

## The Art of Conscious Living

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Tagged as : [Full Catastrophe Living](#), [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#), [Mindfulness](#)

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I'm attending the [Creating a Mindful Society](#) conference this weekend, and am *quite* excited for it.

One of the featured presenters is Jon Kabat-Zinn, and I recently had a read through of his first book: Full Catastrophe Living. It serves as a detailed introduction to mindfulness, and is placed in the context of healthcare and healing. Published in 1990, it helped lay the groundwork for mindfulness in the US, particularly from a scientific end. I'd like to share one quote from the book that resonated deeply, on the art of conscious living:

*"You can't sail straight into the wind, and if you only know how to sail with the wind at your back, you will only go where the wind blows you. But if you know how to use the wind's energy and are patient, you can sometimes get where you want to go. You can still be in control.*

If you hope to make use of the force of your own problems to propel you in this way, you will have to be tuned in, just as the sailor is tuned in to feel the boat, the water, the wind, and his or her course. You will have to learn how to handle yourself under all kinds of stressful conditions, not just when the weather is sunny and the wind blowing exactly the way you want it to.

We all accept that no one controls the weather. Good sailors learn to read it carefully and respect its power. They will avoid storms if possible, but when caught in one, they know when to take down the sails, batten down the hatches, drop anchor, and ride things out, controlling what is controllable and letting go of the rest.

Training, practice, and a lot of firsthand experience in all sorts of weather are required to develop such skills so that they work for you when you need them. Developing skill in facing and effectively handling the various 'weather conditions' in your life is what we mean by the art of conscious living."