
Day 5: Awareness of Routines

<http://www.mindfulnessstrading.com/15day/e34kj0routine/>

An External Orientation

The exercises for the last couple of days have focused on your senses. They have an internal orientation.

The focus of the next few is external. This adds a degree of difficulty since you are allowing in stimuli that are external to your body, but your objective still remains mindfulness which is a particularly internal experience.

It is important therefore that the external object of your focus does not elicit much in the way of examination or logical thinking. It should be something about which you have neutral feelings.

Start with an action you undertake rather than a fully external object. This means that you retain some control in the sense that you bring the object into being.

A routine that you normally undertake without even thinking about it is a good place to start.

Examples of suitable routine events include getting dressed or having lunch but there are many, many that can be used. Indeed, almost every action you undertake every day will be suitable.

Externally, it will seem all is as usual. However, you ensure that, internally, this is not the case.

Task for Today

The task for today is undertake a routine and then a number of routines in a mindful manner.

Do a very near time preparation or planning by choosing a routine where you will not be disturbed from your thoughts.

Either complete any little tasks you have been doing, give yourself enough time to undertake the routine fully – even if this is only a few seconds – and get ready to start the task.

Be aware of your surroundings. What objects are in your location and in your immediate vicinity?

Concentrate on your senses. What do you see and hear? What objects are you touching?

What movements are you making? What sensations do you experience in your body as you make these movements?

Notice that you are not learning anything new – you are doing something like tying your laces that you

have done for years – but you are developing an awareness of what you are doing.

Have you ever thought like this while tying your shoe laces?

Continue to concentrate on the task you are undertaking. If thoughts about anything else come into your mind just observe that this has happened and let the thoughts pass out of your mind.

Don't analyse any thoughts that come by. Don't ask why your mind has strayed. Just observe that it did so and come back to concentrating on the routine task.

If someone interrupts you, deal with what they are wanting from you. Then resume the exercise.

Does the task seem any different than usual as you undertake it? It is not unusual for even a simple routine task to seem more complicated.

Your consciousness is now awakened to what you would normally do almost without being aware of what you are doing.

Take a bit longer than usual.

Complete the routine task in this manner.

When you have completed it, note in your journal any thoughts or comments you have about today's task.

Get on with your day. After a short while identify an upcoming routine task and set about doing it mindfully.

Do this a number of times during the day.

Commit to doing things this way at regular intervals every day. Make a note in your journal if you make any new discoveries about what you are doing.

At some stage you will find yourself undertaking a routine task while concentrating intensely on what you are doing even though you had not planned to do so. Note this as a big step in the right direction.