

Ideas for Practicing Observing

BY COMING BACK TO YOUR SENSES

Remember: Observing is bringing your mind back to the sensations of your body and mind.

Observe with your eyes:

1. Lie on the ground and watch the clouds in the sky.
2. Walking slowly, stopping somewhere with a view, notice flowers, trees, and nature itself.
3. Sit outside. Watch who and what go by in front of you, without following them with your head or your eyes.
4. Notice the facial expression and movements of another person. Refrain from labeling the person's emotions, thoughts, or interests.
5. Notice just the eyes, lips, or hands of another person (or just one feature of an animal).
6. Pick up a leaf, a flower, or a pebble. Look at it closely, trying to see each detail.
7. Find something beautiful to look at, and spend a few minutes contemplating it.
8. Other: _____

Observe sounds:

9. Stop for a moment and just listen. Listen to the texture and shape of the sounds around you. Listen to the silences between the sounds.
10. If someone is talking, listen to the pitch of the voice, to the smoothness or roughness of the sounds, to the clarity or the mumbling of the speech, to the pauses between the words.
11. Listen to music, observing each note as it comes and the spaces between the notes. Try breathing the sounds into your body and letting them flow out again on your out breath.
12. Other: _____

Observe smells around you:

13. Breathing in, notice any smells around you. Bring something close to your nose, and notice the smells. Take it away, and then notice the smells again. Do they linger?
14. When eating, notice the aroma of the food; when cooking, notice the aroma of the spices or other ingredients; when bathing, smell the soap or shampoo; when walking outside, notice the aroma of the air; when near flowers, bend down and "smell the roses."
15. Other: _____

Observe taste and the act of eating:

16. Putting something in your mouth, pay attention to the taste. Keep it in your mouth, and notice all the taste sensations.
17. Lick a lollipop or something else. Notice just the sensation of taste.
18. Eat a meal, or even a part of a meal, paying attention to the taste of each mouthful.
19. Other: _____

Observe urges to do something:

When you are feeling an urge to do something impulsive,

20. "Urge-surf" by imagining that your urges are a surfboard and you are standing on the board, riding the waves.
21. Notice any urge to avoid someone or something.
22. Scan your entire body, and notice the sensations. Where in the body is the urge?
23. When you are chewing your food, notice when you have the urge to swallow.
24. Other: _____

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