

Practice #6: Stillness: Finding the Real You

We are not our thoughts. We can step back from our thoughts, become conscious and make different choices. If we are not our thoughts, then who are we? Who is the real you? If we choose, we can be the one who steps back and listens, becomes aware of their thoughts and consciously chooses to change and then passionately engages in the process of change.

As you practice the process of quieting your mind so you can step back and listen, if only for just a few moments at a time, it will become easier and easier to distinguish between the real YOU and “your thoughts.” In this space you can learn how to control your thoughts.

I would like to do a little exercise to assist you in quieting your mind. It will be important that you are in a quiet place. Are you ready?

Get comfortable in your chair, close your eyes, and relax your head, your neck, and your shoulders. Now, step back and let go of your thoughts. Let go of the need to impress anyone inside or outside this room, the need to feel ashamed about a weakness or imperfection, the need to pretend that you are strong, smart, or perfect, and any other worry, fear, or anxiety that you may have brought with you today (repeat this sentence).

Take a few slow, deep breathes and let that all go. Usually this is the time when your thoughts will get very active and busy. From one you may hear advice about how dumb or silly this activity may seem.

Another thought may try to convince YOU that this is nonsense and YOU can't live without them. Another may advise you to act frustrated, tired, disinterested, or pre-occupied. Another will argue that there is something inherently wrong with letting your mind "be quiet" so YOU can experience "being YOU." The most insecure thoughts will advise YOU that YOU are "giving up control of your life" when in fact you are finally "taking control of your thoughts."

Acknowledge your thoughts. Thank them for their input, and then let them go. Remember, you are not your thoughts. You are the observer of your thoughts. Take a few slow, deep breathes. Notice the air filling your lungs and then being expelled. Let go of any need to impress, or pretend, any need to feel ashamed, and any need to fear.

If your thoughts are still trying to get your attention know that they are very uncomfortable with the idea that YOU can exist without them. Just Relax. How often have YOU allowed your thoughts to control YOU? If you're having thoughts, notice what they are, don't judge them, just notice them and step back from them and let them go.

Take a few more slow deep breaths and continue to relax and observe. Quiet your thoughts and notice when they jump back into action. Notice them and then let them go. There is nothing to do, nothing to try, nothing to get right, just relax, and observe.

From here the need to impress others will seem shallow; the need to pretend, immature; the need to feel ashamed, wasteful; and the need

to fear, childish.

Notice your body, your fingers, your toes, your eyes, and your nose. Don't make any judgments, just continue to relax and observe. Once you find this place, YOU know that YOU are not dependent on any mortal or any material thing to be whole and complete.

From here YOU can simply be YOU, real and genuine and authentic with no need to impress, pretend, feel ashamed, or fear. Just relax in this place for the next minute or so. If your thoughts show up, acknowledge them and let them go. Just relax, let go, and enjoy the quiet.

When you're ready, open your eyes.

Could you hear the noise in your head? Who was doing the listening? Who was doing the talking? Who do you want to be in charge of your life? In what ways would your life be different if the real YOU showed up, fully present and fully engaged, and YOU let go of the need to impress, pretend, feel ashamed, or fear?

Were you able to quiet your mind and be fully present in the moment? If yes, describe the feeling. Was it a familiar and comfortable place? It is only when your mind is quiet that you can really hear your thoughts clearly and recognize that YOU are not your thoughts.

Once you recognize that you are not your thoughts, they will lose their power and YOU will finally be able to take charge of your life.

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