seeking mindfulness or buddhism per se. Its more like I went on a trip and did some tourist activities and then realized I really liked what I saw and heard. So I came back to the States and wanted to read more. Basically, I was

looking at a beginner-intermediate book (not so beginner that its like those "mindfulness for dummies" books but something that was deeper and would take you through a journey of learning)He explains everything well, which is exactly what I needed. I do wish there was a bit of history in it. I would like to know more about the life of Buddha (maybe one chapter?). The book goes right into mindfulness.In terms of mindfulness itself: it really is written in plain-English. I like how it tells you EXACTLY what sitting, walking and sleeping meditation is and what actions/behaviors you have to focus on when you are doing it.I read through it really slowly and practice it everyday now because he writes in a very encouraging way. For example, he mentions how folks who try lotus position may find it very difficult the first time around and he talks about how you should persevere. It took him a while too even though he was meditating (in another position) for decades!This was a great starting place for getting into mindfulness. As you progress and become more intermediate, it serves as a great reminder (through re-reading) of your foundation.

Bhante G, as the author is fondly called, has written another beautiful book. It is so concise and profound. His words are clear so everyone can understand. The Four Foundations are what Buddhism is built upon. Bhante G never takes liberty with Buddha's teachings; he quotes The Buddha throughout. Read this book and relish in the 2500 year old foundations of mindfulness in "Plain English". Bhante G is the leading Theraveda Buddhist Monk in the Western World. He is a world renown author, translated into many, many languages. When you are done reading this read the Autobiography of Bhante G and you will be inspired to live a noble life as he does. He continues to write the most eloquent books on Buddhism I think. After studying Buddhism for 37 years I can say this with conviction.

Whether you approach Buddhism as a religion, a path for meditation, or a philosophy, you will find something of value in this book. I am a list-maker, and there were plenty of lists here - e.g. the 8 steps of Buddha's Path, the 4 noble truths, and the 7 factors of enlightenment. Basic help gained from the book included more understanding of meditation on the breath, staying in the present moment, and the importance of the concept of impermanence.

Clearly written by a master and highly evolved teacher. One of the essential guidance books for the practitioner and for those who wish to practice.Highly and warmly recommended.

This is an excellent overview of the Satipatthana Sutta. All of the "Plain English" books are highly

recommended. Bhante G has the ability to communicate in ways that all can understand. If you would like a more in-depth treatment of this sutta I recommend "Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization" by Analayo. To get a basic understanding start with Bhante G and then go to Analayo for a more scholarly treatment. Both are excellent.

I love Bante's writings, he is clear and wonderful to read, very helpful to sustain the work on the path

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