

An Introduction to ULTRA:
Universal Library for Training Attention

Some Context

First things first . . . a few definitions as context for understanding ULTRA.

Mindful Awareness:

- is a certain way to pay attention to what is happening around you and within you.
- involves three attentional skills working together:
 - Concentration: The ability to focus on what you deem relevant.
 - Clarity: The ability to detect and untangle the strands of your experience.
 - Equanimity: A kind of inner balance within your consciousness. It represents a third possibility between pushing sensory experience down (suppressing) and being pulled away by the sensory experience (grasping).

Experience: There are two sides to experience: sense experience and motor experience. Traditional mindfulness practices emphasize working with sense experience. Zen practice does that but also values working with motor experience. That involves learning to contact and appreciate spontaneity within motor expression.

Sense Experience: What you see, hear, and feel. (Feel includes all body experience, both emotional and physical. Chemical senses of smell and taste considered body experience as well.)

Motor Experience: How you move, think, and speak (also how you focus attention). Auto techniques train you to let go of control and let nature itself organize these activities for you.

Noting: One way to developing mindful awareness by clearly acknowledging the existence of sensory experiences then gently, intently focusing on them at a pace that works for you.

Labeling: An option that can be used when noting. Labels are mental or spoken words that name specific sensory experience you are focusing on at that moment.

Techniques: Distinctive focus exercises that elevate your base level of concentration power, sensory clarity, and equanimity. In Unified Mindfulness, you first learn from 1 to 16 core techniques depending on your interests and needs. Half of those core techniques involve noting with the option to use labels (Just See, Just Hear, Just Feel, Note Everything, See Source, Hear Source, Feel Source, Be Source.)

A Mindfulness Practice: The structure that you need to establish in order to develop mindful awareness. There are four key elements:

- Daily formal practice
- Daily informal practice
- Periodic intensive retreats
- Periodic contact with a big picture coach

Benefits of Mindfulness Practice: Systematic mindfulness practice brings about five broad long-term effects:

- Relief: Minimize suffering
- Satisfaction: Maximize fulfillment
- Wisdom: Understand yourself at all levels
- Mastery: Act skillfully
- Service: Help from love

Modern Mindfulness as defined by Shinzen: Contemplative practice evolving in concert with modern science.

Unified Mindfulness: A form of modern mindfulness that emphasizes the underlying unity of the world's contemplative practices.

About ULTRA

ULTRA arranges all the world's focus techniques into **four basic themes**. Associated with each theme are **four core techniques**. This provides a total of $4 \times 4 = 16$ techniques. In the Unified Mindfulness approach, you'll usually start out by learning one or several of those. All other forms of practice can be thought of as supporting the core Unified Mindfulness techniques (and vice versa!).

Basic Themes	Core Techniques
<p>Appreciate Self and World</p> <p>Experience the senses with radical fullness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just See - Observe visual experience. • Just Hear - Observe auditory experience. • Just Feel - Observe somatic experience. • Note Everything - Observe any and all experience.
<p>Transcend Self and World</p> <p>Contact something beyond the senses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Source – Explore the theme of Expansion and Contraction in visual experience. • Hear Source - Explore the theme of Expansion and Contraction in auditory experience. • Feel Source - Explore the theme of Expansion and Contraction in body experience. • Be Source - Explore the theme of Expansion and Contraction in all experience.
<p>Express Spontaneity</p> <p>Develop energy, bounce, and creativity in what you do, say, and think.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto Move - Tune into spontaneity as you walk, work, dance, move about. • Auto Speak - Tune into spontaneity within vocal expression. • Auto Think - Maintain a global unfixated state in the mind. • Do Nothing - Drop any intention to focus your attention. With time, a focused state will arise spontaneously. From that perspective, Do Nothing could be called Auto Focus.
<p>Nurture Positivity</p> <p>Selectively attend to positive emotion, rational thought, positive behaviors. Refine your personhood, and be of service to others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Good - Create and hold positive mental imagery. • Hear Good - Create and hold positive mental talk. • Feel Good - Find / create / hold pleasant emotional body sensations. • Be Good - Do all three at the same time!

The sixteen core techniques can be organized into a Cycle of Cycles.

