

# Mindful Teachers



Living, Learning, & Teaching with Mindful Awareness

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Sunday, May 29, 2016

## Great Children's Songs about Mindfulness, Self-Acceptance, and Gratitude

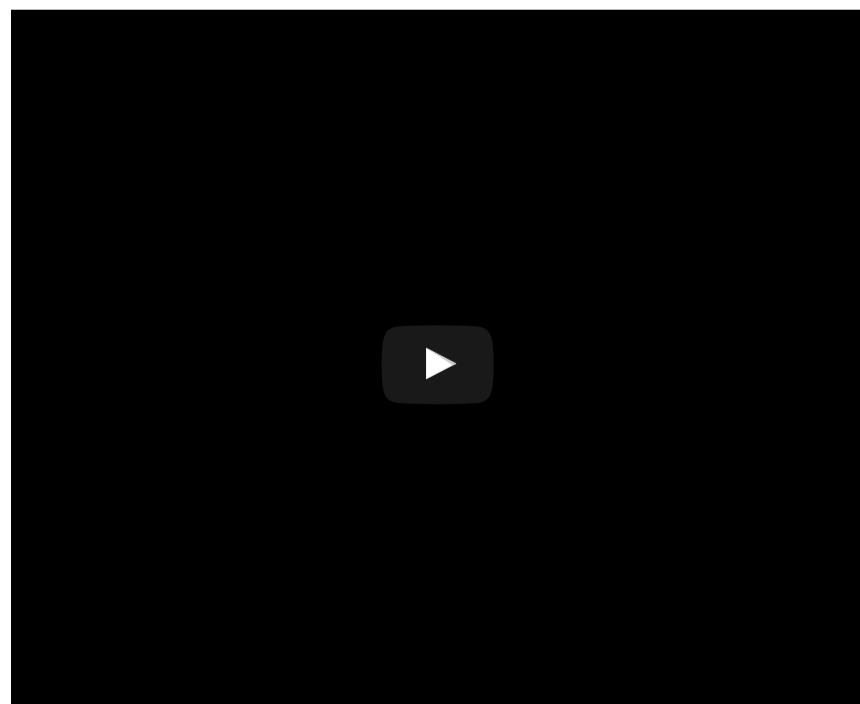


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In the song lists about **gratitude**, etc., I always try to include at least one song that can be used with younger kids. However, most of the songs are geared more toward adolescents and adults.

So here's a whole list with only songs that are appropriate for children... although they can benefit the rest of us, as well. (I know several adults who find it really helpful to belly breathe with Elmo!)

### Emotions & Self-Control



**Belly Breathe**, with Common and Colbie Caillat

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mZbzDOpylA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpylA)

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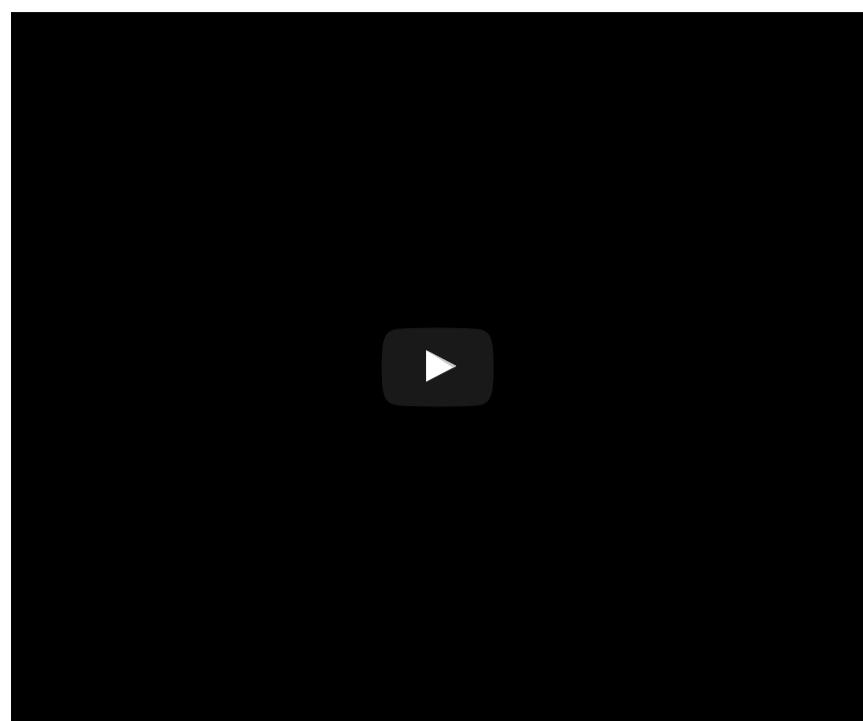
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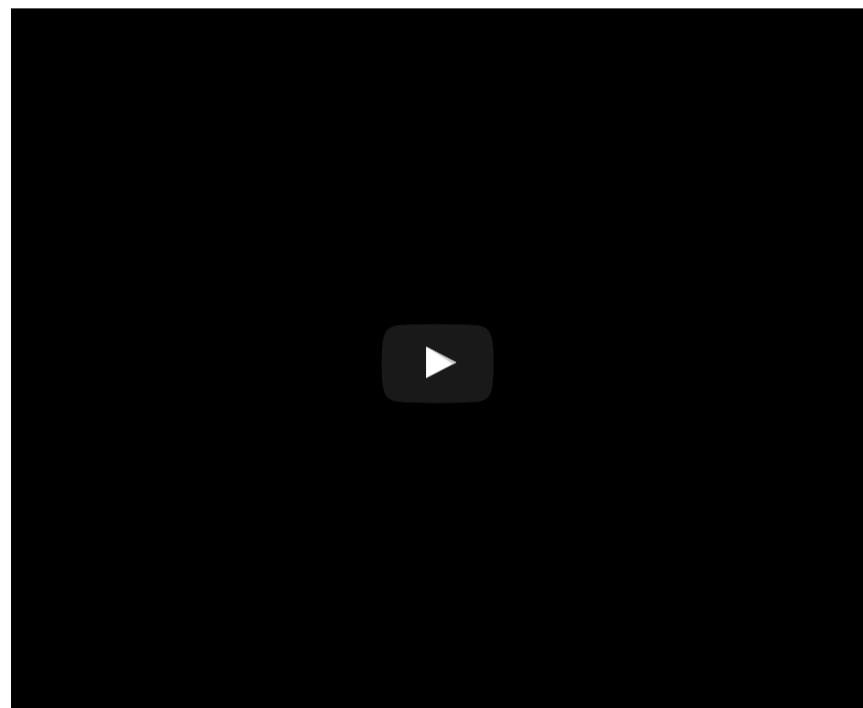
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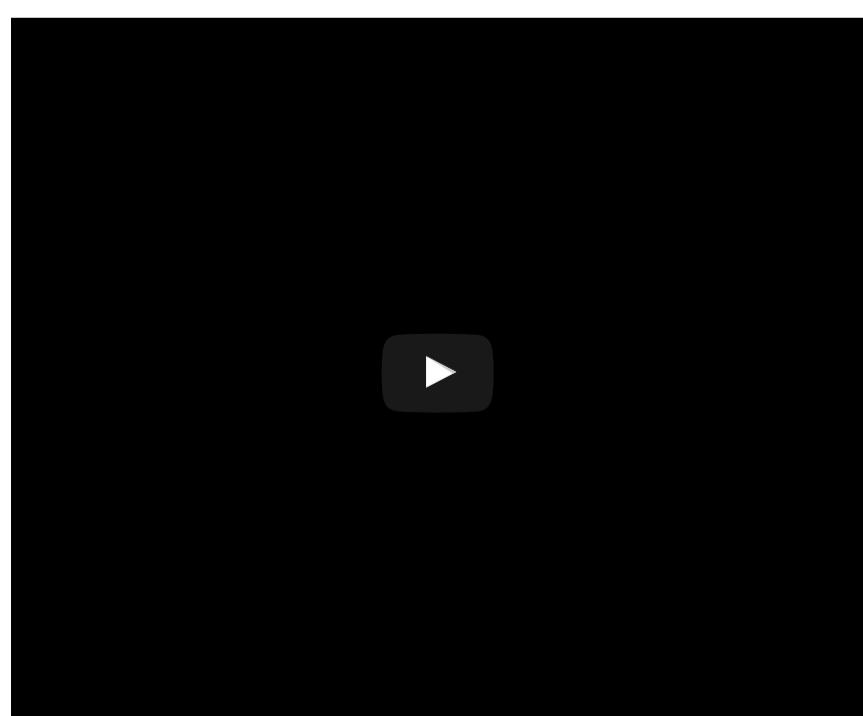


**Feelings**, Patty Shukla  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utZrodPu5sk>



**Me Want It (But Me Wait)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PnbKL3wuH4>

## Gratitude



**Thank Someone**, Amy Grant and John Hiatt

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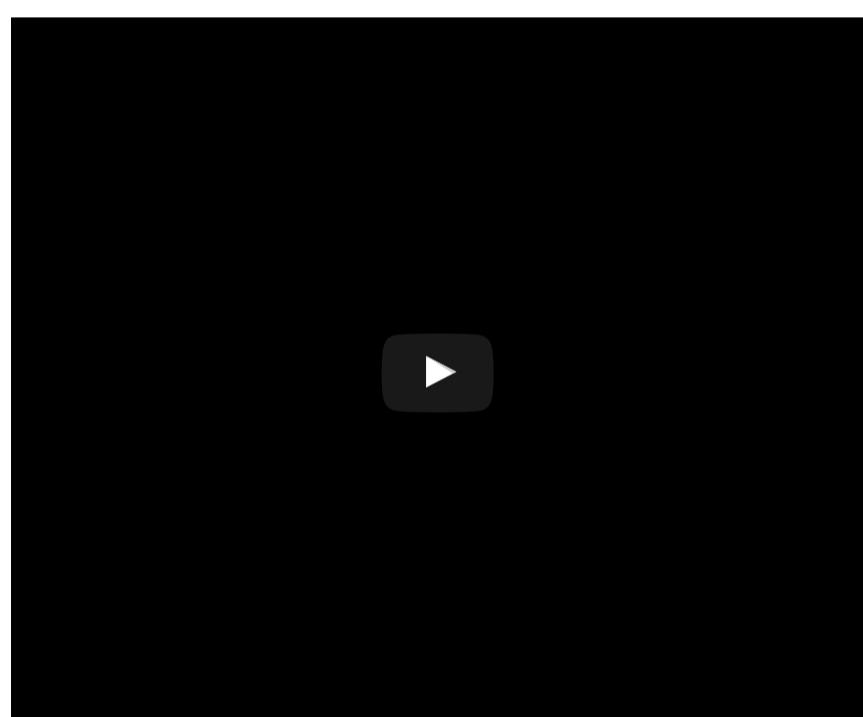
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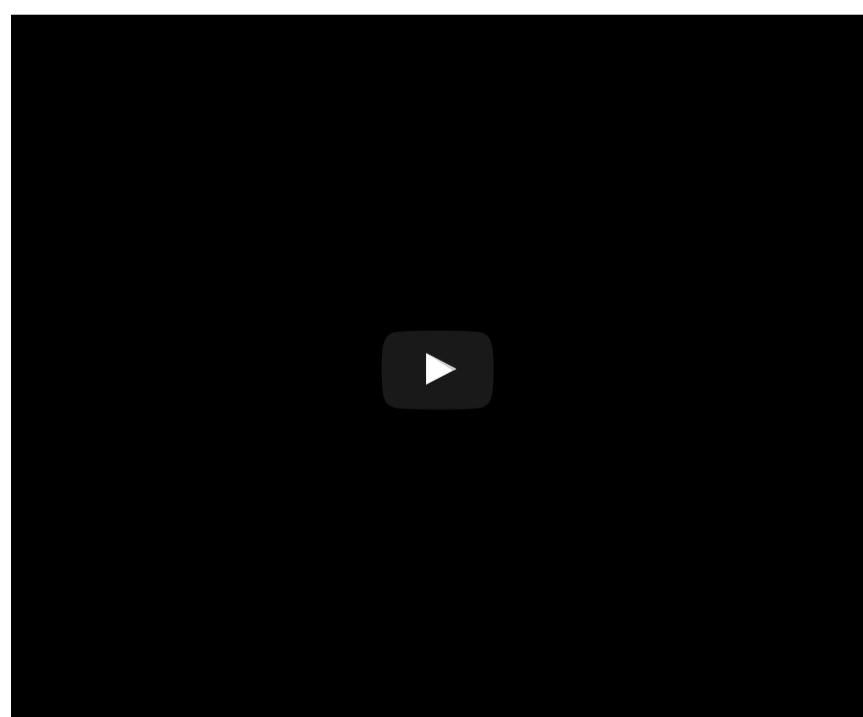
**Together is Better** ("I'm grateful for my friends.")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z94Ko1Z5pCo>

### **Facing Challenges/Self-Compassion/Persistence**

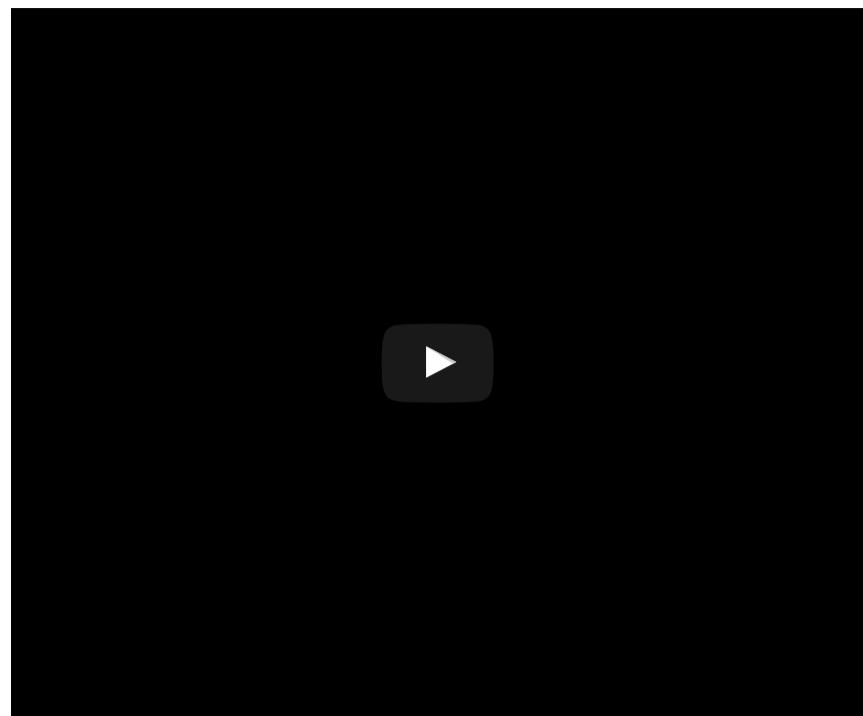


**Believe in Yourself Song**, with Michael Bublé  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mw5E6gYpB8>



**Don't Give Up**, with Bruno Mars

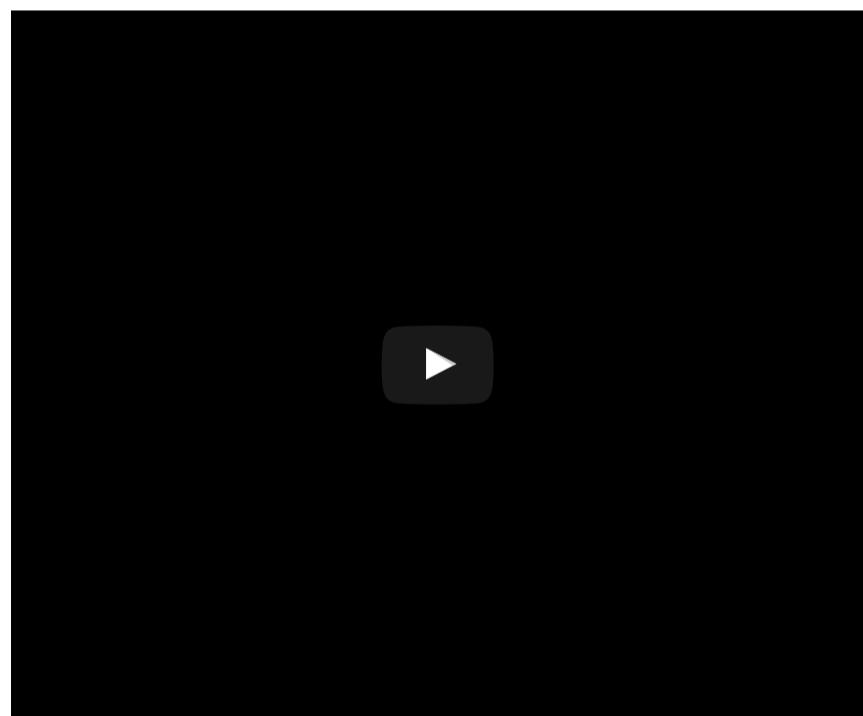
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**Power of Yet**, with Janelle Monae

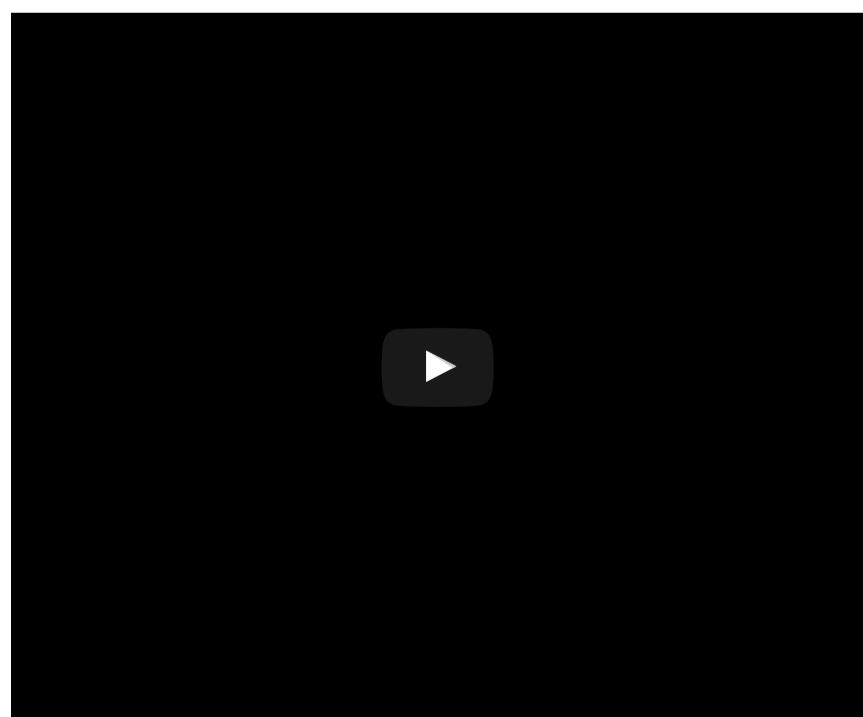
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLeUvZvuvAs>

### **Self-Acceptance/Self-Esteem**



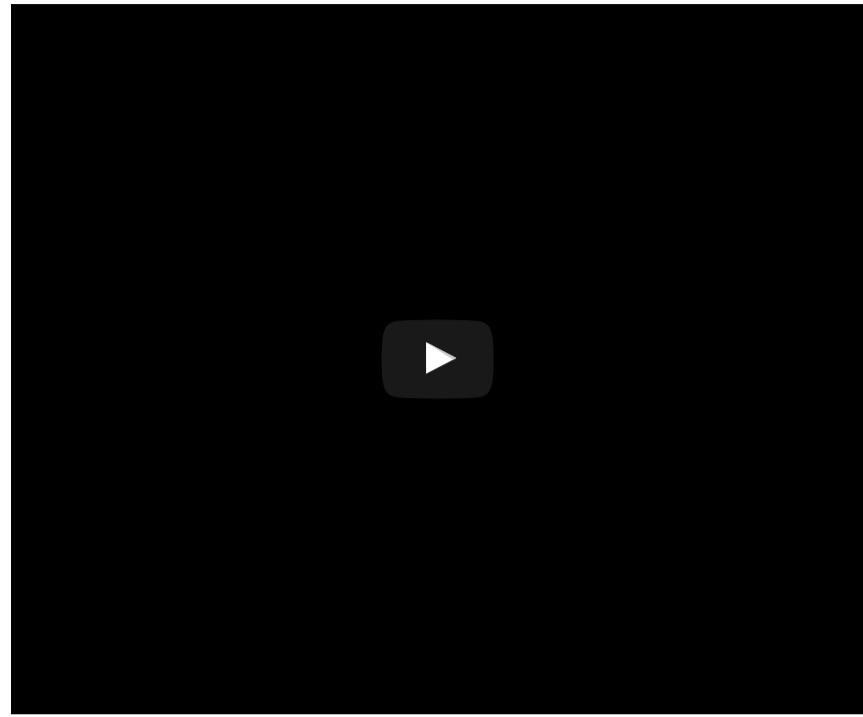
**Everybody Be Yo'self**, with Keb Mo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nLwVGCKNEo>



**The Ugly Duckling** (“It’s good to be me.”)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omK-PtxMOEk>



### **What I Am, with Will.I.Am**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyVzjoj96vs>

If you have a favorite song for teaching mindfulness or social-emotional skills to kids, please post a comment or email me at [mindfulteachers\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:mindfulteachers[at]gmail[dot]com) so I can add it to the list.

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Catharine Hannay  June 15, 2016 at 7:21 PM

Thanks to the Facebook folks for your great suggestions! I've added a couple of songs to the list above, and also a couple of songs for teens to the Self-Acceptance playlist:  
<http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2016/03/songs-about-self-acceptance.html>

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Sunday, March 29, 2015

## Next Time, I'll Do Better: Recognizing and Learning from Mistakes



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It's uncomfortable to feel guilt or shame over something we've done. But instead of trying to push away these negative feelings, we can use them to avoid making the same kind of mistake again.

Think about something that you feel bad about doing or saying, and what you wish you'd done differently. Then write your answers to the following questions.

Something I regret doing or saying:

Why I regret it:

What led up to this incident:

What I learned:

How I could have handled it differently:

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What I can do to avoid this type of problem in the future:

*Note: If you plan to use this activity in a class, be very clear with your students how the information will be used, and don't force them to share anything with the group. Discussion with peers can be very helpful in a safe, supportive environment, but this activity will backfire if it makes a student feel even more shame or discomfort.*

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Sunday, April 19, 2015

## Time to Breathe: Awareness of the Present Moment



image courtesy Mindfulness Without Borders

"Time to Breathe" is a mindfulness practice that was developed by [Mindfulness Without Borders](#) and is reproduced here with their permission.

A first step to developing more mindfulness in your daily life is learning new ways to pay attention and connect to experiences in the moment. One easy way to bring your awareness to the present moment is developing a consistent breathing practice. We call this core mindfulness practice "time to breathe."

To get started, schedule specific times in the day that you can stop, take time to breathe and observe how that works for you. Ideally, practice breathing mindfully for 3-5 minutes a day.

- Sit in a comfortable position. Allow both soles of your feet to connect to the floor.
- Rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders drop.
- Gently close your eyes or look for a reference point somewhere on the floor where you can return your eyes when they get distracted.
- Let your spine grow tall and noble like the trunk of a tall tree.
- Take a moment to notice how your body feels as you bring your attention to the flow of your breath. You don't need to breathe in a special way. Your body knows how to breathe.
- Simply notice each breath coming into the body with an in-breath, and leaving the body with an out-breath.

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- If you notice your mind is caught up in thoughts, concerns, emotions or body sensations, know that this is normal.
- Notice what is distracting you and gently let it go without judgment, by redirecting your attention back to the breath.
- Keep escorting your attention back to the experience of breathing.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to your surroundings and let how you feel now guide you.

Time to Breathe is sometimes called Tuza, which means "to slow down and chill" in one of the local dialects in Rwanda, where Mindfulness Without Borders first developed some of their mindfulness activities.

You can access a recording of this practice and other mindfulness practices by visiting:

<https://soundcloud.com/mindfulnesswithoutborders/sets/mwb-mindfulness-practices>  
or  
<http://mindfulnesswithoutborders.org/media/>

To learn more, please contact: [info@mwithoutborders.org](mailto:info@mwithoutborders.org)



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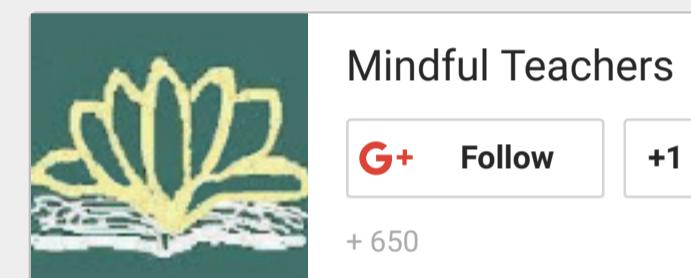
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Labels: [adolescents](#), [practicing mindfulness](#), [teaching mindfulness](#)

**1 comment:**

Ernest C. Domenech August 14, 2016 at 2:06 AM

I every time spent my half an hour to read this blog's articles all the time along with a cup of coffee.

The Summer's

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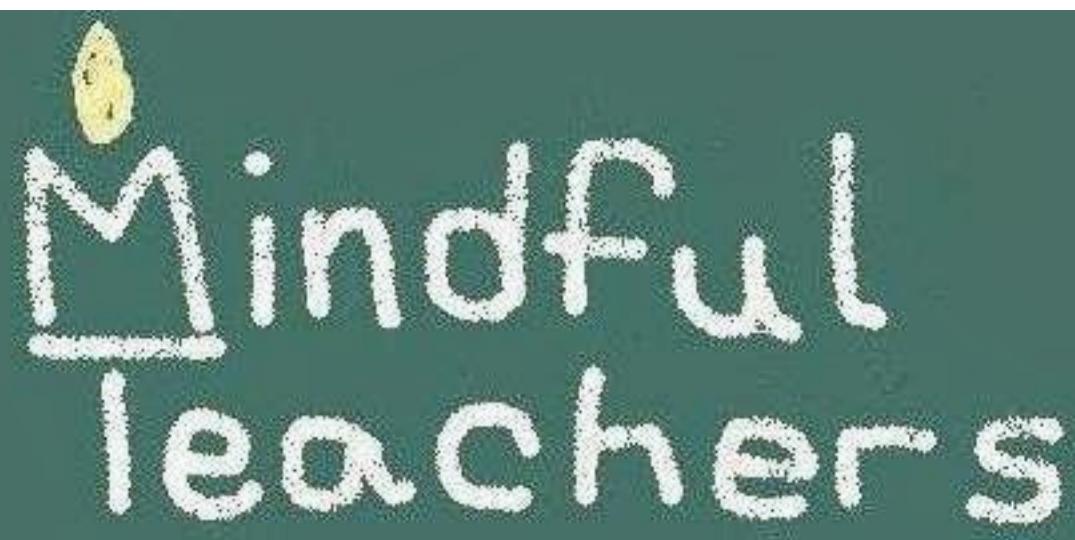
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Sunday, January 11, 2015

## Relaxed Abdominal Breath: Stress Reduction through Mindful Breathing



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“Relaxed Abdominal Breath” is a sample activity from the book *Yoga Sparks* and is reprinted here with permission from New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Shallow breathing (“chest breathing”) can result in a vicious cycle: We breathe shallowly because we’re under stress, which makes the body feel it’s not getting enough air. This causes more stress, prompting faster, shallower breathing.

In contrast, breathing by relaxing the abdomen helps slow and deepen the breath. This triggers calming changes in the body and mind. That’s why relaxed abdominal breathing (“belly breathing”) is one of nature’s best anti-stress medicines.

1. Lie down, if possible, or stand tall. If you’re lying down, feel free to bend your knees or put a rolled towel under your knees if that’s more comfortable.
2. Breathe in and out through your nose and take a moment to notice the sensations of your breath coming into and leaving your body.
3. Place your palms on your lower belly, resting them comfortably below your navel. Relax your abdomen.
4. When you’re ready, inhale and notice how your belly rounds and your hands gently rise. Observe how your navel moves away from your spine.
5. As you exhale, notice how your belly releases inward and your hands gently fall. Observe how your navel moves toward your spine.
6. Continue for a few more slow, full breaths, watching this gentle rise and fall. Avoid pushing your belly out or straining. Be patient and relaxed. Your body knows how to do this.

It's fine to breathe through your mouth if you must, but because the nose has little hairs

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that warm and filter the air, nose breathing is preferable.

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## 2 comments:

**Jude Walters** March 28, 2017 at 2:36 AM

Due to heavy workload and lack of rest, we are facing different types of health problems and stress is the common problem among them. It is quite beneficial to deal with stress at the right time, otherwise, we are suffering from health and mental problems. Here this article also describes some essential facts about how to deal with stress and how to get quick relief. Thanks for this wonderful article with useful information.

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**Catharine Hannay**  March 28, 2017 at 11:56 AM

Thanks for your comment. It's amazing what a difference it can make simply to breathe!

---

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Sunday, May 24, 2015

## One-Word Labeling: Thoughts, Emotions, Sensations, and Urges



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"One-Word Labeling" is a sample activity from the book *The Practicing Happiness Workbook* and is reprinted here with permission from New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

We all have constant streams of *sensations, emotions, thoughts, and urges* passing through our minds and bodies. If we're not aware of them, we may act on them in unhealthy ways. Mindful labeling can help. Labeling is simply the act of naming what you're observing.

- A *sensation* is a physical feeling in the body, such as aching or tingling.
- A *thought* is something that passes through the mind: a string of words, a mental image, or a memory.
- An *urge* is an impulse or desire to do something, such as scratch your nose.
- An *emotion* is a combination of sensations, thoughts, and urges. Emotions are complex, but they can be labeled with a single word, such as "anger," "happiness," or "sadness."

Let's use these labels in a meditation exercise. We'll try it for five minutes the first time.

Settle into a posture that's relaxed yet alert. Close your eyes or gaze at a neutral spot. Allow your breath to flow at its own rhythm without trying to change it.

When you're ready, expand your attention to include whatever you notice within your mind and body. Label what you observe: "thought," "emotion," "sensation," or "urge." Say the word gently and silently to yourself. Don't try to force anything, just label whatever appears.

The purpose of mindfully labeling thoughts and feelings is to recognize that they're distinct from the person who's having them. You are not your thoughts and feelings; they come and go while you remain yourself.

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Sunday, October 5, 2014

## Harnessing the Four Elements: A Mindfulness Activity for Facing Challenges



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“Harnessing the Four Elements” is a sample activity from the book [Mindfulness for Teen Anxiety](#), and is reprinted here with permission from New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

This simple practice is easy to remember, because it involves just knowing the four elements—earth, air, water, and fire—that formed the basis of many ancient beliefs. It works best standing, although you can do it sitting down.

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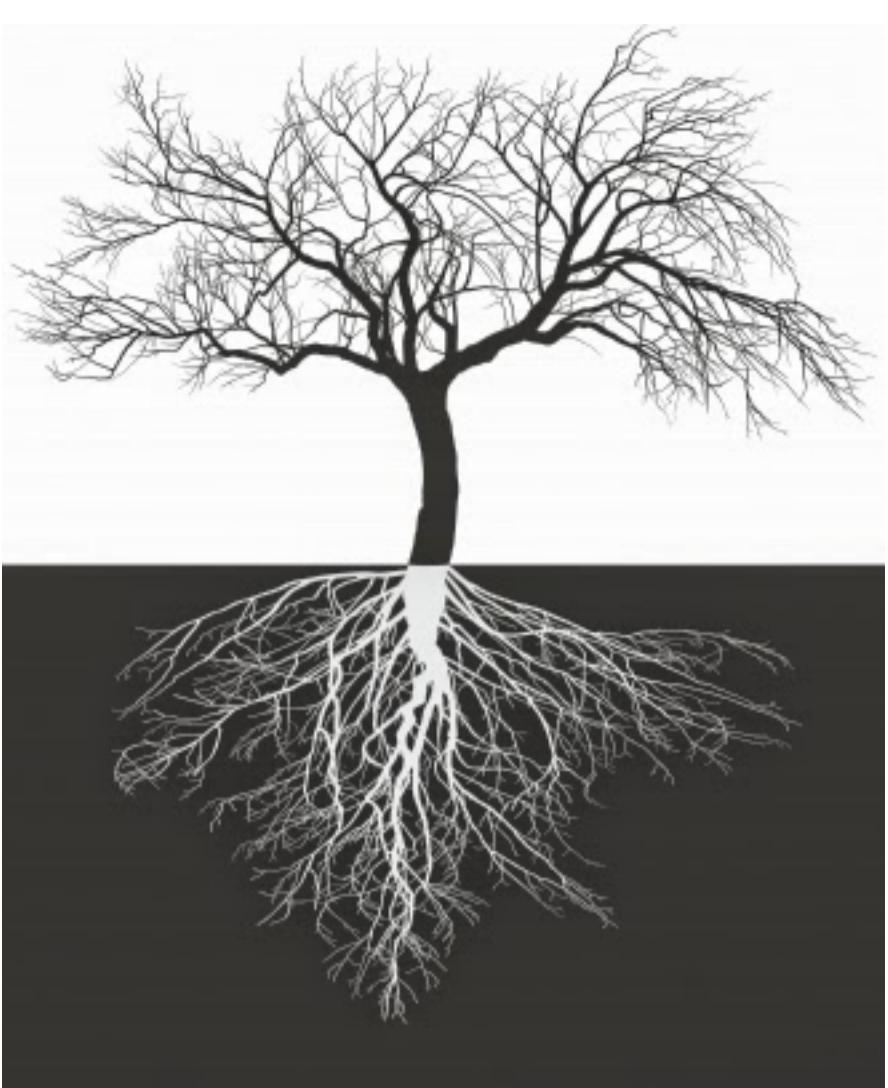
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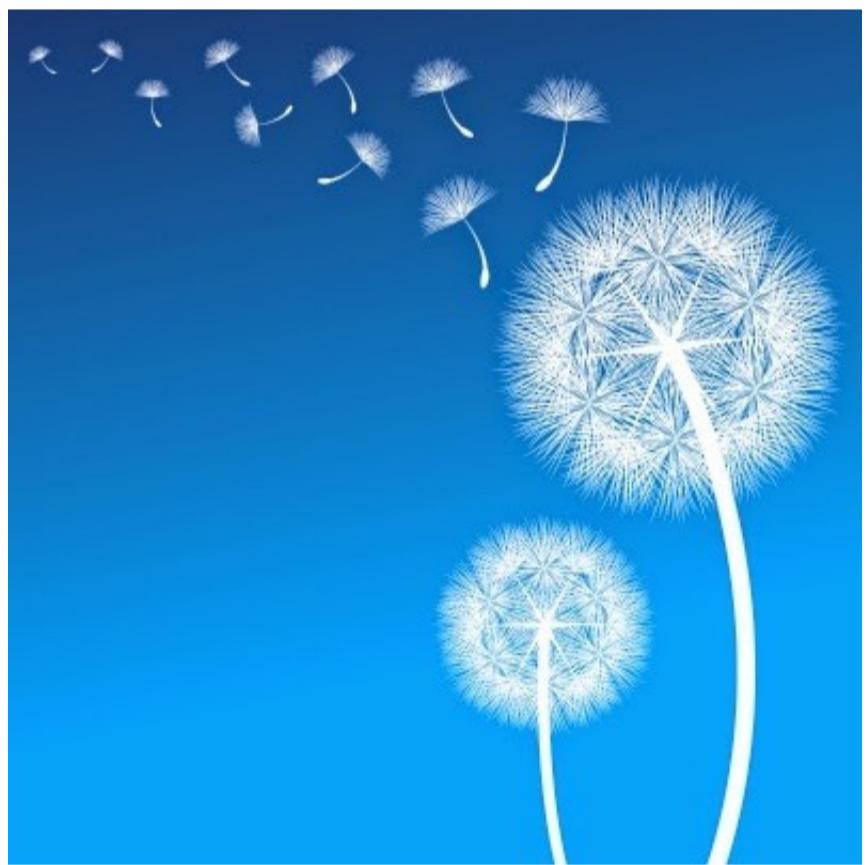
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First, feel your feet rooted deeply in the earth like a tree. You are making contact with earth, the first element. Earth is solid and will hold you stable. Feel the earth beneath you; you can even imagine roots burrowing deep into the earth.



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Next, feel the air at your nostrils. Air makes us free and independent. Air represents the power of our minds, blowing away our fears. Feel your chest and belly open and expand with each breath.

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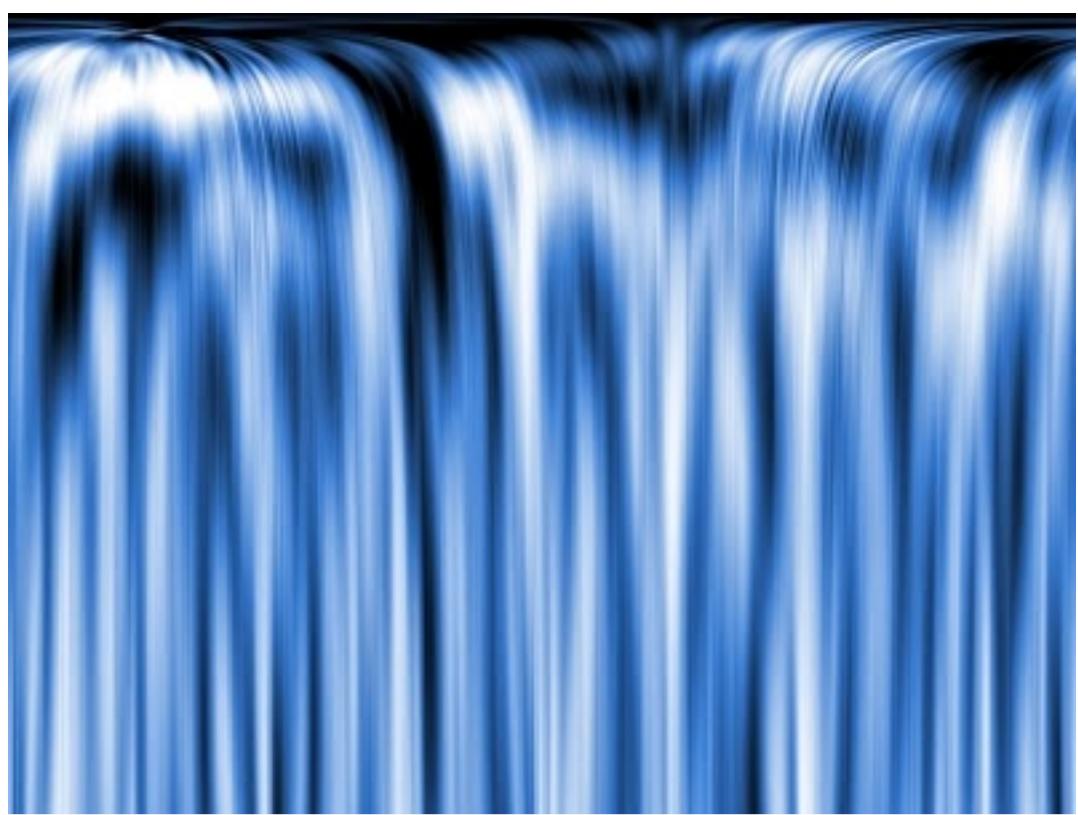
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Once you have connected with air, take a moment to just swallow the saliva in your mouth, and follow it into your belly. The element water flows, settles, and reflects.



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Lastly, feel the energy from deep inside your body. This is the fire of life that gives us confidence, strength, and power in the world.

Take a moment now to connect with each element: earth with its stability, air of independence, water of reflection, and fire of life. Ask yourself whether you need more of any of these qualities as you face a challenge.

From *The Mindfulness Workbook for Teen Anxiety* by Dr. Christopher Willard © New Harbinger Publications, 2014. Reprinted with permission. [www.newharbinger.com](http://www.newharbinger.com)

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Sunday, November 16, 2014

## Emotion Improv: an Exercise for Developing Mindfulness of Feelings



sattva for freedigitalphotos.net

“Emotion Improv” is a sample activity from the book *A Still Quiet Place* and is reprinted here with permission from New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

A rectangular space is defined. Visual cues are used to designate 25 percent, 50 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent of the distance from one end to the other. Participants are instructed to move forward, demonstrating an emotion at a given percentage. Because it is very common and frequently problematic, I usually begin with anger.

*Take a moment to rest in stillness, then step forward to the back end of the bookcase and show a small amount of anger (25 percent) with your body and your face. Now step forward, in line with the front of the bookcase, and show a medium amount of anger (50 percent). Notice what this feels like in your body, mind, and heart...*

Because this is a powerful exercise, it is often wise to limit the emotional expressions to 75 percent of maximum.

*Now step it back to 5 percent—just a smidge of anger. Is there a benefit to knowing what your body feels like when you are just a little bit angry?... Exactly! It's like an early warning system. Sometimes, when you know you're just starting to get angry, you can make better choices than when you are really angry... Now let's stand in stillness and quietness, and see what happens to the feeling. Does it grow? Disappear? Change?*

If time allows, you may repeat the exercise with other emotions: sadness, fear, jealousy, excitement. Just as I usually begin with anger, I usually end with joy.

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Sunday, January 3, 2016

## T.H.I.N.K. Before You Speak 2: Case Studies in Mindful Speech



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I've gotten a lot of positive feedback on [T.H.I.N.K. Before You Speak](#), especially from people who work with adolescents... so here are ten more situations related to mindful speech (or complete lack thereof).

For each of the following situations, decide whether the person followed these guidelines for mindful speech:

Is what I want to say **True**?

Is what I want to say **Helpful**?

Am **I** the best one to say it?

Is it necessary to say it **Now**?

Is it **Kind** to this person and others?

[THINK definition from *Mindfulness for Teen Anxiety* by Dr. Christopher Willard]

Mark ✓ for yes, X for no, or ? if you're not sure. There could be more than one 'correct' answer. The purpose of this activity is to reflect on the situations and whether you've witnessed or experienced something similar in your own life.

1. I did really well on an exam. I said to my friends, "I got the top score. What did you get?"

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

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2. One of my friends was bragging about getting a good score on a test, and I didn't want to tell him I failed. I said, "Congratulations!" then started talking about something else.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

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3. People kept telling me about this strange color Mrs. Jenkins dyed her hair. When I saw her, I didn't think it looked that bad, so I told her, "Your hair's not as weird as everyone says it is."

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

4. A woman with a big belly was about to enter the building. I told my friend, "We need to go open the door for that lady. She's pregnant."

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

5. A boy told his friend to hold the door open for me because I'm pregnant. I said, "Hey, I'm not pregnant! You sayin' I'm fat?"

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

6. A boy told his friend to hold the door open for me because I'm pregnant. I said, "Thank you for holding the door, but I'm actually not pregnant."

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

7. I saw a couple of kids cheating on a test. I went up to the teacher after class and told him what I'd seen.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

8. I saw a girl looking at her phone during a test. I went up to the teacher after class and told him she was cheating.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

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9. I saw Maria's boyfriend leaving the movie theater with another girl. I called Maria and said her boyfriend was cheating on her.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

10. I saw Maria's boyfriend leaving the movie theater with another girl. I went up to them and said hi, and asked "Where's Maria tonight?"

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

T H I N K

### Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion

(Some of these questions are quite personal. Teachers, please respect students' wishes about how much they choose to share with the group.)

1. Has someone ever asked you a question that you really didn't want to answer? How did you respond?

2. Believe it or not, someone really told one of the teachers at my school, "Your hair's not as weird as everyone says it is." Have you ever gotten (or given) a "compliment" that really wasn't a compliment? How did you feel afterwards?

3. Situation #5 also really happened at my school. Did you ever do something to be helpful that turned out badly? What happened? What do you wish had happened?

4. Have you ever caught someone cheating (either on a test or on a boyfriend/girlfriend)? Did you say anything? Why or why not?

5. Have you ever gotten in trouble because someone caught you cheating (or thought you were cheating)? What happened? What do you wish had happened?

6. In what other situations have you seen someone T.H.I.N.K. (or not) before speaking?  
What happened?

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Sunday, April 5, 2015

## T.H.I.N.K. Before You Speak: Case Studies in Mindful Speech



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For each of the following situations, decide whether the person followed these guidelines for mindful speech:

Is what I want to say **True**?

Is what I want to say **Helpful**?

Am **I** the best one to say it?

Is it necessary to say it **Now**?

Is it **Kind** to this person and others?

[THINK definition from *Mindfulness for Teen Anxiety* by Dr. Christopher Willard]

Mark ✓ for yes, X for no, or ? if you're not sure. There could be more than one 'correct' answer. The purpose of this activity isn't to get a particular score but to reflect on the situations and whether you've witnessed or experienced something similar in your own life.

1. Cheryl got a really unflattering haircut. I told her, "Your hair looks great!"

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ K

2. As soon as Cheryl left the room, I said to my friends, "Cheryl's hair looks terrible, doesn't it?"

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

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3. My brother did something that made me very angry. I told him, "It's really hard for me to forgive you. I need some time alone before we talk about this."

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

4. I suspect my sister might be pregnant. Without asking her, I mention my suspicions to our parents.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

5. I think my sister might be pregnant. I ask her if it's true, and if there's any way I can help her.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

6. My name is Kanye. I was upset when Taylor won an award because I thought my friend Beyoncé should have won. I interrupted Taylor's speech and told everyone Beyoncé's video was better.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

7. My name is Beyoncé. When I won an award later that night, I invited Taylor back onstage to finish her speech.

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

8. Kanye asked me, "Do you think I'm a jerk?" I told him "Yeah, but I like your music."

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

9. My name is Justin Bieber. After I visited Anne Frank's house, I wrote this in the guestbook:

"Truly inspiring to be able to come here. Anne was a great girl. Hopefully she would have been a belieber."

(Fans of Justin Bieber's music call themselves "beliebers.")

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

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10. After Justin Bieber got a lot of criticism for his comment, I posted this at the Anne Frank Facebook page:

"Despite everything, I believe people are really good at heart."

I think before everyone goes bashing Justin Bieber we should take a moment to think about these words and why Anne said them.

(This is a real comment that was posted at the site.)

Did I T.H.I.N.K. before I spoke?

\_\_\_\_\_T\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_K

Questions for further reflection and discussion:

- In the above situations, how could "I" have chosen to respond differently, and what impact would that have had on other people?
- Did any of the situations remind you of something from your own life? What happened, and did you and the other people involved T.H.I.N.K. before you spoke?
- Have you ever said something that was true but unkind or kind but untrue?
- Is it possible to say something kind but unhelpful?

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#### 4 comments:



**Monde Nyambe** June 11, 2015 at 7:16 AM

wOW! Simply great and amazing stuff!

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**Catharine Hannay**  June 11, 2015 at 1:02 PM

Thanks for your comment--you made my day! :-)

## Reply



Bren Murphy September 28, 2016 at 9:30 PM

Hi Catharine,

Thanks for this great resource - we have included this post in our list of mindfulness case studies  
<http://www.mbcc.com.au/case-studies> This is very relevant and topical for our students.

Thanks

Bren

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Catharine Hannay September 28, 2016 at 9:48 PM

Thanks for your comment, Bren. I'm glad you found the post useful.

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Sunday, November 2, 2014

## Changing the Script: A Mindful Way to Handle Annoyance



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“Changing the Script” is a sample activity from *The Autism Playbook for Teens* and is reprinted here with permission from New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Instead of following your usual “script” when you’re annoyed (keeping quiet, staying frustrated, or getting angry), you can choose to create a different script.

Often, your body can tell you that you’re annoyed before your mind can.

- Is your jaw clenched?
- Do your legs feel jittery?
- Are your arms folded tight against your chest?

If you notice that you’re annoyed, know that **you have a right to be annoyed!** This is different from being angry that other people don’t know what is bothering you.

You probably already know what you *don’t* want in an annoying situation. It can be helpful to practice thinking about what you *do* want and asking for it in a way that will make it easy for other people to say yes!

You can follow this basic script:

1. State the problem to a person who can help you.
2. Explain what why it is bothering you.
3. Suggest a solution.
4. Thank the person for helping you.

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For example: Your classmate is tapping a pencil on the table while you're working in class, and you can feel it starting to make you mad. You can say, "It would help me if you'd please stop tapping your pencil like that. It's making it kind of hard for me to concentrate. Thanks!"

Your new scripts will give you ways to help yourself get what you need rather than being stuck with the feeling of annoyance.

Adapted from *The Autism Playbook for Teens* by Dr. Irene McHenry and Dr. Carol Moog. © New Harbinger Publications, 2014. Reprinted with permission. [www.newharbinger.com](http://www.newharbinger.com)

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Sunday, March 15, 2015

## Giant Strides: A Seated Walking Practice



photo by Catharine Hannay

"Giant Strides" is a sample activity from *The Qigong Workbook for Anxiety* and is reprinted here with permission from New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

This seated exercise will rouse your energy, calm your mind, and improve your well-being.

Some seats make us slump so our back is curled and our chest compressed. Try to sit up as best you can, but don't strain yourself too much.

Slowly lift one foot off the ground. As you raise your foot, stretch your toes up toward you as fully as possible. Breathe in as you raise your foot. Then slowly lower your foot as you breathe out.

Breathe in as you raise the other foot, again raising your toes up toward you as fully as possible.

Lift your feet eight times. Wait ten seconds. Then repeat the sequence two more times.

Imagine you're taking huge strides over hills and mountains, like a giant. The movement is slow and powerful, your immense body covering miles with every step.

...Remain sitting comfortably in your seat, with your back as upright as possible.

Raise the heel of one of your feet, keeping the ball of your foot firmly on the floor. Then press the ball of your foot down into the floor.

Breathe out as you press the ball of your foot down for a couple of seconds. Then relax, release the pressure on the ball of your foot, and breathe in. Lower your heel.

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Then repeat with your other foot. Press and relax eight times, first one foot, then the other. Wait ten seconds. Then repeat the sequence two more times.

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Sunday, October 12, 2014

## Rainbow Walk: A Mindfulness Activity to Move the Body and Rest the Mind



Sidney, Australia (photo by Catharine Hannay)

This is probably my favorite mindfulness practice. I tend to spend too much time sitting around with my mind running in circles, and this helps get my body to move and my mind to rest.

The instructions are very simple: Take a walk, and look for something red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Keep going through the colors, in order, until the end of your walk.

You can do this anywhere, at any time of year. Obviously, it will be easier to spot a lot of different colors in a garden in the spring. But in the winter, you could notice some bright red berries, or a red ski hat, or even a stop sign.

Here are some suggestions for individual practice:

- Bring a camera and take a photo of at least one image with each color;
- Bring a sketchbook--even if you're not an artist, this will help you really focus on what you're looking at (as Churchill said about painting);
- Write in your journal about the things you noticed and how they made you feel.

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And here are some suggestions for group practice:

- Provide a worksheet for students to note and/or sketch something they saw in each of the colors;
- After the walk, discuss what different members of the group noticed--were different people focused on different things? (For example, one person may have noticed mostly flowers, while another person may have noticed mostly cars or clothing)

Here's a rainbow of photos from some of my own walks in different parts of the world. You might want to use them as a quiet contemplation practice on a day when you can't get outdoors.



Rindge, New Hampshire (photo by Catharine Hannay)

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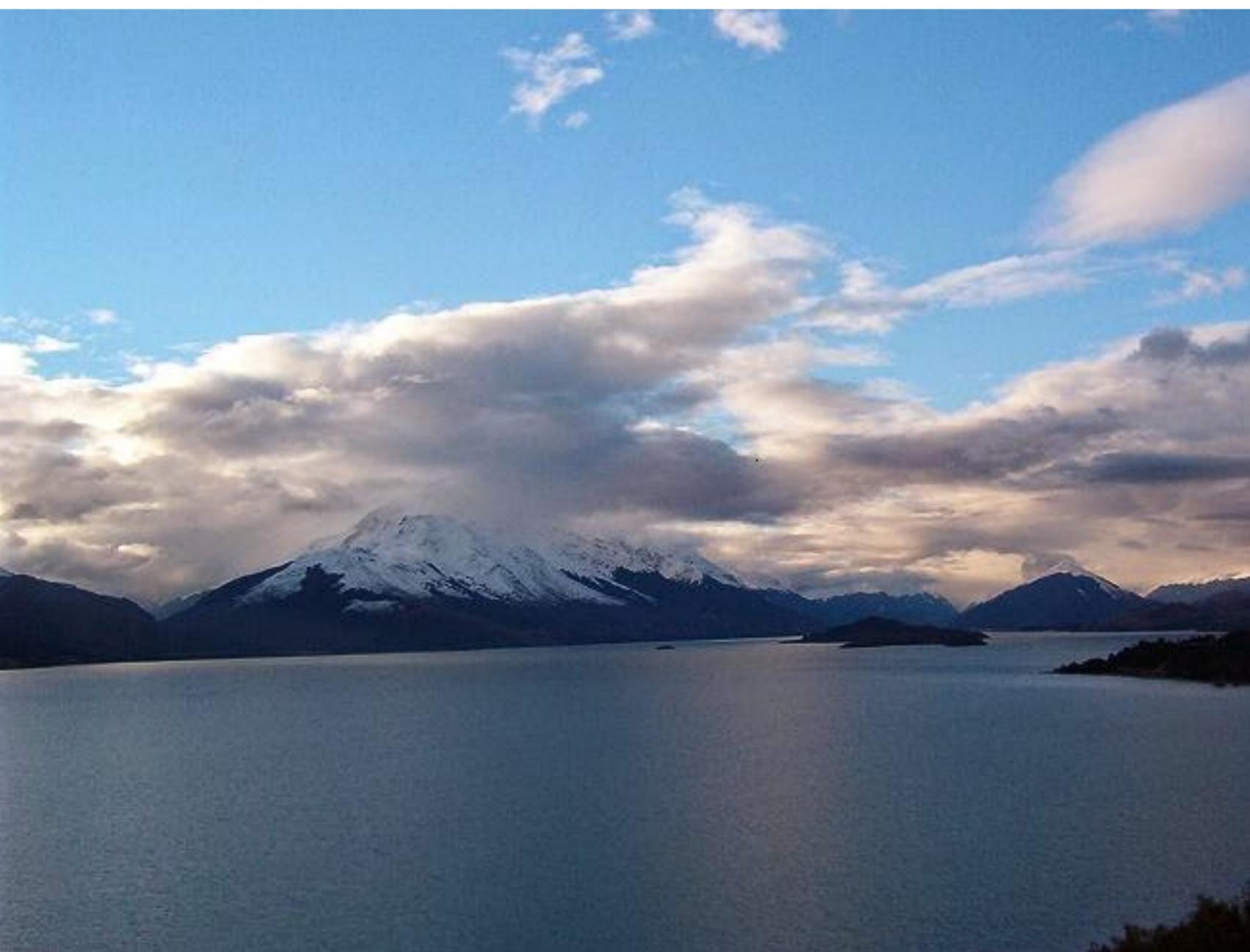
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**Adriana N** March 23, 2015 at 2:02 PM

Fantastic! All the info I was looking for! Cheers!

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**Anonymous** July 30, 2015 at 3:27 AM

We did this with our adult ESOL learners  
thank you for the idea ☺

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**Catharine Hannay** July 30, 2015 at 8:20 AM

You're welcome! :-)

**Sue** March 17, 2016 at 6:46 PM

I love this idea! Thanks so much for sharing all this wonderful information!



**Catharine Hannay** March 18, 2016 at 9:19 AM

Thanks for your comment, Sue--I'm so glad you're finding the site useful.

---

**Reply**



**Shakti Burke** August 4, 2015 at 1:37 AM

I love it, thanks Catharine.

cheers, Shakti

<http://www.joyfulmind.net.au/blog/mindfulness-in-the-classroom-some-helpful-suggestions>

**Reply**



**Catharine Hannay** August 4, 2015 at 11:37 AM

Thanks, Shakti--That's a great link with suggestions for teaching mindfulness to "wriggling, distraction-prone" kids.

**Reply**

**Anonymous** June 7, 2016 at 6:18 PM

Rainbow walk brilliant. Thanks for sharing.Pat Moss

**Reply**

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**Catharine Hannay** June 7, 2016 at 9:55 PM

Thanks for your comment, Pat. I'm glad you like rainbow walk!

---

**Reply**



**Tanuka** August 1, 2016 at 9:07 PM

Did this with my girls today on a neighborhood walk, and they LOVED it. And I noticed things I had never noticed before! Thank you for sharing!

**Reply**

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**Catharine Hannay** August 2, 2016 at 9:33 PM

That's wonderful, Tanuka! Thanks so much for sharing your experience.

---

**Reply**

**Anonymous** August 24, 2016 at 4:08 PM

What an amazing idea! Creating a workshop with others for H.S. students and I think this would be a great activity to include. Thank you!

**Reply**

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**Catharine Hannay** August 25, 2016 at 11:18 AM

All the best with your workshop--I hope they like the Rainbow Walk!

---

**Reply**



**Michelle Ross** March 30, 2017 at 4:57 PM

This was just what I needed, thank you. First I did it by myself and it helped me be in the moment and then I did it with my son and it really helped us connect! We did four cycles of it each taking two turns and finding new things!

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**Catharine Hannay** March 30, 2017 at 7:29 PM

Thanks for your comment, Michelle. I'm glad you and your son enjoyed it; that's a great idea to do two turns each.

---

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Sunday, September 21, 2014

## Pebble Meditation: A Mindfulness Activity to Cultivate Peace



Carlos Porto for freedigitalphotos.net

“Pebble Meditation” is a sample activity from the book *Teach, Breathe, Learn: Mindfulness in and out of the Classroom*, and is reprinted here with permission from publisher Parallax Press.

When I share “pebble meditation” with children in the classroom, I sometimes refer to it as “pebble reflection.” Some of my students also started calling the activity “peace rocks.”

Through mindful breathing and visualization, the qualities of freshness, solidity, clarity, and freedom are cultivated using the images of a flower, a mountain, still water, and a spacious blue sky. The pebbles help us make what can be abstract concepts into something more concrete.

Each student is given a small bag and four pebbles. (You could also have students bring their own pebbles and/or make their own bags.)



Rakratchada Torsap for freedigitalphotos.net

For the first pebble, the image is a flower and the quality is freshness. Thich Nhat Hanh

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often talks about how we are all beautiful flowers in a garden of humanity.



Porbital for freedigitalphotos.net

For the second pebble, the image is a mountain and the quality we are exploring is solidity. The mountain knows it's solid no matter what is going on around it.



James Barker for freedigitalphotos.net

For the third pebble, the image we are working with is still water in a lake, and the quality we are focusing on is clarity. When we are calm, we can make better decisions.



tungphoto for freedigitalphotos.net

The image for the fourth pebble is the spacious blue sky, and the quality is freedom, feeling free from worry or anxiety.

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students practical strategies to help them cultivate peacefulness within so they can be peaceful in the world.

Adapted from *Teach, Breathe, Learn: Mindfulness in and out of the Classroom* by Meena Srinivasan. Reprinted with permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California. [www.parallax.org](http://www.parallax.org)

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I Wish You Peace: A Simple Lovingkindness Meditation

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Posted by Catharine Hannay       +2 Recommend this on Google

Labels: teaching, teaching mindfulness

## 6 comments:

**Lurid Glow** April 24, 2016 at 4:27 AM

The fourth pic looks so attractive! Love to visit there so much.

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**Catharine Hannay**  April 24, 2016 at 10:44 AM

I'm not sure where that is, but I've been to similar lakes in New York and New England. Quite beautiful!

---

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** March 31, 2017 at 9:05 AM

Catherine can you explain the meditation process with each pebble please? Many thanks.

[Reply](#)

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**Catharine Hannay**  March 31, 2017 at 11:24 AM

Thanks for your comment. This is not a meditation I've done personally, but I'm happy to give you some background and some links for more information.

This is an activity developed by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village community to teach meditation to children. Meena Srinivasan, the author of the book cited above (Teach, Breathe, Learn) works in the public schools, where the "Peace Rocks" activity can work as a secular mindfulness practice.

Here's a video from Plum Village with a monk explaining about each pebble:  
<http://plumvillage.org/news/the-pebble-meditation/>

There's also a children's book from Thich Nhat Hanh called A Handful of Quiet, which has individual pages to place the pebbles and pause for reflection:  
<https://www.amazon.com/Handful-Quiet-Happiness-Four-Pebbles/dp/1937006212>

Pebble meditation is also included in the book Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children.  
<http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2014/03/planting-seeds-practicing-mindfulness.html>

---

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** March 31, 2017 at 9:07 AM

Sorry Catharine for your name being misspelled in prior post.

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**Catharine Hannay** March 31, 2017 at 11:25 AM

No problem. Happens all the time! :-)

---

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Sunday, January 10, 2016

## No Winners or Losers: Noncompetitive Games for Kids



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"Competitive games leave the majority of the players feeling left out or upset. When players are mismatched in skill, certain kids have the advantage, making it difficult to set up a fair game. Noncompetitive games create a sense of unity, cooperation and support. The games allow all kids to participate the entire time without branding some as winners and others as losers."

Shelley Frost, [LiveStrong.com](#)

The following games would be appropriate for mindfulness classes or for any context where you're looking for noncompetitive activities for a group of children (school, summer camp, birthday party, and so on).

I've included brief descriptions; click on the links for complete instructions, as well as additional games and activities.

**#1. "Say Something Nice,"** from [Party Games Pond](#): This would fit in well with a lesson on compassion or mindful speech.

**#2. "Mountain Range,"** from [Yogi Times](#): This is a group mindful walking activity that promotes problem-solving and cooperation.

The next three activities, from [Growing Kids](#), are fun ways to teach cooperation and body awareness.

**#3. Copy Cats:** Kids take turns being the leader; the rest of the kids imitate their movements.

**#4. Freeze Up:** Kids dance freely, then "freeze" as soon as the music stops playing.

**#5. Modern Musical Chairs:** In this non-competitive version of musical chairs, no one is "out." As each chair is removed, the kids sit on each other's laps, until everyone's trying to pile onto the same chair. ([LiveStrong](#) has a variation on this using hula hoops: "When only one hula hoop is left, the kids will have to stand very close to all fit inside the hoop.")

**# 6. Hand Breathing:** At [JoyfulMind](#), Shakti Burke explains how to help kids learn to meditate

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through moving the arms and hands up and down as the breath goes in and out at different tempos.

**Healthy Kids Healthy Future** features noncompetitive games that promote listening and movement, including:

**#7. Simon Says:** The focus is on listening carefully; no one is "out."

**#8. Sleeping Animals:** Children move like a particular animal, then pause.

**#9. Follow the Leader:** Similar to "Copy Cats." Each child takes a turn at the head of the line, then follows the next child's movements.

and, last but not least:

**#10. Playing with Balloons**, from [KidsActivitiesBlog.com](#), helps active kids settle down by focusing all their attention on keeping a balloon floating in the air.

If you have a favorite noncompetitive game that isn't listed here, please post a comment telling us about it or linking to the description.

---

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[Go Go Yoga for Kids \(recommended book\)](#)

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## 4 comments:

 **Anna** June 8, 2016 at 7:54 AM

nice

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**Millie** September 23, 2016 at 6:18 AM

Don't underestimate child's play. It may look like leisure time, but when children are playing house, fighting imaginary dragons or organizing a game of hopscotch, they're actually developing crucial life skills and preparing their brains for the challenges of adulthood.

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**Anonymous** January 1, 2017 at 10:43 PM

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Right...and not learning how to compete, and at times lose, totally prepares people for the "challenges of adulthood." Way to set them up for total disappointment when they finally learn that life is full of wins and losses.



**Catharine Hannay** January 2, 2017 at 3:02 PM

That's a good point that kids benefit from learning how to compete. However, there are so many other situations where they're in competition with each other (sports, grades, standardized tests, spelling bees, talent shows) that it's also beneficial for them to have some time for noncompetitive play so they can focus on other types of learning and recreation.

---

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Tuesday, March 18, 2014

## Marble Roll: A Cooperative Game for Teaching Mindfulness



Maggie Smith for freedigitalphotos.net

Marble Roll is a sample activity from the book *Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children*, and is reprinted here with permission from publisher Parallax Press.

*Planting Seeds* was recommended by Meena Srinivasan as one of the The Best Children's Books About Mindfulness.

Materials: empty paper towel or toilet paper roll for each child, one marble for the group

The children stand in a line, close together. Each child holds an empty paper towel or toilet paper roll. The child at the head of the line puts the marble in her paper towel roll and tilts it slightly so that the marble rolls into the roll of the person next to her.

The object is to try to move the marble from the first person in the line to the last person without dropping the marble. No catching with hands allowed! If someone drops the marble, she must start over again at the beginning of the line.

From *Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children* (2011) by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Community. Reprinted with permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California.  
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Friday, March 21, 2014

## Human Camera: A Mindfulness Activity to Engage the Senses



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*Planting Seeds* was recommended by Meena Srinivasan as one of the The Best Children's Books About Mindfulness.

Have the children get into pairs. One child is the camera; the other is the photographer.

The photographer walks behind her "camera," with hands on her camera's shoulders. She carefully guides her partner, who keeps his eyes closed. She will have the chance to make three photos.

She can guide her camera to just the right spot, either lifting his head up or down, to get the right angle. When she's ready to take the picture, she gently squeezes her partner's shoulders.

He can open his eyes momentarily, and his partner can "take the picture." Then he must close them again right away.

After the third snapshot, have the partners switch.

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**Anonymous** June 9, 2016 at 8:35 AM

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