

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

REGULATION FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Linking Your Body, Brain, and Behavior

Carolyn A. Hope

Balboa Press (142 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

Psychologist Hope presents a guide to help readers regulate aspects of their minds and bodies to create positive change.

The concept of “self-regulation” stems from the notion that human beings have the power, with practice, to control their own physical and emotional reactions through targeted brain development. In this book, Hope lays out five mind-body connections that one can achieve with a regulated nervous system: a “loose” instead of “rigid” physical state; an energy level that’s “flexible” instead of “drained”; “directed,” not “distracted,” attention; “responsive” emotions instead of “disconnected” ones; and “pro-social” instead of “self-destructive” behavior. She also dedicates separate sections to what she explains as being three regulation pathways of children’s behavior: “Vertical Brain” (involving integration), “Horizontal Brain” (involving balance), and “Social Brain” (involving connection). A well-regulated system, she asserts, helps people develop healthy coping mechanisms and positive social interactions, and she devotes four chapters to various activities aimed at strengthening self-regulation. “Reader Reflection” sections at the end of each chapter prompt people to connect what they’ve learned to their own lives, using questions such as “Imagine the upper brain is being ‘taken over’ by the limbic system. Suggest a strategy to yourself, such as breathing, pausing, or moving.” Written as a “practical application of scholarly knowledge,” Hope’s guide brims with cited scientific explanations, but her clear, concise voice grounds the book and keeps it from ever feeling overwhelming. Frequent interactive exercises, inserted at intervals, help to break the information into manageable portions. The idea of neuroplasticity, and the concept of people being able to essentially rewire how they think, is one that’s gained traction in recent years, and Hope’s approach effectively seeks to incorporate it into one’s mental well-being. It all results in a consistently engaging read.

A helpful and straightforward blend of science, mindfulness exercises, and other activities that may appeal to stressed-out readers.