

BRIEF CENTRING EXERCISE

This brief exercise will help you focus on the immediate moment. You will also begin the process of developing the skill of mindful attention. This exercise should take you about 5 minutes to complete. As with any other exercise or activity, before you start, remember that success requires the development of specific skills, and a commitment to working on the development of these skills is the first step to success.

Please find a comfortable sitting position. Notice the position of your feet, arms, and hands. Allow your eyes to close gently. Breathe in and out gently and deeply several times. Notice the sound and feel of your own breath as you breathe in and out.

At this time, focus your attention on your surroundings. Notice any sounds that may be occurring. What sounds are occurring inside the room? What sounds are occurring outside the room? Now focus your attention on the areas where your body touches the chair in which you are sitting. Notice the physical sensations that occur from this contact. Now notice the spot where your hands are touching the front of your legs. Now notice any sensations that may be occurring in the rest of your body and notice how they may change over time without any effort on your part. Don't try to alter these sensations; just notice them as they occur.

Now, let your thoughts focus on why you have chosen to pursue this program. See if you can notice any doubts or other thoughts without doing anything but noticing them. Just notice your reservations, concerns, and worries as though they are elements of a parade passing through your mind. See if you can simply notice them and acknowledge their presence. Don't try to make them go away or change them in any way. Now allow yourself to focus on what you want your performance life to be about. What is most important to you? What do you want to do with your skills?

Remain comfortable for a few more moments and slowly let yourself focus once again on any sounds and movements occurring around you. Once again notice your own breathing. When you are ready, open your eyes and notice that you feel focused and attentive.

(From Gardner & Moore, 2007)

