

# THE POWER OF NOTICING

We are always noticing – without even realising it. Right now, as you read this, you might suddenly become aware of the screen in front of you, the feel of your hands and feet, or background noises. These elements fade into the background until something draws your attention to them. Yet with practice, you can hold more of these details in your awareness at once.

In our professions, we're trained to notice specific things: chefs spot bad ingredients, accountants catch numerical errors, and musicians hear the wrong note instantly. This ability to notice can be developed – and not just at work. The aim here is to expand your awareness to include more subtle things, beyond the obvious, and in doing so, to see more of the opportunities life presents.

But noticing is often overridden by habit, distraction, or fear.

Why do we notice and then forget? Why do we ignore things we've seen? Why don't we see some things at all?

Sometimes, it's because noticing would disrupt the comfort of our internal world. On a deeper level, we may unconsciously interpret new information as a threat or challenge to our current reality.

If you've ever guided or mentored others, you'll know that people can't be changed from the outside. Real transformation only happens when someone is ready. What we can do is learn to listen more deeply, observe more carefully, and sense what's really going on – beneath words or actions. That's when the right support becomes possible.

## Foundations of Noticing

Noticing begins with presence. To truly notice others, we need to be physically, emotionally, and mentally engaged. Being in the same room isn't enough – if your attention is split, you'll miss the moment.

This practice is about observing what others overlook – not because they're blind, but because they rush past or dismiss it as unimportant. To notice more deeply, we must slow down, suspend judgment, and treat life as an ongoing experiment.

Importantly, noticing isn't about you. If your mind is busy with anxiety, doubt, or internal chatter, it will drown out the subtle signals around you. Stillness within allows you to sense more clearly what's happening outside.

To begin cultivating the Power of Noticing, try this: notice your reaction to the idea that reading alone isn't enough. These practices need to be lived – tested over weeks and months, shaped by your own experience. Their value grows with time. Noticing isn't fast – but it is powerful.

### The Practice of Noticing

To truly master the Power of Noticing, we must approach life with curiosity – treating it as play, as an ongoing experiment. This means letting go of the need to judge quickly or label everything. The key is to look first, understand later.

Noticing isn't initially about you. If you're caught in your own anxious thoughts or self-doubt, it becomes nearly impossible to perceive what's happening around you. Your inner noise can drown out the signals coming from the outside world.

To develop this skill, the following practices may help. But first, notice your own reaction to the idea that this requires more than passive thought. These are not quick fixes – they must be lived, adapted, and sustained over time. Their true value only unfolds with consistent, intentional practice.

### Getting Started with the Power of Noticing

Safety first: Never attempt these exercises while engaged in activities that require your full attention.

- Occasionally, remove your glasses or contact lenses. Diminishing outer vision may heighten your inner awareness.
- Try softening your gaze – look hazily at your surroundings, as if daydreaming. You may catch details you've previously missed.
- When observing people, look not just at them, but into and through them. Sometimes, glance just to the side of someone. What do you see then?
- In stillness and solitude, close your eyes and picture yourself from above, as if watching from a high step ladder. Alternate between this view and your usual, grounded perspective.

Gently experiment with these techniques. There's no need to force anything. In time, they will begin to shift your perception – and deepen your presence.

## Noticing in Everyday Life

Modern life bombards us with information, but much of it is noise. The true art of noticing lies in developing discernment – seeing what matters without getting caught in attachment or reaction.

The goal is to simply observe:

“That is happening.” “She is saying this.” “There’s a change there.”

And to do so without clinging to approval or aversion.

When we fail to notice, we disconnect. We risk becoming passive, reactive, and numb. But when we refine our attention, we become more fully alive and aware of what’s really happening – with objects, with people, and within the spaces between.

This kind of noticing enriches even the most basic acts: eating, breathing, resting, relating. It helps us distinguish thought from feeling. It brings us back to the present.

## A Simple Practice: People Watching

One gentle way to begin is through people-watching. Sit quietly in a public space – a café, a station, a park – and simply observe. Let thoughts and emotions come and go: judgment, admiration, dislike, curiosity... just let them pass. Don’t follow the stories your mind tries to make.

Instead, witness details without comparison:

A red car. Blue shoes. Short hair.

Notice people. Notice objects. Most importantly, notice the spaces between them.

Watch how people move closer – how space contracts. Then watch others move apart – and how that space expands. Some people seem to carry an invisible field around them, a magnetic pull or a repelling force. See if you can sense it, without naming it.

## Distractions from Noticing

In our modern world, many forces exist specifically to dull our awareness. Substances like alcohol, drugs, processed foods, and even the pursuit of comfort or ease can blur the clarity of our perception. They dissolve the distinct edges of our experience, blending things, people, and space into an indistinct soup.

Some spiritually inclined people mistake this sensation of merging as a sign of bliss or transcendence. But this liquified state is not true awareness. Things and people are meant to be distinct – separated by the space between – so that we can learn from them. When we collapse those spaces, we limit our capacity to grow and to become what we might call Soul Strong.

To notice is to become aware. And awareness is the foundation of meaningful change.

## Listen Closely

Begin listening not to agree or follow, but to notice.

Pay attention to the language of authority—bosses, media voices, influencers. Listen for phrases like:

- “We all know...”
- “What we know is...”
- “What people want...”

Then ask: Who is this “we”? Does it include you? Most likely, it does not. These are often projections – statements of personal belief disguised as collective truth.

## What Are You a Slave To?

Every one of us serves an unseen master. The moment you sneak a bite of food before dinner, you may be serving hunger. If you argue for the sake of being right, you may be a slave to anger. We often justify these impulses by calling them “just who we are,” but in doing so, we relinquish our freedom.

Numerology can offer clues. For instance, someone with a strong Number 5 influence may feel drawn to movement, travel, and variety. They thrive on new experiences, and this can be a powerful strength. But it may also become a trap. In constantly chasing what’s next, they may overlook the lessons and opportunities right in front of them. They may flee from discomfort, only to find the same challenges reappearing elsewhere.

When your greatest strength blinds you to the present, it becomes your greatest weakness.

### Be More Reflective

Reflection is what I've aimed to bring into this writing – but let's define it clearly. Reflection means vaguely recalling or commenting upon an incident – in other words, stepping back from the heat of the moment and, with the benefit of hindsight, observing what you did or didn't do.

This is a vital part of the Power of Noticing, but it requires balance. Too little reflection robs you of the chance to learn from experience. When life just washes over you, unprocessed and unnoticed, it tends to repeat itself – again and again, louder each time, until you finally pay attention.

But too much reflection can also be a trap. It can lead to passivity, overthinking, or even paranoia. You end up circling the past, using thought as a substitute for action. But with the right balance, reflection helps you become less impulsive, more grounded. Impulse is of the body-mind-emotion. Reflection is of the Soul.

### Deprive Yourself

The first time you get drunk is unlike any time after. No matter how much you drink later in life, that first altered state is never quite repeated. This is the nature of desensitisation. When something becomes familiar, we stop noticing it. This applies not just to alcohol but to any repeated sensory indulgence.

Many people, especially in Western society, live in a low-grade state of inebriation – fuelled not by addiction in the clinical sense, but by habitual, socially accepted drinking. The daily G&T, the couple of glasses of wine with dinner – these create a fog that dulls awareness. These people may appear functional, even successful, but their senses are numbed, their attention narrowed to the immediate and trivial.

To re-sensitise is a shock at first. You begin to notice things you never registered before – and it can be overwhelming. But soon, what was once noise becomes signal. The world sharpens. You begin to discern.

Not every meal must dazzle your tastebuds. Not every film must blow your mind. Not every book needs to be a page-turner. Constant stimulation breeds a dull mind. Subtlety is what the Power of Noticing reveals.

## Keep a Journal

Journaling supports your Power of Noticing by helping you process what you experience and what you sense. Write down thoughts, feelings, hunches, things you noticed but aren't ready to share with others. This is not about producing literary genius – it's about taking space to notice, reflect, and record.

Try to distinguish between what you feel and what you think. That simple act builds emotional perspective and inner balance. Avoid judgment. You're not writing to fix, explain or justify. Just notice and record.

Use a notebook or type it into your phone – whatever works. The act of journaling matters more than the medium.

## Notice That There's Not Always Something to Notice

"We do not need more knowledge, but more wisdom; wisdom is found in our attention." — Zen Proverb

Sometimes, everything seems alive. Insights flow. You notice things constantly. At other times, the world feels flat. Nothing stands out. Your attention wanders.

This is natural. Life moves in cycles – through personal years and months, through lunar rhythms, through the shifting seasons. The key is to notice that ebb and flow itself. Even the quiet has something to say. Noticing the silence is noticing too.

## Stop Using Certain Words

Becoming more conscious in speech is a gateway to deeper noticing. One way to do this is to stop using habitual words – especially judgmental or reductive ones.

You might use a derogatory term to describe someone you don't understand or agree with. Whether you've said it aloud or just thought it, try this: stop using that word. Don't use it for them. Don't use it for anyone.

This doesn't mean pretending they're right or denying your experience. It means noticing more specifically what they evoke in you. Why do they bother you? What are they showing you?

This process is valuable for all automatic language – business clichés like "bottom line" or "at the end of the day" dull your attention. Spiritual language can do the same. Words like "transformation" and "community" are now used so broadly they obscure more than they reveal.

Notice what words people use to hide things – or to sell things. Then stop using them yourself. Clarity will follow.

### More Things to Try

These small, deliberate acts can strengthen your Power of Noticing:

- Walk through a doorway and say to yourself, “I am walking through a doorway.”
- Use different colours when writing – black, blue, pencil – observe the shift.
- Notice your movement – when taking stairs or escalators, ask: “Do I use the handrail or not?”
- Turn off your music. Drive, walk, or sit in silence. Break the habit of background noise.
- Notice the Moon. Say, “There’s the Moon,” whether it’s day or night.
- Track the Sun. Where does it rise and set where you are?
- Notice socks. Do they match shoes? Trousers? Anything?
- Watch body language. When someone says “yes” but shakes their head, notice it. When someone tells you they’re engaged in your conversation but face away, notice that too. Most people don’t even realise they do this.
- Walk beside water. Watch the reflections on the surface, then look below it for what’s hidden – fish, plants, or human litter.

### Reflect Some More

Noticing is essential to any spiritual path. With tools like Tarot, a daily card can highlight something to notice in your outer world. But only you can notice it.

Notice your resistance, too. Excuses, justifications, rationalisations – these are often attempts to soothe the discomfort of change. Be honest about the reasons you tell yourself not to bother.

When speaking with others, pause before responding. Did their comment move the conversation, stall it, or redirect it? You always have choices: to respond automatically, to wait, or to say nothing. But if you’re trapped in old patterns, you won’t even notice those choices.

## Professional Blindness

The longer you work in a profession, especially if you're skilled, the harder it becomes to notice. Experts stop seeing what's there and only look for what they know.

- The man with the hammer sees nails everywhere.
- The trained activist sees oppression in everything.
- The seasoned entrepreneur sees every stable system as something to disrupt.

Likewise, the experienced yoga teacher or reiki master might miss the subtle shifts in their students. Attend the fair you think you've outgrown. Not to learn what you already know, but to notice what's changed.

## Signal vs Noise

Sensitivity needs calibration. Over-sensitivity leads to overwhelm and false connections. Not everything is a sign. Notice what's really there, not what you wish were there.

## Dealing with Others

Sharing what you've noticed isn't always easy. Some people will reject your insights, not because they're wrong, but because they're too right – too true, too raw, too fast.

Others might understand but not act. Some might hear you but miss your timing or wording. None of this means you're wrong. Just notice how you share, and when. Pay attention to your delivery. You can always try again.

## Finally

At its heart, the Power of Noticing is the art of perceiving the presence of the divine in everyday life. It's about pulling back the veil, moment by moment. If done randomly, it may create confusion. If done deliberately, it will deepen your experience of being alive.

The world is overflowing with beauty and truth. But you won't see any of it if your head is down or your eyes are shut. Noticing is not about the loud, the shiny, or the hashtag-worthy. It's about the soft, the subtle, and the sacred spaces in between. I was inspired to write this from mentor from many years ago. It is also what I talk about with clients all the time – because many will receive a healing session, but then not be able to notice any shifts, or attribute any changes (even if subtle) to their session, because they haven't been operating from a place of noticing. ❤️