

# TAKING A SENSORY WALK



If you look at the Wellness Wheel on the left, you will notice that beginning top right the first dimension of wellness is Self-Responsibility & Love. We consider this dimension to be the context of all the remaining wellness dimensions. Without a balance of self-responsibility (an appropriate ability to respond) and love, especially self-love (or self-acceptance), high level wellness cannot be fully realized.

Dr. John Travis, the creator of the Wellness Inventory, realized that because the human being, like any organic structure, is what is called “an open system,” we have energy inputs

and energy outputs. The primary organic energy inputs (or fuel) are breathing, sensing, and eating. They make the remaining dimensions feasible as energy outputs. Without adequate energy inputs, our systems wind up operating on less and less fuel and the energy outputs and the quality of our lives can seriously suffer. A focus on the energy inputs can shift the balance and greatly improve how we feel and perform.

This simple and enjoyable exercise is to strengthen the top two energy inputs of breathing and sensing. It involves walking at a comfortable pace and directing your mental focus to various energy inputs as you walk. You can walk around your house and yard, in your neighborhood, on a trail in nature, or anywhere you feel comfortable. These instructions are only guidelines. Alter them in whatever way helps you to gain maximum benefit.

- Take a minimum of 3 minutes for each section.
- If your attention wanders from the subject, it's no big deal. Just gently bring it back. The most important thing is to enjoy the process of noticing and to cultivate your curiosity about your experience so that you notice more and more. (Learning Mode)
- Read these guidelines over a couple of times before going on your first walk. Then review them briefly again for each subsequent walk until you are either well familiar with them or have revised them to suit your needs.

## BREATHING WALK

- Begin by allowing your mind to focus on your breathing as you walk. Just simply notice your breath. Don't try to do anything with it. Just notice.
- Where in your body do you feel your breath? Your abdomen, chest, back, or even high in your collar bone?
- What do you notice? Is your breath smooth, rhythmical and easy? Is it hesitant, sporadic, or labored?
- What else do you notice that perhaps you haven't noticed before?
- As you focus on your breathing, does anything change without you having to purposely try to change it?



### SEEING WALK

- Shift your focus to what you see.
- What are the shapes, textures, movement, and colors that you notice?
- Can you look without naming the objects you see, even for a few seconds, but just see them as shapes, textures, movement, and colors?
- If you are in familiar territory, are there things you notice that you've never seen before?

### HEARING WALK

- Shift your focus to what you hear.
- What sounds do you hear?
- Listen more and more deeply, what are the sounds underneath the sounds you normally hear?
- Even for a few seconds, can you hear what you hear without naming the sound?
- What are the nuances of the sounds? Are the aspects to the sounds that you never noticed before?

### SENSING WALK

- Now shift your focus to what you sense in your body.
- As your body moves, what do you notice? Gently scan your body as you are moving, starting with your feet and ending at your head.
- Can you feel your muscles as they move?
- Can you feel the touch of your clothing, air, or sun on your skin?
- What can you notice that you've never noticed before?

### BRINGING THEM ALL TOGETHER

- Now see if you can bring breathing, seeing, hearing, and sensing all together as you mindfully enjoy your walk.
- Don't worry if you find yourself quickly shifting between these channels of awareness. Just keep practicing and see if you can, even for a few seconds, be aware of them all at the same time.
- What do you notice that you haven't noticed before?

