For a perfect example of perfect attention see:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOfepxVgGk

NOTES

The Pause, connecting with one sense or the breath.

In the space between actions we can come to rest, wake up and come into the present just for a short while. In those moments we can become free of desire. It doesn’t have to be intense or prolonged – just until you become aware of a change, a change in awareness.

There are four states of attention:

1. **Attention open**: This state is when all the senses are open. One is aware of one’s surroundings. It is fresh and it is free.

2. **Attention centered/focused**: The attention centered on the task at hand. There is no sense of rush or pressure. But, everything is most efficient.

3. **Scattered attention** is the state where the attention seems to be all over the place, but nowhere in particular. We sometimes say someone is scatter-brained. One particular state of scattered attention we may be familiar with is that of multi-tasking. (“Eating toast in the shower is the ultimate multi-tasking.” —Harry Styles) We may be tempted to do several things at the same time. What is the effect of a prolonged period of multi-tasking?

4. **Attention Captured** is like being drugged. There is no ability to control the attention. In its extreme state, this results in an obsession or addiction of one kind or another. With attention centered, there is freedom; with attention captured, there is a loss of freedom.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

- Practice the Awareness Exercise everyday.
- **PAUSE** whenever you remember – even for a few seconds — especially at the end of an activity for you, and the activity to come to rest.
- What you give your attention to GROWS. No matter how hateful or how holy.
- Whoever or whatever is in front of you is your teacher.
- Speak what is true, speak what is kind...
- Stop and breathe when you hear yourself engaging in unnecessary talk.
- What would the wise person do now?

PASSAGES FOR STUDY
To me, the very essence of education is the concentration of mind, not collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then, with a perfect instrument, collect facts at will.

Vivekananda, *Education*

Because of my blindness, I had developed a new faculty. Strictly speaking, all men have it, but almost all forget to use it. That faculty is attention. In order to live without eyes, it is necessary to be very attentive, to remain hour after hour in a state of wakefulness, of receptiveness and activity. Indeed, attention is not simply a virtue of intelligence or the result of education, and something one can easily do without. It is a state of being. It is a state without which we shall never be able to perfect ourselves. In its truest sense, it is the listening post of the universe.

Jacques Lusseyran, *The Blind in Society*

The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.

Henry Miller

*Autobiography in Five Short Chapters*

**Chapter One**
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in. I am lost.... I am helpless.
It isn’t my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

**Chapter Two**
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend that I don’t see it.
I fall in again. I can’t believe I am in this same place.
But, it isn’t my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

**Chapter Three**
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in... it’s a habit... but, my eyes are open.
I know where I am. It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

**Chapter Four**
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

**Chapter Five**
I walk down another street.
Tanzen and Ekido were once travelling together down a muddy road. A heavy rain was falling. Coming around the bend, they met a lovely girl in a silk kimono and sash, unable to cross the intersection. "Come on, girl," said Tanzen at once. Lifting her in his arms, he carried her over the mud. Ekido did not speak again until that night when they reached a lodging temple. Then he could no longer restrain himself. "We monks don’t go near females," he said to Tanzen, "especially not young and lovely ones. It is dangerous. Why did you do that?"

"I left the girl there on the road," said Tanzen. "Are you still carrying her?"

Paul Reps Zen Flesh, Zen Bones