

# NOTICE SHIFT REWIRE

A Mindfulness Skillset to Live Each  
Moment with Well-Being



**LIFE XT**  
by mindful

# WHY NOTICE-SHIFT-REWIRE?

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Establish the habits of attention  
and wellbeing

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Develop executive attention

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Increase happiness

# ESTABLISHING THE HABITS OF ATTENTION AND WELLBEING

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Our goal is to live each day—indeed, each moment—with a greater sense of wellbeing.

Attaining this profound goal requires developing the moment-to-moment habit of attention—a habit we can all master using the inner technology of Notice-Shift-Rewire.

This one skill sits at the core of all of our mindfulness coaching program, LIFE XT.

## DEVELOPING EXECUTIVE ATTENTION

The skill that we call attention corresponds to what neuroscientists call **executive attention**, a capacity that enables us to sort through conflicting stimuli. If you are walking through Times Square in New York City, for example, executive attention is the faculty of the mind that allows your brain to remain focused on your destination rather than the car horns, billboards, and bright lights that surround you.

When executive attention is weak, we become more impulsive, rigid, and susceptible to worry, fear, and other symptoms of psychological distress. Our minds easily lose the capacity to resolve conflicts among competing stimuli, leaving us distracted, scattered, and tense.

The good news is that modern science now shows that we can learn the skill of developing executive attention throughout life. When we train the skill of attention, we actually change our brains by activating new neural connections that reduce mind wandering and enhance overall wellbeing.

Training the quality of attention is a lot like training a muscle: The more we train it, the stronger it becomes. Each time we Notice-Shift-Rewire from mind wandering to attention we strengthen this capacity. Think of NSR as doing push-ups for your brain.



# MIND WANDERING

What keeps us from living the moment-to-moment experience of being and doing? The short answer: **mind wandering**.

**Mind wandering is what happens when our attention runs on autopilot, drifting from random musings about our past to anxiety-producing what-ifs about the future.** In this state, we live with the constant distraction of that unrelenting inner voice that keeps the mind in a perpetual state of wandering.

Mind wandering is an ancient human problem. But today's high-tech environment, far from giving us more free time, is reinforcing our mind's tendency to wander. Distractions like email, texting, social networking, video games, movies, and the rapid pace of life offer a constant invitation to inattention.

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## CONTEMPLATION VS MIND WANDERING

Research shows that allowing your mind to dwell on creative problems or important future events can have positive benefits. Allowing your mind to explore a problem you are facing at work can lead to important and unexpected insights. Allowing your mind to explore possible itineraries for an upcoming vacation can ensure smooth travels. These more focused forms of thinking correspond to what many ancient traditions call contemplation. In these states, the mind may wander, but it doesn't run wild.



In the course of everyday life, we tend to experience a different, more problematic form of mind wandering. Our mind isn't contemplating profound intellectual breakthroughs or important future priorities. It's ruminating aimlessly through mostly negative terrain. This near constant stream of everyday mind wandering diminishes our emotional wellbeing.

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## THE LINK BETWEEN MIND WANDERING AND UNHAPPINESS

A 2010 Harvard University study revealed that most of us mind wander—a lot. In fact, **the average person spends 47% of the day mind wandering**: thinking about something other than his or her present activity. The bulk of this mind wandering is focused on pleasant thoughts (42.5%), while the rest is divided between neutral thoughts (31%) and unpleasant thoughts (26.5%).

The researchers' insight wasn't just that our minds wander. It was the link between mind wandering and unhappiness. They concluded, "How often our minds leave the present and where they tend to go is a better predictor of our happiness than the activities in which we are engaged." Mind wandering doesn't just stand in the way of enjoying an ocean-front view. This landmark study shows that it stands in the way of happiness.



# WHAT IS NOTICE-SHIFT-REWIRE?

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Noticing our mental habits brings choice. We can now choose where to place our attention.

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Shifting brings change.

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Rewiring brings lasting neurological integration.

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Together, this inner technology allows us to release the forces of the set point by shaping our experience of each moment.

# A TOOL OF LIFE INTEGRATION: MEDITATION IN MOTION

Notice-Shift-Rewire is a tool of life integration— a tool designed to be used anytime, anywhere. It's meant to help you shift back to the state of being and doing while you are in the midst of your day-to-day life.

Think of it as meditation in motion. Like sitting meditation, it trains the skill of attention. Unlike meditation, it can be done anytime, anywhere. In every moment, after all, your attention is directed somewhere. When you're walking down the stairs, combing your hair, even right now, as you are reading this sentence, your mind is either wandering or focused. When the mind wanders, Notice-Shift-Rewire is the tool that brings us back.

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## CONTROLLING YOUR ATTENTION

The practice is straightforward.

- Notice when the mind wanders.
- Shift the mind back to your chosen object of concentration.
- Rewire the brain's neural pathways by savoring this new experience.

When we learn the art of Notice-Shift-Rewire, we learn to become the conductors of our own attention, shifting from mind wandering to the six states of being and doing.



# STEP 1: NOTICE

It all starts with **Noticing**. Noticing is the act of observing the mind—of standing back and watching the set point forces at work.

This is not the usual human state. The forces of the set point can leave us lost in the stories our minds tell us, trapped in judgment, attachment, and resistance. When these habitual patterns of thought govern our behavior, it's difficult to improve our general sense of wellbeing.

**Noticing—simple, nonjudgmental awareness—is key to establishing a new habit of being.** It allows us to put the critic aside and discover a less used part of our consciousness: the neutral watcher. The watcher is able to take a step back and see what is happening in the mind. This act of awareness—of watching what is going on in the mind—is the first step to training the skill of attention. It opens the possibility for the next step: shifting.

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# STEP 2: SHIFT

**Shifting**—redirecting your attention—is the action that creates the change. Suppose you just had a long, difficult day at work. You feel discouraged, exhausted. Marching through your consciousness is an army of judgments: I am so tired. I wish I had a different job. If only I had more time. These thoughts do nothing but drain your energy. Simply noticing—I feel discouraged; I feel tired; it was a long day—is where you start.





Once you have noticed, you have a choice. You can let these habits of the set point run the show, or you can choose to shift. Shifting enables you to redirect your attention— from the wanderings of the mind to qualities that promote well-being.

The word shift might make you think that the goal here is to shift away from what's happening right now. This is a common misconception. The goal here isn't to repress or check out of your current experience. **The goal is to check in—to draw your attention away from the haphazard musings of the mind and into what is actually happening right now.** When we shift, we meet what is with complete equanimity.

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## STEP 3: REWIRE

Now we come to the part where the long-term payoffs reside. In Step 3, we begin to rewire the brain's neural pathways by **taking a brief moment to savor the new experience that arises after making a shift.** By spending just fifteen to thirty seconds savoring the shift, you keep these productive neural pathways firing and help encode a heightened experience of wellbeing deep into your brain and nervous system. You set in motion the process of neural integration—of creating new, more powerful pathways of activation in the brain.



# THE CHALLENGE OF NOTICE-SHIFT-REWIRE

Notice-Shift-Rewire is a skill that sounds easy. But it requires practice to develop. When LifeXT co-founders Eric Langshur and Nate Kemp first started developing the practice, they both fell into the trap of thinking they could spend every waking moment applying this skill. The results were disastrous: They found they could barely make it an hour, let alone five minutes, without slipping back into mind wandering.

They learned from these early experiments that it is more realistic and helpful to develop specific habits of Notice-Shift-Rewire.

*Start Here* teaches how to use specific habit-forming cues to apply Notice-Shift-Rewire in your everyday life. By the end of the program, this skill will become second nature. Get your free copy of *Start Here* today: [[link to LifeXT site](#)]

