

SHIFT YOUR ATTENTION BY MARLENE AND BOB NEUFELD

There are three main ways that people's attention get's caught:

1. Sometimes our attention gets caught **inside** of ourselves. We are focused on our own pain, our misery, on how we are at the effect of others. We may see ourselves as victims...of others, of our own behaviour, of circumstances.
2. At other times, our attention gets caught **outside** of ourselves, on others. We are focused on what others have done wrong, how they don't measure up, on what we need from them. We may be caught in blame, and/or on how we can help other people.
3. At yet other times, our attention has gone "**up and diffuse**". We may be spacey, and/or ungrounded. As one of our clients says, at that time his partner is "out of touch with reality".

Whenever our attention is caught in any of these three ways, we are not free. We are thinking inside of a box. We are not accessing our full creative potentials. When your attention is captured, you're convinced of your point of view, how it is. Rather than your attention getting caught by one thing, or at one end of the in/out spectrum, you have a choice of where you place your attention.

One of the simplest ways to get ourselves out of the box, is to practice shifting attention. Our teachers, Drs. Gay & Kathlyn Hendricks call this practice "**Loop of Awareness**".

Loop of Awareness involves placing your curious non-judgmental attention on something inside yourself, then placing your curious non-judgmental attention on someone or something outside yourself, then continuing to oscillate your attention in and out. One of our clients recently noticed that her attention would get caught on whether others approved of her or not. She chose to add self-approval to her loop of awareness. She committed to practicing loop of awareness, and every time she brought her attention back to herself she would give herself a little bit of approval, mentally saying something like "You are a good person."

The purpose of Loop of Awareness is to free your attention. The short form of Loop of Awareness is:

- Turn your attention out to the room or another person or thing with an internal hmmmmmm.
- Turn your attention to yourself generating curiosity with hmmmmmm.
- Continue shifting back and forth.

Here are some questions from Dr. K Hendricks to increase your explorations around loop of awareness.

- Notice your own pace and pattern of shifting attention. Do you send attention out more often than in? Do you focus in more than out? What is it you shift when you shift your awareness? Your eyes?
- Play with shifting your attention quickly and slowly.

- What is the rhythm of your oscillation? In other words, if you were to count along with the time you spend focusing attention on another person as compared to focusing attention on yourself, what would the ratio be?
- Notice whether your focus is narrow or wide. Try noticing the quality of light in the room, then your breathing, then the movement of another person's hand, noticing your posture, another person's posture.
- What are the themes in what you notice in others and in yourself? Examples: what hurts, what's not moving, the other person's face.
- What captures your attention and stops the loop? Examples: critical thoughts, a frown or grimace, loud noises.
- What do you characteristically add to curious attention? Examples: needing to do it right, evaluations, approval-seeking.
- How can you promote a flow of curious attention?

Loop of Awareness refreshes energy, keeps us vital and clear. It is useful in all interactions keeping us in the present moment.

Developed by Kathlyn Hendricks, Ph.D., A.D.T.R. of The Hendricks Institute; www.hendricks.com. Dr. Kathlyn Hendricks is in Ottawa at the beginning of October, 2011.

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