



Dr. K's Guide to Mental Health

Practice | Notice the Faculty of Hearing | Notes

This technique involves discovering the self by moving the line between the inside world and the outside world. When you hear sound, the sound is the object of observation and you are the observer. If we notice the faculty of hearing, suddenly the sense organ that was the observer now becomes the object of observation. What we've done is realize that there is an observer "deeper" within us that is capable of noticing the faculty of hearing.

In psychiatry, people who are experiencing trauma sometimes undergo a feeling of depersonalization, in which they feel like an observer of their own body or things are happening to their body instead of happening to them. Everyone can understand this somewhat – I sometimes think of my body as "me" and I sometimes think of my body as something I own. I use the possessive "my body" instead of "I am."

In this practice, we'll start the process of discovering our true self by moving deeper, moving underneath what we believe we are. It is almost a systematic process of depersonalization – to keep digging beneath the layer of experience until you can't "observe" something anymore. It starts with observing a sound... then observing the faculty of hearing...then observing the mind that hears... and onward... and onward...

(Note: This is an advanced practice – I recommend 3 months of meditation before attempting it. Anyone can try it, but it will be difficult to understand until your powers of observation and awareness are potent.)

Practice Instructions:

- Start with something like a rotating sound awareness meditation
- Then notice that YOU are hearing the sound
- Then notice the faculty of hearing
 - Observe the capacity to hear observe that hearing "moves outside of you"
 - That you are the observer of the hearing
 - Notice the effect of words on your mind or the sensation of hunger on mental craving
 - Notice that indriyas, or sense organs, or sensations create reverberations on the mind
- Observe the perturbations of the mind
 - Who is doing the hearing?
 - Who is noticing the faculty of hearing?
 - Who is noticing the perturbations in your mind?

As you practice, and your awareness becomes able to detect more subtle things, you will find answers to these questions.