

About the Appamada Learning Record

Peg Syverson
Appamada

From what I have heard, most folks enjoy exploring their own experience with the help of the Learning Record. The LR is an instrument like a telescope or microscope, that can reveal aspects of our lives we had not seen in quite that way, or with the unaided eye. Like any new instrument, it takes a bit of time to get familiar with looking in these new ways, and it can be helpful to have a little instruction. If you find it is a bit difficult to get started, as a few people have found, here are a few tips that you might find useful.

First of all, although there is no requirement for anyone to keep the Learning Record, experience has shown that most people get familiar with it fairly quickly, and enjoy capturing these impressions of their own learning in a format that helps them more clearly see what is going on. Thought systems, core beliefs, and even just the texture of everyday life as you experience it become clearer.

We wanted to offer this instrument to you in support of deepening your practice and awareness. Over twenty years or so of developing and using the Learning Record with a wide range of students of all ages, people universally report how much it has supported their learning, and how intriguing and compelling it is to see their own learning unfolding in “real time.” Many decide to continue to keep it long after the class has ended.

Second, in case you are wondering “what to observe” in the mindful observations, please do not hesitate. Sitting down to add an observation, just notice what is going on around you at that moment, what you can notice about your own experience. You will gain more and more confidence as you get familiar with teasing apart these aspects of your reality. As you gain this confidence, you will begin to use the mindful observations to explore particular kinds of experiences that you are curious about: times when you were emotionally

triggered, experiences in meditation, moments of confusion or anger.

This process is self-actualizing: you don’t need to have any idea how to use these mindful observations at first. The process of regularly noting our own experience, however, with this fairly focused and precise instrument, teaches us how to use it best for each individual person. That is why we do not specify “content” of the Learning Record, but rather invite each person to discover whatever can be learned through it. Just like a microscope it can be used to study many different phenomena very closely.

Third, please do not struggle with the “right” expression of any part of the Learning Record. This is a personal document, not something for publication. There are no grades to be earned, no way to fail, no one to judge you. Even if you decide not to put anything into the Learning Record at all, you can study how that decision is made, and what responses you notice in yourself about it. There is something to be learned in how you approach the Learning Record itself. I’ve heard quite varied ways of thinking about it. Each one is a personalized learning experience.

So please just enjoy your life, and use the Learning Record as you wish, to help bring clarity and depth to your practice and your understanding. It is intended to engage and delight and illuminate. And of course, I am always delighted to discuss how its going with you, or to demystify anything that may be confusing as you begin to work with it.