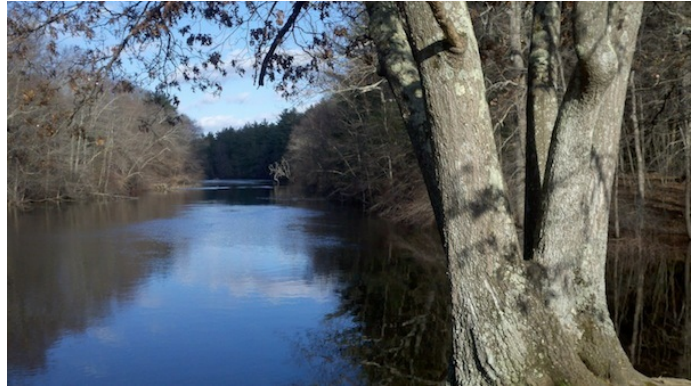


Taking in the Good

A Walking Meditation



Purpose/Effects

To practice present awareness and achieve a happier state of being “in the moment.”

Summary

While walking, practice being in the here and now by noticing, pausing and taking in sights, sounds, aromas and textural sensations that please you.

Long Version

1. Take frequent walks. Regular walking is beneficial for body, mind and spirit.
2. Walk at whatever pace suits you and check in with the physical sensations of walking: the feel of your feet on the path, the flex of your legs and arms. Without effort, relax your upper body. Notice your breathing.
3. When you have established a comfortable rhythm start to become more aware of your surroundings. Experience where you are and what is in the vicinity – whether you are in the country or the city is not important.
4. As you stay in touch with your surroundings you will notice that certain details catch your eye (or nose or ears.) When one of these details elicits a pleasurable response, stop walking and take some breaths to take in and experience the positive feeling. This is called “taking in the good.” Encourage yourself to relish these moments, – as Rick Hanson says in Chapter 4 of “Buddha’s Brain”, “bring a mindful awareness to them — open up to them and let them affect you.....Savor the experience.....Make it last by staying with it for 5, 10, 20 seconds”. (Mehr zu Rick Hansons Ansatz auf der Rückseite)
5. When you have given yourself enough time to notice all the inner sensations of a particular pleasurable occurrence, continue your walk until you encounter the next thing that calls up a positive response.
6. Most places are packed with “opportunities for positive response.” You don’t have to be in the middle of beautiful scenery or a well-tended garden, though these are certainly positive experiences. Opportunities aplenty exist on busy city streets – in well crafted building details, the playfulness of a puppy, the gurgle of rainwater falling into a catch-basin, the smile of a stranger on the path, the smell of coffee roasting, the crunch of new fallen snow. Keep looking and you will certainly find these opportunities.
7. Continue until you feel “full.”
8. Conclude the meditation by sitting quietly, being with yourself for at least five minutes.

History

This is a variation of a mindfulness walking meditation where the object of focus is the felt sense of pleasurable feelings. The story of its ‘spontaneous generation’ is told in detail here: <http://bit.ly/ttziSN>

TAKING IN THE GOOD: A THREE STEP PROCESS TO USE DAILY

By Melli O'Brian

Rick Hanson has a wonderful technique I'd like to share that can help you reshape your brain's neural pathways. It will help you allow your positive emotions to sink in and balance out your negativity bias.

The technique has three basic stages. First he advises us to **deliberately seek out good experiences each day**. They can be simple, like appreciating the beauty in your garden, enjoying a nice cup of tea or coffee or feeling the sun on your skin. So you deliberately want to cultivate these moments of taking in good in your life. This helps you to activate your brain and start the process of taking in the good.

Secondly you want to then **enrich the experience**. To do this stay with the good experience for at least five seconds. Open up to the body sensations, feelings and all that is happening in the moment. Drink in the good experience fully, letting it fill your mind and body and build in intensity.

As you do this, the experience will move from your short-term to your long-term memory which is important in rewiring your brain to take in more good. This may take a little time, as you want to truly connect with these feelings. Allow the experience to sink into your being as you truly engage with it. Feel the joy as you appreciate and savour the experience within you.

The third step is to then **absorb the experience**. Allow the experience to really sink in. Set the intention to make it feel part of you and take it with you in memory.

This technique can be used to help you truly appreciate and enjoy the positive moments in your life. The more we take in the good, the more we can see and experience life in a more balanced way. It's not that we ignore negative experiences and we won't stop bad things from happening as they are a natural part of life...but we can take control of how we perceive them so that we don't become overwhelmed by that negativity bias.

So today and for the rest of this week, see if you can focus on taking in the good like this. Taking a moment to consider now... What are some good aspects in your daily life that you don't usually notice? What is beautiful that you can appreciate and enjoy and savour as you go about your days?

As you cultivate this capacity for taking in the good you'll notice a shift in your perceptions towards a more positive view of life. You'll likely also experience a new lightness of heart and mind and a little more joy and wonder flowing into your days.