

NAME: ATTENTION EXERCISES

SOURCE:

- Residential Training Program, ToDo Institute Gregg Krech 2004
- Revision 2008 James Hill

These are ways to practice bringing mindful attention into your day to day activities.

- 1) **Secret Service** – Do something helpful for another person without anyone else knowing. It is best if you do not benefit directly from the service.
- 2) **Mindful Listening** – Spend time paying close attention to sounds. Pay attention to not only the loudest sound, but also the quiet noises in the background. Focus on the sound rather than your thoughts about the sounds. Make no attempt to name them or figure out what they mean. It may help to close your eyes.
- 3) **Mindful Activity** - Pick one routine activity that you will do mindfully every time you do it. (Brushing your teeth, drying yourself off after a shower, dressing, drinking a beverage, etc.). My activity will be _____.
- 4) **Mindful Eating** – During at least one meal place your fork or spoon down after each bite. Chew and swallow your food completely before picking up your silverware to take another bite. In as much detail as is possible, attend to the taste, smell, and texture of the food.
- 5) **Notice Connections** – Notice how things are connected where they come together (a leaf to the stem, a branch to a tree, a drawer handle to the drawer, two sides of the scissors, two pieces of fabric, etc.) See how many kinds of connections you can discover.
- 6) **Write haiku poetry**: Three lines: First 5 syllables, Second 7 syllables, Third 5 syllables. The author is usually invisible in the poem. The poem often describes an observed reality.
- 7) **Silent Meal Preparation** – Prepare a meal as quietly as possible. Limit speech as well as handling utensils in a way to make as little noise as possible.
- 8) **Mindful Cleaning** – Do the dishes; clean or dust, or vacuum a room, placing as much of your attention on the act you are performing as is possible. Do not listen to music or focus thoughts on anything other than what you are doing. Stay in the moment and the sensory experience of cleaning.
- 9) **Draw Something** – Draw it in as much detail as you possibly can. Let go of any tendency to judge if the drawing is turning out well. Focus instead on really looking, making no assumption that you know what it looks like, and draw what you see. Include as much detail as possible.
- 10) **What is my Purpose** – Carry several coins in your pocket. Each time you enter a room, shift one coin to the opposite pocket. Bring to mind what your purpose is for entering the room (to watch TV, to go to the bathroom, to find your keys, etc.).
- 11) **Put it Away** – Every time you are done with something, put it away. Do not set anything down in a temporary holding spot (on a counter, desk, table, or floor). Put it back where it belongs, or create a particular place for it.
- 12) **Non-dominant Hand** – For a period of 3 hours use the hand you would usually not use to open doors, write, turn on & off lights, water, etc. Notice how many times you use your dominant hand without thinking, and how many times you have to “cheat” to get something done. What would it be like to be without your dominant hand for a day, or week, or the rest of your life?