

Creating a Container for the Work

Exercise 1: Cultivating Relaxation.

Relaxation helps create a safe, nurturing space for all the other work. It is a good idea to consciously relax just prior to any exercise you choose to do. Here is a simple way you can cultivate this calm, clear, centered state of being.

Procedure

1. Sit in a comfortable, erect position. Find a place where distractions of noise, voices, smells, or wind are within your tolerance level. Sit in a poised, comfortable, and still position. Sitting in an upright chair at a table may be preferred. But any comfortable, erect posture that you can hold indefinitely is ok. It isn't that you can't squirm or move around, only that you don't want to be forced to stop in the middle of your work because you have a pain in back or elsewhere. So, make sure you are relatively comfortable, and you feel like you could enjoy yourself for 10 minutes to an hour or more.

2. Relax your body. You might alternately tense and relax your muscles or simply breathe deeply and exhale fully several times.

3. Breathe through your nose, if you can. Breathe down past your lungs into your abdomen. Breathe quietly, gently, smoothly, and rhythmically. Try not to bother expanding your chest. Instead, let your abdomen expand to accommodate your deeper breathing.

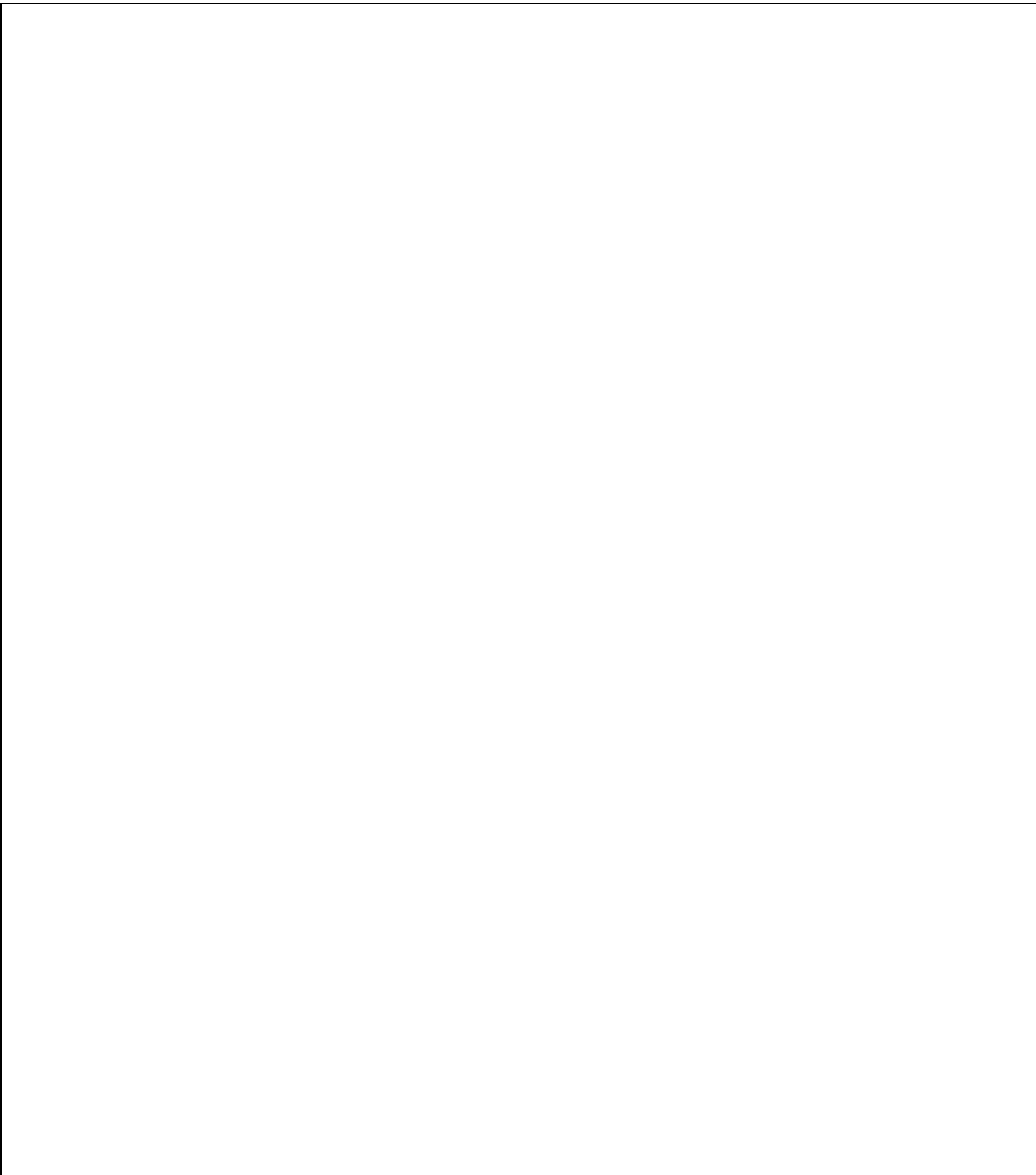
4. Relax your breathing. Once you have gone through 2 or 3 cycles of deep breathing or when you feel fully present in your body, whichever comes first, just breathe normally from that point forward. If you find your awareness of the work drifting off, you can often return to focus by doing a couple cycles of deep breathing.

4. Calm your feelings. Center your awareness. Let your awareness just be. Let it permeate the situation as a whole. Notice everything but let nothing distract you.

5. Begin the work. Begin the conscious questioning or review of whatever the issue is. The first time you make your way through these relaxation steps, the project you're working on is relaxation itself. So let that be your focus the first time you do this. Revisit relaxation as a primary focus from time to time so that you can deepen your relaxation and better your skill at quickly entering this state.

5. Make some notes. Write them here if you've printed this form. Alternatively, put them in a learning journal for later review. Keeping a journal about what you learn as you do these exercises -- in fact, keeping a journal of your whole learning experience with Running a Good Business -- will deepen and codify your learning. I highly recommend it. People who keep learning journals generally report much better success with all aspects of what they are learning about.

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