**NOTING PRACTICE**

**Part 0: Short story test - baseline**

Before we teach you anything. Let’s do a simple memory test. You’ll hear a story and let’s see how many details you can remember from it.

Next Saturday is Mark's birthday. Mark's friends are going to hold a secret party for him. Tim is one of Mark's best friends and loves to prank other people. Although everyone usually eats a sweet and well-decorated cake on their birthday, Tim is going to make one that is salty. He can’t wait to have Mark try the cake and laugh at his response!

[Noting Practice Checklist: write down # of details participant recalls]

**Part 1: Explanation**

In today’s experiments, we will be studying a special type of attention called effortless awareness. An example of effortless awareness is to become aware that hearing the sound of my voice does not require any special effort on your part. In contrast, when you hear sounds and immediately try to understand or make sense of them, you experience an effortful state.

Does that make sense?

The same effortful state is, for example, if you were in an argument recently, it is easy to get caught up in emotions by reliving the situation in your head. The thoughts or situation aren’t the issue, but how you are relating to them – being caught up- in them.

Does that make sense?

Today we would like you to practice a simple attention technique that will allow you to rest in effortless awareness while ignoring all sounds. This technique is called the *noting practice.* During noting practice you simply note what is most predominant in your experience from moment to moment. That is, you just become aware of your senses, like *seeing*, *feeling*, *hearing, and thinking*. Just note silently to yourself whatever is at the forefront of your awareness at any moment. For example, I might note seeing, because I’m reading this, and then I notice my shoulders are tense so I note feeling, and then I start thinking that my shoulders are tense so I note thinking. The sequence would go like this: seeing, seeing, seeing, feeling, feeling, thinking, thinking and so on. Whatever is most predominant in your sensory awareness from moment to moment, just note it. You don’t need to describe specifically what you’re experiencing, but we’d like you to note which senses you are using and let it go after you have noted it.

Does that make sense?

At the beginning it is recommended to pace the rhythm to once per second. But it’s up to you.

I will provide an example (15s, note approx.. once per second)

Notice sometimes I dwell on ‘hearing’ or ‘thinking’ for more than 2 seconds. In those cases, I use an ‘anchor’ so that I force myself to switch my attention to something other than hearing or thinking. For example, I use my right big toe as an anchor. That means whenever I notice I say ‘hearing’ or ‘thinking’ for 2 or more times, I force myself to pay attention to how my big toe is feeling. It provides an easy ‘out’.

Does that make sense?

So let’s try to help you pick an anchor. A body part can be an option. What would you like to use as your anchor?

[Noting Practice Checklist: write down participant’s choice]

**Part 2. Participant practices noting without external interference.**

Could you try this now, just noting seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting, etc., just noting anything that is at the forefront of your attention for the next 10 seconds or so? And could you note out loud this time so I can follow you? I will stop you in 10 seconds.

Don’t worry about doing it perfectly; just do the best you can. If your mind wanders or you get caught up or swept away by something, no problem; when you become aware again, just start again by noting whatever is most predominant in your awareness.

[Noting Practice Checklist: Stop after participant is able to check all boxes on the checklist for two times, or until three practices have been completed]

**Part 3. Participant practices noting while experimenter tells a short story.**

Great. Now let’s practice noting with some background sound. This time, after I say ‘start’, you will start practicing noting as before - you can choose to say it out loud or note in your head without speaking out loud. But at the same time, a story will be played. Your goal is simply to keep going on with the noting practice even while the story is playing .. I will say ‘ready, go’ and you’ll have 5 seconds before the story starts. When the story ends, you’ll hear ‘stop’. Are you ready?

[Audio Story 1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lprlY81_rnhBAKOWqX1KBI4leP86o75K/view?usp=drive_link)

1. Cathy is going on a field trip to a dairy farm. When Cathy gets to the farm, the farmer shows her how he makes fresh milk and creamy cheese. At the end of the day, the farmer said everyone can bring something home as a present for their parents. Cathy's mom and dad love pizza and Cathy's favorite food is macaroni and cheese. She knows exactly what to bring.

Audio Story 2

1. Alex the bear lives on the mountain. One sunny day, Alex was out looking for food. He saw a beehive on a tall tree. Alex climbed up and stuck his paw inside the beehive. He took his paw out and ate a lot of honey! Alex wanted to take a break, so he went to sit down in the shade under a big tree. Alex closed his eyes.

Audio Story 3

1. Zoey is going on vacation with her family by the ocean. She is so excited! She packed her favorite pair of sunglasses and her favorite bathing suit. They drive to the coast. But they see a lot of clouds in the sky and everyone’s hair is blowing in the strong wind. Soon rain starts pouring. Zoey is a little sad.

Audio Story 4

1. Grandpa owns a garden. He works there all year round. In March, he uses the shovel to dig holes in the soil and plants the potato seeds. From March to October, Grandpa waters and fertilizes the plants. In October, Grandpa carefully digs out the potatoes. In the winter, Grandpa takes a break.

[Noting Practice Checklist: Stop after participant is able to reduce # of details remembered two consecutive times]

[If participant doesn’t get it]

If noting practice is done well, you will notice that whatever you hear, you may not understand as well - the content ‘fades away’. That’s the goal for the noting practice. So let’s try next how you can do this.

Remember you can use your anchor if you notice yourself getting involved in the story.