**The Secret Sauce: Measuring**

As you might have seen from the previous introduction to Mindfulness, I am a believer in being as scientific as possible. While we might go overboard a bit, if we formulate this course as a scientific experiment, I want to tell you about the *secret sauce* that will supercharge your Mindfulness experience.

This sauce is called *Measuring* and has two ingredients: the Pic comparison and the Journal. Why are they important? Because they are tools that allow us to answer questions. Let me tell of both and the questions that they answer.

**The Pic comparison**

The first thing that we need: on a day-to-day basis, an idea of whether something is working or not. Let’s say that you are learning boxing, starting at the beginning. You are learning the first punch combo, usually a jab-cross combo.

At some point, the coach will tell you to go to the bag or the focus mitts. And at that time, probably your punches will miss, at least some of them. That’s ok, that is why you’re starting to learn. After some time, you might move onto a moving target, like another boxer and eventually you will use them in a match.

In that case, the question would be: is my one-two combo working? And the way to answer it is simple: is it landing?

But how can we answer the question: is my meditation working?

To answer that, we need a *concrete* experience. Something with the resonance of the one-two. And that concreteness can be found within yourself.

You, your body, your emotions and thoughts are the best way to measure the impact of the meditations that we’re going to practice. But you will only see these changes if you actively look for them.

So, before you do *any* of the meditation techniques that we’re going to teach you, when you’re ready to start, check:

* How does your body feel
* Do you have any kind of emotion at the moment?
* Is a thought coming back again and again?

Do this, make a mental note and do it again *after* the mediation.

Did it change? How?

Making now the habit of noting the changes in your mind will help you build awareness component and learn what every meditation does for *you*: while some meditations work the same for most people, usually everyone feels it as different.

And that’s not considering the changes that come with every day. Are you happy? Sad? Just plain tired from work? All these factors will change meditation. Therefore, to learn it *experimentally*, you must look and answer the question time and time again.

**The Journal**

But, of course, you will forget things. Days will blend with each other.

That’s why it is so important to keep a Journal.

Now, there are going to be a thousand things and variations for Journaling. There are people who swear by keeping a particular format and book/software for everything separated. There are people who create custom Journal pages for everything.

I just throw everything into the same Journal: from business meetings to dreams to travels.

The main thing is that everything is reachable; that if you want to answer the question “Am I seeing an improvement through my practice of Mindfulness?” you have a way to answer.

Choose whichever system of Journaling you like. It can be on your phone, on your computer or a pen-and-paper system. But take notes of each session. Also, take notes of your dreams, since they tend to be affected a lot by meditation. And lastly, if I can give a bit of advice, keeping a daily journaling practice can help immensely to articulate what is happening with you and with others.

So, from now on:

* Keep a Journal
* Write the daily experiences with meditations and dreams

Finally, every week we’re going to include material from other people that we think is interesting and enriching. All of that is a bonus, you don’t need to practice it, but if you want variation it can help. Also, we’re going to include a brief reading list in case you want to expand your knowledge of Mindfulness and Meditation.

Let’s get into the first meditation techniques!