



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

Mindfulness Activities
for the Classroom



MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

We often hear from teachers and students about how they are impacted by stress inside and outside of the classroom. We've compiled a selection of exercises from the Stop, Breathe & Think curriculum to give both teachers and students tools to deal with stress in a healthy and productive way. These exercises can be easily integrated into an academic setting.

Audio recordings of many of the scripted exercises provided here can be accessed via the Stop, Breathe & Think App, available for free at <http://stopbreathethink.org> on the web and through iOS and Android.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.	MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES	9
	A. Quick Stop, Breathe & Think Practice	10
	B. Checking In	12
	C. Find Your Body	13
	D. Find Your Breath	14
	E. Mindful Breathing	15
	F. Body Scan	19
	G. Engaging Your Senses	23
	H. Gratitude	26
	I. Kindness	31
	J. Settled Or Stirred Meditating Snow Globe	35
3.	APPENDIX	40
	A. Snow Globe Meditator Template	41
	B. Check-in Worksheet	42

1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION?

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to what is happening right now, by observing what's going on inside (your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations) and outside (your interactions and surroundings) with curiosity, openness and acceptance.

These exercises begin with checking in and mindful breathing, where you focus attention on the breath as it flows in and out of the body.

Mindfulness will help us stay focused and present when we practice the kindness and gratitude meditations, where we intentionally direct our thoughts and imagination to think positive thoughts and feel positive feelings.

HOW DOES MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION WORK?

You can rewire your brain just by meditating because our brains grow and change based on how they are used. Every time you have a thought, neurons connect like little impulses across the map of your brain. When these neurons connect, your brain grows thicker and stronger in certain places based on the thoughts you think. We can actually change the circuitry of the brain to help us be more peaceful and compassionate, simply by directing our thoughts and imaginations. Just like a bodybuilder lifting weights to build muscle, the more you think positive thoughts, the stronger the part of your brain that allows you to experience positive feelings will become!



1.

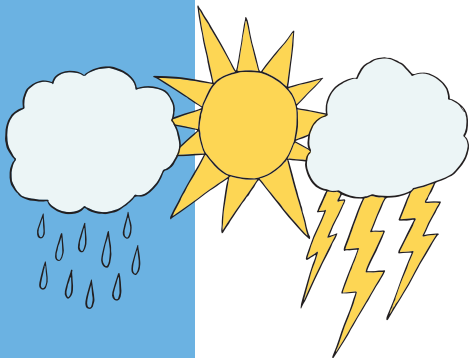
INTRODUCTION

continued

WHAT TO EXPECT

- All sorts of things come up when you practice mindfulness—thoughts, feelings, sounds, and physical sensations.
- Sometimes it can feel uncomfortable; other times it goes really smoothly and feels great.
- Don't worry—it's all part of the experience. The point is to notice and observe what's going on with an open mind and to learn not to get hung up on anything in particular. If you get stuck, just bring your attention to something neutral, like your breathing.

WHAT MINDFULNESS CAN DO FOR YOU



- Have you ever been in a bad mood and didn't know why? You can practice mindfulness to investigate/figure out what's going on in your head and to see how it's impacting your feelings and actions.
- You can identify and work with nagging, repetitive thoughts that add to stress.
- You can create space between your thoughts and reactions so you don't keep doing unproductive things.
- You can create a sense of peace and well-being by strengthening your kindness and compassion.

SETTLED NOT STIRRED

Imagine a bottle filled with sand and water. When you shake the bottle, the sand and water get stirred up, making the water cloudy. When the bottle is left undisturbed, the sand settles and the water becomes clear again. Like the sand in water, when we get caught up in our thoughts and emotions, it can be difficult to see clearly, which impacts our perceptions and decision making. If left unchecked, our thoughts, stress and strong emotions have a tendency to build momentum. The skills of mindfulness and meditation will help us to become aware of this process, create some space between our thoughts, emotions and reactions, and allow ourselves the opportunity to settle. Try the Settled Or Stirred Meditation Snow Globe Activity on pg. 35.

1.

INTRODUCTION

continued

STRESS AND THE BRAIN

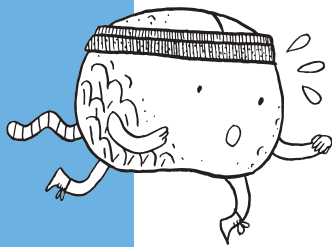
Our response to stress and strong emotion begins in the brain. When we are faced with a dangerous or stressful situation, our senses send information to the amygdala, an almond-shaped group of neurons in the middle of our brain, which is an integral part of our emotional processing. The amygdala interprets the sensory input, and if danger is perceived, a stress signal is sent to the hypothalamus. Like a control center, the hypothalamus relays messages to the rest of the body through the nervous system preparing it to fight, flee, or freeze.

Reflective

When we are feeling calm and settled, the amygdala filters information openly to the prefrontal cortex where executive functions like focusing, learning, reasoning, problem solving and decision making take place. This allows us to be more reflective and think before we act.

Reactive

When we are feeling stressed, threatened or stirred up, our amygdala does not pass information to the prefrontal cortex, and instead triggers the “fight, flight or freeze” response, which has evolved as a survival mechanism, allowing us to react immediately to life-threatening situations. Our bodies can have similar reactions to daily situations that are non-life-threatening, like work-related stress, emotional conflict or being late for an appointment.



STRESS AND THE BODY

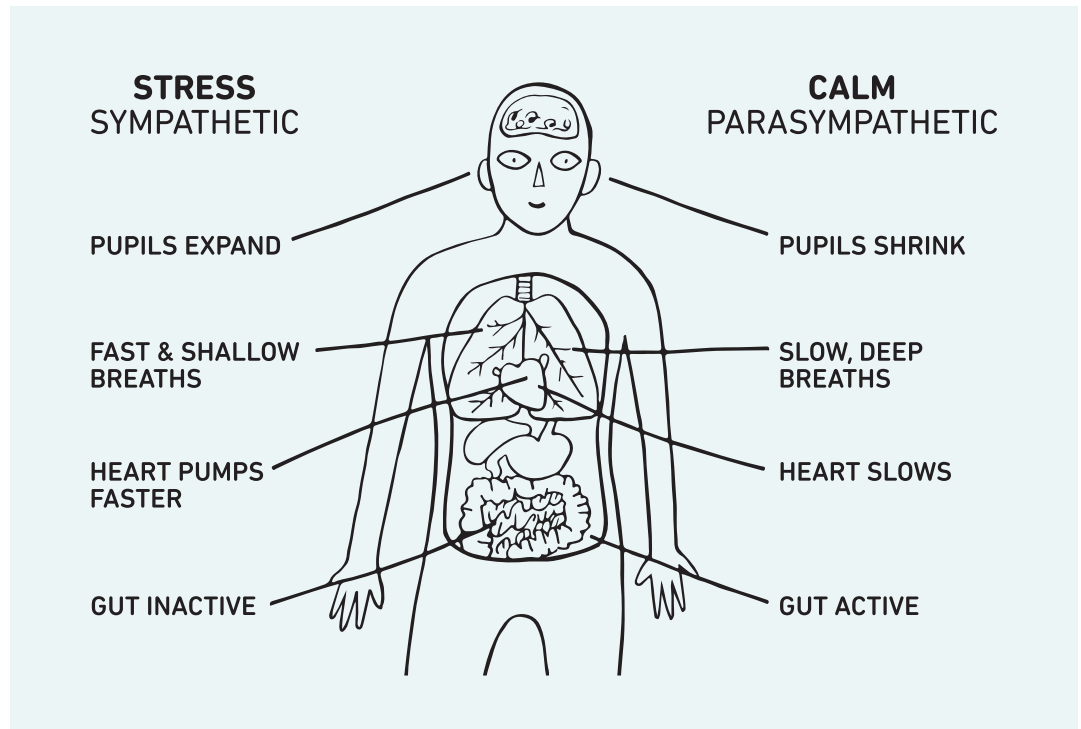
Many of the body’s functions work automatically, like breathing, blood pressure and digestion. These functions are controlled by the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS).

The ANS is divided into two branches: the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) - the “fight, flight or freeze” response during stress, intense activity and emergencies, and the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) - the “rest and digest,” or calming response.

1.

INTRODUCTION

continued



SYMPATHETIC

The SNS or “fight or flight” is responsible for what happens to your body in response to a stressful situation. Adrenaline circulates through the blood, affecting every organ. Your heart pumps faster, blood pressure rises, breathing becomes faster and more shallow, pupils expand, and your muscles tighten. The SNS is your body’s natural response during emergencies, but often times it is triggered during everyday stress, and when this happens it can make us feel unhealthy.

PARASYMPATHETIC

When we practice mindfulness and meditation and focus on deep relaxed breaths, we can turn off the SNS and turn on our Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS), also known as “rest and digest,” which calms us down and helps us to relax. When the PNS is activated, your heart rate drops, blood pressure falls, breathing slows and deepens, pupils shrink and muscles relax. This promotes good digestion, supports your immune system and just makes you feel good all over.

1.

INTRODUCTION

continued

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT

To begin mindfulness practice, the most important thing is to sit comfortably and in a relaxed position on a chair or cushion. If you are sitting on a chair, place your feet flat on the floor.

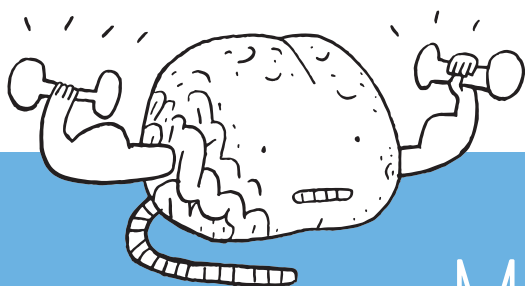
- Everyone can practice mindfulness while sitting in their chairs at their desks. Be sure to close notebooks and put pens and pencils down during practice to minimize distractions.
- If you have the space, arrange the chairs or cushions in a circle. In the beginning, students may be distracted by each other. If this is the case, try arranging the chairs facing outward.
- When you begin your mindfulness practice, remember to check your posture. Is your back straight? Can you breathe easily?
- If you feel tired or lethargic, it helps to sit up straight!



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

It can help to make mindfulness practice part of your daily routine. Set a regular time, and start with short sessions. You're not going to be Master of Mindfulness right away. The more you do it, the better you get. Just like lifting weights to make your body stronger, you're using mindfulness to help strengthen your brain.

Sometimes, you might have a hard time actually feeling some of the positive feelings talked about in each meditation. That's OK! Just doing the meditations and giving yourself the opportunity to feel these positive feelings is a huge step.



MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

2A.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

QUICK STOP, BREATHE & THINK PRACTICE

While you are going about your day, or periodically during a class, try to remember to pause occasionally to Stop, Breathe & Think.

For a quick mindfulness practice that can be done within a matter of minutes, try this:

ACTIVITY #1: A FEW MINUTES

STOP, BREATHE & THINK PRACTICE

Stop

Just pause for a moment – you can stop what you are doing, or you can just pause for a moment in your mind.

Breathe

Take a few deep breaths, paying attention to your breath as it goes in, and out.

Think

With openness, curiosity and without judgment, just notice the thoughts

continued

2A.

QUICK STOP, BREATHE & THINK PRACTICE continued

that are running through your mind, and become aware of any emotions or physical sensations you may be feeling. If you notice any tension in your face, shoulders, hands or body, just take a moment to breathe and relax your muscles.

Then, just go back to whatever you were doing. This simple practice can be done as much as you like and whenever you remember.

HELPFUL TIPS

If you are using the Quick Stop, Breathe & Think Practice with your class, try using audio or visual cues to encourage students to take a moment to stop, breathe and think.

Sample Audio Cues

Chimes, a bell, a wood block, a musical instrument like a xylophone.

Sample Visual Cues

A raised hand, a sign, a color card.

2B.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

CHECKING IN

If you have more time, try exploring the Check-in Process. You can use the Stop, Breathe & Think App or worksheets on pg. 42 of the Appendix to facilitate the check-in and to help students identify specific words to describe how they are feeling mentally, physically, and emotionally.

These check-in activities can be used at the beginning of class or as a way to transition from one activity to another.

ACTIVITY #1: 3 MINUTES

CHECK IN

Think about how you are feeling.

- Pick 3-5 words from the SB&T posters or worksheets describing how you are feeling mentally (how your mind feels), physically (how your body feels) and emotionally (strong feelings).
- Teacher models picking 3-5 words to describe how they are feeling.
- Students write 3-5 words down.

2C.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

FIND YOUR BODY

Find Your Body and Find Your Breath can be done in sequence after checking-in, or on their own, and can be very helpful as a lead in to Mindful Breathing.

ACTIVITY #1: 3 MINUTES

FIND YOUR BODY

We are now going to experiment with our posture—the way we are sitting.

1. Try leaning from side to side, forward and back, roll your necks, and experiment with different ways to hold your body, head, and shoulders until you find a comfortable, balanced way to sit.

DISCUSSION

- What was the most comfortable way to sit?
- How do you feel when your body is slouched over?
- How do you feel when you are sitting up straight?

2D.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

FIND YOUR BREATH

Find Your Body and Find Your Breath can be done in sequence after checking-in, or on their own, and can be very helpful as a lead in to Mindful Breathing.

ACTIVITY #1: 3 MINUTES

FIND YOUR BREATH

Now we are going to take a quiet moment to focus on where in your body you feel your breath.

1. Take three slow breaths, and while you are breathing, try to notice where you feel your breath the most.
2. Put your hand up to your nose, and notice what your breathing feels like.
3. Put your hand up to your chest, and notice what your breathing feels like.
4. Put your hand on your stomach, and notice what your breathing feels like.

DISCUSSION

- Where do you feel your breath the most?
- What does it feel like when you breathe in?
- What does it feel like when you breathe out?

2E.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

MINDFUL BREATHING

With a simple focus on the breath, Mindful Breathing is one of the most effective and easy-to-implement practices. Try Mindful Breathing at the beginning of class or whenever students need a break. Students can practice Mindful Breathing while sitting at their desks or while sitting cross-legged on a cushion on the floor.

ACTIVITY #1: 5 MINUTES

MINDFUL BREATHING SCRIPT

Close your eyes, and rest your hands on your knees. Bring your attention to the touch of your body on your seat. Feel the weight of your body on your chair or cushion.

Begin by finding a comfortable posture. Lean slightly forward and then back. To one side, and then the other. Find a comfortable balance as you come back to the center.

Now, sitting up straight, feel your head on the top of your neck. How can you sit so that your head, neck and back feel most comfortable?

Take a few deep breaths. While you are breathing deeply, relax your

continued

2E.

MINDFUL BREATHING

continued

shoulders, your stomach muscles, the muscles in your face and your hands and your legs. Let go of all the tension in your body.

Now bring your attention back your breath. Where do you feel it most? In your nose, or your stomach? In the rise and fall of your chest? Just notice where you feel it most, and allow your breathing to be natural and relaxed. Now, notice what the breath feels like as it enters through your nose, goes down your throat, filling your lungs, and back out through your nose.

Notice your stomach and chest rise and fall with each inhale and exhale, and allow your breathing to be natural and relaxed.

Now bring your awareness to the sensation of your breath in your nose. Feel your breath as it comes in and goes out. Just focus on this sensation, paying attention to each inhale and exhale.

When your mind wanders, or if you become distracted, just notice what's going on in your head, and then gently bring your attention back to your breath going in and out. Focus on the sensation of your breath in the foreground, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go in the background.

Now gently bring your attention back to the touch of your body on your seat, and open your eyes.

MINDFUL BREATHING FOLLOW UP

Thumb Check In

- Everyone puts their thumbs in the middle to show how mindful breathing was for them.
- Thumbs up = "That was great;" or "I noticed when I was distracted and was able to bring my attention back to my breath."

2E.

MINDFUL BREATHING

continued

- Thumb in the middle = "That was okay;" or "I was distracted, and some of the time I was able to bring my attention back to my breath."
- Thumb down = "I struggled;" or "I was mostly distracted and not really able to bring my attention back to my breath."

DISCUSSION

- What was it like to sit and be with your breath?
- Were you able to stay present and concentrate on your breathing?
- Did you feel any discomfort?
- What thoughts came up for you?
- What feelings came up for you?
- When your mind wondered, were you able to bring your attention back to your breath?

HELPFUL TIPS

When students share their experiences, ask the group "Who else felt this way?"

It doesn't matter how many thoughts came up or if you get distracted a million times in just a few minutes. Just by bringing your attention back to your breath over and over again, you are building your mindful muscles! At first it may be difficult to focus, especially when there are always so many thoughts running through our heads all the time. But the more we practice, the better we get.

ACTIVITY #2: 5 MINUTES

OPTIONAL FOLLOW UP CHECK IN

1. How do you feel after Mindful Breathing?
2. Pick 3-5 words from the posters/handouts describing how you are

continued

2E.

MINDFUL BREATHING

continued

feeling mentally (how your mind feels), physically (how your body feels), and emotionally (strong feelings).

3. Students write 3-5 words down.
4. Students share their words in a group.

DISCUSSION

If you used a Check-In before Mindful Breathing, these discussion questions might be useful:

- Who picked different words now than before we did Mindful Breathing?
- How are they different?

2F.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

BODY SCAN

The Body Scan is a next step for students who would like to build upon Mindful Breathing. This activity can be used to help students rest and recharge, especially in the mid-afternoon, or when you notice they are feeling tired or restless.

Students may sit at their desks, sit with their legs crossed, or lie down on their backs. In all cases, students should close their eyes.

ACTIVITY #1: 10-15 MINUTES

BODY SCAN SCRIPT

The purpose of body scan is to simply check in to see what's going on in your body with open curiosity. There's no need to judge or try to change anything. We are just bringing attention to each part of our body in sequence, noticing how each part is connected to the next.

Start by bringing your attention to the general position of your body—are you sitting up straight with your feet flat on the ground and your hands on your knees? Or maybe you're lying on your back with arms resting by your sides. Notice the relationship of your body to the space around you. Notice where you are, the time of day. Notice if you have any tension or tightness in your body. Notice what you are thinking and feeling—are you restless or

continued

2F.

BODY SCAN

continued

grounded? Agitated or calm? Just notice what's going on without judging or trying to change anything. Now bring your attention to your breathing. Become aware of where you feel your breath most. It might be in your nose or in your chest or stomach. Breathe in deeply, and notice the breath as it fills your body. Breathe out, and notice the breath as it goes out. Simply be aware of the sensations in your body, allowing them space to just be.

Now, bring your attention to the top of your head. Then, to the back and sides of your head and down to your ears. Bring your attention to your face, your forehead and eyebrows, your eyes, cheeks, mouth and jaw. Whatever is experienced, just allow it and let it be. Now, move your attention down into your neck and shoulders... just noticing how your neck and shoulders feel with a sense of curiosity. Move your attention into your arms, your elbows, down through your forearms and into your wrists and hands, fingers and thumbs. Just notice the sensations you feel. It's as if you are traveling through your body with your mind, just seeing what's there. Now move your attention to your torso, and your chest, and upper back. Notice your heartbeat and the sensation of breathing. Now move your attention into your stomach and lower back. Your stomach is the home of digestion and for many of us, a place where we hold many emotions. So just spending a few moments paying attention to this area, feeling what's here, and just letting it be. We don't need to do anything. We are just noticing the sensations in our stomach and lower back, and letting them be. And now, move your attention to your hips, down into your legs, your thighs, knees, shins and calves, and into your ankles to the tops of your feet, the sides of your feet, and to the bottom of the feet.

And finally, feel how each part of your body is connected.

Feel your feet connected to your ankles, your ankles connected to your legs, your legs connected to your hips, to your stomach and lower back, connected to your torso, chest, upper back, shoulders, and arms. Your arms connected to your shoulders and neck, and your neck connected to your head.

continued

2F.

BODY SCAN
continued

Feel the skin around your whole body. Notice the sensations on your skin—the temperature and texture.

Become aware of your whole body in this moment. You don't need to think about what's right or wrong; just relax in a sense of physical wholeness. Feel how your whole body is connected.

And now let your attention rest on your breath. Breathing in and breathing out, feeling your body expand and contract with each inhale and exhale.

And when you are ready, bring your attention to the touch of your body on your seat, and open your eyes.

BODY SCAN FOLLOW UP

Thumb Check In

- Everyone puts their thumbs in the middle to show how the body scan was for them.
- Thumbs up = "That was great;" or "I noticed when I was distracted and was able to bring my attention back to my body."
- Thumb in the middle = "That was okay;" or "I was distracted, and some of the time I was able to bring my attention back to my body. "
- Thumb down = "I struggled;" or "I was mostly distracted and not really able to bring my attention back to my body."

DISCUSSION

- What was body scan like?
- What did you notice?
- What were you thinking or feeling during this activity?
- Were you able to just notice, without judging how you were feeling or without wanting to change anything?

2F.

BODY SCAN continued

HELPFUL TIPS

When students share their experiences, ask the group “Who else felt this way?”

2G.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

ENGAGING YOUR SENSES

Engaging Your Senses is a fun mindfulness activity to engage students' curiosity by focusing on each of their senses. Feel free to use them one at a time for a quick mindfulness break, or try them all at once for a longer activity. This activity can be done in the classroom or outside.

In this activity, we will be using each of our five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch to bring attention to your environment. Try not to judge your experience; just notice what is happening.

ACTIVITY #1: 5-10 MINUTES

ENGAGING YOUR SENSES SCRIPT

Wherever you are, focus your awareness on your surroundings. Look around, and take notice of what you see. Just observe the variety of colors, shapes and textures of what you see.

Choose one thing, and look at it carefully. Try to examine its specific details without having an opinion about it. Analyze its size and shape, its color and its texture.

continued

26.

ENGAGING YOUR SENSES continued

Now, focus your awareness on sound. As you listen, try closing your eyes, and just notice what you hear.

Listen to the quietest sound you hear.

Listen to the loudest sound you hear.

Try listening to just one sound.

Where does it come from? How would you describe it?

Try to observe the sound without having an opinion about it.

Now, focus your awareness on your sense of smell.

What do you smell? How many different odors can you detect?

Choose one of them, and examine it. How would you describe it? Is it strong or faint? Sweet or sour? What else do you notice about the smell?

Now, focus your awareness on your sense of taste.

Imagine your favorite food. Picture this food in your mind, and imagine how it tastes.

Describe its flavor and texture, and notice how your body responds to thinking about it.

Think about your tongue. Do you taste anything? Is it sweet, sour, bitter or salty? Try to observe the taste in your mouth without having an opinion about it.

Now, focus your awareness on your sense of touch.

Reach down, and touch the ground beneath you with your fingertips. Notice how many different sensations you feel.

Wherever you are, choose something to touch. How does it feel? Analyze its size, its texture and shape, its temperature. What else do you notice about how it feels? Try to examine what it feels like without having an opinion about it.

When you have finished, gently bring your awareness back to the sensation of your breath going in and out, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

2G.

ENGAGING YOUR SENSES continued

ENGAGING YOUR SENSES FOLLOW UP

Thumb Check In

- Everyone puts their thumbs in the middle to show how Engaging Your Senses was for them.
- Thumbs up = “That was great;” or “I noticed when I was distracted and was able to bring my attention back to my senses.”
- Thumb in the middle = “That was okay;” or “I was distracted, and some of the time I was able to bring my attention back to my senses.”
- Thumb down = “I struggled;” or “I was mostly distracted and not really able to bring my attention back to my senses.”

DISCUSSION

- What was it like to focus on your smell, touch, taste, seeing or hearing?
- What did you notice about your surroundings?
- Do you think you would have noticed this if we didn’t take the time to do this activity? Why or why not?
- Did you judge what you noticed as good or bad? (For example, “That flower smells really good” or “That rock is ugly.”)
- Was it easier to focus on certain senses over the others? Why or why not?

HELPFUL TIPS

When students share their experiences, ask the group “Who else felt this way?”

2H.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

GRATITUDE

The Gratitude Meditation and Gratitude Journal activities support the wellbeing of students, teachers and the class as a whole. Students can practice the Gratitude Meditation while sitting at their desks or while sitting cross-legged on a cushion on the floor.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is the feeling of being thankful and appreciative. Strengthening our sense of gratitude supports our ability to handle whatever comes our way and can enhance our happiness and enjoyment of everyday life.

ACTIVITY #1: 5-10 MINUTES

GRATITUDE SCRIPT

Close your eyes, and rest your hands on your knees. Bring your awareness to the touch of your body on your seat. Feel the weight of your body on your chair or cushion.

Take a few deep breaths. While you are breathing deeply, relax your shoulders, your stomach muscles, the muscles in your face, and your hands and your legs. Let go of all the tension in your body.

Now bring your attention back to your breath. Notice what it feels like as

continued

2H.

GRATITUDE

continued

it enters through your nose, goes down your throat, filling your lungs, and back out through your nose. Notice your stomach and chest rise and fall with each inhale and exhale, and allow your breathing to be natural and relaxed. Whenever you become distracted, gently bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath going in and out.

Maintaining this mindful awareness, take a moment to reflect on Gratitude. What are you truly thankful for?

It's easy to forget that on the most basic level, we are alive and breathing. We may have problems and experience pain, but in many ways, we have a healthy life compared to other people.

Think about the freedoms you have that many in the world don't get to experience. Think about the opportunities that are available to you. How might it feel if any of those things were taken away?

Think about your relationships. What support have you been given throughout your life?

Think of people who have been kind to you. The family members and friends who have supported you. Remember the teachers who have encouraged and taught you or who have inspired you to learn.

How much do you depend on the cooperation and support of other people? Think about how your home, your school, the food you eat and the clothes you wear all come from the efforts and hard work of other people.

And just take a moment to genuinely appreciate all of the freedoms, opportunities and support available to you.

Now, it may be that you are not feeling so grateful right now, at this very moment. And that's OK. Just notice where you are, and make the wish to feel gratitude.

continued

2H.

GRATITUDE

continued

Now let all of your thoughts, images and feelings dissolve, like a cloud dissolving in the sky, and let your mind rest.

When you are ready, gently bring your attention back to the room and to the touch of your body on your seat.

GRATITUDE FOLLOW UP

Thumb Check In

- Everyone puts their thumbs in the middle to show how Gratitude was for them.
- Thumbs up = "That was great."
- Thumb in the middle = "That was okay."
- Thumb down = "I struggled."

DISCUSSION

- What are you grateful for?
- What relationships are you grateful for?
- What freedoms are you grateful for?
- What opportunities are you grateful for?

ACTIVITY #2: 5-10 MINUTES

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Materials

- Small journal or notebook (paper stapled together with a construction paper cover works great)

continued

2H.

GRATITUDE

continued

Have students write down 5 things they are grateful for in a journal.

Students can write in their gratitude journal throughout the summer. This is a great activity to do at the beginning of class.

Detailed Instructions

Try writing down three to five things you are grateful for each day. Avoid repetition; this way, maintaining your journal will become more difficult as time passes, but your awareness of what you are thankful for will grow. Considering what we are thankful for helps us to cultivate gratitude.

1. What material things are you grateful for?
 - To start, think about things you use everyday, such as running water or your bed.
 - Try to explain why they are important to you and how they make you feel.
2. How are you grateful for yourself?
 - Start with the basics, like simply being alive, or appreciating the body you have, even if it's not perfect!
 - Or you can think about your basic abilities, like your ability to see, hear, feel, think and touch.
 - You can also think about your unique skills and talents, like your ability to sing, dance, draw or play sports.
 - Also think about other personal qualities, such as being a good listener or a caring friend.
 - Note: When thinking about how you are grateful for yourself, try not to compare yourself to other people.
3. How are you grateful for the people in your life?
 - Choose one person or multiple people in your life, and describe why you are grateful for them and how they make you feel.
 - Though it might be challenging, try to find something you are grateful for in a person that you might find difficult to be around.

continued

2H.

GRATITUDE

continued

4. How are you grateful for certain experiences or situations?
 - Think about things in your past, even your recent past, that you are grateful for.
 - Consider vacations you have taken, delicious foods you have eaten or positive conversations you have had.

The Gratitude Journal was adapted from www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Gratitude-Journal

21. KINDNESS

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

The Kindness Meditation and Kindness Cards activities support the wellbeing of students, teachers and the class as a whole. Students can practice the Kindness Meditation while sitting at their desks or while sitting cross-legged on a cushion on the floor.

What is Kindness?

Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate. In other words, it means wishing that everybody experiences happiness.

ACTIVITY #1: 5-10 MINUTES

KINDNESS SCRIPT

Close your eyes, and rest your hands on your knees. Bring your awareness to the touch of your body on your seat. Feel the weight of your body on your chair or cushion.

Take a few deep breaths. While you are breathing deeply, relax your shoulders, your stomach muscles, the muscles in your face, in your hands and your legs. Let go of all the tension in your body.

Now bring your attention back to your breath. Notice what it feels like as it

continued

21.

KINDNESS

continued

enters through your nose, goes down your throat, filling your lungs, and back out through your nose.

Notice your stomach and chest rise and fall each time with each inhale and exhale, and allow your breathing to be natural and relaxed. Whenever you become distracted, gently bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath going in and out.

Maintaining this mindful awareness, take a moment to think about kindness.

Call to mind someone or something (a person or a pet for example) who easily arouses your feelings of kindness. If it's a person, it could be someone you love or feel grateful for.

Think of what you appreciate about this person. Let the thought of this person fill you with positive feelings and kindness.

Once you are filled with these positive feelings and kindness, make a wish for the sincere happiness of that person. Think to yourself, "May they always have positive experiences and happiness."

Establish that wish firmly in your thoughts: "May they always have positive experiences and happiness."

Allow yourself to be filled with feelings of kindness. And just take a moment to rest in those positive feelings.

Once the feelings of kindness are firmly in your thoughts, think of someone toward whom you feel neutral—someone you neither like nor dislike. It could be someone you see in the store or on the bus. And just picture them in your mind.

Try to genuinely wish for the happiness of that neutral person. Think to

continued

21.

KINDNESS

continued

yourself, "May they always have positive experiences and happiness."

"May they always have positive experiences and happiness."

Once the feelings of kindness for someone neutral is firmly in your thoughts, try to think of someone toward whom you feel negativity or dislike, or get frustrated with. Picture them in your mind.

Try to expand that feeling of kindness to include that person. Make the wish that they always have positive experiences and happiness.

Think to yourself, "May they always have positive experiences and happiness."

Now let all of your thoughts, images and feelings dissolve, like a cloud dissolving in the sky, and let your mind rest.

And when you are ready, gently bring your attention back to the room and to the touch of your body on your seat.

KINDNESS FOLLOW UP

Thumb Check In

- Everyone puts their thumbs in the middle to show how Kindness was for them.
- Thumbs up = "That was great."
- Thumb in the middle = "That was okay."
- Thumb down = "I struggled."

DISCUSSION

- How was it to think of someone you love?
- How was it to think of someone you feel neutral towards?

21.

KINDNESS
continued

- How was it to think of someone you don't like?
- What does it mean to be kind "without conditions?"
- What does it mean to be kind "without self-interest?"

HELPFUL TIPS

When students share their experiences, ask the group "Who else felt this way?"

ACTIVITY #2

KINDNESS CARDS

Materials

- Index Cards
- Sticker Cards
- Stickers
- Prizes

Instructions

1. Give each student 10 index cards. Students write one act of kindness that someone could do at home or at school on each index card.
2. Cards are placed in a box.
3. Students may randomly choose 2 cards at a time from the box.
4. Student completes the act of kindness on the card and writes a brief journal entry about their act of kindness on the back of the card.
5. Student turns the card into their teacher when the act is completed, and they get a sticker to place on their sticker card.
6. Once every blank spot (10) on the sticker card is filled with a sticker, the student gets a prize.
7. Have students write more acts of kindness as needed.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

2J. SETTLED OR STIRRED MEDITATING SNOW GLOBE

In this project, you'll be creating a snow globe featuring a personalized meditator in the center. This "Settled or Stirred" Meditating Snow Globe craft is a visual representation of how practicing mindfulness affects our emotions and thoughts.

When we get caught up in our thoughts and feelings, our perspective becomes cloudy, and we have more difficulty making decisions. Mindfulness and meditation allows our mind and emotions to settle, making it easier to see the bigger picture. The quality of the water when the snow globe is shaken is opaque, with the sand or glitter representing stirred-up thoughts and emotions. When we set the snow globe down, the sand or glitter settles, revealing a personal meditator. The quality of this water signifies the quality of the mindful mind... clear, settled and peaceful.

Creating the snow globe will take approximately ½ - 1 hour and is suitable for ages 5 - 18 years.

2J.

SETTLED OR STIRRED MEDITATING SNOW GLOBE

continued

ACTIVITY #1: ½-1 HOUR

MEDITATING SNOW GLOBE

Materials

- Blank meditator template (Appendix pg. 41)
- Colored pencils
- 16 oz. Mason jar
- Scissors
- Laminating machine or clear packing tape
- Hot glue gun (Please use adult supervision.)
- Spoon
- Glitter and/or colored sand
- Glycerin (optional)
- Water

Instructions

1. On page 41 of the Appendix, you'll find the meditator template. Copy the template as needed.
2. With colored pencils, decorate and personalize a blank meditator.



3. Use scissors to cut out the meditator from the template.

continued

2J.

SETTLED OR STIRRED MEDITATING SNOW GLOBE continued



4. Laminate the meditator, or cover it with packing tape on both sides. Be sure to leave a ½-inch border around the meditator. This will prevent water from leaking into the drawing.



5. Leave a 1 in. base of lamination underneath the meditator. If you are using tape, add extra tape to make the base stiff.
6. Flip over the Mason jar lid so that the inside of the lid is facing up. Using a hot glue gun, place a line of glue in the middle of the inside lid. Attach the meditator by its base (which you created by adding the extra tape in the step above) to the lid.

continued

2J.

SETTLED OR STIRRED MEDITATING SNOW GLOBE continued



7. Measure five spoonfuls of colored sand or glitter, and add it to the jar. If you use colored sand, test the sand to see if the color runs. If it does, rinse the sand until the water is clear. If you decide to fill your jar with glitter, try adding a dash of glycerin to keep the glitter from falling too quickly.



8. Fill the jar with water, and then screw on the lid with the meditating figure attached.



continued

2J.

SETTLED OR STIRRED MEDITATING SNOW GLOBE continued

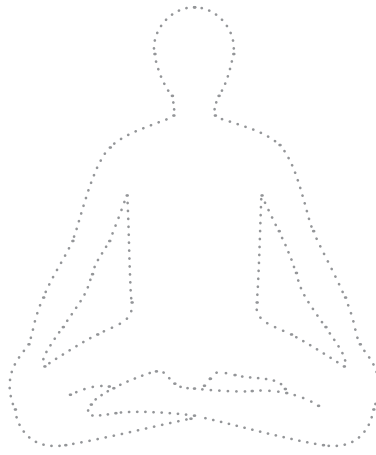
9. Flip the jar upside down so that the meditator is sitting upright, and voila! Your snow globe is complete!





APPENDIX

SNOW GLOBE MEDITATOR TEMPLATE



NAME _____

DATE _____

HOW ARE YOU?

Take a deep breath and think about how your mind and body feel.

I'M MENTALLY...



GREAT



GOOD



MEH

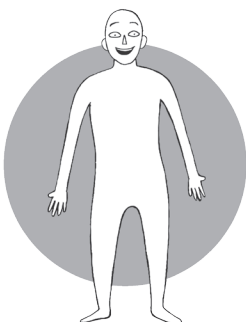


POOR

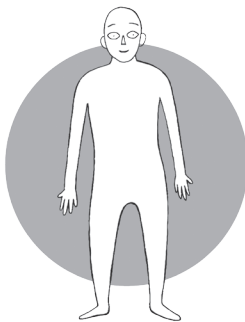


ROUGH

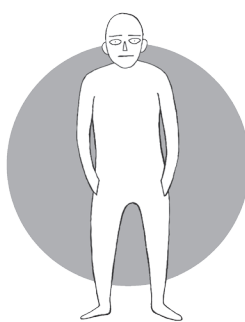
I'M PHYSICALLY...



GREAT



GOOD



MEH



POOR



ROUGH

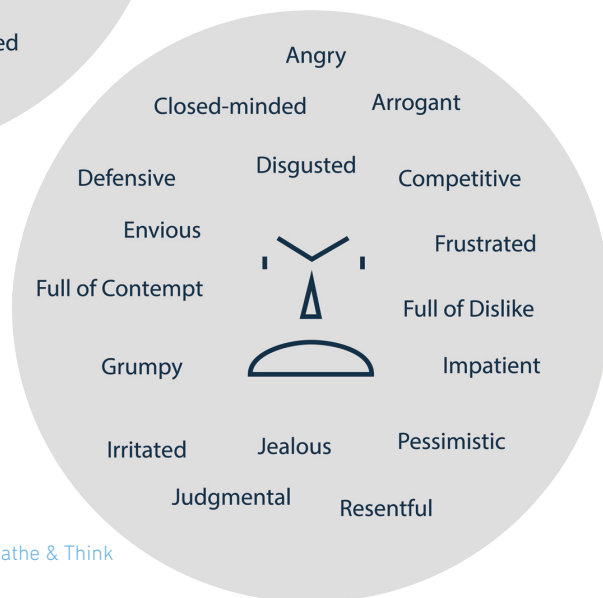
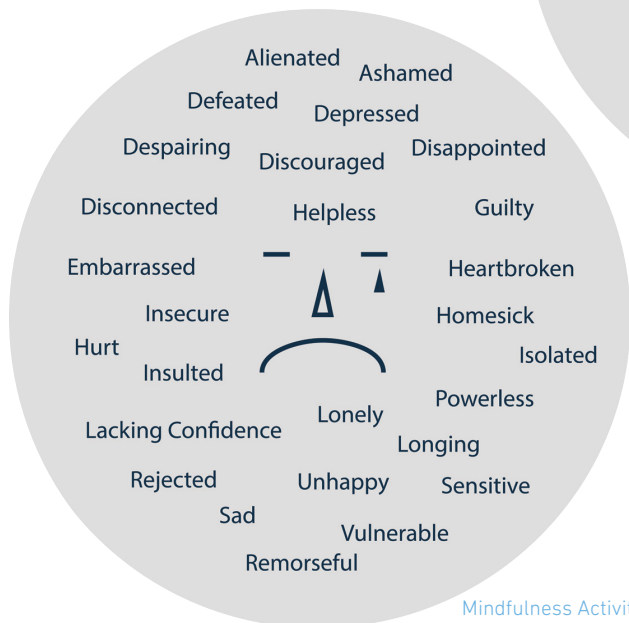
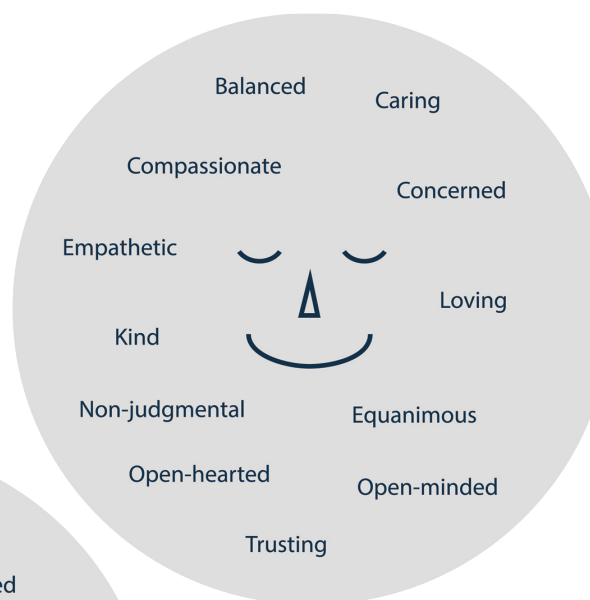
NAME _____

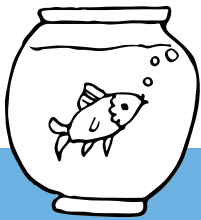
DATE _____

HOW ARE YOU?

Circle at least 3 words that describe how you are feeling.

I'M EMOTIONALLY...





STOP, BREATHE & THINK

Audio recordings of many of the scripted exercises provided here can be accessed via the Stop, Breathe & Think App, available for free at <http://stopbreathethink.org> on the web and through iOS and Android.

Mindfulness Activities for the Classroom (v.1 Nov 2015)

© Stop, Breathe & Think