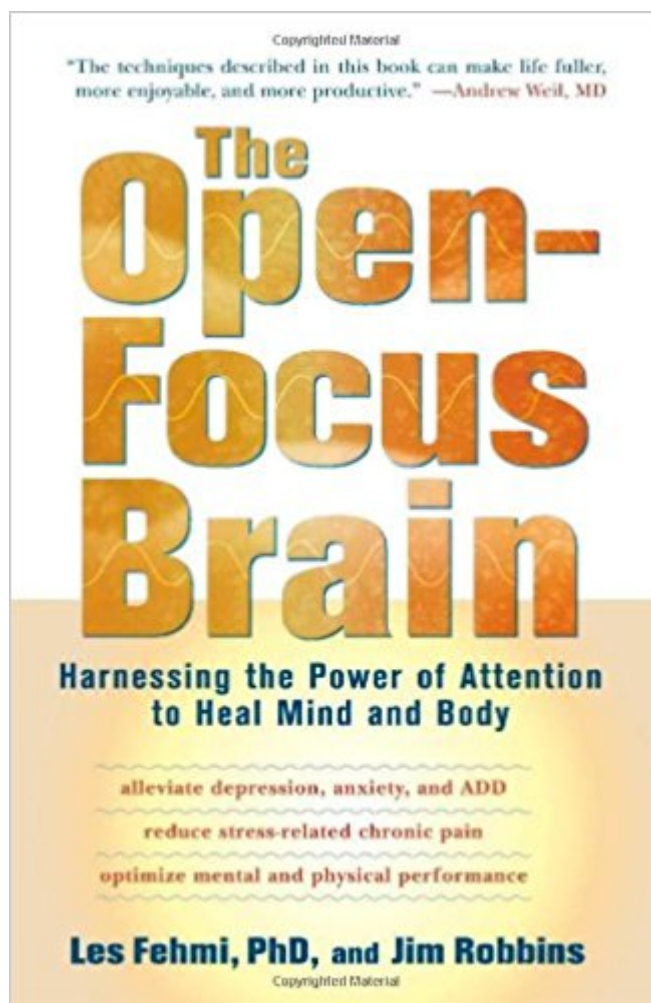


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The Open-Focus Brain: Harnessing The Power Of Attention To Heal Mind And Body



Synopsis

This breakthrough book presents a disarmingly simple idea: The way we pay attention in daily life can play a critical role in our health and well-being. According to Dr. Les Fehmi, a clinical psychologist and researcher, many of us have become stuck in "narrow-focus attention": a tense, constricted, survival mode of attention that holds us in a state of chronic stress and which lies at the root of common ailments including anxiety, depression, ADD, stress-related migraines, and more. To improve these conditions, Dr. Fehmi explains that we must learn to return to a relaxed, diffuse, and creative form of attention, which he calls "Open Focus." This highly readable and empowering book offers straightforward explanations and simple exercises on how to shift into a more calm, open style of attention that reduces stress, improves health, and enhances performance. The Open-Focus Brain features eight essential attention exercises for improving health, along with an audio CD in which the author guides the reader through fundamental Open-Focus exercises that can be used on a regular basis to enhance our health and well-being. Dr. Fehmi writes, "Everyone has the ability to heal their nervous systems, to dissolve their pain, to slow down and yet accomplish more, to experience the deeper side of life—in short, to change their lives for the better dramatically. At last readers can learn the techniques that Dr. Fehmi has offered to thousands of clients—the same drug-free, safe, and effective techniques that have led to remarkable and long-lasting results. The Open-Focus Brain offers readers a revolutionary, drug-free way to: alleviate depression, anxiety, and ADD; reduce stress-related chronic pain; optimize mental and physical performance. Includes a 60-minute audio CD: essential attention exercises from the book, led by Dr. Fehmi. listeners learn how to "train the brain" to reduce stress, anxiety, chronic pain, and more. safe and effective techniques used in Dr. Fehmi's clinic for decades

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Trumpeter; 1 Pap/Com edition (December 16, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1590306120

ISBN-13: 978-1590306123

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 103 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #96,260 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Mental Illness](#) #215 in [Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Mental Illness](#) #342 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Pathologies](#)

Customer Reviews

Alongtime clinician and researcher in biofeedback, Fehmi (with the assistance of science writer Robbins, author of *A Symphony in the Brain*) advances his program for learning to relieve stress by attaining what he calls open focus—•a more diffuse, flexible form of attention that, paradoxically, allows one to focus better and in a more relaxed way. According to Fehmi, most of us habitually operate in a narrow-focus stress mode that results in anxiety and a host of physical problems, including digestive upsets, rashes and migraines. Fehmi draws on his experience with neurofeedback (brain-wave biofeedback) to explain how we can shift our brain waves to attain open focus. These mental techniques help you to experience your body and even your heart in a new way and change how you perceive the space around you. Fehmi grounds his plan in research and patient anecdotes showing the techniques can reduce pain and improve relationships and athletic performance. Fehmi acknowledges the results of open focus are similar to those from meditation, but even readers skeptical of Eastern spirituality may find Fehmi's science-based program useful. (The accompanying audio CD was not heard by PW). (July 10) 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.

“These mental techniques help you to experience your body and even your heart in a new way. Fehmi grounds his plan in research and patient anecdotes showing the techniques can reduce pain and improve relationships and athletic performance.”—Publishers Weekly

"Fehmi and award-winning science writer and journalist Robbins present a convincing argument for the effectiveness of neurofeedback in a self-help format for those who want to try the techniques. . . . This well-written book will be of interest to anyone in the alternative healing community.”—Library Journal

“Based on thirty-plus years of research and professional experience, this book reveals a startling truth: how you deploy your attention in your daily life is centrally important for your mental and physical health. It also describes a breakthrough

methodology for overcoming depression, anxiety, and other hard-to-manage emotional states. As a colleague of Dr. Fehmi from the earliest days of brainwave-biofeedback research, I can trust the credibility of his reports. He is a creative and critical thinker in the field. I heartily recommend this book.

• Joe Kamiya, PhD, research psychologist at Langley Porter Institute of Psychiatry

"I've used the Open-Focus techniques in my work with NFL players, and I've shared this knowledge with other athletes and coaches. These attention exercises are applicable across all disciplines.

• Bob Ward, Director of Sports Science, former conditioning coach for the Dallas Cowboys

"The techniques described in this book can make life fuller, more enjoyable, and more productive. I recommend it.

• Andrew Weil, MD, author of Healthy Aging

The book inspired me to take the Open Focus Training to enhance the neurofeedback trainings. I hope to offer the mediation to those interested in getting the most of the brain trainings. I used the CD for my own meditations and found the program helpful

I have been searching for a modernist form of meditation having meditated for 12+ years and having had meager results despite several liberating experiences in my past unrelated to meditating. Like many other modern people who live in our heads, I simply could not find an angle on the standard types of meditation that actually worked consistently. Eventually it dawned on me that despite all the grand non-dualistic talk on non-doing and all effort being egoic, I realized that this ego-syntonic state of consciousness had a vice grip on consciousness and only an altered state would cause any noticeable change. Searching for something better had only turned up those absurdly expensive brain entrainment packages that are sleekly sold as the answer to meditation for several hundred to thousands of dollars. Not to mention the passive nature of those practices which only really help a person to get the feel for the correct altered states. When I found this book I knew it was something different. Although verbally guided in nature, you get a sense that it is really leading you to get a feel for this work of attention so that you can both recognize it and make it a part of your everyday life. It's also a practice that one can eventually do on one's own and return to the recordings when needed. It's like a way of teaching you this unique form of meditative attention. I found the book to be great. I read through the entire thing. But the practice is what is excellent. When I first experienced it, I began to experience that wonderful feeling of consciousness opening up to a state of space, peace, flow, and presence. States I have only had glimpses of after years of meditative work or deep breath work. Suddenly I began to understand what Zen koans have been attempting to point

to: a focus on what the mind cannot grasp, causing a lateralization and synchronization of the mind which leads to a relaxing of that vice-like grip of the left brain, sympathetic nervous system, tensions in the body and fixed attention. But this way is much more direct. Space is easy to contemplate, but it takes practice to learn to allow the mind to focus on what it cannot grasp. I have also been playing with contemplating ungraspable dimensions of experience such as energy, quality of experience, and presence. Far from fully replacing meditation and other practices, I find that this work can enhance them all. For example, I practice The Focusing Technique from Dr. Eugene Gendlin, where you experientially inquire into the unfinished psychological felt experience that is arising. It is extremely difficult to do consistently. But the times it has worked has been when I stumbled upon an open focus. Now I can intentionally go into an open focused state and work with the implicit felt-sense of my present. Same with my meditation, which has been a belly and breathing centered practice. Working space and open focus into that it like adding nitrous to a car. One difficulty in this technique is that the experience of open focus and flexible attention can come and go easily. It is simply not easy to work into everyday life, but the more it is experienced, the more easily it can occur. The ideas of attention in the book are excellent. It isn't about settling into an open focus all the time, it is about not being stuck in any form of attention so that you can go between any state needed. The other fantastic thing about this practice is the integration of the body. I'm seriously sick of meditation teachers saying over and over again that all you need to do is stop the "chatter" in your mind and you'll be liberated. That's BS. The real problem is a lifetime of implicit mind-body unprocessed material that is kept out of awareness because of our standard state of attention and consciousness. The chattering mind is simply a symptom. I'm a therapist and I work very deeply with the body and emotions, so I am impressed how this practice does not create a dualism between the two. In fact, the majority of the practices are a contemplation of the spaces of the body. I was so impressed with my initial experiences with this book and the practices that I bought 10-11 of the MP3's from the Open Focus website. I highly recommend doing this. Unlike the brain entrainment products, Dr. Fehmi doesn't appear to be a slick salesman. His work is more humble and not sold as a new-agey short cut technique but a grounded life long practice. One last note, I had an insight when reading this book and listening to the MP3's: the highly glorified ancient meditative and spiritual practices were created in the contexts of the pre-industrial world for the pre-industrial mind. We are in a different age. I feel that we need a new medicine that meets us where we are at. Modern humans need something that gets us there quicker. Our beta wave states of mind are simply too entrenched for the old ways of meditation to be of much help to the masses. We also need significant bodily and emotional work. Get this book and the media. Buy it for your

friends and family!

This book is easy to read and understand. I am seeing results from practicing the exercises laid out in the book. The accompanying cd is a real help. Easy to follow.

This is a good book despite the fact that Fehmi oversells the benefits somewhat. Still, open focus makes a lot of sense. It does seem that being laser pointed straight ahead seeing is akin to emergency mode for the body. Imagine yourself on the African savannah 30,000 years ago, on guard for your village, at night. Imagine having an open focus mind, opening wide in a hemisphere around and above you, at one with the bush and awake. Suddenly, a branch snaps, or you sense movement. Open focus quickly drops to narrow focus so you can assess the possible threat. Yes, it's one of those guys from over the next hill again! I will say that the book is well worth your time.

This is a refreshing process and approach to use for meditation and healing. It opens up the mind to broaden our focus and avoid being fixed and rigid. After much practice, it can become part of any mental activity and a way of being in the world that expands your awareness. The DVD is very helpful in getting started with the process. The more you practice the more it becomes a part of your daily mental outlook.

Great processes to open awareness-consciousness, whether for spiritual opening, or open focus of the senses and your everyday responses to life. Great tool for expanding meditation practice for spiritual purposes or stress relief. I bought the newer version of the paperback and the kindle version. Both did not come with the CD of recorded practices, although they are transcribed in the book and you can make your own. These two authors co-wrote a book for pain relief, which does have a CD. *Dissolving Pain: Simple Brain-Training Exercises for Overcoming Chronic Pain* by Les Fehmi and Jim Robbins. I highly recommend both books and you can get more guided open focus exercises from Fehmi's website. I don't have pain and have no experience with the pain practice so I can't speak to them, but the book is just as useful and interesting as *The Open-Focus Brain*.

I've been practising meditation for 20 years and this book has thrown a refreshing light on the subject, and very much helped my practice. Having listened to the included guided Open Focus recordings only a half dozen times and tried to implement the technique throughout the day, I feel that I have been able to remain calm and focused even in such potentially trying situations as

preparing and hosting large family dinners over Christmas. Les Fehmi has done a great job of explaining the history, background and successful implementation of this remarkable technique over the last forty years. Can't recommend it highly enough.

Lots of great insights. Expected more scripts for open focus meditations.

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