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Connection Stroll

Strolls for Well-being at ISU: Press Pause & Take a Break...

Connection is a necessary part of being human and an important component of not only surviving but thriving. Brenè Brown defines connections as “the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.” And it is not only the connection with and between people, but also the natural world around us.

As you begin, find a comfortable place where you can start at the location you have decided on. Once you are there, stop and take a few deep breaths, noticing and being grateful for the air coming into your body to support you. Breathe out all the stress and tension you may be feeling or holding inside.

Notice the two intentions that are offered by *Strolls for Well-being at ISU*. One intention is to notice the physical path as you walk, the natural wonders all around and the amazing art displayed on campus. The other intention is a contemplative path as you reflect on past, present and future aspects of your life.

As you prepare to start, begin to still your mind. Put aside thoughts of schedules, to-do lists and other responsibilities. Come into this present moment— be right here, right now. Bring your full attention to the experience and the reflective opportunities.

Each pause on your Connection Stroll will have
choices for reflection:

A quote,
reflection, or
question

A focus on
awareness
of senses

A mindful
movement

A place for you to jot down your thoughts along the way



Pause 1: Circle of Life

All our lives are a circle and moving through the circle brings us to an understanding of the different stages of life and the benefits of each stage. All of it is connected.

Location: Fountain of the Four Seasons on the north side of the Memorial Union

“When we know ourselves to be connected to all others, acting compassionately is simply the natural thing to do.” -Rachel Naomi Remen

Think of your connection to the past and to the present. How does this space, this place, play a role in the connections in your life?

Mindful movement is to notice the flow of breath.

Take a slow comfortable inhale, breathing from chest to belly and exhale with drawing the belly in toward spine moving air slow out. Take four mindful breaths and notice the circular movement of breath and the connection to all awoken.

Thoughts:



Pause 2: Walking Path

Walking is a metaphor for a new beginning and leaving past troubles and sorrows behind. Following the path leads to a transition from one thing to the next.

Location: George Washington Carver Plaza between Carver and Beardshear Halls

“The world is so empty if one thinks only of mountains, rivers and cities; but to know someone who thinks and feels with us, and who, though distant, is close to us in spirit, this makes the earth for us an inhabited garden.” -Goethe

Think about how you feel connected right here, right now.

Is it the people, the place or the way you spend your time that deepens your sense of belonging?

What do you notice about the types of connections you see around you?

People?
Space?
Nature?

Thoughts:



Pause 3: Zig-Zag Path

The zig-zag path is a metaphor for times in our lives when we were not sure where we were going. Unseen challenges are a part of life. As you enter the garden, you cannot see the other side and must walk in faith that the path will lead you where you want to go.

Location: Anderson Sculpture Garden next to Morrill Hall

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly." -Martin Luther King Jr.

As you walk around the garden, where do you notice connections?
The sidewalks that weave through, the pieces of art that bind the space together.
What connections in your life weave and bind together?

Mindful Movement of connecting with your heart.

Move around the Sculpture Garden, and as you are looking at the art, let your hands move to your heart. Feel the connection with the beauty of the art and how that feels in your heart. Let it soften the worry of not knowing where you are going and enjoy every step.

Thoughts:



Pause 4: Tree Pavilion

Being surrounded by pines is a natural place to think about self-care. Without caring for ourselves, we cannot care for others. This is a refreshing, restorative and pleasant stop.

Location: Class of 1910 Pine Grove directly east of Morrill Hall

“I promise you that the same stuff galaxies are made of, you are. The same energy that swings planets around stars makes the electrons dance in your heart. It is in you, outside you, you are it. It is beautiful. Trust in this.” -Kamal Ravidant

Sit and bring awareness to the beauty around you.

What draws your attention? How does it feel to sit and ‘be’ with nature?

Find a place to pause on a bench or by a tree. Take a deep breath in, hold it and release it.

Did you know that Pine trees give off substances called terpenes that help boost our immune system? So, take a few deep breaths and let your immune system grow stronger!

Thoughts:



Pause 5: Life is a Journey

Our life is a never-ending journey. As you go through life, you build on your experiences, and they become like layers of your life. When you reflect on your past, you can see where you have been. The foundation you have created will influence your present and future.

Location: Gerdin Business Building on the courtyard in the southwest corner

“We must say of the universe that it is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.” -Thomas Berry

This pause is located off the main campus pathways.
Sit and watch the flow and connections of the people and spaces. What do you notice?

Sit and watch the flow and connections of the people and spaces. What do you notice?

Consider the connections and spaces in your life. If you look at it from a different angle, what might you notice?

Mindful Movement to expand your field of vision.

As you pause, take a few breaths and notice what is in your field of vision. With your next breath, exhale and turn your head to your right shoulder. What is in your field of vision? Next exhale, turn your head and look over your left shoulder. Return to center and look up to the sky and down to the ground. With each breath, pause and notice what is in your field of vision.

Thoughts:



Pause 6: Moving Water

Water is a metaphor for cleansing and overcoming obstacles. It is also a place of beauty and serenity in the natural world.

Location: Bridge over the creek east of the Memorial Union by the parking garage

“Just as the wave cannot exist for itself but is ever a part of the heaving surface of the ocean, so must I never live my life for itself, but always in the experience which is going on around me.” -Albert Schweitzer

As you have explored connections around campus –what have you noticed?

Reflect on how you are connected to this space, the people and the natural surroundings.

Turn into your senses...
Slowly look around in all directions. What do you see?
What can you touch?
Close your eyes for a few moments. What can you hear?
What can you smell?
How do your senses enrich your experience?

Thoughts: