

A Provocative Author and Speaker Issues a Harsh Wake Up Call For a Sleeping Western World

Attention Training expert, Aaron McNaught, author of "Waking Up to Life!: The Art & Skill of Awakened Attention," addresses readers suffering from attention deficit, distractibility, an overactive mind and information overload, offering a new vision of life, as well as the tools to get there.

Red Deer, Alberta (PRWeb) January 3, 2007 -- In our fast paced, multi-tasking, always-on society, it is difficult to maintain attention to our present experience for more than a moment. With continuous demands being placed on our attention, from our environment, our own busy minds, as well as from various forms of media such as cell phones, Internet and Blackberries, it's little wonder there is such a buzz about an 'Attention Deficit Crisis.' This form of Attention Deficit is not a disorder per se, but instead the state of mind that many otherwise highly functioning, 'normal' individuals are complaining of. This state of mind is characterized by distractibility, incessant mental chatter and a lack of focus, clarity and concentration.

When McNaught, author of "Waking Up to Life!: The Art & Skill of Awakened Attention," set out to discover the source of his own suffering almost 16 years ago, it led him to what he sees as the common root of many of the world's wisdom traditions. After exploring many of the world's philosophies, Aaron says that despite their differences, "there is a basic consensus that one of the primary causes of suffering is weak attention, prone to becoming lost in mental activity that is neither useful nor reality based. In short, we live in a dreamworld of the mind."

This understanding led McNaught to initiate various forms of what he calls 'Attention Training,' techniques utilized to cultivate a strong, stable and energetic attention. After several years of practice in formal and informal settings, McNaught concluded that Attention Training is the single most important inner technology available today.

Says McNaught, "It's strange how forms of Attention Training are unanimously acknowledged by the eastern wisdom traditions as an obvious key to happiness and freedom from suffering, yet here in the west we seem to be skeptical of the whole idea. Maybe when we can see it under a microscope or buy it in a pill form, people will sit up and take notice."

McNaught suggests that Attention Training can rapidly improve ones life in a multitude of subtle, as well as dramatic ways, but in his seminars and workshops, he usually focuses on five key areas.

1. Attention Training leads to a deeper connection to our life as it's happening. When attention is energetic, there is a strong connection to our immediate experience. With increased focus and concentration we can remain alert to what is going on around us and our lives regain meaning, purpose and richness.
2. Attention Training leads to decreased suffering caused by incessant, white noise-like self talk. Strong, stable attention puts a halt to the automatic inner commentary that causes anxiety, negativity and agitation.
3. Attention Training leads to increased enjoyment of life's simple pleasures. Strong, stable attention allows us to experience the peace and contentment of our basic day to day activities such as cleaning, eating, bathing, etc.
4. Attention Training leads to decreased reactivity that often leads to outbursts of anger, aggression and violence. When attention is energetic, there is a detached quality to experience, which allows us to remain emotionally mature and non-reactive.
5. Attention Training provides access to the wisdom that is found beneath the surface of the busy mind. When attention is strong, we have the capacity to act from our deeper understandings, rather than our shallow, reactive mind.

This is just the start though. McNaught claims that for the last several years, he has been asking a revealing question of seminar participants. The answer to that question highlights the severity of our society's attention deficit problems. The question?

"Does anyone here 'sleep-drive'?"

Says McNaught, "There is always an uncomfortable chuckle that comes from that question, but I have never met a single person who denies consistently driving a car at high speeds while their attention was elsewhere. One hundred percent of those I have surveyed admit to driving a car while routinely lost in daydreams or distracted by cell phones, stereos or talking with the passengers. Most speak of being absent or in a daydream, much of their driving time."

According to McNaught, most people admit to not only being absent while driving, but also while engaged in almost all other activities of their day to day life. This leads many to quickly see that, between being asleep with their eyes closed in bed and being asleep with their eyes open in their day to day life, they are almost completely absent from their actual life as it is happening.

McNaught admits to outright rejection of many western approaches to working with the mind. "We seem to understand that we suffer from negative thinking, but mistakenly believe that happiness consists of reprogramming the mind with positive thinking. Programming means habitual and automatic. A person may be more comfortable with programmed positive thoughts, but thoughts are only thoughts and a long way away from reality, even if they make you feel good. Self talk is for children and sleeping adults."

Never being one to shy away from controversy, McNaught admits to a provocative tone in his teachings and writings. "I have always appreciated teachers that have a humorously harsh edge to their offerings, because it seems to me that sugar coating dilutes the power of the message. I suppose I have acquired that harsh edge honestly enough, and people seem to get it."

McNaught ends on a somewhat ominous note: "It doesn't take much looking to see the mess this world is in. Consumerism, materialism, addiction, despoliation, self-gratification and obsession. These are the driving forces behind our way of life. It isn't pretty, but to wake up from this nightmare requires a loud, rude wake up call. When you are awake and your eyes are really open, it's a completely different way of life."

"Waking Up to Life! The Art & Skill of Awakened Attention" (Dec 2006 * Self-Help* ISBN 0-9781324-0-8) is available through the author's website: <http://www.wakinguptolife.com>

About the author:

Aaron McNaught is the owner of Aaron McNaught Education/Consultations, an Alberta based business providing seminars, workshops and consultations to individuals and businesses interested in going far beyond average personal and professional development.

Aaron lives in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada. He is just finishing work on his third book, "Ruthless Words: Unsentimental Quotations From The World's Wisdom Sources."

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