

A Sentence-Completion Program to Facilitate Living More Consciously From *“The Art of Living Consciously”* by Nathaniel Brandon

This program is for the purpose of expanding your awareness, of assisting you in the process of deepening your awareness in various areas of your life. Doing this work on a daily basis as described here is a kind of psychological discipline that over time allows us to achieve insight, integration, and often spontaneous behavior change.

The essence of the sentence completion procedure is to write an incomplete sentence, a sentence stem, and to keep adding endings—not less than six, and ten is sufficient—as fast as possible, with the sole requirement that each ending be a grammatical completion of the sentence. Start a journal, and make a commitment to do the process every day for the entire 22 week program.

When doing the sentence completions, work as rapidly as possible—speed is essential—no pauses to “think,” no censoring, *inventing if you get stuck*, without worrying if it is true or right or reasonable, or significant. Any ending is fine. *Just keep going*. The art of doing sentence completion is to maintain a high level of mental focus combined with a total lack of inner inhibition.

How do you integrate the things that you become aware of? The answer is that the practice itself, done repetitively, tends to bring about the integration.

Introductory Exercise

Week 1.

The first set, done for a week—Monday through Friday—is to help you become comfortable with the method. Later sets will take you deeper into self-awareness.

First thing in the morning, before proceeding to the day’s business, sit down and write the following stem:

I am a person who...

Then as rapidly as possible, without pausing for reflection, write as many endings as you can in two or three minutes—*never less than six, and ten is sufficient*. Do not worry if your endings are “profound.” Write anything, but write something. Never repeat the same ending twice on the same day. (In the course of a week, inevitably, there will be some repetition.)

Then go one to the next stem:

One of the things I wish people understood about me is...

Then:

If I allowed myself to really see people...

Then:

If I allowed people to really see me...

Then:

I am becoming aware that...

The Basics

Week 2.

If I bring five percent more awareness to my activities today...

If I bring five percent more awareness to my important relationships today...

If I bring five percent more awareness to my emotional reactions today...

If I bring five percent more awareness to my communications today...

I am becoming aware that...

Week 3.

If I bring five percent more awareness to my deepest fears today...

If I bring five percent more awareness to my deepest longings today...

If I bring five percent more awareness to the feelings other people evoke in me...

If I can contemplate my feelings without self-judgment or self-criticism...

I am becoming aware that...

Week 4.

If I imagine living more consciously...

The scary thing about living more consciously is...

If I bring five percent more awareness to my fear of living more consciously...

If I bring five percent more awareness to the issues I tend to avoid...

Right now it seems obvious that...

Week 5.

If I were more accepting of the different parts of me...

If I were more accepting of the strange thoughts and feelings I sometimes have...

If I allowed myself to know all the different parts of me that don't fit my self-image...

I am becoming aware...

Exploring the influence of Parents

Week 6.

Mother was always...

With Mother I always felt...

Mother gave me a view of myself as...

One of the things I wanted from Mother and didn't get was...

Mother speaks through my voice when I tell myself...

I am becoming aware...

Week 7.

Father was always...

With Father I always felt...

Father gave me a view of myself as...

One of the things I wanted from Father and didn't get was...

I am becoming aware ...

Week 8.

Mother gave me a view of life as...

Mother gave me a view of men as...

Mother gave me a view of women as...

Mother gave me a view of love as...

Mother gave me a view of sex as...

Week 9.

Father gave me a view of life as...
Father gave me a view of men as...
Father gave me a view of women as...
Father gave me a view of love as...
Father gave me a view of sex as...
I am becoming aware...

Week 10.

One of the unspoken messages I got from Mother was...
One of the unspoken messages I got from Father was...
If Mother thought I had a happy love relationship...
If Father thought I had a happy love relationship...
If Mother thought I had made a success of my life...
If Father thought I had made a success of my life...
I am becoming aware...

Week 11.

If I reflect on Mother's influence in my life...
If I reflect on Father's influence in my life...
One of the things I am still doing to win Mother's love is...
One of the things I am still doing to win Father's love is...
If any of what I have written is true...

Week 12.

One of the ways I am like Mother is...
One of the ways I am like Father is...
If it turns out that I am more than my mother's child...
If it turns out that I am more than my father's child...
If I am free to write my own life script...

Values

Week 13.

One of the traits I look for in people is...
One of the rules I live by is...
I respect people most when they...
I don't respect people when they...
Sometimes I am drawn to people who...
Right now it seems that...

Week 14.

One of the principles that guides me is...
One of the things I want out of life is...
One of the things I want from people is...
One of the things I want from work is...
One of the things I expect of myself is...
I am becoming aware...

Week 15.

Life seems most fulfilling when...

Life seems most painful when...

When people speak of life as tragic...

When people speak of life as exciting...

I feel most alive when...

I am beginning to suspect...

Relationships

Week 16.

If I bring five percent more awareness to my interactions with people...

If I bring five percent more awareness to my choice of companions...

One of the things I long for in relationships is...

One of the things that frustrate me in relationships is...

If I am honest with myself about my relationships...

Week 17.

If I were to treat listening as a creative art...

If I notice the effect I have on people...

If I notice how I respond to compliments...

If I notice how I respond to criticism...

If I pay attention to the quality of my communication...

Week 18.

One of the things I want from people and often fail to get is...

One of the ways I can make it difficult for people to give me what I want is...

One of the ways I distance myself from people is...

With people, sometimes I am afraid that...

One of the ways I can make my fears come true is...

Week 19.

If I bring five percent more benevolence to my encounters with people...

If I were more willing to share my excitement...

If I were more willing to expose my vulnerability...

If I could face people with less self-protective armor...

I am becoming aware...

Week 20.

If I look at my relationships realistically...

If I bring more awareness to my communications...

If I take more responsibility for being understood...

If I take more responsibility for understanding others...

I am becoming aware...

Resistance

Week 21.

The scary thing about being more conscious is...

At the thought of operating more consciously...

If I operate unconsciously...

The good thing about raising my consciousness might be...

If I can face my fears without denying or disowning them...

Conclusion

Week 22.

If I am willing to see what I see and know what I know...

If I refuse to play "confused"...

If I am honest with myself about what I know...

If I keep reaching deeper within myself for answers...

If I fully accept that my mind is one of my most precious possessions...

Right now I am clear that...

Suggestion:

When you have completed all 22 weeks of this program, take a week off and then do the program again, from the beginning, as if you had never done it before. You may be surprised by the changes in many of your responses, which will give you some indication of your progress on the road to living more consciously... as well as obstacle you may still need to work on overcoming.