

## ***MINDFULNESS: mindful music***

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### **The importance of mindfulness**

Mindfulness is present-centered awareness of what is arising in our body/mind moment-to-moment as we experience the world through our senses. Integral architecture requires developing skill and acuteness in all of the basic human attributes. In particular, an integral consciousness requires that we learn or re-learn how to be fully present in each moment, so that we experience it clearly.

To create places that are living, integrated, and whole, we each have to know with certainty what those kind of places feel like. Whole places make us feel whole—most radically free in ourselves, most able to be who we truly are. When we are very clear about who we are and what it feels like to be present in our being without concepts, interpretations, cravings and aversions, then we can perceive directly the wholeness of a place.

The skill of mindfulness is a developed human capacity, that is, it must be learned and practiced to become a permanent trait. Knowing the relative wholeness of places in the world, we can develop deep empirical insight about what kinds of patterns in the physical world help to create these experiences full of life.

Practicing mindfulness can help us develop skills and qualities necessary for every architect: interpersonal sensitivity, refined senses, self-knowledge, particularly of one's mind, freedom from automatic reactions, and psychological health.

### **Listening mindfully**

Rarely do we pay full attention to the sense of sound. Most often, listening to music is a multi-tasking experience in which we are only partly present.

Choose a favorite piece of music that is calming, gentle, and has significance to you. Ideally, the music you choose should appeal to the part of you that reaches for its highest human potentials. It could have intellectual, emotional, or spiritual significance.

Devote at least 15 minutes to the listening experience. Sit or lie comfortably in such a way that you can be fully awake and present and will not fall asleep.

Pay attention and focus on all the details of the sound. It is likely that you will find your attention drifting into past memories or future fantasies. If you do, notice it without judgement and direct your attention back to the music.

Your only objective is to be fully present in each moment, developing concentration and sensitivity. Listen for the details and nuances you may have missed in the past.

Mindful musical listening can develop the faculty of awareness while awakening attention to one's inner being.

## ***MINDFULNESS: mindful eating***

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### **Eat mindfully, enjoy every bite.**

The sense perceptions are how we know the world. Crude perceptions yield an untruthful picture of reality. Done habitually, we mistake the unreal for the real or miss the real entirely.

Have you ever noticed that you have finished a meal and not even noticed what it tasted like? Busy and hurried, we miss the joy of taste. How many things do you do while eating? Talking in conversation, watching television, reading a book, planning, daydreaming, or even beating ourselves up about how we should eat better.

*What to do:* Once this week, eat alone (unless you have a partner willing to go along with this routine...) and in silence. Your task is to be fully aware of all sensations through the entire process of eating a meal.

Start with observing the smells and sights. Notice differences in fragrances. Notice how you feel before eating: rushed, calm, anxious, etc. Notice what your body is doing in preparation.

There is one strict rule: after every bite, put your fork or spoon down and do not pick it up again until you have fully tasted, chewed and swallowed the bite in your mouth. Chew slowly and completely. There is no need to rush. Be aware of the sensations of the food in your mouth. Notice the complexity of flavors. Notice if one flavor follows another. Notice what it feels like to swallow.

If you notice that you are lost in fantasies, planning, or reliving your day, return your attention to the food and begin enjoying again. When you are done, reflect on how this experience differs from how you normally eat. Remember to be thankful for all the beings who have brought the food to you.