

Taming The Brain Exercise 2: Week Two

The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character and will. No one is composed sui [master of himself] if he have it not. An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence. -----William James, Principles of Psychology

Being Disciplined

William James, the author of the quote above, is considered one of the three most important people in the birth of modern psychology. I love his quote. He essentially is saying that **personal mastery is built upon a foundation of focus--bringing back a wandering attention.**

The disciplines of silence, solitude and practicing internal stillness do just that. They are the foundation for almost all growth that we can generate in our life. Being present. Being grounded. Not being "somewhere else" in our mind.

This week, continue to daily practice your deep breathing based meditation exercises. Keep in mind that you can experiment with walking meditation—doing this while walking in nature, or with background soothing music, and in any number of ways. If one way doesn't work for you, try something else.

But, above all be patient. And remember, **simply practicing these disciplines is the secret sauce....not doing it perfectly, or doing it "right."** If your mind wanders every three seconds, simply practice bringing it back by releasing the thoughts, when you recognize your attention has wandered, and bring your attention back to your breathing, inhaling down into your belly through your nose, and exhaling out through your mouth. This is what is going to ultimately generate the value for you.

This Week's Practice

Get in a quiet place, with no distractions. Sit upright, or lie down--whatever will support you best in this exercise. Close your eyes. Consciously relax.

- Breathe deeply, down into your belly. Your stomach should go out when you inhale and back in when you exhale.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Clear your mind of all extraneous thought and focus on your breath and your bodily

sensations.

- Don't try to figure anything out. There is nothing else you are supposed to do other than be fully present in your body.
- When a thought enters your mind, when you notice it, just release it and let it float away, and bring your attention back to your breath and bodily presence.
- Do this for as many minutes as you can. Two minutes is a start. If you can do this for twelve minutes, it is a home run for today.
- When you are complete, non-judgmentally reflect on what your experience was. Continue to do so throughout the day as it occurs to you.

Also, this week, make sure you read and start practicing the Participant Guide Taming The Brain Exercise # 1: Overcoming Emotional Flooding. When you find yourself getting triggered into reactivity and defensiveness this week, practice this mindfulness exercise to help work through and “breath down” the upset you are experiencing.