



# JOOL Deep Dive *into Presence*

## SESSION 2

Hi, Vic here. Welcome back! In Session 1 we spent time exploring the range of benefits associated with living in the moment with enhanced presence and focus. I like to think of each waking moment as an opportunity to be present. And it's a wonderful practice to focus on being present almost anywhere, while doing just about anything. So, why call this session **The Observation Deck**? It speaks to what Buddhists call "original mind" -- a calm, immersed-in-the-moment state of being that's engaged, curious, compassionate, and alert, without judgement, to everything that's going on.

So often, we're physically present but mentally AWOL. The reason: our minds latch onto a thought, a statement, a look, an aroma, a sound, an ache and then we're off -- riding a runaway train of tangential thoughts right out the room. Did she just look at me funny? I wonder what my daughter's doing right now? That perfume reminds me of Lake Winnepesaukee. These people are way smarter than me. Why does my back hurt all of a sudden? Oh, the places we'll go!

So, let's talk about some ways to keep our minds -- our attention -- present in the room.

### Mindful Eating

Let's start with eating. Needless to say, we all have to eat. Several times a day. And JOOL's Deep Dive Into Eating can teach you how make the most of when, how, and what you eat. For many, though, eating is a bit of a catch as catch thing. Plunked down in front of the computer or the TV, we're eating for fuel more than for the joyful, communal experience eating used to be. And, frankly, that kind of sucks.

Here are a few quick pointers to bring presence back onto your plate:

- **Really taste your food:** Chew slowly and savor each bite
- **Look at your food:** Appreciate the various colors, textures and shapes
- **Breathe it in:** Take a moment to let the aromas just fill up your senses
- **Track your food:** Feel the food in your mouth and follow it pass down your throat. Where do you lose track of it?
- **Check in with your brain:** Feelings of hunger or fullness come from the brain, not your stomach. As you eat your meal or snack, pay attention to signals from your brain telling you you're full or hungry for more. This kind of attention can be especially helpful for those who overeat from stress, boredom, or running on automatic.

### Mindful Walking

There is a time-honored form of meditation that involves walking, very slowly, in a contemplative mode. It comes in very handy when people have been sitting in meditation for long stretches because it gives the body a chance to stretch and move while maintaining the meditative practice. Mindful walking outside is a wonderful way to reconnect with the world around us -- to take in the landscape of our lives with new eyes and ears. Try this next time you have a few minutes free. Head out the door and...

- **Follow the movement of your body:** Notice the natural rhythm and glide to your walk; the graceful shifting of weight from one leg to the other and back again.
- **Feel the gravity; feel the ground:** Gravity's an amazing phenomena we typically pay no mind to. Feel how gravity holds you to the earth but also how your legs and arms can propel you up a flight of stairs or gently into the air.
- **Listen and look:** What do you see and hear on your walk? Pay attention to things passing by and get curious about your surroundings. Likely this is a familiar place -- see it for the first time.

### Mindful Conversations

Is conversation a lost art? Some say so. A true conversation is about an exchange; a sharing of minds. A give and take. Sometimes, when things get really interesting, time disappears; hours go by. How great is that? When's the last time it happened to you? Here are some quick thoughts on bringing back the fine art of getting lost in conversation.

- **Keep eye contact** with the person you're talking to. Really take them in. If it's someone you know well, you'll often see something new and fresh about them if you're really paying attention to who they are.
- **Be an active listener.** These days people tend to talk over one another a lot. They grab the floor with quick "I mean..." draw in a giant breath and talk. Talking at people is so different from talking to them. Hear what they're telling you. Listen for what's going on beneath the surface. What's their body language telling you? Don't sit there planning your response. Just listen. It can actually be quite a relief.
- **Phones?** Switch them off, or better yet, don't bring them in the first place.

Some of these suggestions might seem almost too obvious, but look deeper. This kind of deep attention to living and being in the world is actually quite rare.

That's it for today. Keep an eye out for an email in a day or two inviting you to Session 3. Till then, thanks a lot for listening.