

Practicing Intentionality

- 1) Sitting quite still, notice the experience of your body. Notice the movements of your torso in relation to the breath coming in and going out.
- 2) Notice any thoughts arising in your mind. Each time a thought arises, gently label it by silently saying “thinking,” “reviewing,” “planning,” or any other note that comes quickly to mind; then immediately return your focus of concentration to your body. Do this over and over, each time you notice that you are thinking.
- 3) Notice your feelings. Once again, label them quickly: “anxious,” “bored,” “calm,” or any other note that comes quickly to mind. Immediately return your focus of concentration to the experience of your torso in relation to your breath.
- 4) Stand up. Notice that this is a complicated movement. Slowly walk a few steps. Notice all the different parts of your body that must move in order to walk. Notice the feel of clothing on your skin. Walk slowly for a while, trying all the time to experience each body movement as fully as possible. While walking, do #2 and #3 above repeatedly, continually coming back to the experience of the body whenever you note a thought or feeling arise.
- 5) Return to your seat and sit down again. Attempt to be present with everything that is happening in each moment. At times, your thoughts or feelings will overwhelm you, and you will forget where you are. As soon as you have realized that you have drifted away, gently note that this is so, and immediately return to the experience of your body and breath.
- 6) If you do not already have one, get an inexpensive watch with a timer/beeper that can be set for a selected number of minutes. Set it for approximately, but not exactly, one hour. Each time your watch beeps throughout the day, stop whatever you are doing for about 15-30 seconds and fully experience your body and breath. You can do this in almost any situation; or if not, you can finish what you are doing and then take the 15-30 seconds to reflect on what is happening in different parts of your body.
- 7) Every few days, change the interval of the time so that you will always be caught unawares. After a while, you will find that you spontaneously raise your awareness of your body and surroundings. This is the purpose of the practice.

Rabbi David A. Cooper