



Awareness Short Course

Welcome to this course on Awareness in which you are invited to some inner exploration of the meaning by cultivating your inner perception to what is happening in your life so as to truly be in the driver's seat.

It is suggested that you take your time to read through the course while engaging in each focus with curiosity, willing to experience life and yourself in a new way. You may choose to read one paragraph and to then work with the focus for a day or so or longer if inspired, it is entirely up to you. It is interesting how we can read something for the second time only to discover meanings that were not clear the first time around too so enjoy, explore and bring the richness of awareness to your life now.

By definition:

- Merriam Webster:

The quality or state of being aware; knowledge and understanding that something is happening or exists

- Cambridge Dictionary:

Knowledge that something exists, or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience

When the above definitions are accepted and applied to the self, it follows then that self-awareness is vital to anyone who wishes to change and grow. Without being aware of our thoughts, behaviours and feelings, the tendency to act out unconsciously in life is likely. **In order to change, one must first be *willing* to change and then to know *what* requires changing as the next step.** To engage the observer aspect of self with the felt experience of life provides feedback as a connection is made between the choice and its resultant consequence (whether made consciously or unconsciously). By being fully present with one's feeling experience in absolute acceptance is what leads to both increased self-awareness, where the opportunity exists to choose what had been chosen previously or, to embrace the necessary willingness to change the experiences, which do not serve growth and therefore create a different experience for your self.

Focus

Be curious enough to take a moment to stop, breathe and sense how this applies to your own experience. Allowing your awareness to reveal a time when you were not really focused and the opportunity of a new choice and experience was potentially missed and how the outcome could have perhaps been different. No judgment, only the value of hindsight for we can't change anything until we acknowledge how it is.

While admittedly it is challenging to maintain complete and present awareness in all moments, it is possible however, to begin by setting an intention to practice being more present and aware today than yesterday. Choosing to bring one's attention to as many situations as possible, and at the end of each day to review the situations and moments where awareness was absent, setting an intention to practice again tomorrow.

Awareness will grow with attention, commitment, willingness and application. The practice of bringing more of yourself to each situation, interaction and moment will increase your effectiveness of living a heart-centred life. Feelings become your guide and provide the ability to discern the levels of your system (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) as well as that, which originated from others (opinions and judgments that have been accepted as our own) will also become more refined. In order to be present and aware, ensure you are being 'within' yourself, in other words on the 'inside' firmly anchored in the heart centre. From here looking and feeling outward in all directions, so that your entire system is in your awareness and you can see, feel, sense and perceive all of who you are, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

If someone came up and poked you in the arm for example, you would feel that. Your awareness is such that when they got close enough and physically touched you, you would feel it. Now aiming to expand your awareness to the point where you can sense someone approaching as if to touch you physically, you 'sense' they are there before they actually touch you. Maintain your commitment and practice towards being present and setting boundaries within and around the parameters of your energy field, this is a self-respecting and self-loving way to be.

Maintaining heart-centred awareness allows you to be able to sense and act on the opportunities that present, which are in alignment with your greater self, the part of you that is growing and evolving. It also offers the potential for you to become more aware of the influence the unconscious aspects of yourself are having on your life, the choices and therefore any possibilities of growth and change. What kind of impact are your thoughts and behaviour having on the rest of you? Systematically remove any negative impacting beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, narratives and strategies, which affect you in ways that inhibit your growth possibilities and potential for self-respect and self-love.

The self-monitoring and review process is a tool for increasing self-awareness. The more committed you are to awareness and to 'know thyself,' the more regular check-ins are required for you to incorporate throughout the day. Not just at the beginning or the end of the day - often throughout the day ask yourself "Where is my attention?" "Am I anchored and present?" "Am I 'within' and looking out?" "What am I sensing?" "What is my experience physically, emotionally and mentally?" "What thoughts am I having and are they uplifting and supportive or are they fearful or putting me down?"

Focus

Here is an opportunity to set the intention to be as fully heart-centred, present and aware as possible during your day. Play with this, again being curious as you discern the power of thought to create many realities, some self-loving and some self-depreciating and the experience resulting from each of them.

There is a saying that we can talk ourselves in or out of anything through the power of thought!

Awareness is also about being kind to yourself as you identify issues, maladaptive behaviour and unconscious patterns or beliefs sooner rather than later. The longer these behaviours run, the more ingrained and harmful they become, which means paying attention to transforming yourself while prioritising being proactive in dealing with those issues as they arise. It is about having compassion as you retrain yourself and if you are honest with yourself you know what at least some of your 'stuff' is. Begin with what is known that you'd like to change and feel ready to try. There can be no judgment as you become aware of and work towards changing that, which no longer serves who you are now and who you are becoming. Acceptance and kindness are more encouraging and supportive than harshness and judgment.

Another aspect of not being present and aware is when you do not recognise the connection between choices and consequences. You don't see where you have made a similar choice previously or the feeling experience is familiar. A little hint! If it feels familiar you have chosen it before, it isn't new. Growth is about new experiences and so to make the same choice again will result in a similar feeling experience. In this way it will become clear to you what needs to be changed. That is the review process, yet, if you are not connected in your heart (feeling) centre, events can seem random, isolated situations which you cannot remember because you were not anchored in the centre while looking out for the familiar themes and repeated patterns in relationship to yourself or others.

Focus

Let us step in a little deeper to review some situation in life that seems to be repetitive. When was the last time you said to yourself "Why is this happening again?" Now bringing heart awareness to this, view the situation through new eyes. Was there a moment when you could have made a different choice rather than going with what is familiar or less confrontational? Can you see how this could have brought a new outcome and how this is possible with kindness and self-love?

Being able to discern the difference between a thought and an emotion is an important aspect of awareness. Where in your life do thoughts lead to an emotion? E.g. you *think* you can't do something and the emotion that follows may be that you feel down and not good enough. Also where do emotions (feeling sad) lead to thoughts of 'No-one likes me'? While these are examples of how one can lead to the other - awareness is being able to identify what is happening in your experience, then you can begin to

change the way you respond and do some work on changing the way you think about yourself.

If you are willing to truly see yourself as you are and accept all of your choices and the resultant consequences without any judgment, the potential will exist to identify themes or patterns. Pay attention to those themes, the consequences, the feelings, how things play out, the similarities, then you can review the situation and turn it into a learning opportunity by taking responsibility, (self-accountability) for your involvement rather than blaming someone else or feel that someone did something to you whether consciously or otherwise and begin to make different choices now.

Focus

Feel into any tendency to want to make a challenging or confronting situation someone else's fault. Once again step back a little, looking through new eyes and acknowledge your part in the event to see your part in it, again free of any judgment. This is how we can potentially reclaim self-empowerment rather than making it about another.

Awareness is being able to acknowledge the unhelpful themes while prioritising facing forward to where you are headed. Awareness will grow to include that which is currently unconscious with determination, will and practice. Awareness is not a passive process, it is very active and you have to be proactive and engaged in your life. *True awareness cannot occur if you are not fully in a heart-centred space, some awareness may exist, yet you will also have defences and excuses that can mask the real message.* Realisations are just the beginning, you have to be proactive with that new insight - bring it in and pour that new knowing deeply into the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels, all the way in so that you know you can do things differently, if you choose to.

Awareness is not about focusing on the problem, it is more like being aware of the stuff that gets in your way, while at the same time knowing where it is that you are going with the majority of your energy and focus being solution oriented. The process is of accepting self exactly as you are now, without any judgment of how you got here while also acknowledging what it is that you'd rather be moving toward simultaneously. Consciously being open-minded and openhearted, decreasing the frequency of such activities while actively bringing in more of what the preferred state of being is. This allows us to bridge the gap between the two by remaining in acceptance and non-judgment. Accepting where you are while being willing to change. Through the process of consistently remaining in awareness, it is possible to one moment at a time, chip away at the 'stuff' you know is not who or how you want to be and move one step at a time toward the 'you' you'd like to be.

Audio file 'Awareness' 16 mins accompanies these notes, recorded live at a workshop facilitated by Linda and shared with permission of participants who appear on the recording.