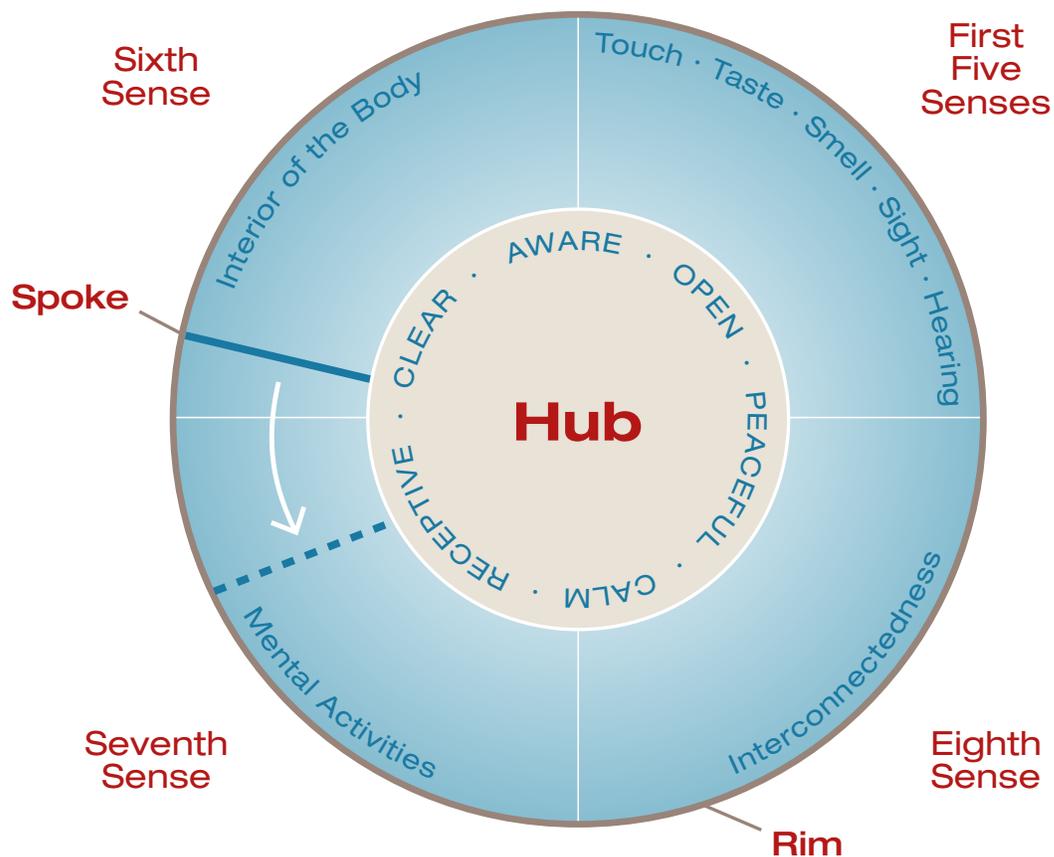


Dr. Dan Siegel

We are happy to share our Wheel of Awareness with you and hope that you will find it useful. The regular practice of the Wheel of Awareness strengthens your mind by integrating your consciousness and empowering you to live a full and vital life. [Mindsight](#) is defined as a skill of the mind that promotes insight, empathy and integration. This is a mindsight-building practice.

Wheel of Awareness



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The Wheel of Awareness is the basis for a reflective practice which helps us direct our attention and improve our ability to focus on the individual aspects of our internal and external worlds, which are key components of a healthy mind.

If you have any questions, please contact us at info@drdansiegel.com. We appreciate having you in our Mindsight community!

Why is this practice important?

Here at the Mindsight Institute, we work in an interdisciplinary field that combines all sciences into one framework called [Interpersonal Neurobiology](#). We describe the mind as *an emergent, self-organizing, embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information*. This definition reveals how this aspect of mind is both within and between us, and helps us clarify how a healthy mind is one that moves these inner and relational movements of energy and information flow toward integration; integration optimizes self-organization.

[Integration](#) is the linkage of differentiated parts, such as connecting the left and right sides of the brain, or embracing and honoring differences and cultivating compassionate communication. By exploring our mental lives, we can move toward a healthy flow of integration, which creates harmony in our lives.

When not moving toward integration, complex systems like our lives move toward either chaos or rigidity, rather than the flexible harmonious flow of integrative wellbeing.

One way to promote integration is with the Wheel of Awareness. In this practice, the center hub of our metaphoric wheel represents the “knowing” of being conscious while the elements on the rim stand for the “known.” Known elements on the external rim include:

- **What we see, hear, smell, taste and touch**
- **What we sense from our inner bodily sensations**
- **What we experience with our mental activities, such as feelings, thoughts or memories**
- **Our sense of relational connections—with other people and with the planet**

The power of doing the [Wheel of Awareness practice](#) is to integrate consciousness by differentiating hub from rim, and systematically linking these various elements intentionally with the movement of a spoke of attention. This integration of consciousness allows us to free the mind to learn to move recurrent thoughts and moods of the rim toward an open space of knowing – the hub. Practicing the Wheel of Awareness can liberate the mind from ingrained patterns of cognition and emotion and help you emerge with a more expansive sense of awareness.

How do I conduct this practice?

This practice can be done on one's own or by listening to a [guided practice](#). **To practice on your own, we suggest the following approach:**

- 1. Begin by getting into a comfortable position,** and sensing the rhythm of your breathing
- 2. As you breathe in and out, begin by visualizing the wheel.** The “hub” is at the center and four quadrants surround it with a rim encompassing everything you know and can be aware of. For each portion of this practice, you will send out a spoke from the hub to the rim to focus your awareness. After each part of this practice, we suggest you center yourself with a deep breath before moving on.
- 3. Now, turn your attention to the first quadrant – your five senses.** One by one, take time to focus your awareness on what you're seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.
- 4. Next, focus your attention on your “sixth sense,” the inner sensations of your own body.** This is the second quadrant around the hub. Take a few moments to move your focus throughout your entire body, becoming aware of sensations you feel from inside your physical being, from the muscles and bones of your head, limbs, and torso, to feeling the sensations in the organs of your body.
- 5. Now it is time to focus on the activities of your mind itself.** These include emotions, thoughts, memories, hopes, beliefs, dreams, images, longings, attitudes and intentions. This portion of the practice is separated into two parts. First, begin by just becoming aware of what enters your mind – invite any mental activity to come into awareness.
- 6. Once you have taken some time to do that, the next step is to pay particular attention to the characteristics of how these mental activities enter and leave consciousness.** How do they arise and pass? Do these activities come up suddenly or gradually? Do they then stay constant, fade in and out, or reverberate? Then how do they leave? And are they replaced immediately with something else or not? If not, how does the gap feel between two mental activities?
- 7. Now it is time to try something a little different.** As in other parts of this practice, send your spoke of attention out from the hub, but this time, bend it back toward the hub itself to direct your attention to focus on your awareness. With this part of the practice, you are working on “awareness of awareness” and feeling what that is like. This will take some practice, so try to be patient.
- 8. The fourth quadrant represents our sense of connection to things outside of our body.** Start with focusing your awareness on the people who are physically close to you, then expand to others who are further away. Next expand to those whom you feel close to – family and friends – and then to others whom you're engaged with, such as co-workers, students, teachers and others. Then widen your sense of connection step by step to include those who live in your neighborhood, city, country, continent, in the whole world, and finally to all of living beings on earth.