

Mindfulness allows us to more fully appreciate and the richness of experience in each moment. When we practice mindfulness, we learn to allow experience to come and go with detachment.

Noting is a technique to help us achieve that goal. To note something means to notice it and then focus on it intently (but gently!) for a few seconds. **To facilitate this process, you have the option of accompanying the noting with labeling.**

Labeling label means to think or say a word or phrase that describes what you are noting.

*Labeling is designed to facilitate noting
Noting is designed to facilitate mindfulness.*

An act of noting usually consists of two parts:

- 1. An initial *noticing*, which takes place in a fraction of a second, and**
- 2. A period of intently focusing on what you noticed. This typically lasts for several seconds, during which you intentionally soak into it and open up to it.**

Pacing and Voice Tone

As a general principle, note and label at a leisurely pace, allowing approximately 2-6 seconds between each labeling. Some people find it helpful to use the breath to help the timing.

When you speak the labels in your mind or out loud, intentionally use a low, gentle, matter-of-fact, almost impersonal tone of voice. The leisurely pace allows you to soak in and savor each experience as you note it. The tone of voice helps put you in a deep state.

Thus, noting consists of a sequence of well-defined noticings and highly focused soakings.

Labeling

Noting need not be accompanied by labeling, and labeling may be mental or spoken. This gives us three possibilities:

- 1. Just noting without intentionally labeling.**
- 2. Mental labels accompanying the noting.**

3. Spoken labels accompanying the noting.

If spacey, stronger labels

Three OK's of labeling

- It's okay to guess.
 - It's okay to miss.
 - It's okay to be late.
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A frequently asked question regarding labeling is: "Making a mental label is obviously an instance of Talk. Should I note or label it as such?" The answer is no.

Dividing the Attention between the Label and the Labeled

As a general principle, put no more than 5% of your attention on the labeling process itself.

The other 95% goes into the soaking and opening process. An exception to this is the case of strongly spoken labels, which are used when you really "hit the wall" and need a period of continuous feedback to fight through the wandering and unconsciousness. When using strongly spoken labels, 20% or even more of your attention should go into *really listening* to the labels. That way as soon as the label stream ceases, you have instant feedback letting you know that you are getting spaced out and caught up.

At the beginning labeling will take a bit more of your attention.

Within the spoken labels there are three sub-types:

- a. Sub-vocal labels (Mouthed, whispered, or *sotto voce* labeling that would be inaudible to people near you.)
- b. Ordinary spoken labels.
- c. Strongly spoken labels.

(Obviously the latter two can only be done in appropriate environments.)

↑ Strongly spoken labels

Stronger Labeling Mode Normal spoken labels

Sub-vocal labels

Weaker Labeling Mode Mental labels

↓ No labels