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## Your Body or your Mind?

<http://www.mindfulnessstrading.com/your-body-or-your-mind/>

The mindfulness exercises you will encounter are largely aimed at training your mind to pay attention to the present moment. There's more to mindfulness than that of course but it is an important aspect.

However, you will notice that the focus appears to be mostly on the body – your breathing, what feelings are in your body and so on. It is soon clear that in training the mind to pay attention, the attention is being paid mostly to the body.

So, it is reasonable to ask, given that mindfulness is about training the mind, why does so much of it seem to be about the body?

## Your Body is the Center of Attention

Consider the types of exercises you practice. You pay attention to breathing, what you hear, what you touch or taste, how your body feels as you walk and so on.

For example, many of the exercises you will encounter in the free 15 day Introductory Course For Traders center on moving through the various senses. You can get access to this course by [clicking here](#).

This is quite different from most form of mental training you will have encountered where there is little attention to physical aspects beyond perhaps sitting comfortably.

After all, if you are concentrating on your body then you are not prioritizing your head. And if you are not prioritizing your head then how can it be mental training? Is the term 'mindfulness' a misnomer?

## Why This Apparent Contradiction?

There are a number of reasons for this apparent contradiction, but by far the most important is that your body is also always available to you to study. It is always close to your mind and it is always sending out signals that you can access.

You are always breathing. Doing so does not use up any of your concentration. It just happens. Indeed, it is stopping yourself from breathing that requires the effort and a level of concentration that is beyond the abilities of just about everyone for more than a few seconds.

The same can be said of many continuous functions within your body – your heart, your blood, your hearing and involuntary movements of your muscles and skin to name but a few. Importantly, while you do not need to exercise any control over these functions beyond what happens all the time, you can

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perceive the physical sensations.

In summary, your body is a gateway to the present.

This is why mindfulness guides often describe your body as an anchor that you can use to return yourself to the present. The activities and sensations are always present and are therefore always available to you to practice your ability to pay attention to the present.

Be clear. In mindfulness it does not matter precisely what is happening in your body. It is simply a focus for you to exercise attention. It's a place on which you practice.

## **The Demands are Made of your Mind**

This gives rise to a second important reason for the focus on the body. We usually expect that our body is at our disposal to follow the commands of our brain without really paying much attention to it.

It's usually only if something goes wrong that we pay attention. Or if we want to improve it in some way. Because of this, attention to your body is often associated with expending energy and negative feelings.

But when you pay attention to your body in a mindfulness exercise or meditation you are approaching it in a very different way. You are addressing it in a spirit of curiosity but never being judgmental.

It is exploration: you are looking to see what you can find. You are not looking to see if your body is performing in a particular manner, as you usually do.

In other words, you are giving loving attention to your body without placing any demands on it, or commenting on it. It's your mind that is making all the effort.

Your body is a large part of what you are. Approaching your body in this positive accepting manner is a big step towards moving away from the self-critical mindset that permeates much of our thinking. You create a good feeling towards yourself.

## **This is Different**

The approach that is adopted in many practices can be summed up by the quote that 'Your body hears everything that your mind says'. The idea is often associated with 'positive thinking' approaches to well-being.

With mindfulness, this is effectively reversed. Your exercises mean that your mind is experiencing what your body encounters. It is being aware of the signals that your body generates.