



ENLIGHTEN EXERCISE #47

Mindfulness Exercises

Mindfulness is awareness of the present moment. It's about being in the “*here and now*” rather than dwelling on the past (it's over) or worrying about the future. It is important to realize that there is a difference between mindfulness and concentration.

Concentration is important. It helps you to focus your attention on one thing or another, and in this way it helps you to influence your self-talk and what goes on in your mind. But mindfulness is another step beyond concentration. *Mindfulness* is a state of awareness (i.e., a “presence” of mind).

These mindfulness techniques are an important part of learning how to practice mindfulness.

Exercise #1: Conscious Observation

Pick up an object that you have at work or home. Any everyday object will do such as your phone, a coffee cup or your keys. Hold it in your hands and allow your attention to be fully absorbed by the object.

Observe it. Don't assess it, or think about it, or study it. Just observe it for what it is. If your mind begins to wander, disregard these thoughts and go back to focusing on the object you selected.

Exercise #2: 60 Seconds of Mindfulness

This is a basic mindfulness exercise, and one that you can do anytime throughout the day. Take a moment right now to practice this.

Check your watch and note the time. For the next 60 seconds your job is to focus all your attention on your breathing.

Leave your eyes open and breathe normally. Be ready to catch your mind from wandering off (because it will) and return your attention to your breath whenever it does so. Focus on your breath going in and out and the motion of your chest. Notice the rhythm and note how you both inhaling and exhaling.

This mindfulness exercise is far more difficult than it appears. It takes some people many years of practice before they are able to complete a single minute of focused, clear and uninterrupted attention.

Remember that this mindfulness exercise is not a contest or a personal challenge. You can only experience it—there is no pass or fail grade on how well you did.

Use this exercise at last three times throughout the day to restore your mind to the present moment and to restore your mind to clarity, calm and peace. With practice, you can gradually extend the duration of this exercise into longer and longer periods of time.