



Mindfulness Parenting: From Chaos to Connection

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Please Grab...

1. Something sweet
2. Something crunchy
3. A piece of fruit

What is Mindfulness?

- ▶ The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something
- ▶ Being present with our body and our mind, being a witness to yourself
- ▶ Allowing yourself to feel whatever is rising without judgment
- ▶ Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention in the present moment, non-judgmentally –John Kabat-Zinn.



What Mindfulness is Not

- ▶ Your mind going blank
- ▶ You having no feelings
- ▶ Sitting on a cushion for 20+ minutes
- ▶ You must achieve a bliss state
- ▶ A cure for everything

Body Scan

Body Scan Meditation

- 1 Set aside a time and place in your day where you can sit comfortably and you won't be distracted or disturbed.
- 2 Find a comfortable but attentive seated position, close your eyes, and bring your attention to your toes.
- 3 Working up from your toes, bring awareness to each body part in turn: your feet, ankles, calves, knees, etc. up to your head.



Health Benefits:

- Reduced stress
- Decreased muscle tension
- Increased pain tolerance

Why it works to reduce stress:

Body scan meditations encourage self-awareness of sensations we might otherwise be ignoring.

Things that Mindfulness Helps With

- ▶ Higher Brain Functioning
- ▶ Increased immune function
- ▶ Lowered blood pressure
- ▶ Lowered heart rate
- ▶ Increased awareness
- ▶ Increased attention and focus
- ▶ Increased clarity in thinking and perception
- ▶ Lowered anxiety levels
- ▶ Experience of being calm and internally still
- ▶ Experience feeling connected
- ▶ Decreased depressive symptoms
- ▶ Self-acceptance
- ▶ Allows you to get familiar with your triggers
- ▶ Allows you to get familiar with your emotions
- ▶ Much more....

Linking Mindfulness to Parenting

- ▶ How can mindfulness help you as a parent?
 - ▶ Helps you to understand when you are starting to become dysregulated
 - ▶ Helps you to slow down before reacting
 - ▶ Helps you to notice the subtle cues when your children are becoming dysregulated
 - ▶ Helps you with having empathy
 - ▶ Helps you to model a more regulated response to dysregulation
 - ▶ Helps you to recognize patterns in yourself and your children

Breathing

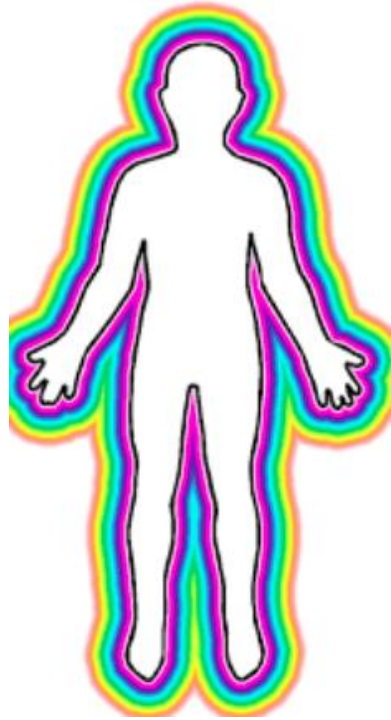
- ▶ 6 breaths per minute turn on your parasympathetic nervous system
- ▶ How does mindful breathing impact us?
 - ▶ Increases ability to focus
 - ▶ Decreases mind wandering
 - ▶ Allows for more positive emotions
 - ▶ Decreases emotional reactivity
- ▶ Inhale through your nose for a count of four. Then exhale through your nose for a count of six. Repeat this process six times.

(<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/05/180510101254.htm>)

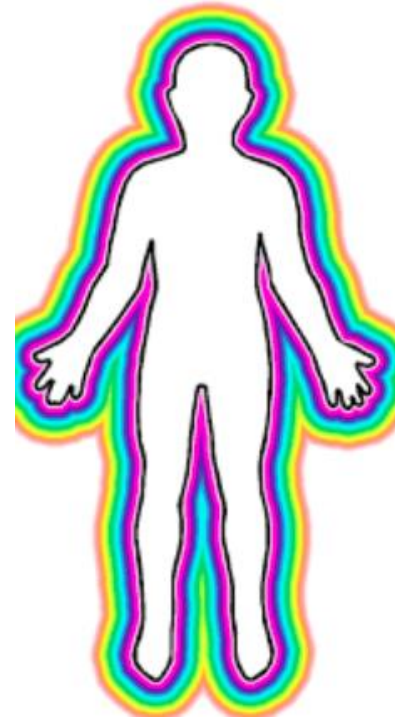
External Regulator

- ▶ By nature the parent/caregiver is the one who holds the container
- ▶ Your role is to keep your child(ren) safe and protected, this means supporting them in the time of needs and outbursts (regression)
- ▶ If you struggle with staying regulated your job is to tend to yourself first
- ▶ Being aware of your experience will help you to become familiar with your emotions and your body sensations with different emotions

Checking In With Ourselves



Anger



Love

Real Life Example

- ❖ Think of a typical fight that happens in your home
- ❖ Play this scene in your mind
 - What were your thoughts?
 - What were your emotions?
 - What body sensations did you feel?
- ❖ Shake it out

Decreasing Blowups

- ▶ Before you enter ask yourself am I regulated enough to enter? Is there another adult who can help if you are not?
- ▶ Track your body language: posture, tone of voice, eye contact (get on their eye level, gentle tone of voice, etc.)
- ▶ Name your experience only – use “I statements” – “I am feeling overwhelmed”
“I am starting to feel angry”
- ▶ If emotion words are a trigger- remove them and use body sensation words
“My heart is beating so fast right now” “My body is getting so hot right now”
- ▶ TIP - Less words are always better

Real life Example Repeated

- ❖ Think of a typical fight that happens in your home
- ❖ Apply the skillset we just spoke about and imagine you have been practicing mindfulness
- ❖ Play the scene in your mind
 - What were your thoughts?
 - What were your emotions?
 - What body sensations did you feel?
- ❖ Shake it out

Gratitude Practice

- ▶ In a Chinese Study researchers found that higher levels of gratitude were associated with better sleep, and also with lower levels of anxiety and depression. (<https://ideapod.com/neuroscience-reveals-gratitude-literally-changes-brain-happier/>)
- ▶ Gratitude activates the part of your brain associated with dopamine
- ▶ Gratitude increases activity in your hypothalamus- helps with sleeping, eating, and regulating your body

Ways to practice

- ▶ Gratitude Letters to others (do not need to send)
- ▶ Gratitude Journal for yourself
- ▶ Naming 3 things you are grateful for before bed or at dinner

Ways to Implement?

- ▶ You can implement mindfulness into basically anything!
- ▶ Find one activity or chore you do daily and use it as a mindfulness practice
- ▶ Try different times of the day with different activities/chores
- ▶ Ways to be mindful
 - ▶ Shower- feeling the water on your body, noticing the temperature, noticing your thoughts
 - ▶ Brushing teeth- from the moment you pick up your tooth brush
 - ▶ Drinking coffee- from the moment you have the thought "I need to make coffee"
 - ▶ Doing dishes- feeling the soap on your hands and feeling your feet on the floor
 - ▶ Folding laundry- using all your senses
 - ▶ Walking up/down the stairs or hallway- feeling your feet on the floor
 - ▶ Noticing your breath at any moment throughout the day
 - ▶ Noticing your senses in any moment

Mindful Eating



Are you ready to commit?

- ▶ Name 3 things you could do mindfully starting tomorrow...
- ▶ Pause...
- ▶ Take a breath...
- ▶ What are the thoughts that immediately follow you saying that? What emotions arise? Is there a body sensation?

How Will You Implement Mindfulness?

- ▶ What is one way you can add mindfulness into your day?
- ▶ What will be the hardest part about adding this into your day?
- ▶ Who can you recruit to help you? Who will you lean on?
- ▶ What are some words of wisdom you can offer yourself now?

Resources

Apps:

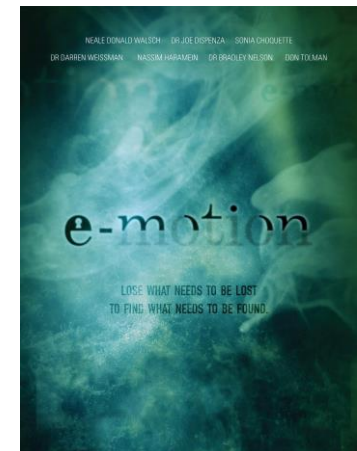
Insight Timer
Calm
Stop, Breathe & Think
Meditation Studio

Books:

The Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh
Wherever You Go There You Are by Jon Kabat Zinn
Buddha's Brain by Dr. Rick Hanson
The Whole-Brain Child by: Dr. Dan Siegel and Dr. Tina Bryson

Movies:

E-motion – Amazon Prime or Gaia
Heal – Netflix



Questions or Comments?

