

from stillpointleadership.com dated September 23, 2013

So, how do you practice? How do you cultivate the art of paying attention? In my experience (stillpointleadership.com) there are at least four steps.

First, prepare yourself to pay attention. This means deciding to pay attention, setting an intention that you will be present for the next meeting, the next phone call, the next conversation. Then do your best to clear your mind, so that you don't carry that last tense interaction, or the bad news you just received from your boss, into the next moment. Going for a brief walk, releasing tension with three long exhales, or simply turning your phone off can all help prepare you to pay attention.

Then, direct your attention. Know what it is that you want to pay attention to. For example, in a team meeting do you want to focus on listening carefully to what people are saying? Or do you want to pay attention to the body language of people sitting around the table? Over time, you'll be able to do both at once, but if you're prone to distraction it can be very helpful to have a specific point of focus.

(It can be useful in directing your attention to know what typically most grabs your attention. For example, do you tend to notice what's working well? Or what's going wrong? Neither is "right," but most of us have default settings that make it easier to pay attention to some things rather than others, and so get an incomplete picture. If you know what your tendency is, you can purposefully direct your attention toward what you usually overlook.)

Next, sustain your attention. Do your best to keep your attention where you've placed it. As paradoxical as it may seem, the heart of sustaining your attention is knowing when you've become distracted. **Most of the time, we get distracted and don't notice** – before we know it, we've missed the last 10 minutes of the meeting thinking about what happened two hours ago. The skill is to notice that we've left as soon as possible, and then bring ourselves back. This means consciously choosing to let go of the distraction and re-focus on what's in front of us.

Finally, live a life that supports you in paying attention. The truth is that we live in a world that invites us NOT to pay attention. Technology, information, the pace of business, our collective addiction to constant stimulation – all conspire to keep us off-balance and constantly distracted. **To really cultivate a greater capacity to pay attention requires slowing down occasionally**, quieting your body and quieting your mind, and taking care of yourself. Examine your life and see what practices and habits you have that help you do this, and what practices and habits get in the way. Whatever supports you in paying attention, do more of it.

the Four Noble Truths

lionsroar.com dated July 30, 2018 by Sylvia Boorstein

I.

Life is challenging. For everyone. Our physical bodies, our relationships-all of our life circumstances-are fragile and subject to change. We are always accommodating.

II.

The cause of suffering is the mind's struggle in response to challenge.

III.

The end of suffering-a non-struggling, peaceful mind-is a possibility.

IV.

The program for ending suffering is the Eightfold Path.

It is:

1. Wise Understanding: realizing the cause of suffering;
2. Wise Intention: motivation to end suffering;
3. Wise Speech: speaking in a way that cultivates clarity;
4. Wise Action: behaving in ways that maintain clarity;
5. Wise Livelihood: supporting oneself in a wholesome way;
6. Wise Effort: cultivating skillful (peaceful) mind habits;
7. Wise Concentration: cultivating a steady, focused, ease-filled mind;
8. Wise Mindfulness: cultivating alert, balanced attention.