

# LIVING WITH YOUR HEART WIDE OPEN

How Mindfulness & Compassion Can Free You From Unworthiness, Inadequacy & Shame

STEVE FLOWERS, MFT & BOB STAHL, PHD

FOREWORD BY TARA BRACH, PHD

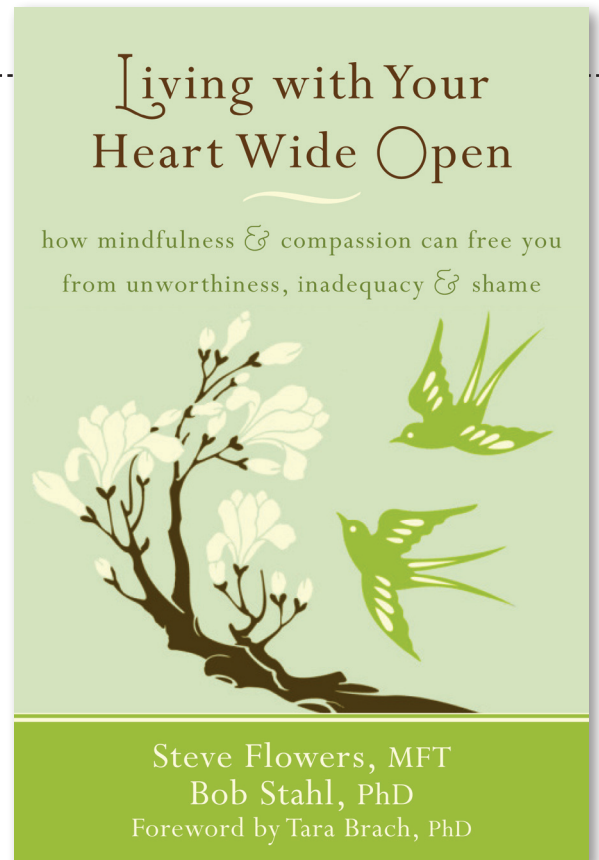
*“Living with Your Heart Wide Open is both healing and awakening. By questioning and transforming the many false and negative ways we understand ourselves, we find the joy of liberation.”*

— Jack Kornfield, PhD,  
author of *The Wise Heart, A Path with Heart*, and *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*

Cultivate deep emotional healing through mindfulness and self compassion.

To live with shame and feelings of inadequacy is to live with guilt, self-loathing, and a constant sense of isolation propelled by the belief that you are deficient as a human being. These beliefs are hard-wired and painful to face, but those who are eventually able to overcome them reap many rewards: compassion for themselves and others, and the ability to open beyond the the trance of unworthiness. *Living with Your Heart Wide Open* presents a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) path to moving past feelings of shame and unworthiness and toward a new perspective based in compassion and acceptance. MBSR has been proven to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve well-being.

The exercises in this guide help readers process the painful feelings of shame, instead of avoiding them, and move past the beliefs and self-concepts that keep them from reaching their full potential. Through the healing power of mindfulness and acceptance, readers come to terms with their thoughts of shame and unworthiness and grow to fully understand them, yet develop a shield of compassion to protect them against the temptation to absorb or believe these thoughts.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT  
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HOW MINDFULNESS & COMPASSION CAN FREE YOU FROM UNWORTHINESS,  
INADEQUACY & SHAME

Steve Flowers, MFT & Bob Stahl, PhD

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## About the Authors

### Steve Flowers, MFT,

is founder and director of the mindfulness-based stress reduction program at Enloe Medical Center in Chico, CA, and is a mindfulness-based psychotherapist in private practice. He is also author of *The Mindful Path Through Shyness*.

### Bob Stahl, PhD,

founded and directs mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs in three medical centers in the San Francisco Bay Area. An experienced mindfulness practitioner, Stahl lived in a Buddhist monastery for over eight years and has completed MBSR teacher certification at University of Massachusetts Medical Center. He is the only MBSR practitioner authorized to train new MBSR teachers outside of Jon Kabat-Zinn's Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society. Stahl serves as an adjunct senior teacher for Oasis, the institute for mindfulness-based professional education and innovation at the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at UMASS Medical School. He is a coauthor of *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook*.

## Do you save the harshest judgments for yourself?

The way we talk to ourselves is often unkind and filled with self-judgments. These overly harsh self-criticisms can make us feel unworthy and incomplete. What if what you really need is not higher standards for yourself, but greater self-compassion? In *Living with Your Heart Wide Open*, you'll discover how mindfulness and self-compassion can free you from the thoughts and beliefs that create feelings of inadequacy and learn to open your heart to the loving-kindness within you and in the world around you.

Based in Western psychotherapy and Buddhist psychological principles, this book guides you past painful and self-limiting beliefs about yourself and toward a new perspective of nonjudgmental awareness and acceptance of who you are, just as you are. You'll receive gentle guidance in mindfulness and compassion practices that will lead you away from unproductive, self-critical thoughts and help you live more freely and fearlessly, with your heart wide open.

### • What is self-authorship?

• What are self-limiting beliefs? How are they constructed and what can we do about them?

• Mark Twain once said "We do not deal much in facts when we are contemplating ourselves." What does this mean in the context of overcoming self-limiting beliefs?

• In *Living with Your Heart Wide Open*, you discuss the narrative-based self vs. the immediacy-based self. What are the differences between the two and how are they significant?

• In the book there's also a section called "Why pleasing others doesn't work in the long run." Certainly we have all done things we maybe wouldn't have done otherwise in efforts to please others. So why doesn't pleasing others work in the long run?

## Interview Questions

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