

# Awareness

Our ability to change, develop or grow is dependent upon our level of awareness. In this regard, everything starts and ends with awareness.

If we are not aware of our present state or situation, we cannot form the intention or have the desire to change or improve it. So everything we'll be doing and learning together through this newsletter really is based on awareness and further refining it.

Another word for awareness is mindfulness. Awareness/mindfulness is both an inherent gift we are born with and an ability we can develop and refine. Becoming more aware affords us more clarity, understanding and, importantly, more options.

Rather than simply passively perceiving, mindfulness eventually leads us to an active engagement with what's going on. It allows you to enter into a situation or state more completely, more meaningfully. This in turn affords you the luxury of deeper knowing and deeper participation. Once inside a situation or state, your very presence or intention can now change it from the inside.

## Body - Awareness

We will start with the body; simply becoming more aware of the body.

While this may sound simple and to many with mind/body training, very basic, it is a skill that can always be deepened. And by entering into the body more deeply with awareness, we are also at the same time further developing our ability to consciously influence and change it on many, many levels. Whether that be on the level of metabolism, digestion, blood pressure, heart-rate, blood sugar, tension, anxiety, etc.

By entering deeply into the body, becoming more and more mindful, we:

- 1) become more aware and clear about what is going on with the body and
- 2) we can begin to consciously, actively change that position or state.

So to start, let's work with simple body-awareness ..... which really is profound in itself!

Even while sitting and reading this, turn your attention inward and become aware of your body ... notice and feel your body's experience at this moment.

## **Breath - Awareness**

Feel the pressure of your body against the chair and floor beneath you. Notice the sensations created by gravity.

Does this new awareness allow you to realize that you are perhaps a little slumped in your chair or hunched over your desk? Is your body structure crimped or compromised in any way?

With this new clarity of awareness, can you adjust your posture in a way that feels healthier, more open ..... brighter?

And what about your breath? Bring your awareness to your breathing. At first don't change anything. Just notice the quality of your breath. Is it long, slow, deep or shallow and tight? Can you improve it in any way? Can you allow it to be more full, more complete?

You may have noticed that when you adjusted and improved your posture, your breathing became more open and free as well.

Notice how you feel now. Does your body feel released and open? Is your breath more natural? How does this affect your overall sense of well-being?

# Staying Conscious

Even if you were able to make, or only needed to make small changes, those changes have directly contributed to your health. Even small corrections done repeatedly throughout your day add up and over time will have a huge impact on your overall health and even your longevity.

But can you see that if your attention were not drawn to your body and your breath like it was a few minutes ago, you would probably still be in that compromised state? And how long would you have stayed in that health-draining state?

Minutes, hours, days? Or, dare we say...years?!

To be precise, you would have stayed in that less-than-optimum condition exactly as long as you were unconscious of it. The second your awareness was brought to the situation was the instant that change could begin to occur.

So, for our purposes, everything begins and ends with awareness.

Awareness is Everything.

# What it Takes

To begin to benefit immediately from increased awareness, decide to be more mindful of your body and breath throughout your day.

Several times a day, stop and check-in. How does your body feel? What are you doing to and with your body? Can you change it; can you support your body by removing any collapsed or constrained conditions?

How are you breathing? Can you allow it to be more open and free? How do you feel now that you've made these conscious changes? How does it

compare to how you were feeling before you made those changes? (Even though you probably didn't know how you were feeling before you checked-in).

Do this throughout your day, both at work and at home.

Of course, the hard part will be remembering to check-in, right?

This brings us to the crucial, key component to changing and taking charge of your health; to change and development of any kind, really.

And that is the consistency and persistence required for the accomplishment of any goal or mastery of any skill. Yes, we're talking about that dreaded word ..... Discipline!

The good news is, discipline doesn't have to be hard or unpleasant. We just have to make our practice **SYSTEMATIC**.

What that means is we just need to make it so it happens regularly. But here is the real key: it has to happen regularly **WITHOUT** our thinking about it.

If we have to think about it, chances are we'll be hit-and-miss at best. If we have to think of it and decide if we have time or not to do it or feel like doing it, we'll more often than not be side-tracked and distracted and not do it. Something else will always fill that time and space.

## **Tricking Yourself into Mindfulness**

So the trick to discipline is to arrange it so the activity happens without having to remember and decide. It has to be automatic.

So to help us out, a handy trick (technique) is to set your watch or clock to beep each hour. This way, no matter where you are or what you're doing, when the pre-set alarm beeps, you will be automatically reminded to take a minute or two, check-in, see how you're feeling, make conscious, positive changes, then go about your day again.

Even if you are in the midst of an activity or in the middle of a meeting where you can't stop what you're doing, it literally takes just a second or two to tune-in and adjust.

With this strategy, you can guarantee yourself the discipline, consistency and persistence necessary to cultivate real change and development. All without having to think about it, except for the initial setting of your clock.

Real change, even dramatic transformation, is really just the accumulation of incremental steps.

The above technique ensures that you will support yourself along your path by taking those incremental steps ..... all day long!

This is when new and positive habits can be forged and anchored. And nothing fuels motivation and breeds success like success.

Remember to practice mindfulness throughout your day for better health and happiness!

Yours in Health & Harmony,

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