

A hand with white nail polish and gold jewelry holds a piece of burning wood. A plume of white smoke rises from the wood against a dark, blurred background. The text 'BUILDING AWARENESS' is centered in a white box, with 'WEBSITE EDITION' below it.

BUILDING AWARENESS

WEBSITE EDITION



WHAT IS AWARENESS?

Recently it seems as though this word appears everywhere; yet, I've never heard anyone actually explain it. So, what does it mean to "be aware"?

According to my personal definition, *awareness* is the ability to consciously perceive a situation and from that perspective be able to cultivate a knowing + understanding of both our outer + inner worlds; as a witness, without judgement or analysis.

WHY SHOULD YOU BUILD AWARENESS?

Building awareness allows you to assess where in your life you feel happy + fulfilled and where in your life you feel stagnant or unsatisfied. Cultivating awareness in your life presents you with the opportunity to take responsibility for your life -- to show up, do the work, and implement change so that you may live a life of MORE... more joy, more love, more wealth, more happiness.

HOW DO YOU BUILD AWARENESS?

This is the fun part! In my experience, the best way to start building awareness is to *SHAKE THINGS UP!* If you've ever been a client of mine you know one of my favorite things to do is get you out of your comfort zone, because that is where the *MAGIC* happens. That is where transformation takes place, when you *switch off auto-pilot!*

DAY 1

SWITCHING OFF AUTOPILOT

In my 1:1 work with people I talk a great deal about switching off auto-pilot, because let's face it... we all get caught up in the hustle + bustle of daily life. We are set in our routines + habits, usually going through the motions and call it "*living*".

Work, Gym, Eat, Sleep, Repeat - always wishing for the weekend, only to fill our schedule with more "DO-ing"; forgetting the simple fact that we are human "BE-ings" and our purpose is to experience life, not be a witness to it.

ACTIVITY 1:

CHANGE AT LEAST 1 HABIT IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

In my experience, the quickest way to switch off auto-pilot and become more aware of yourself, your life + what you are creating is by purposefully *creating change* + doing things that make you *uncomfortable*! So for the next 5 days, change at least *1 habit* in your daily routine. This will start to *shake things up*.

You can:

- *get out on the OPPOSITE side of the bed*
- *brush your teeth at a different time (i.e., before/after breakfast)*
- *take a different route to work*
- *go to a new workout class*

Your mind will no doubt start to panic a bit, which we want. This is where you start to build...

- 1. Be aware of your thoughts*
- 2. Notice how you feel*

You will likely feel a bit uncomfortable, feel like something is "off", feel "weird". This is a good thing.

DAY 2

THE BREATH

The breath is a seemingly simple concept - inhale, exhale... easy, right; but many people don't realize that the breath is a powerful tool which can provide you with information about the state of your mental, emotional + physical wellbeing.

The breath is a direct reflection of for how we are living our life...

>>> *shallow breath* = living on the surface, not wanting to face certain emotions/fears/realities, not in control, difficulty letting go

>>> *deep breath* = taking ownership, you are in control, you receive, you are willing + open

Most of our days are spent in our heads — thinking about what we have to do next, who we have to c, picking up dry cleaning, etc. resulting in very shallow breath patterns. As a result of all this time spent in our heads we are often not present in our bodies; and, once again, we find ourselves living on autopilot.

ACTIVITY 1:

BREATHING TO TUNE IN

Today's there are 2 activities, both focus on using the breath as a tool to help you get back into your body and the present moment. The first activity will help you determine the state of your mental, emotional, + physical well-being; and the second will allow you to m check in with yourself + help you to get out of your head and into your body.

DAY 2 CONT'D

Sit down (preferably in a quiet place) and once you've settled, simply focus on inhaling + exhaling — notice how you feel - stressed? tense? relaxed?

Slowly begin deepening your inhalations - is it more difficult? does the breath get stuck anywhere? do you feel any tension in your chest? or does the breath flow inward with ease as chest + belly rise?

Do this for a few minutes (3-5 min), and see if you can continue deepening your breath with each inhalation + exhalation. you may even want to place one hand on your chest + one on your belly to help you breathe in those spaces. When you've finished compare how you feel at the end to how you felt at the beginning. was your breath in the beginning more shallow? are you breathing more deeply now? refer to the phrases above, regarding shallow vs. deep breaths — which are you?

For a more challenging task...

set a timer on your phone for 30 seconds, and take a DEEP INHALE - take in as much air as you can and HOLD! (*when you've inhaled to full capacity, start the timer!)

while holding your inhale, take note of how you're feeling as you hold your breath.

- what do you notice in your chest? is it tight? relaxed?
- what emotions are coming up? frustration? anger? peace?
- where is your mind going? is it restless? complaining? or silent? are you thinking about a certain situation/person?

DAY 2 CONT'D

After the 30 seconds are up, exhale fully - until there is no air left + HOLD the exhale for 30 seconds. once again take note of your body, mind, + emotions.

When you've completed both, compare which was easier for you - the inhale or the exhale? Leave a comment in my *Facebook Group "Own Your Life"* + let me know which was easier for you! And I will explain what it means — each tells you something different about yourself.

Now that you've figured out where you're at with your breathing. I encourage you to check in with yourself + your breath throughout the day. I recommend morning, noon, and evening.

ACTIVITY 2:

Each time you check in with your breath, take note of the ease with which your breath flows. You may notice certain times of the day your breath is more fluid than others — for example, your breath may be more fluid at home verse at work.

Take each of these times throughout the day to bring awareness to your mind and your body. Whenever you notice your breath is more shallow, use it as an invitation for you to stop + ground yourself with a few deep breaths.

This practice will help you build awareness of your emotions + physical body as you get out of your head and back into your body + the present moment.

DAY 3

SILENCE

Since you now have some effective tools for becoming more aware of your mind, body, + emotions we are going to take it a step further. Today, set aside 5 minutes to sit in silence. Yes... SILENCE. That means no phone, no music, no background TV. NO DISTRACTIONS. It's only 5 minutes, how hard can it be, right?

This isn't a meditation, its simply showing up + sitting with yourself. Listening to what your mind + body have to say. As I mentioned on Day 1, we are often so busy doing that we rarely take the time to just BE... to listen, to observe. A large part of building awareness, if you have noticed already, is observation. Observing what is happening both within and outside of the mind; and learning to show up + sit with yourself is one of the best ways to achieve this.

ACTIVITY 1:

SITTING WITH YOURSELF

Sit with NO distractions for 5 minutes (set a timer, so you don't have to keep checking your phone). You can close your eyes if you want or take a few deep breaths to get you settled (but don't focus on the breath). The point is to sit with yourself + observe!

Again, notice what comes up for you.

- *How does your body feel? Tired? Relaxed?*
- *Do any places in your body feel tense?*

DAY 3 CON'T

SILENCE

- What is happening in your mind? Is it running a million miles a minute? Is it all over the place? Or is there silence?
- What emotions are you experiencing? Anxiousness? Joy? Frustration?

Do your best not to judge, simply take note. Trust that whatever is coming up is what needs to be there, it's what needs attention in that moment. I suggest continuing this practice for the next few days and see if it gets easier each day. You can even take note of where your mind goes and how it may change depending on the day.

DAY 4

LANGUAGE

As a former Speech Language Pathologist, I am passionate about language. I have seen first hand how effective communication, or lack there of, can impact a person's life. I have witnessed the power of language and how words can make someone light up + smile or contract + withdraw.

The words you choose to use impact you, your life and the way you view the world. Words have the power to create new possibilities or to shut them down; to build relationships or to damage them; to lift people up or to pull them down. But like the breath, words are a powerful tool —unbeknownst to many + much underrated.

The words we speak and the thoughts think, add up + create stories about ourselves and the world around us. Those stories eventually shape and create our realities. And I, just like you, have control of the words we choose to use + say; and thus, the stories we create, which in turn shapes the way we view the world.

For example, “whatever happens, happens” and “it is what it is” used to be some of my favorite phrases... until I realized I was disempowering myself. I was quiet literally saying “I give up”, “I have no control over what happens in my life”; but this is simply NOT true. So I began to notice my language and the words I was using... and damnnn was I shocked to see how often I was putting myself down.

DAY 4 CONT'D

ACTIVITY 1:

WORDS HOLD POWER

Today I encourage you all to become more aware of the words you use, and how you may or may not be disempowering yourself. Below are two exercises you can do.

1. One of the first few words I like to bring awareness to are “should” and “try”. These words do nothing for us; except disempowers us + create guilt.

Example: *“I should go to the gym”*

- translates too: I’m lazy, I’m not fit enough, I am not doing enough — this ultimately results in feelings of guilt, especially if you don’t follow through, and it subconsciously decreases your desire to actually do the task.

- instead say: “I would like to go to the gym”, “I am excited to go to the gym”. See how that changes things? I bet you don’t feel as hopeless about it now.

Example: *“I’ll try to go swimming”*

- translates to: I’m not making any commitments, if i don’t follow through that’s ok — ultimately leaving you feeling disempowered because there is an “excuse” already built in. “Well at least I tried” (but did you really?).

- instead say: “I am going swimming” “I will go swimming today”.

DAY 4 CONT'D

ACTIVITY 2:

One of the best things my brother ever said to me was, “trying is doing with the intent to fail”. If you want to accomplish something why not empower yourself to do it? If you are going to do it, there’s no need to “try”.

2. Stand up and say the following... noticing your body language, how you feel and the tone of your voice each time.

Say...

“I’m tired”

“I’m bored”

“I’m stupid”

“I suck”

- What did your body language look like? Were you more slouched? Poor posture?
- How did you feel? Did you feel tired? bored? less than?
- What tone of voice did you have? Powerful? Loud? Quiet? Soft?

Now say...

“I am strong!”

“I am super!”

“I am vibrant!”

“I am beautiful!”

Did you notice a difference? Compare your body language, your feelings and your tone of voice.

DAY 5

MOVEMENT

The last day of this mini awareness building series is here! As we move into the last day, I want to bring things full circle. On DAY 1, I mentioned that a major key to building awareness is getting out of your head + into your body; I spoke about “shaking things up”. Now, I want you to literally do exactly that!

Physical movement is another simple, yet underrated tool for building awareness. As I had explained on DAY 1, when we are in our heads too much we forget to check in with our body + tune into what it’s telling us. The more we stay in our head and neglect the signals our body is giving us, the more we disconnect from ourselves.

This is why people get sick. You don’t just “wake up one day” with a disease, illness, or injury. The body is often giving you signs + signals for months before an actual diagnosis is given, but many of us are too busy being in our head that we don’t notice what the body is trying to communicate.

Then POOF, one day you wake up and are suddenly sick and say “i don’t know why/how this happened” or “it is what it is” (in reference to yesterday’s post, this is an example of you giving your power away). I see this time and time again with my clients. They tell me they have “X” illness and I am always able to trace their illness/injury back to emotional roots, when it began and why. Then I help them create awareness around the issue and we work to make connections + create understanding; which in turn, reconnects the mind + body promoting healing.

DAY 5

MOVEMENT

There are various methods I use to help my clients reconnect one of which includes physical movement.

When we physically move our body.. through yoga, dance, boxing or any other workout, it requires a special kind of fluidity between the mind + the body. We must not only coordinate, but also synchronize our movements with the breath creating an uninterrupted flow between the mind and body; resulting in connection. This is why practices like yoga + qi gong are so effective when it comes to reducing stress — because the mind + body sync and communicate without the distraction of your thoughts — the busyness is silenced.

ACTIVITY 1:

MOVE YOUR BODY

Today, i invite you to MOVE + notice how the busyness of the mind fades as you coordinate movement between the mind and body.

- Have a dance party + channel your inner 5 year old @ a birthday party! LET LOOSE! (my personal favorite is in the car)
- Do a workout which requires coordination (i.e., yoga, boxing, SLT, acro) — maybe even combine DAY 1 + 5, doing something out of your comfort zone that is also movement based!
- Shake it out in on your living room floor, let your body just move and flow

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME
TO READ + FOLLOW MY GUIDE!**

if you are ready for additional support + want
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