

SINGLE-POINTED AWARENESS

If we want to achieve a task, something that may even seem impossible, then developing the art of single-pointed awareness will certainly take us a long way towards achieving that goal.

Sadly, we've been using the shovel of progress to dig our own graves, pursuing greater and greater attainments in the fields of science, medicine and a host of technologies, not realising the price that we're paying. The digital and virtual revolutions have us in a spin, so much so that we've lost our focus and forgotten what the priorities are. This is why we need to learn single-pointed awareness. This is an activity that goes beyond formal meditation practice.

The wonderful movement towards meditation and mindfulness in the developed world, is providing a valuable antidote to the stress and strain of modern life. At last, the eastern traditions are being given the respect and reverence they rightly deserve. These introspective pastimes give us greater capacity to perform in very demanding and challenging circumstances. They encourage stillness, reflection and calm. They help deepen our understanding and increase our insights... all of which leads to contentment. They enable us to recognise that real power doesn't reside outside of ourselves but resides within.

So, what do we mean by single-pointed awareness? It is about regularly focusing your whole attention on an object, a goal, a hope, an ambition, something that you feel passionate about and want to manifest in your life. To do this you must first of all be clear what it is that you're trying to achieve. Once you have that clarity, a healthy obsession is required. Healthy obsession means repeatedly immersing yourself in that slipstream of consciousness. It's that immersion (which needs to be heartfelt) that organises the energy around what you're focusing on.

Whenever we focus on something, with sincerity, to the exclusion of all else, then energy pools together. Within that pooling of energy, there is power and infinite possibility. Scattered thinking dissipates energy, dilutes it, and this dissolution means it's difficult to achieve your hopes and dreams. In fact, many of us are unable to achieve our goals because our energy is not concentrated and focused. In other words, we have not brought our awareness to a single point.

We all know what happens when we capture the sun's rays, using a magnifying glass, harnessing its energy into a single point onto a piece of paper... it burns. Such is the power of the heat generated by the sun. Harnessing its power gives us options in terms of how we use its energy.

Your mind is the sun in your own solar system. It too is immensely powerful, capable of performing wondrous things, but if that radiation, heat and light (ideas, thoughts, creative intelligence and feelings) are not harnessed, then you are unable to maximise the mind's potency and choose how to use its energy.

Begin by deciding what you want to achieve. Document it clearly in writing or record it if you prefer. Whatever route you take, you need to be able to paint a picture so clearly on the

canvass of your mind that you can see it in a three-dimensional way. The more you can attach positive feelings to this image, the more fruitful the end result.

Once you have your three-dimensional image, obsessively focus on it. Sit regularly and imagine yourself enveloped by it. Walk through your visualisation as if it were a film set. Make it so real that not only can you see it, but you can touch it and feel it. Populate it with those images that soothe and inspire. See the people you want to share your vision with, actively participating. They are blissfully happy, equally uplifted by this dream.

Another way to deepen the experience, is to match your story to a piece of music that you love. Then you could listen to the track, whilst seeing and feeling yourself bound to these beautiful images. Make it your soundtrack. The more you do this, the more that piece of music, whenever you hear it, will transport you to that special place and all the feelings and divine possibilities associated with it.

Vision boards are also powerful instruments for increasing the single pointed awareness that is required for success. Collect and surround yourself with images that speak to you and remind you of where you're heading. Organise your images on a board or sheet of paper so every time you see the vision board you are filled with hope and determination. Then come up with positive statements and simple mantras that inspire and remind you of where you're heading and what you want to achieve. These affirmations will help to remind you of your vision and change your inner narrative.

You will need to focus on them mindlessly until they become mindful. It doesn't matter if at first you don't believe your positive statements and mantras. The more you recite them, the more you alter the architecture of your brain, creating the structures that will support your new beliefs. It does take time, but it is now clear from the growing cognitive neuroscience research that we can begin, within weeks, to change how the brain relates to itself and with that our perception and self-concept. Take a look at the work on synaptogenesis and gyrification to deepen your understanding.

There is a host of ways to develop single-pointed awareness, but the most important thing to achieve this is to regularly put time aside to bring your whole awareness to a point. You need to practice fixation. What will help you with this is trying to perform one task at a time. The more you develop this skill the more you will achieve self-mastery. So, as you go about your day-to-day life, try the mindful practice of really focusing on what you are doing in any one moment. Multitasking has its virtues but to develop single pointed awareness, you need to learn the art of being completely focused on what you are doing right now. When you can do that, you'll find building healthy obsessions gets easier and easier.

Try building healthy obsessions today.