



The Wheel of Awareness

Instructions

In this mindful awareness practice, you will visualize a wheel; and this wheel has a central hub, an outer rim, and four quadrants in between. In this metaphor of how the mind is structured, the hub represents our experience of awareness, and the quadrants represent anything we can be aware of, including sensory awareness (i.e., what we see, hear, smell, taste and touch), bodily awareness (i.e., what we can sense physically), mental activities (such as emotions, thoughts, memories, and urges), and our sense of connection to things outside ourselves (such as other people and other things). The purpose of the practice is to cultivate a full sense of connection and awareness to both yourself and the world around you.

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The Wheel of Awareness

Part 1: Wheel of Awareness meditation

1. Get into position

To begin, find a comfortable meditation position. Either sitting on a cushion on the floor, or in a chair. Allow your spine to be straight and long, and let your shoulders drop, relaxed. Rest your hands in your lap, and gently close your eyes.

2. Breath awareness

Become aware of the rhythm of your breathing. There's no need to change your breathing in any way, simply notice it exactly as it is.

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MINDFUL APPRECIATION

3. Visualize the wheel

Now, bring to mind the image of a wheel. This wheel has a center, known as the “hub”, and four sections, or quadrants, surrounding this hub. There is a rim that encompasses everything - the four quadrants and the hub. For each part of this practice, you will zoom in on one portion of the wheel, and become aware of its contents with my guidance.

4. First quadrant: connect to the five senses

I'd like to invite you to first turn your attention to the top, left quadrant, which houses your five senses. Zoom in on this area of your wheel by engaging your sense of hearing... what can you hear? And now your sense of touch... what can you feel? And now your sense of smell, and taste... what can you notice? Now gently open your eyes for a moment... what can you see?

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MINDFUL APPRECIATION

5. Second quadrant: connect to bodily sensations

Good, and now close your eyes again, and bring your wheel back into your mind's eye. Take a deep slow breath here. Now I'd like to invite you to turn your attention to the top, right quadrant, which houses your "sixth sense", which is the inner sensations of your own body. Take a few moments to scan through your body from head to toe, becoming aware of any and all physical sensations throughout. Tingling, heat, tension, numbness. Take your time to move through each body group. Just noticing, being curious, just observing.

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MINDFUL APPRECIATION

6. Third quadrant: connect to mental activities

Good, let's take another nice deep breath here. And next, I'd like to invite you to turn your attention to the bottom, left quadrant, which houses the activities of your mind itself, including your emotions, thoughts, memories, hopes, beliefs, dreams, attitudes, and intentions. First, simply become aware of everything that is entering your mind at this moment. Welcoming this mental activity into your awareness. What thoughts and feelings are showing up right now? Next, begin to examine how these internal experiences arise and pass... do they come up suddenly or gradually? Do they stay constant, or fade in and out? Are there gaps between the different mental activities, or do these exist as one long stream of consciousness?

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7. Hub: awareness of awareness

Let's take another nice deep breath here. And we'll now bring our attention to the center of the wheel, the hub, which is where your awareness stems from. The hub is the 'you' that has noticed everything so far in this practice - the part of you that is observing, listening, looking, focusing, sensing. Take some time here, as cultivating this "awareness of awareness" takes practice.

8. Fourth quadrant: connect to others

Let's take another deep, slow breath here. And then turn your attention to the bottom, right quadrant of your wheel, which houses your sense of connection to the outside world. First, notice the sense of connection to the people physically closest to you right now. Then, expand this sense of connection to people further away. And then tap into your sense of connection to your loved ones, wherever they may be right now. Then, widen your sense of connection step-by-step to include those who live in our neighbourhood, city, country, continent, in the whole world, and finally to all living beings on earth.

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MINDFUL APPRECIATION

9. Ground yourself

As the meditation comes to an end, simply bring your attention back to your breath, as you did at the beginning of the practice. You might like to take a few deep, slow breaths here, to ground yourself back into this moment. Then, when you are ready, gently open the eyes.

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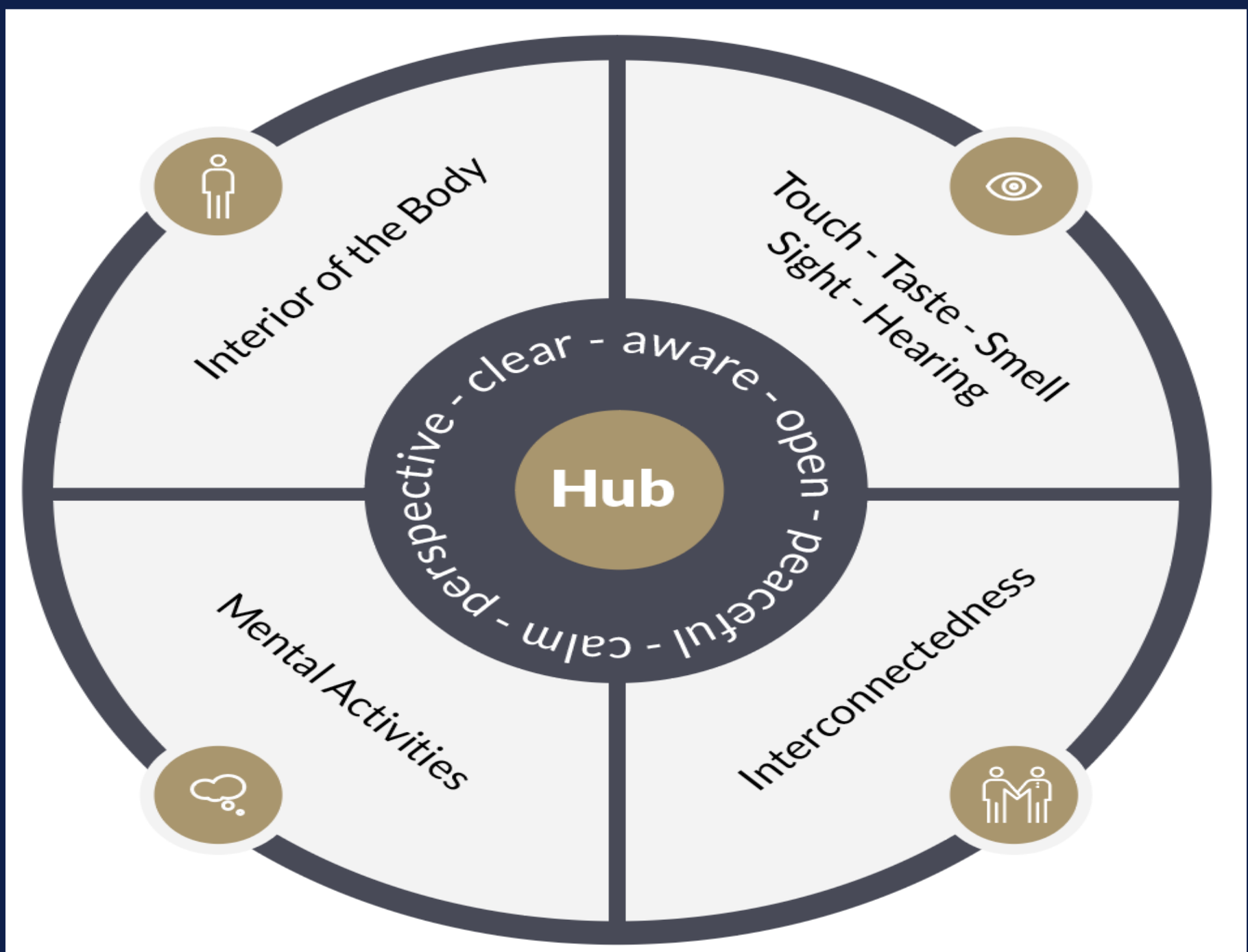
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MINDFUL APPRECIATION

Part 2: Reflection

Now take a look at the wheel of awareness, displayed below.



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MINDFUL APPRECIATION

Reflect on what you noticed during the meditation (Part 1). Write down as much as you can remember from each of the four quadrants and from becoming aware of awareness itself (the hub). There are no wrong answers here! Everyone's wheel of awareness experience is unique.

Quadrant 1: Mental activities – My observations?

Quadrant 2: Interior of the body – My observations?

Quadrant 3: Touch - Taste - Smell - Sight – Hearing – My observations?

Quadrant 4: Interconnectedness – My observations?

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