Staying Present: Mindfulness for Better Teaching and Learning

Your name here:
Staying Present

What is it to be in the present moment?  

Why be present?

How can I stay present?
Presence

Simple “awareness on the present moment and thoughts, is increasingly recognized in today’s scientific community as an effective way to reduce stress, increase self-awareness, enhance emotional intelligence, and effectively manage painful thoughts and feelings (Project Happiness, n.d.)

In our busy modern lifestyles that are often characterized by stress, sleep deprivation, multitasking, and digital distractions… Shift your focus, and create a new mindset with presence.

https://www.projecthappiness.org/science-of-happiness
Mindfulness in Education

Why be mindful? What is mindfulness?

How can I be mindful?

Srinivasan, (2014)
Mindfulness

“a way of being, a practice we can engage in. It's a non abstract state; it's a kind, curious, nonjudgmental awareness that we can try to bring to each moment” (Srinivasan, p. 18, 2014).

Mind Full, Or Mindful?

Mindfulness

“...a mental state of being where a person focuses their awareness on the present moment, the here-and-now, while being in a state of acceptance to each emotion, idea or sensation that arises”.

“...a conscious, purposeful way of tuning in to what’s happening in and around us...the best of our human qualities, including the capacity for kindness, empathy, and compassion, support and are supported by mindfulness.”

(David & Sheth, 2011, p. 2).
Jon Kabat-Zinn, the biologist who first coined the term “mindfulness” in the '70s, defines it as a state of mind: the act of “paying attention on purpose” to the present moment, with a “non-judgmental” attitude (Davis, 2015).

- Mindfulness is a secular philosophy and set of techniques adapted from thousands-of-years-old Buddhist traditions recently landing in the business and medical worlds and now entering education.

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Living mindfully is like being an artist: you need the right tools to practice your craft, and you need to constantly refine your technique to achieve your creative potential. In the same way, using the present moment tools below will help you to hone a consistent mindfulness practice that will in time lead to a more aware, compassionate and fulfilling way of life.

In a spirit of nonjudgmental awareness, read the list of present moment tools below, and rank them from 1-10 based on how often you use them.

___ tool 1: Breathe Mindfully
Use your breath as an anchor to still your mind and bring your focus back to the present moment.

___ tool 2: Listen Deeply
Listen with intention; let others fully express themselves and focus on
understanding how they think and feel.

___ tool 3: Cultivate Insight
See life as it is, allowing each experience to be an opportunity for learning.

___ tool 4: Practice Compassion
Consider the thoughts and feelings of others and let tenderness, kindness and empathy be your guides.

___ tool 5: Limit Reactivity
Observe rather than be controlled by your emotions. Pause, breathe, and choose a skillful response based on thoughtful speech and non-violence under every condition.

___ tool 6: Express Gratitude
Practice gratitude daily and expand it outward, appreciating everyone and everything you encounter.

___ tool 7: Nurture Mutual Respect
Appreciate our common humanity and value different perspectives as well as your own.

___ tool 8: Build Integrity
Cultivate constructive values and consistently act from respect, honesty and kindness.

___ tool 9: Foster Leadership
Engage fully in life and in community. Share your unique talents and generosity so that others can also be inspired.

___ tool 10: Be Peace
Cultivate your own inner peace, becoming an agent for compassionate action and social good.
Which tools do you use most often?

Which tools do you use least often?

Can you think of ways to incorporate those tools into your life?

Which one could you try today?

Why mindfulness in Education?

Responding rather than Reacting...
Breathing is FREE...
Transform Education from the INSIDE out...
Mindful Monday
Mindfulness, Focus, Mindset

Mindfulness, the ancient practice of focusing non-judgmental awareness on the present moment and thoughts, is increasingly recognized in today’s scientific community as an effective way to reduce stress, increase self-awareness, enhance emotional intelligence, and effectively manage painful thoughts and feelings.

The mind is highly trainable through various mindfulness practices like meditation, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT).

Anyone can stand to benefit from cultivating the skills of mindfulness – particularly in our busy modern lifestyles that are often characterized by stress, sleep deprivation, multitasking, and digital distractions. Shift your focus, and create a new mindset.
Beginning of Year Intentions

What are some ways I can ensure my students and I have the most positive classroom experience this year?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Some things I already do that I love and should KEEP

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________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Some things that would be helpful to CHANGE

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Some things that would be helpful to START

What are some things I love doing outside of school that I can commit to engaging in to ensure I stay energized, excited about teaching, and happy in general?
Who is going to be my "life line" in my professional life this year? Who is the person I can rely on for input, advice, a shoulder to lean on, my "safe place," or just someone to laugh and celebrate with?

Who will be the "life lines" in my personal life?

Which colleague or colleagues can I develop a closer relationship with this year? (Can I be someone's life line?)
Notes from Professional Development

What "take aways" do I have from the beginning of the year Professional Development? Which ideas can I immediately implement before they get forgotten? Which ones in particular might contribute to a more joyful classroom experience?
Rainbow Walk

Use your 5 senses to find the colors of the rainbow. With no sound, walk and find something that is red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet (purple).

Write what you found by each color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet (Purple)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflect here on the photo you took while on our Rainbow Walk or draw a picture here of your photo.
Use your five senses in your reflection or did you notice any thoughts, emotions, or a “to-do” list come up while on the walk? Did you stay present or did your mind wander? Did any of the colors you spotted make you think or feel something? What was it? Explain...Remember no judgement, just awareness...
Now take a few moments to write down your reflections on the following questions:

1. How was this experience the same or different from how you normally eat?

2. What, if anything, surprised you about the experience?
3. What did you notice with the raisin (or whatever food you chose) in terms of sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste?

4. What thoughts or memories popped up while doing this exercise?

5. What is one tip for yourself that you are going to take from this experience to apply to your eating habits in the future?

6. What differences did you notice between eating the first raisin and then eating the second raisin?

7. Did you notice any thoughts or emotions arise? Were you able to let go of your thoughts and just explore the raisin? What did this feel like?
Pebble Meditation Practice Sheet

Flower - Fresh
I feel fresh, energetic, joyful and playful when: (finish the sentence or draw a picture)

Mountain - Solid
I feel solid, strong and confident when: (finish the sentence or draw a picture)

Still Water - Reflecting
I feel calm, still, quiet and focused when: (finish the sentence or draw a picture)

Space - Free
I feel free, light and relaxed when: (finish the sentence or draw a picture)
Pebble Meditation

Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain. Breathing out, I feel solid.

Breathing in, I see myself as still water. Breathing out, I feel calm.

Breathing in, I see myself as space. Breathing out, I feel free.

Breathing in, I see myself as a flower. Breathing out, I feel alive.

created by Bianca Browne for Mindful Minis