

Awaken your senses

Welcome to the RelationKit mindfulness series. Today you'll be stepping outside to practice and opening up all your senses to the freshness of the present moment.

Mindfulness doesn't just have to be a meditation practice. We can bring it in to everyday stuff like cleaning our teeth and feeling the texture or tasting the flavour of the toothpaste. It could be having a shower and feeling the water against your skin. It might include noticing more about your environment when you go on the school run, for example, or on the way to the bus stop, even choosing to go a different way to freshen things up a little. These things help to train the mind to become more present in the moment.

So today the invitation is to go outside just for a short time, maybe into your yard or garden or just step out the front door and notice something about your time there that you may not usually notice, using all of your senses to open up your attention to the moment. So listening, tasting, smelling, feeling and seeing what is there in each moment.

Once you're outside you can stand or maybe find a seat and just take a minute to notice the parts of your body resting on the seat or standing into the ground. Can you feel your feet touching the earth? Now start to notice any sounds near or in the distance. Maybe there are birds tweeting, wind rustling in the trees - nature's very own playlist - or are there car doors shutting, the sound of traffic, people chatting maybe? You're listening to what's there right now. See if you can begin to feel the air flowing around your skin. Feel its temperature. Is it cool, or warm today? Is it blowy or calm? Maybe the sun's out and, if so, can you feel the sun's warmth on your skin? Just notice. How do these things feel upon your body?

Now take in what you can see in front of your eyes right now. Are there plants? Trees? Birds? Other animals? Colours? Maybe you notice light or dark. Can you see some shadows where the sun casts over an object creating a dark patch? Is it buildings you are looking at? Imagine you're seeing this for the first time. What do you notice? Anything new? Different? Is there movement? Or stillness? You are looking out from the frame of your eyes and seeing what's before you, seeing it exactly as it is.

Are there any smells around you? Maybe nice smells or not so nice smells. Just notice. Without reacting, what can you smell? And if there aren't any, note that too.

Just for a moment drop inwards and notice your breath there, feeling your breath, maybe hearing your breath, seeing what comes into your attention. Maybe there's a taste of something in your mouth or throat. If it's still morning, can you taste your toothpaste or maybe your morning coffee? Or something else?

Now turn yourself slowly around to the right for a moment, whether that's in your seat or standing. Is there something different or anything new that you notice here in this direction, inside or outside of yourself? Notice what you notice now. What comes into your attention?

After another few breaths turn yourself around so that you've moved to face your left now, and do the same here: open your attention to what you see, or feel, or hear now in this direction. It could be anything. Then come back to the centre and be still there with your breath, there with yourself, and just observe whatever happens moment by moment and breath by breath.

Notice how this simple practice of noticing has made you feel. Maybe more present in this moment, grounded, clear headed perhaps. Just notice yourself now.

Finish this practice by thanking yourself for taking this time out, for stepping outdoors into the fresh air of this present moment.

See you next time.