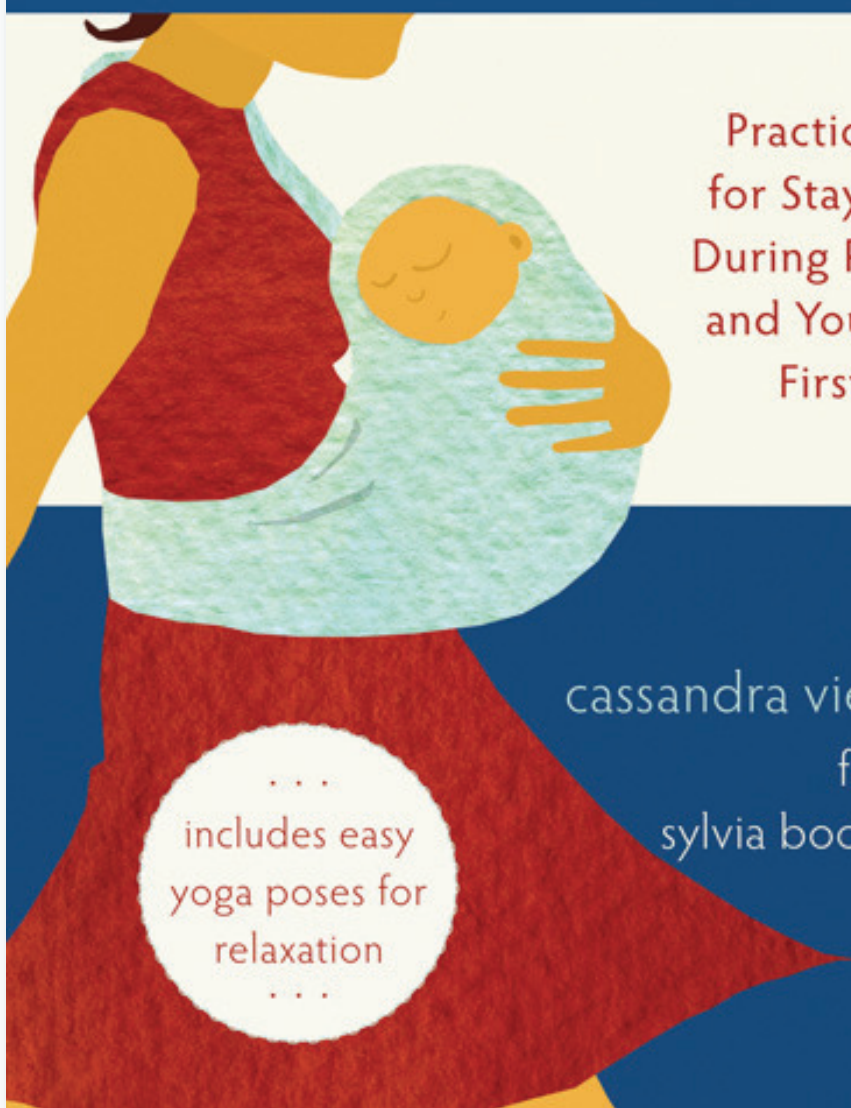


# mindful motherhood

Practical Tools  
for Staying Sane  
During Pregnancy  
and Your Child's  
First Year

cassandra vieten, ph.d.  
foreword by  
sylvia boorstein, ph.d.

...  
includes easy  
yoga poses for  
relaxation  
...



# mindful motherhood

by **Cassandra Vieten, PhD**

*"In Mindful Motherhood, you'll experience the wisdom of a mother, clinician, and researcher who outlines the accessible, practical steps to take to turn challenge into triumph during pregnancy and the parenting of young children.*

*Read this book, give it as a baby shower present, carry it with you into the pediatrician's office—but most of all, take it in and savor its secrets for a richer life for yourself and your child."*

—**Daniel J. Siegel, MD** author of *Parenting from the Inside Out* and *The Mindful Brain*

From hormones to stretch marks, labor pains to diaper changes, motherhood is an adventure like none other. The rapid changes in your body, your lifestyle, and your very identity call for a certain mental and emotional agility. Mindfulness can help you meet the challenge and approach every experience with your new baby with open eyes and an open heart. Based on research conducted at California Pacific Medical Center, and with a foreword by beloved meditation teacher Sylvia Boorstein, ***Mindful Motherhood: Practical Tools for Staying Sane During Pregnancy and Your Child's First Year*** (New Harbinger/Noetic Books, May 2009, \$16.95 ) by psychologist and mom Cassandra Vieten, has been acclaimed by women's health experts, mindfulness teachers, and psychologists alike.

***Mindful Motherhood*** provides pregnant women and new moms with a brief, low-cost, easy to implement set of tools to deal with stress, difficult moments, depressed or anxious moods, and negative thought patterns during pregnancy and early motherhood. Based on the principles of mindfulness, this book also provides information, exercises, and ideas to enhance the positive emotions that are part of the experience of motherhood and improve the quality of mother-infant interactions, bringing more attention and awareness to the deep joy and satisfaction that motherhood can bring.

*"Mindfulness, when extended from mother to child,  
weaves a blanket of grounded attunement sufficient for two.*

*Cassandra Vieten's down-to-earth suggestions will help all newly enlarged  
families navigate this wonderful, but often disruptive milestone."*

—**Zindel V. Segal, Ph.D.**, C.Psych., Morgan Firestone Chair in Psychotherapy  
at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, ON, Canada



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## ***Mindful Motherhood* provides pregnant women and early moms with:**

- 1) accessible information based on science and sound clinical theory,
- 2) practical tools for practicing mindfulness in everyday life,
- 3) stories and examples to inspire interest and clarify points, and
- 4) experiential exercises that will help readers integrate the information and experiences they have.

*Mindful Motherhood* also offers current insights into the positive psychology of motherhood and mother-infant attachment, translating science and theory into jargon-free language and immediately applicable tools. This book is aimed specifically toward pregnant women and mothers with infants, who would like to deal more effectively with stress and mood during pregnancy and postpartum, who are interested in being the best parent they can be, and who want to cultivate a deeper connection to themselves and their children.

The goal is to help women become the kind of present, authentic, connected, emotionally competent, psychologically-balanced, and loving mothers they want to be – not to mention enjoying the extraordinary experience of motherhood to its fullest extent.

## ***Why it is Important***

A large body of evidence in both animal and humans studies indicates that stress and mood disturbance experienced during pregnancy increases the risk for preterm birth, low birth weight, and other pregnancy-related complications, and may adversely affect the developing fetus. Postnatal mood disturbance can interfere with attachment, healthy parenting behaviors, and child development. While a wealth of evidence supports all these facts, surprisingly little information is available to women and clinicians for reducing stress and improving mood in pregnancy and postpartum.

## ***Mindful Motherhood ...***

is the only book oriented toward teaching research-based mindfulness principles to reduce stress and improve mood in pregnant women and new moms. It is an easy but informative read that gives new moms the psychology, science and health facts behind how mindfulness can improve mood, reduce stress, enhance mother-infant attachment, and be used in childbirth.



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## *What is Mindfulness?*

Mindfulness simply put, is being aware of your experience, from moment to moment, as it is happening, without pushing it away, wanting to make it stay, or judging it. This allows you to meet each situation as it is, and to over time, more and more often, approach whatever is happening with curiosity and compassion.

Mindfulness is a way of approaching all of your experiences with open eyes and an open heart. Whether internal, like thoughts, feelings, or body sensations or external, like relationships, workplace situations, or the physical environment – mindfulness is a way of simply being with whatever is happening, no matter what it is. Mindfulness is both a skill, and a way of being, that is focused on helping you be aware, stay in the present moment, stay connected with your baby even in times of distress, be less overwhelmed by emotion and less caught up in negative thought patterns, and enjoy the simple pleasures that can suffuse each day of being a mom.

## *Mindfulness Practices Cultivate the Capacity to:*

- remain present and aware in the face of changing and at times difficult circumstances,
- observe relatively non-reactively your own processes of thinking and feeling,
- approach unfamiliar experiences with curiosity and compassion as opposed to fear or defensiveness,
- use approach-based coping methods (e.g. examining and exploring what is causing discomfort rather than habitually avoiding it) without getting caught in rumination and preoccupation;

... all of which are a part of psychological health and emotional intelligence. These skills are fundamental to good parenting, and are conducive to experiencing the tremendous enjoyment and opportunity for adult development that becoming a mother offers.

## *Mindful Mothering*

Increasing your capacity for mindful awareness enhances the quality of your motherhood in both how you engage with your baby as a mother and how you experience motherhood. Over time you are more and more often able to meet what is happening as it is and to make a choice about how to respond that is based on the actual situation, rather than your stories about it, or your desire to make it stop or make it stay. Each time you do this, you very literally transmit that capacity to your child. Your baby senses that he is safe, that you are solid, that his own overwhelming experiences are not overwhelming you. Even when you do get upset, your capacity to remain present and connected with your baby lays the groundwork for him developing a strong and secure sense of self.



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## *Bringing Mindful Motherhood into Everyday Life*

This book is made up of twenty-four chapters that should take about twenty minutes each to read. Each one can be read during a quick, feet-up rest while pregnant, one session of nursing, or an unusual moment to yourself when the baby is napping. You can read the book straight through, flip to a chapter that seems particularly appropriate to you that day, and by all means, read them over and over.

This book is filled with guided meditations, yoga exercises and mindful practices that allow you to experience the benefits of practice. Most chapters include one or more five-to-ten-minute exercises that you can incorporate into your everyday life. Chapters 2 and 4 provide instruction for more formal, twenty-minute practices that you can do every day to beef up those mindfulness muscles and get familiar with the territory of mindful awareness. The key to all of this is finding realistic ways that mindfulness can be incorporated into your life as a mom.

## *Conclusion*

To summarize, mindfulness is moment-to-moment, nonjudgmental awareness of your present-moment experience, so that increasingly, as time goes on, you are able to approach your experience with curiosity and compassion rather than habitually reacting based on your desire for situations to be other than they are. *Mindful Motherhood* is focused on helping you be aware and stay in the present moment so that you can be connected with your baby even in times of distress, be less overwhelmed by distressing emotion and less caught up in negative thought patterns, and enjoy the simple pleasures that suffuse each day of being a mom.

With mindful awareness, even when you are feeling sadness, fear, anger, or guilt, you have an increasing capacity to remain present, to stay connected with your baby, to be able to set nurturing limits (for both yourself and your baby), and to respond to what is actually happening rather than reacting to your story about what is happening. You are less likely to translate pure, normal, and natural emotions like sadness, fear, or anger into more chronic experiences of depression, anxiety, rage, or shame. More and more, you are able to act in alignment with your values and your goals to be the kind of mother you want to be.

*"This book is destined to become the new bible for any expectant or new mom suffering from serious anxiety. It brings state-of-the-art breakthroughs in anxiety treatment to women in a clear, compassionate, practical, and user-friendly self-help format."*

—Valerie Davis Raskin, MD, author of *This Isn't What I Expected*



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## *About the Author*

**Cassandra Vieten, Ph.D.**, is a licensed clinical psychologist, director of research at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, codirector of the Mind Body Medicine Research Group at California Pacific Medical Center Research Institute in San Francisco, CA, and co-president of the Institute for Spirituality and Psychology. Cassandra is also the mom of eight year old Indigo.



## *About the Book*

**TITLE:** *Mindful Motherhood: Practical Ways for Staying Sane During Pregnancy and Your Child's First Year*

**AUTHOR:** Cassandra Vieten, PhD.

**PUBLICATION DATE:** May 1, 2009

**PUBLISHER:** New Harbinger/Noetic Books

**ISBN:** 1572246294

**PRICE:** \$16.95

**FIND US ON THE WEB:** [www.mindfulmotherhood.org](http://www.mindfulmotherhood.org)

**GO TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:** <http://tiny.cc/mindfulmotherhoodfacebook>

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER:** <http://twitter.com/mindfulbookmom>

**AND TWITTERMOMS AT:** <http://www.twittermoms.com/profile/mindfulbookmom>



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## *What Others Say*

"*Mindful Motherhood* contains what so many other parenting books omit: the consoling information that each mother has the ability to know, deep within, how to care for her child. *Mindful Motherhood* is a gem."

—**Christiane Northrup, MD**, author of *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*

"Wise, soothing, and helpful—this is really good stuff for new mothers."

—**Jack Kornfield**, author of *The Wise Heart*

"This book will inspire, guide, and reassure mothers in pregnancy and after childbirth. Nothing could be more important to our families, our children, and the future of the world. Dads will benefit, also."

—**Paul Ekman, Ph.D.**, coauthor, with the Dalai Lama, of *Emotional Awareness*

"The connection between mother and baby is one of the most spiritual relationships we have."

—**Baba Ram Dass, also known as Richard Alpert**, author of *Remember, Be Here Now*

"This is a welcome and needed book. These practical meditations for women may be a great help with prenatal and postnatal challenges. These essential psychological practices come from a woman who has earned the right to teach a classical path of human development through motherhood."

—**Robert Bruce Newman**, author of *Calm Birth* and *Calm Healing*

"This is a beautiful book – deeply moving, intensely practical, and filled with wisdom."

—**Ruth A. Baer, Ph.D.**, professor of psychology at University of Kentucky

"With wisdom, depth and humility, *Mindful Motherhood* guides us through the miraculous and challenging path of becoming a mother. It weaves together scholarship, personal experience, and practical tools, helping us become the most loving, present and joyful parents we can be. As a scholar and mother, I found this book immensely valuable."

—**Shauna Shapiro**, coauthor, with Linda Carlson, of *The Art and Science of Mindfulness*

"I think mothers everywhere would greatly benefit from this book. It is honest, openhearted, straightforward and compassionate. *Mindful Motherhood* is an invaluable resource for moms at any stage in their parenting."

--**Sharon Salzberg**, founding teacher of the Insight Meditation Society and author of *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience*



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## *Upcoming Events*

### **Mindful Motherhood Book Launch & Open House**

Saturday May 9, 2009 3:30—6pm

Marin Montessori School, 5200 Paradise Drive, Corte Madera, CA 94925

Babies and children welcome (childcare not provided)

<http://mindfulmotherhood.eventbrite.com>

### **Conscious Parenting: How Science and Wisdom Practices Can Bring Your Parenting to a New Level**

Wednesday, June 17, 2009 9:30—4:30

Institute of Noetic Sciences' 13th International Conference: Toward a Global Shift: Seeding the Field of Collective Change

J.W. Marriott Starr Pass Resort, Tucson, Arizona.

[www.ionsconference.com](http://www.ionsconference.com)

### **Mindful Motherhood: A Mindfulness and Yoga Retreat for Pregnant Women**

with [Cassandra Vieten](#) & [Jnana Gowan](#)

Sunday, August 23—Friday, August 28, 2009

Esalen, Highway 1, Big Sur, CA 93920

[www.esalen.org](http://www.esalen.org)

### **Mindful Motherhood: A Mindfulness and Yoga Retreat for Pregnant Women**

with [Cassandra Vieten](#) & [Jnana Gowan](#)

Friday, September 25—Sunday, September 27

Institute of Noetic Sciences, Petaluma, CA

[www.noetic.org/events](http://www.noetic.org/events)

