



Practice: Walking to connect

Purpose of this Practice:

A practice is an action or activity done repeatedly with the intention of building your capability and competency to behave differently, leaving you more able to deal with your challenges in your own way. It is a way of building your body's ability to respond in new ways that will enable you to generate new possibilities for yourself and others.

Instructions:

This Practice is best done outdoors. I recommend setting aside at least 10-15 minutes for your walking and not trying to combine it with anything else like going on errands or walking briskly for exercise. Let this be a walk just for the sake of it so that you can sink into the experience with your undivided attention.

- Before starting to walk, spend a little time while still standing still. Allow your awareness to be with your body. Take some deep breaths, inhaling deep into the belly.
- Put your full attention on the sensation of breathing. Then allow the breath to return to normal and notice it going on its own for a little while.
- Now bring your awareness to your body, noticing how your body feels as you are standing, and becoming aware of all the sensations going on in your body.
- Then begin walking. Walk at a relaxed, fairly slow but normal pace. Pay attention to the sensations in your body as you walk. It is natural to find your attention drawn to the sights around you as you walk but keep bringing your attention to what is going on internally.

The idea is to have your attention on the physical experience of walking. If the mind starts getting caught up in thoughts, gently bring your attention back to the experience of walking. Notice how your body feels in detail as you walk. The entire body is involved in the act of walking - from alternation of the left and right foot to the swinging of your arms and hips.

- Notice how the soles of your feet feel - the contact they make with your socks or shoes, the textures of the fabrics touching them, the way they feel as they bear the weight of your body and the sensations in them as you walk.

Feel the entire foot, being aware of how it moves as the heel is placed on the ground, and then the movement rolls to the ball of the foot and toes. Notice how it feels as the foot lifts and moves forward. Allow your awareness to move through every part of the body, noticing the sensations as you walk.

- Gradually scan all parts of your body as you bring your attention to the ankles, skins, calves, knees, thighs, hips, pelvis, back, chest, shoulders, arms, neck, and head. When you become aware of tension anywhere in the body, let it go. Allow that part of your body to relax. Allow your ankles, belly, shoulders, arms, and neck - all of your body - to relax. Let your hips swing loose.
- As you do this, walking will become more enjoyable. You can scan your body randomly, moving your awareness from place to place in your body, or you can systematically scan your whole body going from the soles of your feet to the top of your head noticing the sensations of walking. The most important thing is to keep your awareness on the sensations in your body, gently bringing it back when your mind has wandered.

Frequency & duration:

Continue this Practice for a minimum of one month

Network of support:

This Practice should ideally become a part of your daily routine. Consider who can support you to do this?