

Inspired Life Formula with Nina Lockwood

Module 1 Nurture Your Body

Exercise 1 Noticing the Breath

The first practice we're going to be working with in the ILF Module 1 Nurture the Body is simply noticing the breath. It's extremely simple but it gives you a world of information about yourself - about your ability to focus, to pay attention, to become aware of the details about how your body is breathed. I'm specifically stating it this way because if you're not already aware of it now, you will become aware that you don't make breathing happen. the breath breathes you. I'll lead you through this exercise after I've given you some guidelines.

You can do this practice any time during your day. You can be standing, sitting or lying down, as long as you're comfortable. If you're sitting or lying down, close your eyes and begin to pay attention to how the breath moves through your body. It's easier to begin learning this practice in a setting that's relatively quiet. Now, You can't do this wrong. There's no objective other than to notice. It doesn't matter if your mind wants to explain everything to you; do your best to let go of any expectations about what this is supposed to look like or feel like, Just be the observer of the body and let the breath move without trying to do anything with or about it. Let your attention shift as you notice how the breath is moving through you.

Try to practice this exercise for about three minutes. If that's too difficult at first, just try for a minute or so - you might want to set a timer, but of course you can go longer if you're enjoying it. And as much as you're able, keep track of your observations, how you feel before and after, and what happens to your ability to notice. Sometimes there's more that you notice and other times, it's just in and out, in and out. You can also do this exercise when you're out and about during your day and you find yourself waiting.. for someone, for an appointment, for the subway, and you have a few moments on your hands. Just softly focus your gaze and begin paying attention to your breath as it moves through your body. So, Let's practice this together.

PAUSE. Sit comfortably, Distractions or interruptions are at a minimum. There's no where else you need to be right now, nothing else you need to you. This is time for you to be with you. You might even allow yourself to have a little smile on your lips. Start by noticing how the air comes in and out through the nose. Does the air have a temperature? Is it warm or cool? What's it feel like? Can you feel the inside of your nostrils as the air comes in and goes out? Or maybe you're only aware of the air coming in or going out of one nostril. Maybe you can't quite tell. That's just fine. Keep going... Are your shoulders moving at all as you breathe? Are they tense or relaxed? Are you aware of any other parts of your body responding to your breath, maybe softening or relaxing, letting go. Maybe you're discovering tension somewhere else in your body that you weren't aware of previously. Whatever you notice, just let that part of your body do what it wants to do or needs to do. Just be the observer... maybe your attention goes to your belly as the breath fills it up and then goes out again. Can you tell if the breaths are shallow or deep? Does the breath move in and out again with the same speed? Can you feel the air moving from your throat to chest to belly and back again? What else do you notice? PAUSE. Okay, good. You can stop here.

We just spent about three minutes noticing the breath. What was that like for you? Does your body feel differently than it did before you began? How about your mind? What was it like before you began and after you finished? As you do this exercise on your own, feel free to use this recording if that's a good way to learn - and after a bit, try it on your own.

I'll look forward to comparing notes with you. Happy noticing!