

Inside/Outside

This exercise helps build our ability to be aware of our internal experience while also attending to whatever tasks we're engaged in, not getting rigidly fixated on either.

While you're engaged in some task, say gardening or a household chore, keep paying attention to what you're doing but also shift some focus to what's going on inside your body.

This is very much like focusing on both your feet. Allow any physical sensation to step forward but without grabbing all of your attention. Where do you feel this sensation? Notice the edges. What is the quality of the sensation? Hot / cold? Tense / calm? Throbbing / constant? Tight / loose? Rough / smooth? Remember to stay with the activity as you do this.

Now bring your attention more fully again to the task, but also continuing to be aware of the sensation. How is the sensation related to the task? How are your feelings about the task, and your degree of focus on it, related to the sensation?

Your insides are reacting to the task, and your feelings about the task are impacted by that. Maybe you're feeling deeply satisfied by seeing how well your flowers are growing and you notice that you have a physical internal sensation of pleasure even while you are also feeling some pain in your knees and arms. Or maybe you're feeling bored with the task and you notice that you're also feeling a slight sensation of hunger.

It's important that you allow your awareness of these interconnections to emerge from just shifting your attention around from inside to out and that you don't start problem-solving and giving yourself a rule – *"I've got to find a connection!"*

Presence Tool

This exercise is one of attentional focus, not of diagnosis. It helps us keep our attention limber so that we're more fully present in the moment, with both our bodies and our minds. Over time, that helps us experience the present moment more fully, staying alert about whatever information may be presenting itself to us that can be useful.