

EXERCISE: SABER

STOP... Focus on the present moment.

The first thing to do is to STOP, right here and right now, wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, and start by paying attention to yourself. In your mind, stop here, and focus on this very moment. By doing it, you're breaking a cycle of the autopilot.

ACKNOWLEDGE... what is going on right now, in this very moment, in your body, heart, and mind. This pausing and observing means that you have stepped out of autopilot.

Start by ACKNOWLEDGING the thoughts, feelings, and the sensations in your body. Observe what is going on with you right now. What thoughts are going through your mind? Try to name and label your thoughts. Here again, as best as you can, just notice all these sensations, thoughts, and emotions. Observe them without judging. Notice especially all unpleasant experiences, any sense of discomfort, or unpleasant feelings. Rather than trying to push them away or shut them out, just acknowledge them, perhaps by saying, "Yes, there you are. This is just how it is right now. It's okay..." Just observe.

BREATHE... Focus on your breath—your anchor to the present moment.

Focus your attention on your BREATH and the movements of the belly, so that you are aware when the breath is moving in, and you know when the breath is moving out and leaving your body.

EXPAND... your awareness to your body and mind, and to your surroundings.

Now, allow your attention to EXPAND. Continue being aware of the breath, but also include a sense of the body and mind as a whole. See whether there is any tightness or tension in the shoulders, neck, back, or face, or anywhere in the body. If there is, just notice it, observe it, and don't try to fix it. Follow the breath as if your whole body were breathing. When you're ready, expand your awareness to what's happening around you. Just watch it, observe.

RESPOND... After this pause and curious, friendly observation, when you know what's happening in you and around you, now you are ready to respond mindfully.

Keep breathing and think what would be the best RESPONSE, best thing to say or do. Or perhaps you decide you shouldn't do anything, after all.