



# Secular Meditation: 32 Practices for Cultivating Inner Peace, Compassion, and Joy — A Guide from the Humanist Community at Harvard

*By Rick Heller*

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Meditation is a form of mental exercise with numerous scientifically verified physical and psychological benefits. As meditation teacher Rick Heller shows, the benefits of the practice extend beyond the personal to enrich relationships with others, with one's community, and with the world. In *Secular Meditation*, step-by-step instructions, personal stories, and provocative questions teach empathy for others, stress reduction, and the kind of in-the-moment living that fosters appreciation for life and resilience in the face of adversity. Heller simplifies what is often found mysterious, describing and providing detailed instructions for thirty-two different practices, ensuring that anyone can find the right one.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“Grounded in solid research on the brain and physical and mental health — and full of practical ideas and methods — this friendly, down-to-earth guide is a wonderful resource for both beginners and longtime meditators.”

— **Rick Hanson, PhD, author of *Hardwiring Happiness and Buddha’s Brain***

“Everyone, regardless of views or beliefs, can develop happiness and wisdom. In *Secular Meditation*, Rick Heller and the Humanist Community at Harvard offer a straightforward way for nonreligious people to connect with their inner capabilities for compassion and clarity.”

— **Sharon Salzberg, author of *Lovingkindness and Real Happiness***

“An ideal introduction for those new to the practice, as well as a valuable compendium offering fresh perspectives for seasoned meditators.”

— **Stephen Batchelor, author of *Buddhism Without Beliefs* and *After Buddhism***

"This book is an ideal guide for those who want to study meditation and mindfulness but are put off by the focus on Buddhism or religion in general."

— ***Library Journal* (starred review)**

"The very short review of Rick Heller’s *Secular Meditation*: If you’re curious about secular meditation and mindfulness, there’s finally a book for you. And it’s a good one.”

— ***The Humanist***

“In simple, accessible language, *Secular Meditation* introduces practices that profoundly transform our hearts and consciousness. Through a rich weave of stories, teachings, meditations, and inquiry, this book offers trustworthy guidance on the journey of awakening.”

— **Tara Brach, Ph.D., author of *Radical Acceptance* and *True Refuge***

“This book — at once simple and profound — is a joy to read. Rick Heller manages to capture the essence of traditional Buddhist practices and translate them into a no-nonsense secular format. His suggestions for practice are straightforward and can be easily incorporated into daily life.”

— **Kristin Neff, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin and author of *Self-Compassion***

“This book has the potential to benefit many people. Rick has a light and yet substantial style that makes his writing lovely and approachable. He is clearly practicing what he is writing about, which makes for an authentic and sincere offering to this world. ”

— **Narayan Helen Liebenson, guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center and the Insight Meditation Society**

“*Secular Meditation* is a clear and generous adaptation of Buddhist and other practices for the humanist community. It is a great book for people who believe that the human mind can be trained just as the body can but who are uncomfortable with any supernatural claims. It is simple and accessible, opening doors to

generosity, clarity, and joyfulness in this life.”

— **James Ishmael Ford**, author of *If You're Lucky, Your Heart Will Break*

“Rick Heller combines his secular humanist worldview with his expertise in guiding weekly meditation sessions, producing a unique reference work that’s approachable, practical, and based firmly in the natural world. This book fills a gap in the current literature: a workable guide to meditation in theory and practice for a secular audience.”

— **Ted Meissner**, founder of the Secular Buddhist Association and host of the *Secular Buddhist* podcast

“Rick Heller’s book represents a milestone in the emergence of a truly naturalistic form of contemplative practice. It will do much to help more people find happiness in life.”

— **Daniel Strain**, executive director of the Spiritual Naturalist Society

“I can’t say for sure, but we may be seeing the beginning of a major revolution. This revolution is in some ways a natural next step from the Scientific Revolution that occurred about five hundred years ago and the Neolithic Revolution that occurred many millennia before that. Ever since the Neolithic, human spirituality has tended to center on a literal interpretation of organized myth. The Scientific Revolution decentered those myths. So is humanity now left without a source of deep meaning and moral compass? Perhaps not. The Mindfulness Revolution offers a totally new direction: industrial-strength psycho-spiritual growth based on industrial-strength attentional skills — concentration power, sensory clarity, and equanimity. This book offers a rich banquet, inviting you to taste many flavors of mindfulness.”

— **Shinzen Young**, director of Vipassana Support International

“*Secular Meditation* is a wonderfully practical book grounded in the latest neuroscience. Rick Heller shows readers how one can mindfully learn to love others and be loved by others. It provides a step-by-step guide for anyone who wants to live a happy life.”

— **Paul J. Zak, PhD**, author of *The Moral Molecule*

“*Secular Meditation* by Rick Heller is a wonderful door-opener for people who are interested in the benefits and how-to of meditation and mindfulness practices but who are skeptical about the religious sources. Heller, the meditation teacher for the Humanist Community at Harvard, has collected thirty-two practices that will have something for every curious reader. His style is warm and engaging, with great stories sprinkled in, and he pulls the reader into trying out attention and kindness practices from all different angles to find their right fit.”

— **Christiane Wolf, MD, PhD**, coauthor of *A Clinician’s Guide to Teaching Mindfulness*

#### About the Author

Meditation teacher **Rick Heller** leads the Humanist Mindfulness Group at the Humanist Community at Harvard. A freelance journalist, he has written for the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, *Buddhadharma*, *Free Inquiry*, *Tikkun*, and *Wise Brain Bulletin*. He has attended workshops and retreats at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, and the Insight Meditation Society. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from MIT, a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University, and a master's degree in journalism from Boston University.

#### Users Review

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**Edward Phillips:**

This book untitled *Secular Meditation: 32 Practices for Cultivating Inner Peace, Compassion, and Joy — A Guide from the Humanist Community at Harvard* to be one of several books this best seller in this year, here is because when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this kind of book in the book store or you can order it by using online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quicker to read this book, because you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this guide from your list.

**Brandy Godwin:**

The actual book *Secular Meditation: 32 Practices for Cultivating Inner Peace, Compassion, and Joy — A Guide from the Humanist Community at Harvard* has a lot of information on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was published by the very famous author. The writer makes some research previous to write this book. This particular book very easy to read you will get the point easily after perusing this book.

**Valerie Beauchamp:**

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**Charles Parker:**

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