

TEN-SECOND GENERALISATION EXERCISE

Do this exercise as often as you can, making it an enjoyable, ten-second break throughout the day. Some people use smile buttons, little paste-on stars, or any other item as a reminder to do this exercise. Put these reminders around in places you are likely to be often, such as your study area, the bathroom mirror, the refrigerator, on your car rear-view mirror or dashboard, on your books and notebooks, your watch, etc. Use them as a stimulus to start the exercise described below.

When you see the stimulus, check your breathing. It will always be shallow. Smile at yourself and say to yourself silently something like, "I don't need to do this to my body". Next, take two slow, easy, deep breaths -- with a count of four in and a count of four out, another count of four in, and as you exhale the final count of four out, let your body go completely limp. If you are alone, you can actually drop your jaw and let yourself go completely limp from head to toe just like a rag doll. Imagine feelings of warmth and heaviness from your head down to your toes, which reach your toes at about the same time as you finally exhale the last breath. Then carry on your normal activities.

You can modify this exercise whenever you encounter any minor annoyance such as following behind a car that is straddling lanes or is going too slow, when a telephone ring interrupts your train of thought, standing in line for something, or in any situation that might normally get on your nerves as part of the pressure of daily living. Whenever you become aware of the fact that your body is showing anger, that you are getting tense, smile at yourself and think, "It's not necessary to get my body uptight about this". Then complete the exercise with the breathing, with letting the jaw and body go limp, and feeling the wave of warmth and heaviness pass down to your toes. Then carry on your normal activities.

You will find this brief ten-second exercise remarkably refreshing, giving you new sources of energy, making you feel much more alert at the end of a tiring day. It's through extensive repetition of this exercise that you will achieve the ability to carry out your quieting response automatically, anywhere, any place, any time, to make it a part of your life.

Even if you should forget to do the quieting response for a few days because of its newness or any other reason, simply re-initiate the practice until it becomes so automatic that it is almost the same for you as breathing.

In addition, continue practicing the 20-minute full deep muscle relaxation at least once a day.

