

## **Book Summary – Wherever You Go, There You Are, by Jon Kabat-Zinn**

Annie says: the Western mind is often trained to be productive, energetic, scientific, rational, and to “push, push, push”. We get what we think we want by strength of will, by accomplishment, by influence; by determination; by winning; by power, strength, importance. We want to develop the habits of success. We want to work efficiently and productively. We believe in these ways of thinking and behaving. We think they will bring us what we crave. But sometimes we forget that, in our deepest souls, we perhaps might want something different from where these cravings lead us.



Stepping back from the ego to connect with the Universe and allow different forces to work on our inner self is very hard for us. This book is one of the “classics” in how to take the Buddhist-inspired idea of Mindfulness and harness our Western-educated brains to this alternative way of being. We do not have to be Buddhists in order to learn how to sit calmly and notice our inner being responding to the world around us. We can all do this, if we so desire. But it is hard for many of us to persist for long in this type of mind-training for awareness, who have been trained in other styles of interacting with our environment. We feel perhaps that we cannot “do it right,” when being mindful includes getting away from the idea that belonging where we are can be either right or wrong. It just is. We “just are.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn teaches us how to think mindfully, and guides us through the process of learning to accept ourselves, with all our inner demons, witches, kings, queens, and so on. These characters in our psyches are different aspects of our emotional and rational selves and we need to learn to be comfortable with them so that we can channel them into our growth and development as we become fully human as our own wiser selves, rather than remaining tools of a youthful “dream” or fantasy that matches a particular externally-taught ideal.