

"Stretches our minds in startling new directions."

— Howard Gardner

MIND- FULNESS

ELLEN J. LANGER



Contents

Acknowledgments *xiii*

1 Introduction *1*

PART ONE: *Mindlessness*

2 When the Light's On and Nobody's Home *9*

Trapped by Categories 11

Automatic Behavior 12

Acting from a Single Perspective 16

3 The Roots of Mindlessness *19*

The Mindless "Expert" 20

The Sacrilegious Poodle 22

Mindlessness and the Unconscious 25

Belief in Limited Resources 27

Entropy and Linear Time as Limiting Mindsets 31

Education for Outcome 33

The Power of Context 35

4 The Costs of Mindlessness *43*

A Narrow Self-Image 44

Unintended Cruelty 48

Loss of Control 50

Learned Helplessness 53

Stunted Potential 55

PART TWO: *Mindfulness*

5 The Nature of Mindfulness 61

Creating New Categories 63

Welcoming New Information 66

More Than One View 68

Control over Context: The Birdman of Alcatraz 72

Process Before Outcome 75

Mindfulness East and West 77

6 Mindful Aging 81

Control and Survival 82

Reversing Memory Loss 88

Outgrowing Mindsets 89

Stretching the Limits of Age 93

Growth in Age 95

Putting Age in Context: An Experiment 100

7 Creative Uncertainty 115

Mindfulness and Intuition 116

Creativity and Conditional Learning 119

Distinctions and Analogies 129

8 Mindfulness on the Job 133

Welcoming the Glitch 134

Second Wind 135

Innovation 138

The Power of Uncertainty for Managers 143

Burnout and Control 148

CONTENTS

- 9 Decreasing Prejudice by Increasing
Discrimination 153
A Patient by Any Other Name 155
The Painted Cast 158
Mindfully Different 160
Disabling Mindsets 164
Discrimination Without Prejudice 167
- 10 Minding Matters: Mindfulness and Health 171
Dualism: A Dangerous Mindset 173
The Body in Context 176
Addiction in Context 182
The Traditional Placebo: Fooling the Mind 187
The Active Placebo: Enlisting the Mind 191
- Epilogue: Beyond Mindfulness 197
- Notes 205
- Index 225
- About the Author 234