

Quick steps to mindfulness: the running treatment

From a heartfelt chat on a long walk to Dynamic Running Therapy, motion moves minds

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Sun 22 Jan 2017



Motion and emotion: Ben Cross and Nigel Havers in 1981's Chariots of Fire. Photograph: Allstar/Cinetext/Warner Bros

Movement is (1) in our lives. Often, in order to grow or to overcome (2) we need a sense of (3) a passage or transition. Movement shifts perspective and, in so doing, provides clarity, (4) hope, drive and possibility.

Anyone who has found themselves opening up to a friend on a long walk or road trip will be familiar with the sense of (5) that comes from talking and moving at the same time. The words seem to flow, (6) from story to story. Secrets, seldom shared before, can fall into the conversation with surprising ease. When silence comes, it seems to be a natural part of the experience, too.

Sometimes we refer to this as “emotion in (7)”, the sensation of feeling full of and connected to our feelings as we move. We may begin to connect with feelings that are hidden deep down. As we start to move our emotions rise up, (8) by the energy we (9)

and the story we are telling ourselves. It is as though the movement somehow becomes an (10)..... or performance of our inner emotions.

This powerful process of walking or running with, into or through our feelings can be (11) and liberating, and is the (12) of mindful running – or Dynamic Running Therapy (DRT).

Mindful running uses the movement of your body to get you closer to what is going on inside you emotionally, helping you to both understand and process it better. It can also be (13) to whatever level of fitness you have as long as you are (14) yourself physically some degree some of the time. This means that if a walk is a struggle for you, that counts as DRT. (15)....., if sprinting is your thing then you can set that as your DRT pace. The goal is to find a level of challenge where the blood starts to (16) a little faster. There is no need to push yourself too hard or to maintain the same (17) throughout the session.

Mindful running isn't complicated or particularly challenging. You are not actively changing anything – (18)..... noticing the tone of your inner dialogue and meeting whatever you find there with acceptance and patience, letting it pass on by naturally. It is an open-ended practice, continuing until you decide to stop.

Movement is (19) and written deep into our DNA. So, why learn from only the spoken word, or thoughts, when the moving body is so (20)? The body screams out in communication and can tell you everything, from what makes you happy and sad to what you do with stress and anger. Your (21) posture reflects how heavily the world (22)..... down on you. The spring in your step today could be a consequence of your promotion yesterday.

How you run may indicate how you move in the wider world, such as in your relationships or work life. Are you quick to start but (23) rapidly? Are you consistently paced but just can't let go? Or perhaps you're all about the sprint finish, forgetting that the detail of how you start the run is important too? Part of mindful running is understanding and learning what your running style says about you.

Unlike conventional running, it's crucial to avoid "striving". Striving is the (24) of anxiety and a modern (25) of the first order. There is no use in trying to run as far as possible as fast as possible while understanding as much as possible. As you progress, you will find your pace and your footing – don't try to rush to the end.

Exercise

Complete the article using the words provided below. You might need to change the form of some of them.

enliven	insight	easy	instinct	bedfellow	fire up	flow	adapt	
weigh	motion	tired	information	likewise	curse	strife	challenge	
criticism	enact	tumble	undergo	bedrock	pace	slumped	exert	merely