

APPENDIX A

A Full BREATHe Session

IN THIS APPENDIX, I'VE COMBINED all the practices into one session of the BREATHe model so you can see what it might look like to incorporate it all at once into your devotional time. Keep these tips in mind, just as you have when you've tried each practice individually.

1. Find a comfortable place in your home that is quiet, undisturbed, and free from distractions. But don't get too comfortable. Choose a chair that supports your back and sit up straight.
2. Have your Bible with you to refer to your anchor verses if you've not memorized them. You can also use the downloadable tool that includes the practices, anchor verses, visual metaphors, and skills for the entire BREATHe model. Find it at www.holynoticing.com.
3. I recommend closing your eyes to block visual distractions. If you get sleepy, it's okay to open them. You also may want to open them when you practice the *E*.
4. Set your timer. Twenty minutes works well for me. You may want to start with less time, and that's okay. The key is consistency. If your timer goes off but you haven't finished and want to keep going a few minutes longer, that's fine.

5. Don't get frustrated when your mind wanders. It will.
When you become aware that it has, thank the Lord for reminding you. Simply refocus on your breath by taking a couple of slow, deep breaths while you repeat your breath prayer. Then silently ask yourself, *Now where was I? B . . . R . . . E . . . oh yeah, E. That's where I was, on E, the environment.*
6. Seek to make holy noticing a trait of your life, not simply an add-on to your devotional life. Practice being in the moment in your day-to-day routine. If you're diligent, you will experience tangible benefits.



B: Ponder and Yield Your *Body*

Anchor verses: Psalm 139:14; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Romans 12:1

[Begin with long, slow breaths.]

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

Breathe in and breathe out with your breath prayer.]

Holy Spirit [the in-breath]

Breathe on me [the out-breath]

[Repeat your breath prayer as long as you want. You may want to include other breath prayers such as *Lord Jesus* (on the in-breath) *You are good* (on the out-breath).]

[Move on to your anchor verses for *B*.]

Lord, I come before You and present my body to You. I want to ponder it and yield it to You right now.

[Meditate on your anchor verses, or read them if you have not memorized them.]

Lord, I acknowledge that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I know that full well.

I acknowledge that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that You have freely given to me.

I am not my own. I have been bought with a price.

I want to honor You with my body.

Therefore, I now offer my body as a living sacrifice to You.

[Begin your body scan. Start with your left foot and leg as you imagine a scanner passing over it from bottom to top. Pause at various places to feel any sensation, no sensation, or sensations that come and go. Focus your attention on that part of your body. Notice how sensations may change. Thank God for that part of your body. Be creative in what you thank Him for. You may thank Him for such things as how your knee flexes, for your kneecap, or for the cartilage and ligaments that hold your knee together.

Now move to your right leg and do the same, noticing sensations that come and go. Thank God at various places on your leg.

Move to your torso and then up your left hand and arm and up your right hand and arm. Thank God at various places in your torso and hands and arms.

Now move up your neck, up your face, and finally up through your

head. You may thank Him for things that seem insignificant, such as your eyelashes or the contours of your ear. Remember, God has fashioned you as the crown of His creation.

Simply notice and express thanks. You are here to be with your body in the presence of the One who created it. Sometimes you may want to revisit your anchor verses during your body scan. That's fine. When your timer sounds, you can stop, even if you haven't scanned your entire body. If you want to, you can keep going after your timer sounds. Close with these prayers.]

*Lord, thank You for giving me my body. I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
I yield it to You today as a living sacrifice.*



Transition to *R*: Review and Renew Your Relationships

Anchor verses: John 13:34–35

[Move on to your anchor verses for *R*. Meditate on them by reading or reciting them from memory.]

*Lord, I bring my relationships before You. I want to review and renew them as Your Spirit guides.
Please give me a sense of Your grace right now.
Show me Your love.
Help me love others as You have loved me.*

[Now visualize those in your concentric circles. Start in the center circle with those closest to you. Ask questions like these.]

How are things in this relationship?

Is this relationship healthy?

Is there some work I need to do?

Is there something regarding this relationship I should be praying about?

Do I need to confess a bad attitude toward this person?

[Linger a bit with the image of that person in your mind. Pray for them as the Spirit prompts. Then move to the next person in your concentric circles diagram, and so on. Don't feel as though you need to cover every relationship. God will bring to mind those you need to focus on today. If you get stuck on a person who invokes a negative response, move on. The deeper the hurt, the longer it will take to heal and wish this person well.]

Lord, thank You for putting these people in my circle of relationships.

I recommit them to You.

Help me refresh and renew these relationships on an ongoing basis.

If I must interact with a difficult person today, give me Your grace to respond in a godly way.



Transition to E: Notice and Engage Your *Environment*

Anchor verses: Psalm 8; Psalm 95:4–5

[Move on to your anchor verses for E. Meditate on them by reading or reciting them from memory.]

Lord, I bring my attention to the environment You have placed me in right now.

Thank You

... for the ability to hear

... for the air I breathe

... for Your magnificent creation

... for the sounds that surround me right now.

[Imagine you are sending a sonar “ping” into your surroundings. Listen deeply to the sounds you hear. Is it the air-conditioning, the clock, the wind outside (or the wind blowing in the trees if you are outside), birds chirping, a neighbor’s lawn mower, stirrings of your family members in your home?

Listen for whatever comes your way.

Catch yourself if you begin to add commentary, and refocus on the sound.

Just listen to the tone, timbre, beat, and so on of the sounds. Remember, you are strengthening your attentional muscles with this skill.

You may want to then try focused observation.

Open your eyes and focus on an object that you’ve not focused on before, such as the flower in the windowsill, the lampshade, the sofa, familiar objects you may have taken for granted. What new things do you notice that you’ve never seen before? Is it a color, a pattern, or an unusual aspect of that object?

If you are at a window or outside, focus your attention on a tree branch, a leaf, a flower petal, or something else in nature. Notice its shape, color, size, uniqueness, symmetry or asymmetry.

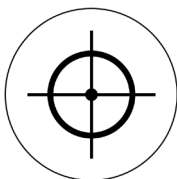
Revel in God’s creation.

Remember, you are simply noticing, not adding commentary.]

Lord, I thank You for the senses You’ve given me to enjoy Your creation.

Hone my attentional skills.

Help me become a better “holy noticer” of You, Your creation, and others.



Transition to A: Label and Release Your *Affictive* Emotions (*Affect*)

Anchor verses: Galatians 5:22–23

[Move on to your anchor verses for A. Meditate on them by slowly reading or reciting them from memory. If you are using Galatians 5:22–23 as your anchor verses, reflect on each quality mentioned. Visualize in your mind someone you know or yourself demonstrating love, joy, peace, and so on. Remember, you’re in no rush. Take your time. And when your mind wanders, which it will, thank God for helping you recognize it. Don’t berate yourself for a wandering mind. Simply refocus on your breath and pick up where you left off.]

Lord, I pause right now to be present with You and my affect, my emotions, both pleasant and afflictive ones.

I want to relate to any difficult emotions in a way that honors You and helps me release them to You.

I don’t want to push them away but to acknowledge their existence even as I know Your Spirit is with me right now.

Lord, reveal to me any afflictive emotions right now.

I’m having feelings of _____
_____.

[Label and describe how you feel, both good and bad emotions. Use the

crosshairs exercise or Rifle Scope Chart if you need help. Remember, when we label our difficult emotions, their power over us decreases. Simply name and describe them without adding commentary or judgment. Observe them without getting caught up in them or judging them as right or wrong. Remind yourself that these emotions don't define you. You aren't ascribing intent to them or evaluating them. You are simply observing them as transient passing mental events. Try to use descriptive words (i.e., *unfortunate*) rather than evaluative words (i.e., *horrible*).]

Lord, I am noticing the emotion of (anger, etc.) right now.

I acknowledge it without pushing it away.

My (anger) does not pose a threat to me. I am safe in Your care.

[Stay aware of your tendency to push away, suppress, or use the Whac-A-Mole strategy.

If you sense sin behind the emotion, confess it. But remember that feeling does not automatically imply sin.

Once you've labeled them, it's time to release these emotions to the Lord. Turn your attention to skill 2, the quiet waters exercise from Psalm 23.]

Lord, I release my (anger, etc.) to You.

I let go of it.

May Your Spirit now grow in me greater love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control so that I don't try to suppress my emotions or let them control me.

Thank You, Lord, for helping me.



Transition to 7: Observe and Submit Your *Thoughts*

Anchor verses: 2 Corinthians 10:5;
Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:8; Isaiah 26:3

[Move on to your anchor verses. Meditate on them by reading or reciting them from memory.]

Lord, I submit my thoughts to You right now.

Help me sort through which thoughts are true and correct and which are not.

Help me be with my thoughts without adding commentary to them.

[As thoughts rise up in your mind, try to reframe troublesome ones such as *I am anxious* to a decentered thought such as *I am having feelings of anxiety*, which provokes less anxiety. By labeling thoughts in this way, you're adding some distance between them and their effects on you. Other phrases could include, *I am having memories of . . .*, *feelings that . . .*, *thoughts about . . .*, *bodily sensations of . . .*, and so on.

Try to simply name your thought instead of spinning a commentary about it. Remember, you are developing the skill of thinking about your thinking (metacognition), the ability to think about your own mental state. As you grow in a holy-noticing lifestyle, you'll get better at this.¹ One helpful way to distance yourself from your unhealthy thoughts is to learn to differentiate between a description and an evaluation. A description is just that, a description of an event or an emotion. An evaluation attributes subjective qualities to an event. For example, a description

would be: "I am having feelings of fear." An evaluation would be: "My fear is intolerable." Evaluations often intensify our emotions.

Imagine that you are on a mountain and are observing the weather. You are secure in the Lord, and your difficult thoughts are like the weather. View those thoughts as passing storms.]

Lord, I submit this thought to You: [fill in the blank]

And this one . . .

And this one . . .

Help me be present with these thoughts.

Thank You that I am not my thoughts.

I am as secure as Mount Zion. You are my rock, my fortress, my strength, my truth.

[Here you may want to recall and reflect on your anchor verses again. There is no need to try to dredge up negative thoughts. As thoughts arise, even good ones, be present with them. If thoughts arise that are potentially sinful, bring those before the Holy Spirit and let Him bring appropriate conviction. Confess those that He convicts you are sinful.]

Lord, help me live out the reality of having the mind of Christ.

I want to think thoughts that honor You.

I submit my thinking to You.



Transition to *H*: Search and Surrender Your *Heart*

Anchor verses: Psalm 139:23–24; Zephaniah 3:17

[Move on to your anchor verses. Meditate on them by reading or reciting them from memory.]

*Lord, I yield my heart to You right now.
Please shine Your searchlight on my soul.*

[Envision a bright searchlight shining on your heart.]

Reveal to me any hidden sin or wrong attitudes.

[Pause and simply be still before the Lord.
As God reveals sin, respond with confession.
After a few moments, reflect on Zephaniah 3:17 or Scriptures that clarify your position and identity in Christ.]

*Lord, I rejoice in the fact that You rejoice and sing over me.
I receive Your affirmations of my identity and position in Christ.*

[One way to experience this is to recall times when you felt truly loved by others. Recall the details of those experiences. You may want to write them down.

You may want to list your strengths and thank God for them.
Beware of any tendency to criticize yourself or bring up your flaws.
Remember, God takes great delight in you and rejoices over you.
He loves you with an everlasting love.]

*Lord, thank You for Your love, mercy, care, and concern for me.
I receive it with gratefulness.*

[end of the practice when your timer goes off at eighteen to twenty minutes]

APPENDIX B

How Holy Noticing Affects Your Brain

I used to think that the brain was the most wonderful organ in my body. Then I realized who was telling me this.

—EMO PHILIPS

YOUR PARENTS OR A SCHOOLTEACHER probably taught you about about the birds and the bees. But did you ever get a talk from them about your brain? Probably not. Yet this walnut-shaped, tofu-textured, cantaloupe-sized powerhouse profoundly affects every part of your life, including your spiritual life. And holy noticing can create positive changes in your brain. In this chapter I give a simple bird's-eye view of the brain and its basic functions, especially as it relates to how mindfulness affects it.

In Psalm 139, King David muses and marvels over God's handiwork in the human body. He says in verse 14, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful." If he lived today and knew what scientists now know about the brain, I'm sure he'd echo the same sentiment about our brains.

Composed of between eighty-six and one hundred billion neurons (plus other kinds of cells), with connections estimated to exceed the number of stars in the universe, the human brain weighs a mere 2–3 percent of the average body's weight, yet consumes almost 20 percent of our body's energy. It's so complex that it would take thousands of books to begin to plumb its complexity.

As we learn about the brain, it's helpful to understand the interplay of faith and science. As psychiatrist Matthew Stafford writes,

God's majesty is reflected in how our brain cells function, the biological and environmental factors that affect the formation of our personalities, the mechanism by which memories are brought to our minds, and the precise balance of brain chemicals that are the foundation of our thoughts and behaviors.¹

And John Polkinghorne, a Christian who was the former professor of mathematical physics at Cambridge University, wrote, "Science and theology have things to say to each other since both are concerned with the search for truth attained through motivated belief."²

Throughout history, science and religion have related to each other in one of four ways: conflict, independence (they both keep their distance from each other), dialogue (even after meaningful dialogue, each side retreats into its own framework), and integration (collaborative, bidirectional, and reciprocal learning).³ In this book I've taken the fourth approach, believing that since good neuroscience is God's truth, we can learn from it. And, there is a growing movement of intellectuals who, although may not be Christian, are embracing the reality of the supernatural.⁴

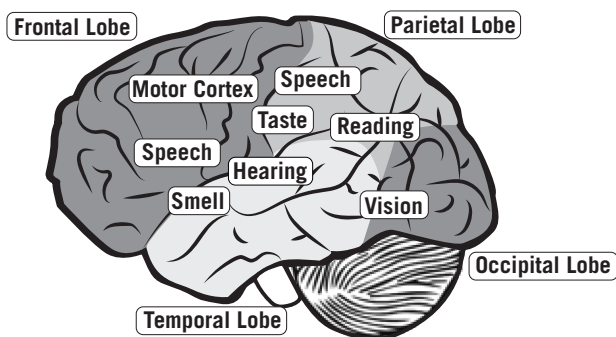
How Your Brain Works

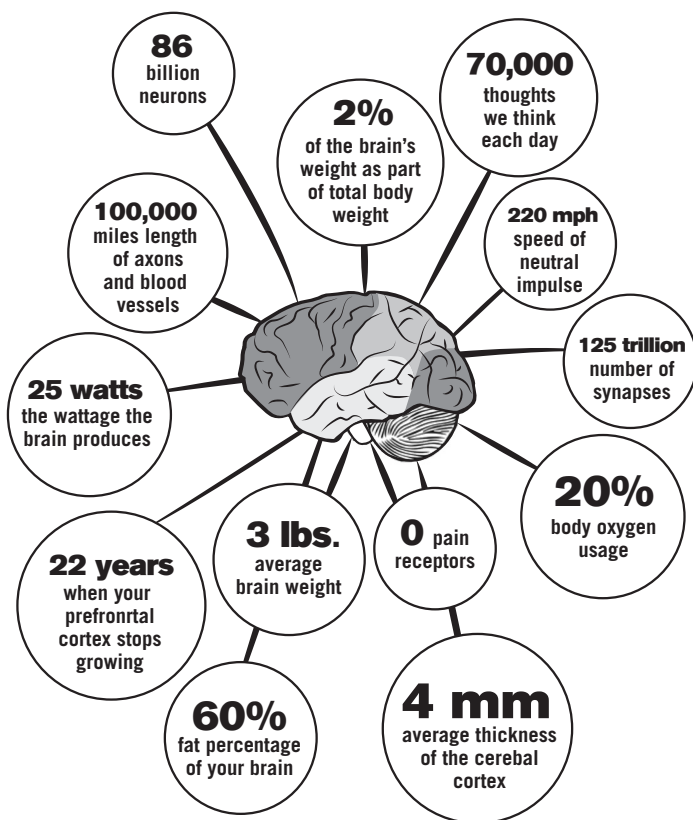
Just as a house includes multiple components—rooms, building materials such as bricks, systems such as plumbing, Wi-Fi,

and electrical—our brains are made up of several parts called lobes. The brain's main building components are called neurons (brain cells), along with other kinds of cells, primarily glia cells, and its systems are called neural networks.

God fashioned our brains in two mirror-image halves, like a walnut, with the sides joined by a superhighway of neural connections called the corpus callosum. Each hemisphere includes five major rooms or lobes—occipital, parietal, temporal, frontal, and insular. And scientists generally agree that four *major* networks form the brain (there are many minor ones as well)—the visual network, the salience network (makes things stand out in importance), the attentional network, and the default mode network (the circuit that activates when we aren't focused on a task and are thinking mostly about ourselves and what we believe others are thinking about us). Generally speaking, circuits in our brains (like a bunch of computers networked together) either receive information, perceive information, or conceive information. Here's a simple diagram of the brain with its basic functions.

CORTICAL LOBES

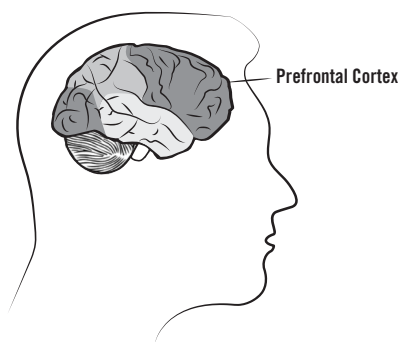




Different functions are generally localized (located in one area of the brain), but neuroscientists are discovering that the brain's functions are much more distributed than once thought. The left side of the brain is more linear, logical, and linguistic (sees the trees), and the right side is more artistic and wholistic (sees the forest). The left side tends to explain things more (the left bone is connected to the right bone), and the right side tends to describe things more (I am so sad that my bones ache).

An overriding principle guides our brain: Minimize Danger/Threat—Maximize Reward/Pleasure. The terms *away* and *toward* correspond to danger/threat and reward/pleasure. Although many brain parts are involved in and affected by mindful practice, it's helpful to know a few most impacted.

Our executive center, the brain's CEO, is called the prefrontal cortex and is located behind our forehead and temples. The acronym REAP describes what our brains' CEO does: **R**ational thinking (planning, analyzing, goal setting, insight, morality); **E**motional regulation; **A**ttention; and **P**eople (how we perceive and relate to others).



The middle part (which stretches from between our eyes and traverses all the way to the back of our head—think of a Mohawk), helps us understand how present experiences relate to our past and how they may affect our future. This part is activated when we pay attention to ourselves and when we think about what others may be thinking about us. It gives us a sense of self and activates when we're not focused on a task. It's called the *default mode network* (DMN). Holy noticing

helps us keep that network in check when we tend to worry and get anxious and it also influences that network to increase creativity.⁵

Our limbic system, what neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz calls our “Uh Oh Center”⁶ is the fight/flight/freeze system (our feeler), which includes four major brain parts, each with a particular function. The hypothalamus affects our response to stress. The amygdala (there are two of them and two of every part of our brains) is an almond-shaped cluster of neurons that revs up fear, anxiety, and other unpleasant emotions when we feel threatened. The hippocampus is a seahorse-shaped cluster of neurons involved in creating memories. It helps us remember the names of our coworkers while the amygdala reminds us who we do and don’t like. And finally, the cingulate cortex, which lies between our CEO and our emotional centers and right above the superhighway that connects both sides of the brain (corpus collosum), influences attention and focus and acts like a mediator between thinking and feeling. The front part of the cingulate cortex (the anterior cingulate cortex) is a conflict monitor, alerting us when our goals, preferences, and beliefs are in conflict with our actions. It’s like a smoke detector that alerts us when something isn’t right.

Another brain region influenced by this practice is the insula. Located deep within the brain, it enables us to experience our internal body sensations (called interoception) and their salience. *Salience* is a term to describe how worthy those sensations are of our attention (chunky chocolate triple fudge peanut butter ice cream is more salient than a radish). The insula is also involved in intuition, our “gut” feeling.

What Holy Noticing Does to Your Brain

A key impact from mindfulness practice involves our inner body states. Holy noticing helps us become more aware of those inner body states because it helps strengthen the connections between the brain's CEO and the insula.⁷ It also helps hone our ability to sense and understand those internal body states because the practice activates the insula.⁸

When our thinking gets negative (the tendency of our default mode network, the Mohawk), holy noticing can give us stronger and quicker access to the brain's direct mode (what the brain does when we focus on a task). This helps minimize the effects of negative thinking. It decreases mind wandering,⁹ which usually defaults to negative thinking. It also strengthens the neural pathways between our CEO and our feeler (amygdala), which helps us control negative emotions.¹⁰ And, as one author writes, "Over time this increases our capacity to focus so that we can more intentionally allow God's Spirit to direct our thoughts and control our emotions. This is why Scripture says we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). In essence . . . we are aligning our brains with the work the Holy Spirit is doing in our hearts."¹¹

Your brain's chemical messengers (neurotransmitters)

Most neurons are programmed to produce, send, and receive certain chemicals called neurotransmitters—chemical messengers that relay information from one neuron to the next. Think of a courier relaying information from one person to the next. These chemicals activate the next brain cell (called excitatory) or keep it from firing (called inhibitory). The amount of these chemicals affects our well-being, happiness,

and our spiritual health. Sometimes these chemicals become imbalanced with too much or too little of them. And, a mindful lifestyle is implicated in increasing the levels of several important brain chemicals.¹²

- *Dopamine* is involved in reward, wanting, motivation, attention, and learning. Too much or too little of this one can inhibit attention, create addictions, and cause fatigue.
- *Acetylcholine* affects how fast your brain processes data, acting somewhat like a lubricant to keep energy and information flowing well. A lack of this one creates brain fog.
- *GABA* (short for a really long word) is involved in producing the feel-good hormones we experience in exercise and sex. An imbalance leads to anxiety.
- *Serotonin* is involved in healing, mood, good sleep, and the sense of feeling satisfied. When this one gets out of balance, we get depressed and don't sleep well.¹³

Dopamine and acetylcholine are like the brain's "on" switches to give us energy. GABA and serotonin are like the brain's "off" switches to help calm us. Mindful practice also apparently increases the neurotransmitter called oxytocin that builds trust between people.¹⁴ "It seems that oxytocin makes our neuronal pathways more malleable, enabling us to learn—and unlearn—more readily than we normally would. We become more impressionable; as a result, change becomes easier."¹⁵

Eight Amazing Facts about Holy Noticing and Your Brain That Will Blow Your Mind (Maybe)

1. *It physically changes your brain.* Neuroscientist Andrew Newberg studied a group of nuns who had been practicing a form of holy noticing, centering prayer, for at least fifteen years. He discovered significant neurological changes in their brains.¹⁶ In another study, after participants completed an eight-week course and practiced it for an average of twenty-seven minutes a day, their brains got thicker in these regions: areas involving mind wandering, learning, emotional regulation, empathy, and compassion. And, their brains shrunk in the regions of fear, anxiety, and stress.¹⁷

2. *You can shape your brain with your thoughts.*¹⁸ Related to number 1, this process is called *experience dependent neuroplasticity*. Another term, *competitive neuroplasticity*, describes the brain's tendency to look for neglected neurons to recruit for new purposes. The adage "Use or it lose it" applies to your brain as well. If you want to retain your brain cells, you must use them, because our thoughts and experiences actually reshape the brain's wiring. The more you think about something (i.e., reflect on the truth in Scripture), the more your brain allocates its real estate to the subject of those thoughts. It forges stronger connections to other parts of the brain. The opposite holds true as well. If you repeatedly focus your thoughts on negative experiences (i.e., my friend hurt me with her words), those negative thoughts get wired more deeply into your brain. What you think about changes your brain. Our mental habits, to what we give our attention, literally shape our brains, which in turn shape our behavior. This relates to the biblical concept of "renewing . . . your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

3. *You can grow new brain cells even into old age.* At one time neuroscientists believed that once we got past our teen years, the brain was fixed and couldn't grow any more brain cells. However, recent research shows that we *can* grow new brain cells, especially in our memory centers (the hippocampus). The process is called neurogenesis.¹⁹

4. *Your brain is hardwired to be negative, and holy noticing combats negative thinking.* *Negativity bias* is a term that explains that we are hardwired and primed to detect and pick up on negative information more easily than positive information. This is one of the effects from the fall in the garden of Eden. We recall negative things more quickly, mentally and emotionally imprint negative things more easily than positive ones, tend to make things gloomier than they are (called mood bias), and remember negative experiences longer than positive ones. At the same time, this bias causes us to downplay life's positive experiences. One expert says that our brains are like "Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones—even though most of our experiences are probably neutral or positive."²⁰ Yet holy noticing helps us notice this natural tendency so that we can change how we think. The apostle Paul understood this tendency and reminded us to let our minds dwell on that which is good and wholesome (see Phil. 4:8).

5. *Your brain wanders almost 50 percent of the time.* The *default mode network* (referred to above) describes the state our minds drift to when we aren't directly focused on a task (called the *direct mode*). The default mode activates when we think about ourselves and how we think others think about us, often leading to unhappy thoughts. Mindful practice helps decrease mind wandering and helps us become more aware of it because it strengthens the connections between our thinking

centers and the brain circuits in the default mode network. As a result, we gain more control over mind wandering.²¹

Jesus taught us to seek first His kingdom and to put others first (see Matt. 6:33). Holy noticing helps us do this because it decreases self-focused thinking. Also, the apostle Paul instructed us to set our minds on things above (Col. 3:1). As we intentionally place our attention on these areas, our brains disengage from the default mode. On the other hand, since the default mode causes self-preoccupation, it usually magnifies unhappiness.

But not all mind wandering is unhealthy. Psychologist Jerome L. Singer²² classifies mind wandering into three categories: (1) poor attention control (we can't stay focused on important tasks); (2) guilty-dysphoric (when our mind wanders to guilt, anxiety, and angry situations); and (3) positive-constructive. Mind wandering benefits us when we envision future possibilities, set goals (called prospective bias), or think about creative solutions to problems we face.

6. *It may actually make you smarter.* Mindfulness has been shown to increase the amount of the brain's gray matter (neurons make up gray matter), thicken the insulation (myelin) around the tail of a brain cell (the axon), thicken the axon itself,²³ and strengthen the circuits between the brain's error detector (the anterior cingulate cortex) and the pleasure center (the nucleus accumbens).

More gray matter means more available circuitry to process information. More myelin and thicker axons mean you can process things more quickly. And greater connectivity improves self-control, planning, and attention.

7. *You can read other people's minds (kind of).* A category of neurons called mirror neurons acts like your brain's virtual

reality simulation center. These neurons are involved in mentalizing (the process called theory of mind). It's the ability to resonate with the feelings and intentions of others by feeling your own. We might call it intuition or discernment.

In biblical days, pagan and Jewish mystics and prophets would claim special revelation. John cautioned his readers to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1). The same holds true for us today. We must test not only what we hear others tell us but also the thoughts that we tell ourselves in our unspoken self-talk. When our "theory of mind" is poorly tuned, we can misinterpret the motives and intents of others, which can wreak havoc in our minds and relationships. Mindful practice helps hone our ability to accurately sense the emotional states of others.

8. *It helps you become more comfortable in your own skin, with your own thoughts.* Most people prefer to not be alone with their thoughts. In one study referred to earlier in the book, participants chose to give themselves mild to moderate electrical shocks rather than sitting by themselves in a room for fifteen minutes with nothing to do except be with their thoughts. One-third of the men and one-fourth of the women were so uncomfortable with their thoughts that they preferred a distraction, even if it meant the shock. One participant shocked himself 190 times. A mindful lifestyle, however, can help us become more comfortable with our thoughts and emotions, and less likely to stuff or ignore them.²⁴