



“ORGANIZING ATTENTION” **(a report from our first cohort of “Attention Activism Fellows”)** **4 April 2025**

13:54:52 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:
Such a cool video, Hali! I peeped it this morning

13:55:05 From Hali Dardar to Everyone:
aw thanks gwen 🍷

14:08:51 From Jac Mullen to Everyone:
that's the dream

14:13:31 From Jac Mullen to Everyone:
There's no such thing as a non-life-size walt whitman

14:18:13 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
<https://schoolofattention.substack.com/>

14:18:35 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:
Century of the Self !!!

14:18:57 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:
^^^^ I just taught it this past week in my attention class!

14:19:54 From Connor Griffin to Everyone:
Congratulations Jahony!

14:20:22 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Subscribe to our Substack!!
<https://schoolofattention.substack.com/>

14:24:11 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:
<https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nyas.15313>

14:24:26 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
Thank you!

14:24:45 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
And Brooke!

14:24:48 From Vitória Oliveira to Everyone:
and Brooke!

14:25:17 From Elisabeth Quatrano she/her to Everyone:
A link to Graham's article would be great...

14:25:35 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
<https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nyas.15313>

14:34:08 From Melissa Galvez (she/her/hers) to Everyone:
Lights were bright and a little fluorescent; turned them off to feel more at peace

14:34:10 From Donica Bettanin (she/her) to Everyone:
Wow! This got me thinking about how the multitasking mentality that technology(ies) impose on us can invade analog space. I closed a magazine, a book, and a notebook and it really made things feel different

14:34:18 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:
There was a big sack of cut dry grass in the corner of my room – and I took it outside...

14:34:32 From Daniel Peltz's iPhone (2) to Everyone:
A sense of wondering about how I defined "the space" I was attending to, first inside this room and then moving out the window

14:34:44 From Luisa Dantas to Everyone:
Moved my phone out of view.

14:34:50 From Mitra Martin to Everyone:
I removed a few open loops that were distracting me and It is amazing how big of a difference it actually made. Kind of want to keep at it now!

14:34:54 From Tascio, Peter to Everyone:
Replying to "Moved my phone out of view.":
Same!

14:34:59 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:
I have a lamp that doesn't work on my desk in my office. It's just one big piece of clutter, not even attractive if it did work, and I realize I've left it there as if something will magically happen to it. So I threw it in the bin.

14:35:02 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
I have a pot of cinnamon/anise/cloves on the stove, which I put to boil... there's lot of thinking to be done about SMELL's role in creating attentional environments.

14:35:04 From Hali Dardar to Everyone:
i learned the name of the person next to me

14:35:15 From Connor Griffin to Everyone:
I see like 30 tiny tasks that all need to be done, ideally RIGHT NOW 2. I could turn the whiteboard with my giant list of tasks around so I'm not looking at it!

14:35:17 From Brian Janosch to Everyone:

In a sterile, empty, buzzing office “focus room” I had to recognize myself as PART of the space. To make it more of a sanctuary I needed to stretch and bring more attention to my own body. (And play music to drown out the buzz)

14:35:29 From ana pura to Everyone:
opened gill attention
afraid of the infinite possibilities in imagining; realizing the volume of bias: what purpose of this intervention towards att sanctuary?
when it was just about acting in a small real act, it simply became obvious and light and easy
(bring a plant vase to the table)

14:35:30 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
I moved my phone away and lit a candle and an incense.

14:36:18 From Alex to Everyone:
I'm sitting in a threshold space, at the entrance of my house, and this space already feels like a sanctuary for attention: there are two chairs, flowers and trees and we are surrounded by the dance of bees. So my question was how do I care about this space for the present and the future?

14:36:27 From daniellec@werhize.org to Everyone:
Electric humming was noticeable and distracting

14:39:39 From Hali Dardar to Everyone:
i can say a short word after the vvid if we have time/ connection

14:45:22 From Hali Dardar to Everyone:
love your printouts!! beautiful

14:45:23 From David Landes to Everyone:
Replying to "i can say a short word after the vvid if we have t...":
can you give the link to your video?

14:45:45 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:
Also your pics, brit! So awesome to see

14:47:27 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:
thank you!

14:48:29 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:
if you want to follow along, @attnclub on instagram

14:49:59 From Hali Dardar to Everyone:
that interview yall did was so good gwen- thanks for that

14:52:00 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:
love all the collages

14:52:29 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:
“nobody doesnt want to talk about the impact technology is having on them”. i found the same

14:52:36 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:
Mark-making zine
Walking zine
Reading zine
Connections radio show

14:52:48 From daniellec@werhize.org to Everyone:

Creating a tool kit on practice is used for the project is such a good idea and democratize is the knowledge so much!

14:53:20 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:

Replying to "'nobody doesnt want to talk about the impact techn...":
What a convoluted sentence I made lol

14:53:43 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:

Replying to "'nobody doesnt want to talk about the impact techn...":
double negative i get it haha

14:53:45 From ana pura to Everyone:

so inspiring that each session happened at local partners, territorializing att sanctuaries

14:54:23 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:

Hali, Brit and Gwen, thank you! I loved listening to you and seeing through presentation you prepared for us!

14:56:46 From Mitra Martin to Everyone:

A question maybe for later: Is there a working definition of an attention sanctuary? And a list of ingredients about what makes something an attention practice?

15:07:24 From Christopher Mole to Everyone:

University of Mount St Vincent, (plus Colleges, Schools, and other educational institutions:
running Attention Labs - creating clubs

Two Models: Opportunities for re-construing existing practices (e.g. crafting) as attention-practices. Vs. Introducing new practices as attention-practices.

Museums, art galleries

Introducing attention-exercises into other teaching/reading practices. Directing attention onto attention and the conditions for it.

Need to set apart time, in addition to space — rhythm of academic year only has occasional quiet periods (and people are prone to leave during them).

Work needed to enable virtual space to be sanctuary-like. Using technology as a tool for resistance, rather than rejecting it.

15:07:46 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:

Friend groups

Translating language into regular vocab for ppl - shout out to Hali's project

Group of friends gathering almost as recovering from cell phone use

Playing instruments

Going to spas

Playing sports

Bird watchers - ant watchers!

Journalism - integrating practices into teaching space of investigative journalism

Classrooms - Practices to bring people together in classes - tool for educators and a space

Sitting in ways that we recognize and respect one another, knowing everyone's name, introducing self, etc. - the sanctuary of attention comes before the practice

Conflict spaces and other well-facilitated spaces

Tascio, Peter:👍

15:07:51 From Mitra Martin to Everyone:

Lawrence:

Mindfulness world - it IS attention to the now, vast community

Focusing Institute - pairs of people attending to each other and the felt sense

David:

YMCA, city recreation orgs

Universities and community colleges

Religious orgs

Day care centers

Public space and foottraffic spaces

Mitra

Argentine Tango spaces

Montessori spaces

Walking on the bike path

Dinner parties

15:07:58 From Luisa Dantas to Everyone:

Room 4 Places that can be a locus for attention organizing:

Music-related groups (body/music/improv): they meet in different places parks/universities

Yoga studios/practices (already creating sanctuary)

Meditation spaces

Local Library- very random people show up because it's a public space, so especially in the winter, it's a refuge for folks

Stores/business (depending on how the business is run, is it aligned?)

Woods/nature Local Bars

Community Coffee Shops-that are catered/designed through sanctuary and focus/attention

The importance of like-minded people who manage/run spaces...with intention you can make any space a sanctuary

Multifunctional spaces- example in Kingston NY- a clothing store that also serves coffee and does community potlucks...Organically becomes attention.

Embodied Activities like Climbing- (also run clubs, groups that already come together) Role playing clubs

Braslian example of Sarau- community centered cultural activity music/singing/movement

15:08:16 From Mitra Martin to Everyone:

We also engaged the question of the value/benefit of framing activities as attention activism

15:08:29 From Tascio, Peter to Everyone:

What factors need to be in place for a group to explore ideas around attention?

Perhaps the group needs to: Want to be together; has the time and place to be together; is interested in making a change; Has the agency to make the change (not just the desire)

15:08:42 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:

Replying to "Friend groups Translating language into regular vo...": Also apologies to my group for accidentally exiting early!! Feel free to add to this

15:09:40 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Daniel: A School of Shying Away - an ongoing project I'm developing (with partners developing a Pan-African Arts School). It's built around the idea of "shyness as a methodology" that we can organize around. It's very connected to the work of creating attentional sanctuaries. We recently published a book entitled "Shying: A Way." I've been thinking about Schools, and what it means to locate a practice inside of a school, vs. within the broader poetic space of a curious proclamation/pronunciation. After a lifetime of investing in education, I'm wondering IF those are the spaces where we can really do this work.

15:09:47 From Daniel Peltz's iPhone (2) to Everyone:
The School of Shying a Way

<https://taju.uniarts.fi/handle/10024/8505>

15:14:45 From David Landes to Everyone:
bus stops!

15:14:46 From Christopher Mole to Everyone:
'Bird=practices' at Wesleyan:
Incorporating Strother-School-esque — into classroom teaching, and into non-classroom social time (if only people weren't so busy).
Bring attention to things happening here and now, not to pre-prepared information on a screen.
(We were all university people.)

15:14:46 From Gwen Olton (they / she) to Everyone:
Getting a facilitator if it's not your thing (don't have to do it all!)
Giving folks an opportunity to share / talk / discuss about tech, impact, etc.
Facilitating something to support people to connect with one another in college classes

15:14:47 From Luisa Dantas to Everyone:
Grp 4

Doing what you already/always do, but a little bit different: Incorporate small prompts-inviting people into present moment in pre-existing activity. (For example with climbing.)
Tininha at the Library-prompted folks to make a map of the route they take every day and then taking that route within the library...changed the way that folks moved through the library
Bar/coffee shop: bringing participatory attention prompts to the regulars who come in (feel less like customers and more collaborators within the space)

15:14:49 From Tascio, Peter to Everyone:
-Playing sports
-Meeting people where they are: what activities does the group want to do?
-1-1 tutoring for Attention
—Grounding exercises; agreements – I will not use my phone, you will not use your phone;
compromising to be together; consciously doing this thing together;

15:15:45 From Mitra Martin to Everyone:
Possible practices:

Commuting-oriented practices of attention: subway, ferry, bus stops

Intentional dinner parties, practice where your wrists are tied to your neighbors to add attentiveness to group dining experience

Framing of attention activism can bring forward a layer that isn't obvious

15:16:27 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Join our Substack (we will be soliciting writing on attention in the weeks to come)!!
<https://schoolofattention.substack.com/>

15:17:22 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
Was last night's conversation recorded? I so wanted to watch/listen! Had class last night, missed it

15:17:32 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:
Yes! It was!

15:18:24 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
Is it in the Friends' website?