



# Enlightenment for Grown Ups: a practical guide

*Philip John Gundy*

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## **Enlightenment for Grown Ups: a practical guide** Philip John Gundy

Enlightenment for Grown Ups is a consequence of what happened to me a number of years ago when I started experimenting on my own brain, in order to change how I perceived the world. I really didn't expect anything to permanently change it, especially as I was committed to using non-invasive, non-chemical means, such as meditation, to bring it about. But it did change. Little by little at first, and then with 'flashes' of inspiration, which gained momentum as time went by. Eventually, I reached a tipping point from which there was no return. The book is a reverse-engineering of what I ultimately did to myself. We live in exciting, and scary, times for the brain. Neuroscience is making huge advances in both mapping the brain and in explaining how its wiring dictates how we perceive and interact with the world. It shows the brain to be not a fixed structure, but a plastic one, changing throughout our lives. Evidence shows how new brain cells form in parts of the brain and then migrate to other parts, changing the very wiring that makes us 'us'. This rewiring can be aimed at specific medical conditions such as anxiety, or can be used for other things such as accelerating learning, or insight. Medical research is rapidly approaching a time when this rewiring can be done to us, hopefully for the best possible reasons, using drugs or other external stimuli such as focused electromagnetic pulses. We will soon come to see it as a normal type of treatment done to us by medical practitioners. However, research also shows that we can undertake such changes ourselves, at our own pace and in our own homes just by sitting quietly, using some ancient meditation practices. Practices I just happened on by chance in my own experiments. The book is written for anyone who wants to explore changing their lives, for whatever reason. It is a step by step guide to rewiring the brain using tried and tested techniques, but based on my own experiences of insight meditation. It can be used as a dipping-the-toe-in experience, maybe for relaxation or to reduce anxiety, or can be taken all the way to full enlightenment practice aimed at permanently changing your relationship with the world. The first part is to convince you that we can, and need to, change how we 'see' the world, by utilising the plasticity of a brain, which allows for its own wiring to be permanently altered. The section includes a look at the brain and mind, and at current research into strategies that others can use on us, before describing somewhat less scary methods that we can use on ourselves. The 'grown ups' part of the title reflects the permanent nature of changes arising from meditation, a warning that you should think long and hard before committing yourself to the programme. The next part helps the reader develop insight meditation, which is vital in bringing about this structured rewiring. Insight meditation resets the brain to a more natural, integrated state by mindfully reflecting on fundamental ideas, ideas which are neither to be taken on board nor rejected, but used as a focus that allows for changes to take place in the brain. Changes that bring about moments of insight into the nature of reality, moments of altered states of consciousness leading to enlightenment. Following this is a look at the subjective, and rather fleeting, nature of enlightenment experiences, and how they have been expressed in literature and other works of art. I also reflect on my own enlightenment, the experiences that I went through, and how it has affected me. The reader is then invited to explore what their new brains will bring to the rest of their lives.

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