To change your mental state of alertness, use your ability to control the speed and depth of your breathing.

Do you know your "state of mind"? Are you relaxed and alert, tired, agitated, flooded with thoughts? Are you fighting sleep? Are you bored? Are you uninspired?

You can't change your inner mental landscape with more thoughts or gems of wisdom. You can influence your brain (and body) chemistry with altered breathing patterns.

To attain a relaxed and focused state, do a double breath intake to completely fill your lungs and then let the air out slowly. (Also very helpful for playing wind instruments)

To attain an alert state,

do many short and quick in breaths followed by a quick exhale. Feel your diaphragm move.