

Disidentifying from Obstacles to Awareness

Once you have mastered the practice of setting the intent (see worksheet on "Setting the Intent), you can use it to disidentify from issues, challenges, negative voices, or other emotional and mental obstacles to the practice of awareness.

Identifying with the object of your inquiry means that your behavior is likely to be influenced by the structure and content of that object.

Disidentification is the process of noticing the object of your inquiry -- such as a thought or feeling that interferes with your practice of awareness. Having noticed, you are then much more likely to be able to break free from your identification with that thought or feeling.

If successful, you have taken a first step toward becoming more fully aware.

Exercise 3: Noticing and Breaking Free

This exercise is best done in the context of a problem-solving session. If you are following the previously introduced preparation procedure, you have focused on your breath and body, brought yourself into the present moment, and then brought forth the issues that you wish to work on. This this moment of increased awareness then becomes the container for your work.

These steps are described here in the context of any struggles you may have been having getting into that container, remaining there, or returning there at will.

We also recommended using this procedure anytime you'd like to disidentify with any thought or feeling that is plaguing you -- especially the obsessive or compulsive ones that we all suffer from moment-to-moment.

Procedure

- 1. Relax.** (See the exercise entitled "Creating a Container for the Work" above.)
- 2. Notice.** Set the intent to notice any particular obstacle or challenge to your efforts to be more aware.
- 3. Name.** Give it a friendly name: "For the voice that says "Why bother? You'll never amount to anything anyway" you can say "Oh, that's the old 'you'll never amount to anything' voice. For "Why are you wasting time on this? You have better things to do" you can say "Oh, yeah, there's that 'Mr. Guilty' feeling again. For "This awareness stuff is a lot of crap!" you can say "Hello, Mr. Crappy!"
- 4. Count.** Begin to count how many times these voices speak up. If you are unable to make an exact count, just roughly estimate. You can write down some more qualitative descriptor like "some," "a lot," or "all the time."

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Example: Noticing Obstacles or Challenges to Awareness.

Name	Count
Mr. Guilty	\ \ \ \ \
Mr. Crappy	\ \ \ \ \

5. Write it down. If possible, keep a written record of your observations. This step is not absolutely required, but it usually makes the disidentification happen more quickly. Use this form or make entries in your learning journal.

Name	Count

6. Let Go. Once you have noticed the obstacle or challenge to awareness as fully as possible, simply let it go -- let it pass from your awareness and return to whatever exercise you would like to try next.

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