

Summary notes 5/30/18: Calm, Kind, Clear, Wise - Cultivating Presence

Motivation/Intention:

Motivation/intention is the container for everything, and influences what happens at many levels. We usually are on automatic pilot about awareness of our motivation/intention; or we think of it in short-term practical ways. Try making your motivation/intention bigger, brighter, and closer to the way you truly want to be as a human being in the community of life. Connect more deeply to your heart and mind, and decide on your intention. Then remember it and keep coming back to it.

What	Why	How
<p>Calm: Ground in the present moment by using a neutral object of awareness as anchor.</p> <p><i>Meditative qualities:</i> concentration, one-pointed focus, present moment awareness</p>	<p>Listening well and being fully present in relationship requires showing up physically with our bodies and minds, staying connected to the present moment, and pausing our habitual mindset. From that foundation of presence, we can open and respond to the other person or situation with greater kindness, clarity, and wisdom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause whatever is going on in your mind and attention; • Use awareness of your physical sensations of the body standing or sitting to pay attention to the present moment of your experience; • Join one's mind together with the body in the present moment; • Use your inner experience of the present moment as an anchor, while opening to the other person or situation. Keep coming back to that anchor as you listen or speak.
<p>Kind: Warm and expand the good heart and sincere caring for self and others.</p> <p><i>Meditative qualities:</i> loving kindness, compassion, impartial well-wishing</p>	<p>Connecting with a simple aspiration for warmth and goodness when we interact with others, we can change the default frame of our relationships to non-harming and well-wishing for self and others. Recognizing common humanity with others, we can soften and change the edges of perceived difference and separation. This is a form of communication in itself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring your attention to your heart area; • Think of a time, person, pet, or symbol that is associated with caring, kindness, warmth, appreciation, or compassion; • Let yourself receive or bathe in that quality as best you can; • Using that quality of kindness/caring as an anchor in the present moment, open to the other person or situation. • Remember: just like me, this person wants happiness and experiences suffering.
<p>Clear: Be aware of experience exactly as it is, with curiosity and openness, aware of identification, judgements, and reactions.</p> <p><i>Meditative qualities:</i> Mindfulness, equanimity, clear perception</p>	<p>Knowing what is happening in our minds and hearts with an attitude of openness and curiosity gives us the capacity to respond, rather than react, because we can choose when to express reactions or perceptions. This way of perceiving also allows us to hear and understand others with less distortion and more interest in truly understanding their experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your attention balanced between awareness of your inner experience and awareness of what is originating from the other person. • Stay aware of your stream of experience as best you can. • Notice when you lose awareness of your own experience, get lost in reactivity, or become absorbed in the other person. • Notice when you want to speak and your motivation for speaking. • Notice reactivity or emotional intensity and choose whether/how to express it. (See "wise" below.)
<p>Wise: Live so as to put into action, our personal understanding of what is most true, most important, and most beneficial for self, others, and life. Be at peace and deeply happy.</p> <p><i>Meditative qualities:</i> Ethics; spiritual purpose; equanimity</p>	<p>Doing our best to be conscious of our motivation and expression in relationships, we are more likely to live in alignment with our deepest values, purpose, and understanding. While judgements and reactions are often part of our minds and relationships, if we are aware when they arise, we have choice about whether and how to express them. We can familiarize ourselves with simple alternatives to becoming hijacked by reactivity and add these skills to our toolbox.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask yourself what are your aspirations for wise speech and action? Remind yourself of them as the framework for your interactions and spoken/written words with others. Examples from traditional wisdom: 1) do as little harm and as much good as possible; 2) practice caring and compassion, love thy neighbor as thyself. • When you recognize reactivity, you have choices! They include: choose not to speak; take a few breaths or change focus of attention to a neutral object; call upon self-compassion or loving kindness; focus more deeply on what the other person is saying; ask for guidance to do or say what is most helpful; repair disconnections when they occur.