

Mindful Classrooms

Weaving Yoga and Mindfulness into the Busy School Day



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Welcome

A Moment to Settle



Introductions

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...and YOU!

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Our Evening Together

- Defining Terms
- Reframing Classroom Mindfulness
- The Impact of Our Own Presence
- Pauses and Mindful Moments
- Daily Rituals
- Making it Meaningful
- Kid-Watching and Scaffolding
- Resources for Going Deeper

With lots of suggestions and ideas for practices!

What is Mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is generally defined as bringing our attention to the present moment, and doing so with kindness towards ourselves and without judgment.

“Mindfulness is paying attention to your life here and now with kindness and curiosity.”

Amy Saltzman

- **Mindfulness involves a process of intentionally shifting attention to our immediate experience: often to sensory experiences.**
- **When we shift attention to immediate sensory experience, there can be a corresponding physiological shift towards decreased stress and greater calm.**

A Taste of Mindfulness

Mindful Listening - Layers of Sound



CONNECT



Layers of Sound



Find a still and comfortable position with your body. It's fine to sit in a chair or lean against the wall. The most important thing is that you are comfortable enough to be still. It may be helpful to close your eyes for this activity. If it doesn't feel right to close your eyes, let them rest on the ground in front of you or on one spot that isn't moving.

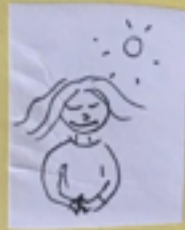
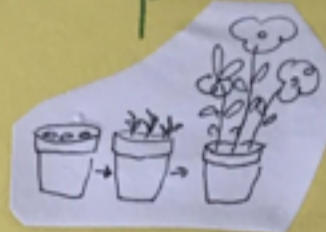
Take a slow breath or two to help you get ready for what is going to come next. The first thing that we are going to listen for are the sounds that are far away from us. Imagine opening your ears as wide as you can, and imagine stretching your hearing way out beyond the room you are sitting in. Listen carefully and find the farthest away sounds that you can hear. When you start hearing sounds, don't worry about identifying the sound or figuring out what is making the sound. Just notice it exactly as it is. Listen for as long as you like - 10 seconds is great to start.

Now that you have heard the farthest sounds you can find, bring your hearing in a little bit closer and find the sounds that are happening inside the building you're in.

Now bring your sense of hearing in a little closer to find the sounds that are happening just inside of the room.

Finally, bring your hearing as close as you can to listen for the sounds happening inside of your own body. After a few moments of listening to your own body, slowly open your eyes.

Mindfulness plants seeds!



seeds for
being calm



seeds of
kindness



seeds for paying attention

Yoga in Relation to Mindfulness

A Pathway to Mindfulness Through the Body

Little Flower Yoga

Yoga can be:

- Enjoyable
- Challenging
- Accessible
- Satisfying
- Developmentally Important

Benefits of mindfulness and yoga in schools:

Focus

Self-esteem

Academic performance

Classroom behavior

Self-Regulation

Decrease anxiety and stress

Teachers can often find
implementation daunting.

The key is in how we frame our expectations:

- We can credit ourselves with what we already ARE doing.
- “Kid Friendly” can look very different.
- We can use our regular voice.
- Practice when things are calm
- We recognize that we can weave it in to small moments.

Two Domains of Mindful Teaching

Our Presence and the Container We Set

The Activities and Practices We Offer

The Container We Set



Our students LEARN from the implicit values of the community we create and from sense of safety and care the we promote.

The Power of Our Presence



Our manner, our sense of ease, our acceptance and our care can support a classroom and can be a model for our students.

Nurturing Our Own Presence

- We can attend to our own self care.
- We can consciously find ways to settle our own nervous systems.

Practices for Ourselves

We can start with the practice of bringing our awareness to the sensations in our own bodies.

Body Scan



We may need a little self compassion.....

Practices for Ourselves

- Listening
- Body scan
- Self-compassion when things are hard
- Access the Support of the Breath

BREATHE



Heart and Belly Breath



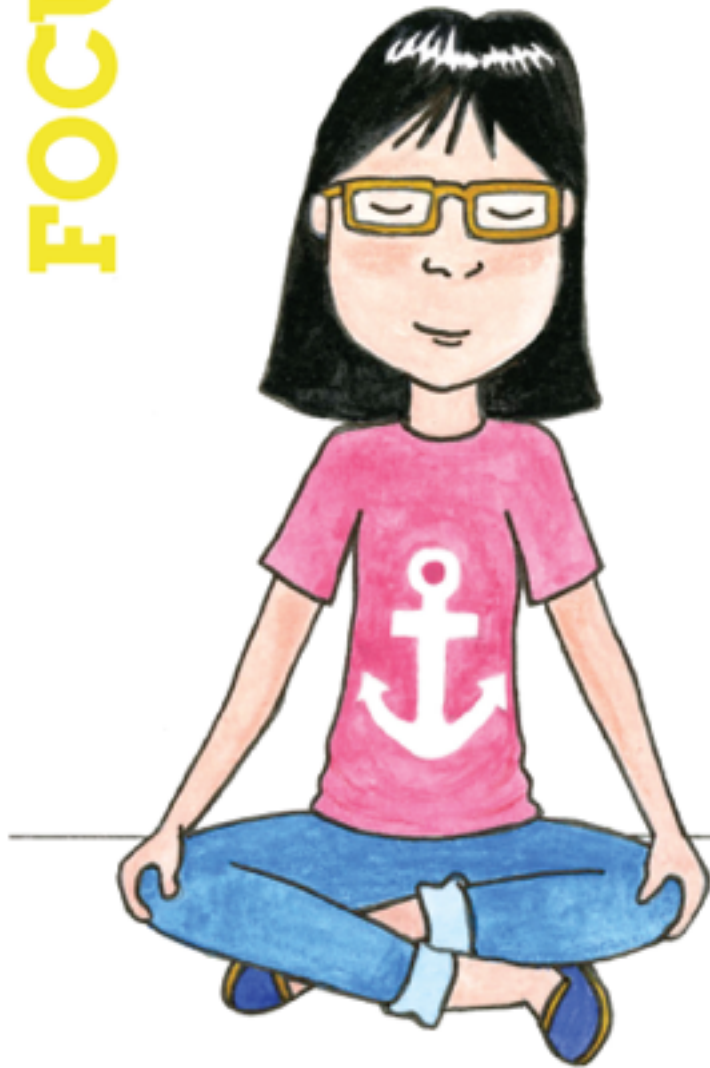
You can do this practice with your body sitting up or laying down, and your eyes open or closed. Bring one hand to your belly and one hand to your heart.

Let your hands be heavy on your body so that you can really feel the connection. Notice the feeling of your hands resting on your heart and belly. Can you feel your breath moving in your body? Take a moment to notice the way your body moves when you breathe in, and notice the way your body moves when you breathe out. Just pay attention to the sensation of your breathing, without trying to change it.

After a few moments, start to slow your breath down, and make your breath steady and even, so that your inhale and exhale are the same length. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Can you feel your breath moving through your body? Can you feel the feeling of the breath in both your belly and your chest? Notice any sensations, and when you are ready, bring your hands down.

FOCUS



Anchor Breath



An anchor is a tool that helps keep a ship steady even when it's windy or there are rough seas. Do you ever have times in your life when you feel a little like a ship getting tossed around in big waves? Could you use an anchor to help you find steadiness?

Your breath is something that you always have with you, and that you can use to help you get steady when things around you are rocky. Sit up tall, and try to keep your body still.

Breathe in and out through your nose, taking full breaths and letting your belly expand each time you breath in.

As you breathe, imagine that your breath is your anchor, helping you stay steady. When you notice your mind wandering or being distracted, see if you can bring it back to the sound and the feeling of your anchor breath.

Finding Time for Practice

Pauses are our resource!

As children experience US taking mindful pauses, they begin to internalize them.

We can even describe to our students what we are doing.

In a pause we can...

- Bring our attention to listening, to our body, our breath, our emotions or energy
- Pause to deeply take in the experience of being with our students.

Inviting Our Students to Pause With Us

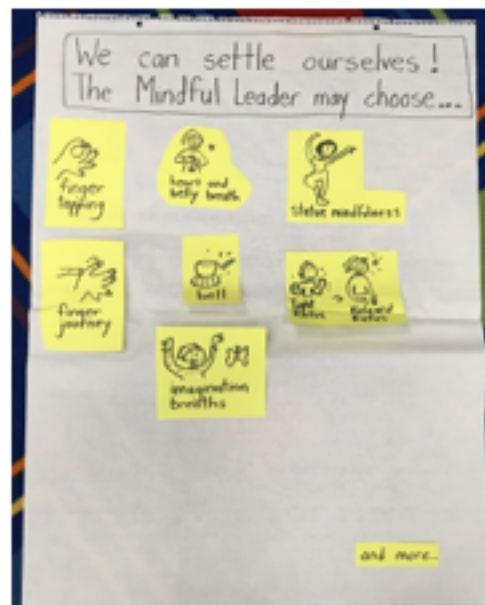
- Let's take a few heart and belly breaths.
- Let's try a (playful) body scan.
- Let's listen!
- Just take one breath and let it out.



Pause as a class to let an experience linger

- Pause as you finish a wonderful read aloud.
- Pause to “take in the good”.

Short moments of mindfulness, frequently repeated, can have powerful impact



Statue Mindfulness



Strike a pose, freeze, breathe.
Or... move, come to stillness, breathe. Repeat.

Make it child-friendly and developmentally appropriate.

For younger kids:

- Movement
- Sensory input
- Imagination
- Playful
- Songs, chants

For older kids:

- Movement
- Sensory Input
- More abstract
- Longer
- Make relevant

But they often
need it to be
playful also...

Finger Tap Affirmations

Practices can reinforce a tone or quality.

"I am so calm."
A Favorite Practice



FOCUS



I Am So Strong



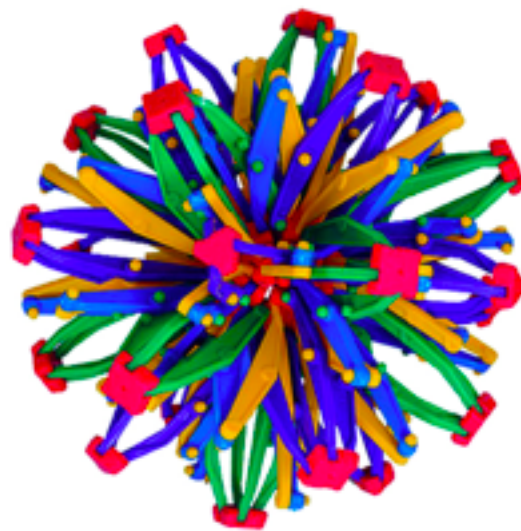
Combine the movement of your hands with a powerful statement or affirmation towards yourself. Begin by connecting your thumb to your pointer finger for "I," your thumb and middle finger for "am," your thumb and ring finger for "so," and thumb and pinkie for "strong."

Use enough pressure to feel the connection your fingers are making. Begin slowly, saying "I am so strong" using both hands simultaneously, and as you feel more comfortable you can go a bit faster.

Experiment with what it feels like to say the statement out loud, versus saying it silently to yourself. Continue for as long as you would like, about 30 seconds is great to start, and when you are finished take a few slow breaths before you go on with your day.

You can always try out other statements as well, such as "I'm Full of Love", "I Am In Charge", "I Can Do This" or anything else you think you need to hear.

Hoberman Sphere



A support for engaging with the breath.

Coordinating Breath and Movement

Imagination Breaths





- Find a motion for the in-breath and a motion for the out-breath.
- Maybe finish with a Heart and Belly Breath.
- Encourage invention!

MOVE



Crazy Eights



This activity can be done sitting or standing anytime you need an energy boost. Count out loud as you shake and move each part of your body for the allotted number of times. Experiment with speeding up, slowing down, and the volume of your voice.

Begin standing in Mountain Pose or sitting in your chair.

Shake one hand for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Shake the other hand for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Shake both hands for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Shake one foot for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Shake the other foot for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Run in place as quickly as you can with your feet for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Shake one hand for 1, 2, 3, 4. Shake the other hand for 1, 2, 3, 4. Shake both hands for 1, 2, 3, 4.

Shake one foot for 1, 2, 3, 4. Shake the other foot for 1, 2, 3, 4. Run in place with your feet for 1, 2, 3, 4.

Shake one hand for 1, 2. Shake the other hand for 1, 2. Shake both hands for 1, 2.

Shake one foot for 1, 2. Shake the other foot for 1, 2. Run in place with your feet for 1, 2

Shake one hand for 1, Shake the other hand for 1, Shake both hands for 1

Shake one foot for 1, Shake the other foot for 1, Run in place with your feet for 1

Repeat another round if you'd like—try speeding up the counting just a bit. After the practice is completed, take a moment to pause, notice the sensations in your body and any changes in energy level.

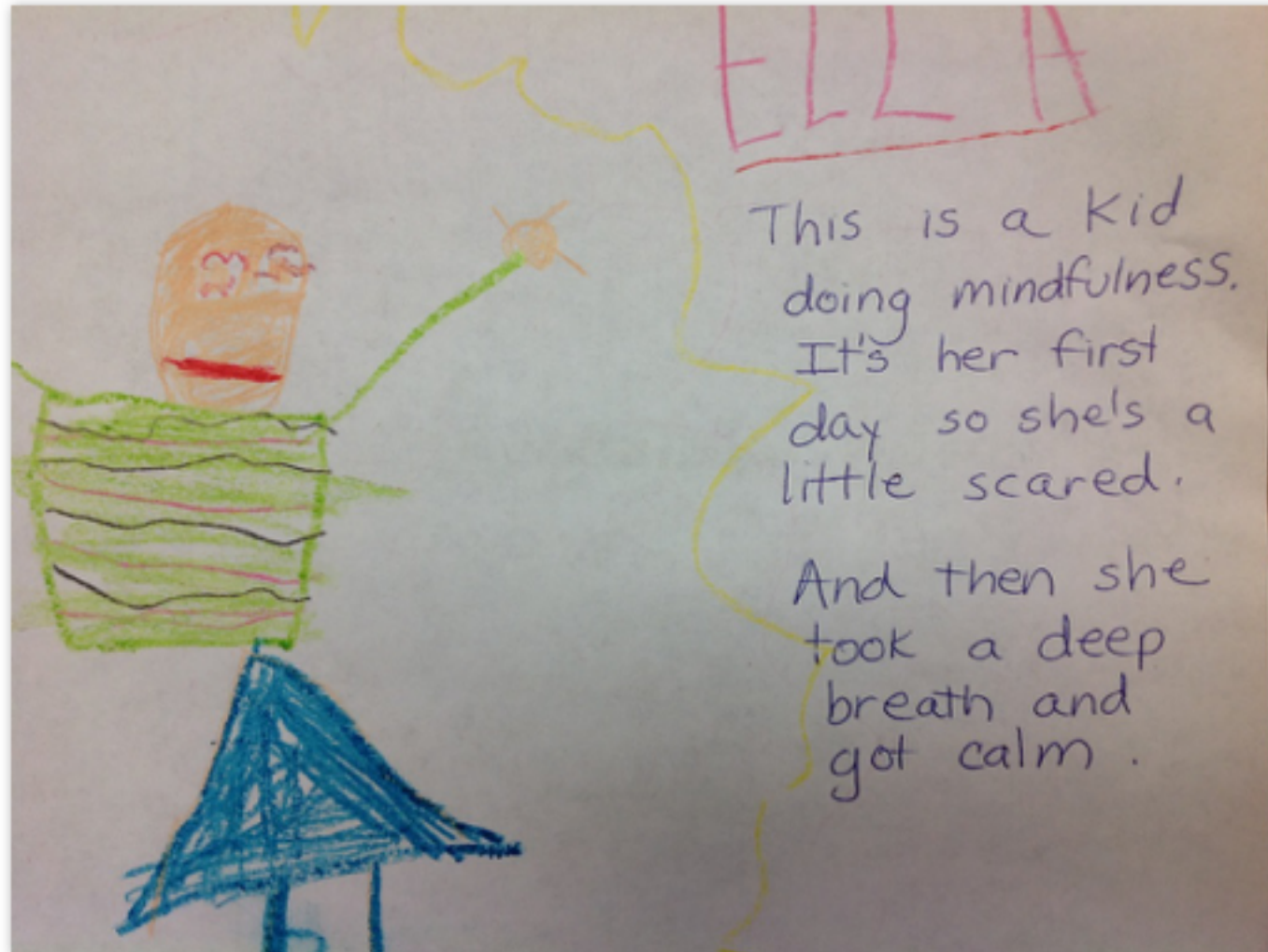
Short is fine.

In the midst of things, we keep our instructions to a minimum. We just invite the kids to "do it."

But we also need to make it
meaningful.

We need to find time for debriefing:

- noticing
- accepting
- generalizing
- reflecting



ELLA

This is a kid
doing mindfulness.
It's her first
day so she's a
little scared.

And then she
took a deep
breath and
got calm.

MINFLNIS.



MINFLNIS

is fun. 😞

IT felse good.

IT WELPS I you or
CRACE.

Daily Routines

Tick Tock Mindfulness



Activity modified from Susan Kaiser Greenland

Including practices within class meetings or when students first sit down, can anchor your day and set a tone.

One or two practices is all you need.

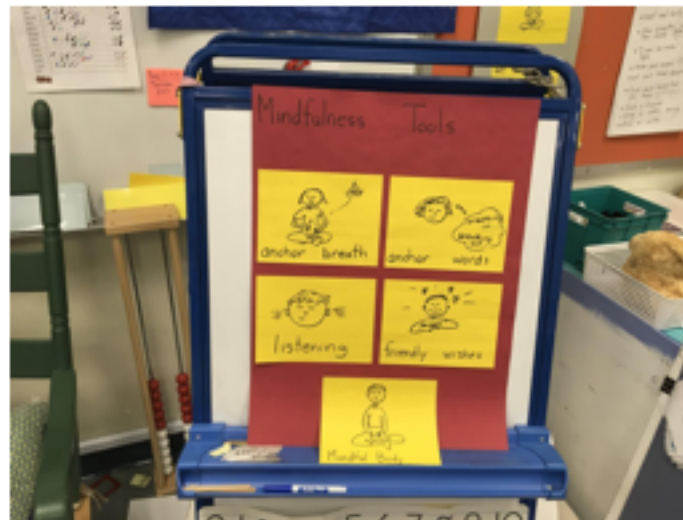


Encourage Student Ownership

Kids can lead practices.

Kids can suggest or choose practices.

Kids can teach each other.



Watch your students and learn from them.

- What resonates?
- What do they need?
- Work with their energy.



Scaffold your instruction.

- Start with what seems most accessible.
- Expand as your kids are ready.
- Then ask yourself, "What might I add?"
- Add challenge when it feels right.

Keeping up our inspiration



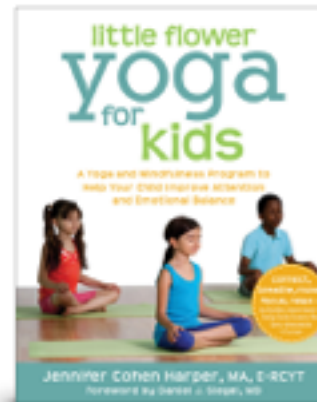
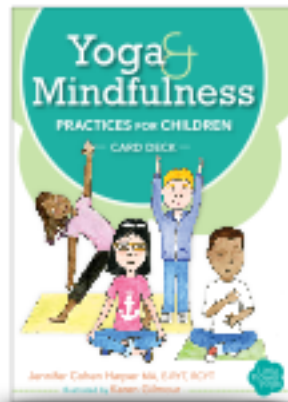
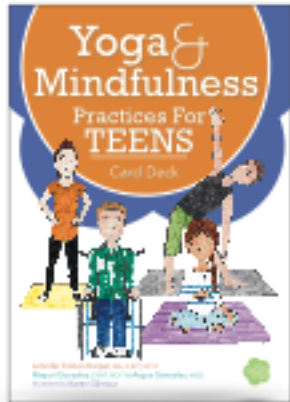
- Find a buddy or study group.
- Remember what truly matters.
- Have fun and don't expect perfection!
- Use resources for great ideas.



MINDFUL MONDAYS FREE RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

littlefloweryoga.com/programs/mindful-mondays/

RESOURCES



Empower Tools Series on GoNoodle
Free 3-5 minute videos for
use in the classroom

www.gonoodle.com/channels/empower-tools

Recommended Reading

Growing Up Mindful: Chris Willard

Little Flower Yoga for Kids: Jennifer Cohen Harper

Mindful Games: Susan Kaiser Greenland

The Mindful Education Workbook : Daniel Rechtschaffen

Useful Apps

For your own practice: Headspace, Calm or Stop, Breathe and Think

For your students: Stop, Breathe and Think Kids

QUESTIONS

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MORE INFO

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THE SCHOOL YOGA PROJECT

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Just a Reminder!!

Make it fun and playful.

Teach into “noticing” and generalizing.

Allow time for reflection and sharing.

Keep it short and gradually scaffold.

Use movement, imagination and story.

Teach into student ownership.

Teach from your heart and trust your instincts.

