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Children's Books
Conversation
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Mindfulness



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Librarians - How to Use This Kit

Welcome, Friends.

Thank you so much for choosing this healing kit to assist your community. Below are some recommendations we offer to help your kit do the most good. We wish you peace.

The Goal of This Kit

This kit has been designed to introduce facets of the concept known as mindfulness to members of your community. It is intended to be educational, not to replace the work of medical professionals. It can not undo any trauma that may have occurred.

We recognize that one size does not fit all in terms of our varying lived experiences, wellness needs, and what resonates from one person to the next. As such, this kit offers a variety of flavors of mindfulness, which kit users can sample on their journey to find mindfulness strategies that work for them. Inside, users will find opportunities to explore constructive conversation, activities, and meaningful books, and to engage in a larger community. With these offerings, kit users can begin building a toolkit which they can utilize moving forward to assist them in incorporating mindfulness into their daily lives or whenever it is needed most.

By offering this kit, you are not taking the place of a medical professional. You are merely providing a curated set of resources designed to aid your community members in a variety of ways.

Who Created This Kit

This kit was put together by the following team:



Stephen Jackson, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Restorative Justice Practitioner



Nicole Lewis, Community Advocate, Space Creator, Logistician



Megan Schadlich, MLIS, Author and Children's Librarian



Bonnie Thomas, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) specializing in working with youth utilizing art and play therapy

Lending Period

Ultimately, it's up to you. LCSW Bonnie Thomas suggests families be given 4 weeks with the kit to enhance effectiveness.

Assembling the Kit

Printing

To ensure their journey with mindfulness is sustainable, families are encouraged to remove and keep any printed pages that resonate with them for future reference. Upon the kit's return, lending institutions should review the kit's printed contents and reprint pages as needed.

We recommend you review the Community Helpers section and add any additional local resources that can assist families. These may include, but are not limited to, the following types of organizations:

- Your library's phone number, website, and email address, as well as any department, remote programming or services you may be offering that align with mindfulness
- Local mindfulness, breathing, meditation, or wellness organizations, especially those aligned with research, nonprofits, or with free/reduced cost options
- Mental health services
- 211/United Way

Housing

Considering the books and replaceable materials you choose to include, you may put this kit into one of the following:

- A backpack
- A wheelable bag/box
- A duffle bag
- A canvas tote
- A hard plastic case
- A sturdy binder

Materials to Replace

After each lending period, check your kit to see what materials need to be replaced. These may include:

- Any/all handouts
- Healing Activity materials:
 - It's up to you to determine how many activities you'd like to provide materials for. When deciding what to include, please consider the experiential diversity of what you're offering and not just what materials are easy to obtain. We suggest each activity be organized into a clearly labeled individual container, such as a clear plastic tote.

Mindfulness Healing Activities include:

- Breathwork + Breathing
 - Feathers
 - Stopwatch
 - Pinwheel Breath Activity:
 - Pinwheel templates
 - Chenille sticks/Pipe cleaners
 - Paper straws
 - Thumb tacks
 - Scissors
 - Ruler
 - Colored pencils
 - Pencil sharpener
 - Hole punch
 - Glue dots
- Mindful Moments
 - Scissors
 - Glue stick
 - Travel size Buddha Board with paintbrush

- Grounding
 - Smooth stones
 - Seashells
- Gratitude
 - Stationery paper with envelopes
 - Set of colored pens
 - Photo frames
 - Blank paper
 - Scissors
 - Markers
 - Crayons
 - Colored pencils
 - Pencil sharpener
 - Stickers
 - Die cut shapes
 - Glue dots
- Meditation
 - Bubbles
 - Hot cocoa or apple cider packets

When the Kit is Returned

When the borrower returns the kit, the librarian should ask if there is anything more that the library can do to help. There is a lot of information included in the kit, which may leave the family with questions, new research to complete, or community partners to seek out. Even if they don't need any assistance upon returning the kit, it's a good idea to offer a gentle reminder that the library is here to help them, should they need it.

Mindfulness Family Survey

Included at the end of the Family Materials Binder is a survey that was developed with the help of Laura Efrom, Assistant Branch Manager at the Severn Community Library in Maryland. We hope you'll consider utilizing it in your kit to understand and improve the experience of your families who are borrowing this kit. It's just one more way to involve your community in this wellness initiative.

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Thank You

Whether you've purchased this kit or assembled it yourself, we thank you for participating in the wellness of your community by lending these materials. If we can be of any help, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at thehealinglibraryus@gmail.com.



Activity

Breathwork + Breathing



Activity

Grounding



Activity

Gratitude



Activity

Mindful Moments



Activity

Meditation



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Family Materials



How to Use This Kit

Welcome, friends.

This kit has been designed to support your family in your exploration of mindfulness.

Inside you will find a Discussion Guide, Activities Guide, Acts of Kindness, Book recommendations with discussion and observation guides, and a list of Community Helpers. This combination offers your family a variety of ways to understand mindfulness and move forward in building a toolkit of exercises, language, and strategies that will support your effort to incorporate mindfulness into your daily lives and the trying times where it can be most beneficial. If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this kit, you are welcome to do so.

Most, if not all, of the art materials suggested for projects in the Activities Guide can be found in this kit or your home, so you can engage without incurring any costs or having to leave home. The handouts are yours to keep; we hope they'll continue to be of use to you and your family.

We aren't suggesting that everything in this kit needs to be done. Rather, you should review the information and determine what will work best for your family. It is an extraordinary time we are living in. You don't have to be perfect to care for your kids during these difficult circumstances. You just have to be you. Extra hugs, caring language, and allowing yourself to slow down and breathe are a great place to start. You've got this. We believe in you.

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If you find your family is in need of other kits like this, you can find free downloads on topics including The Death of a Loved One, The Death of a Pet, Separation & Divorce, COVID-19, and Alzheimer's & Your Family available at www.thehealinglibraryus.com/free-downloads.

Thank you for taking this step in your mindfulness journey. We wish you peace.

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Discussion Guide

Mindfulness is a topic that generates a lot of buzz. But what IS it?!? And how are we supposed to share it with kids?

In this discussion guide we'll go over what mindfulness is, what its benefits are, and how to begin incorporating mindfulness into your family's routine. We've written discussion prompts into the guide to help you discuss this tricky topic with kids in a constructive way. If you'd like to explore the information shared in this guide more deeply, you can refer to any of the Resources at the end.

Remember, a discussion about mindfulness is just the beginning of your journey. Your family's version of mindfulness will be unique. The other resources in this kit can assist you as you move forward.

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If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

What is Mindfulness?

At its core, mindfulness is a way of actively participating in life which benefits us with emotional understanding and growth. "Mindfulness for kids is more than just another parenting strategy. It isn't a discipline tactic, nor is it a quick-fix for problems. Mindfulness for kids is much more powerful than any of that. It's a way of being with kids and of helping them be with themselves and their world. Mindfulness is a way of being, an outlook, and a skillset all at once, and learning it young allows kids to build a strong foundation for lifelong mentally healthy habits and skills." (Peterson, 2022)

To begin unpacking mindfulness, let's break it into three main steps: Recognition, Acceptance, and Focus.

Recognition

Mindfulness “means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.” (Mindfulness Definition, 2022)

This means recognizing what's going on around us, what we're physically feeling, and what we're emotionally feeling at any given moment. Then we view all three experiences through a lens of kindness that allows space for all three experiences to coexist. This recognition allows for emotional identification.

Recognition discussion prompts for kids (please remember, there are no “right” answers from your child):

- Thoughts:
 - It seems like something is different with you; what's on your mind?
 - Did something happen that's bothering you?
 - What does (current situation) make you think of?
- Feelings:
 - You look upset, can you tell me what's happening right now?
 - What are you feeling at this moment?
 - Your body is showing me you don't feel good, can you tell me more?
- Bodily Sensations:
 - Do you feel uncomfortable in some way? Can you tell me more about that?
 - What is your body telling you?
 - Does your body feel different (in this current situation)?
- Surrounding environment:
 - Is something going on around you that's making you feel different than normal? Can you tell me more about that?
 - What happened that made you feel/think this way?
 - Is something bothering you right now? Can you tell me what's happening that's making you feel that way?

Acceptance

“Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them – without believing, for instance, that there's a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to think or feel in a given moment.” (Mindfulness Definition, 2022)

Once we've recognized what we are experiencing, mindfulness encourages us to sit with those thoughts and feelings without judgment. When we do so, we can accept all emotions as neither good or bad, but simply as part of being human.

Frequently as a society, we are told that certain emotions, like anger or sadness, should be turned off completely or quickly moved past. It's common for adults to say things to our kids like "calm down" or "stop crying," or to put them in time out when they're experiencing these deep emotions. While usually rooted in good intentions, such actions suggest to our kids that these emotions are not acceptable and don't encourage kids to learn from them. Instead, we should view feelings such as anger or sadness as opportunities for kids to begin learning emotional regulation.

Acceptance discussion prompts for kids (please remember, there are no "right" answers from your child):

- It's okay to feel that way sometimes. I can stay with you while you're feeling that way if you'd like.
- Sometimes we feel angry/excited/sad/frustrated, and that's okay.
- Let's just sit with our anger/excitement/sadness/frustration and listen to what it's telling us.

Focus

Finally, the last step of mindfulness is focusing on the present moment. Instead of focusing on the past or worrying about the future, we can learn emotional regulation by focusing solely on the present. "When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future." (Mindfulness Definition, 2022)

Once we've recognized what we're going through and accepted that our reaction is neither good nor bad, we can focus on our immediate present. Doing this can result in a lot of things based on what we're going through. We might be able to resolve how we're feeling and regain control of our emotions. We might need to understand how a situation is impacting our well being before moving forward in a way that is best for us. Or we might simply want to reflect on things to learn something from what we're experiencing.

This part of mindfulness is where a variety of mindfulness exercises will come into play and our individual journeys with mindfulness can begin to look very different. Most likely you've heard of many if not all of these common ways people participate in mindfulness:

- Breathwork/Breathing Exercises
- Mantras/Devotionals/Prayer
- Grounding
- Gratitude
- Meditation

But which is the right one for you? And which will feel like the right one for your child? Experimentation is the best way to begin building your family's mindfulness toolkit. There will be times one works better than another, and some that may become tried and true favorites. In the Healing Activities section of this kit you'll find opportunities to explore variations of these mindfulness activities to see what works. We recommend trying a few out during play with your child so it's easier for them to experiment with those skills when they're feeling upset.

Focus discussion prompts for kids (please remember, there are no "right" answers from your child):

- Let's try one of our exercises to get you back to feeling like yourself. Which one would you like to do?
- Which of our activities would your body like to try at this moment?
- Does your (insert emotion your child has already expressed here) want to get bigger or smaller right now? Which of our activities might help with that?
- Let's try an exercise to try and feel in control again. (Offer suggestions of exercises that have resonated with your child.)
- When I'm feeling like you do right now, I like to (insert mindfulness strategy you like here). Would you like to try it together?

Putting it All Together

When we put all three steps together and begin participating in mindfulness, it can look like this:

- Recognition: "Right now I'm feeling angry. I don't like that Hector is the only one getting presents at Hector's birthday party. I'm also mad that Hector skipped the line for the tricycles at school yesterday."
- Acceptance: "It's okay that I'm angry. That happens when things don't feel fair."
- Focus: "I feel angry. I want my anger to feel smaller, so I will choose an activity/action that makes my anger smaller. I also know this feeling is temporary."

Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness has a wide variety of benefits. While research on the subject of pediatric health and the benefits of mindfulness is relatively new, and it's agreed more research is needed (Awan & Windon, 2022), there are positive impacts that have begun to be recorded in professional journals. Plus, many of these benefits can be achieved in as little as a few weeks! (Mindfulness Definition, 2022)

Benefits that have been studied include:

- Reduced anxiety (Franco Justo et al., 2011; Napoli et al., 2005; Potek, 2012)
- Improved academic performance (Franco Justo et al., 2011)
- Increased verbal creativity (Franco Justo, 2009)
- Reduced depression (Joyce et al., 2010).

- Reduced rumination on negative thoughts (Mendelson et al., 2010)
- Reduced occurrence of intrusive thoughts (Mendelson et al., 2010; Metz et al., 2013)
- Reduced emotional arousal (Mendelson et al., 2010)
- Decreased negative effect or outlook (Schonert-Reichel & Lawlor, 2010)
- Improved executive control (Biegel & Brown, 2010)
- Improved social skills (Joyce et al., 2010; Napoli et al., 2005)
- Increased emotional regulation (Schonert-Reichel & Lawlor, 2010; White, 2012)
- Improved behavior (Schonert-Reichel & Lawlor, 2010)

Beyond this list, there are also studies being done on the benefits for marginalized cultures of color to engage in mindfulness practices which show a reversal of the neurological damage tied to the impacts of colonization called “neurodecolonization”. (Dawson, 2021) This is not to say that there are “easy fixes” for the oppression of systemic bigotry. Rather, the introduction of mindfulness tools can begin creating space for deeper action to combat their effects.

Practicing Mindfulness with Your Child

Preparing to bring mindfulness into your family’s lifestyle will look a bit different for everyone. However, we believe you can set yourselves up for success in three steps by preparing yourself as a parent, getting your child ready for mindfulness, and then working it into your daily life.

Preparing Yourself as a Parent

Discussing mindfulness with kids can require changes for parents. To effectively share the concepts and benefits of mindfulness with our kids, we must also put them into practice ourselves. “Practicing mindfulness yourself and modeling the open, attentive attitude is the best way to teach mindfulness to your kids.” (Peterson, 2022) There will be times when it feels easy to do so, and other times will prove more challenging. However, as the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu famously said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” (BBC, 2022) Taking the initiative to bring these practices into your parenting style is a fabulous first step! The next steps will have you build up your own mindfulness parenting toolkit and perhaps unlearn some traditional parenting behaviors.

First, let’s tackle the language we use to discuss emotions with kids. As mentioned earlier, there are societal phrases that have crept into most of our traditional parenting toolkits which can do more harm than good when it comes to building the emotional identification, awareness, and regulation of our kids. Most likely, they’re things you heard as a kid: “toughen up,” “stop crying,” or “calm down.” While rooted in good intentions, these phrases can inadvertently undermine the current emotional experience of your child. (Clarke-Fields, 2019) After all, as an adult, when you’re attempting to discuss a problem with a coworker, it doesn’t feel great to be told to “calm down;” imagine that same experience but as a child with no real power, agency, or coping skills.

Instead of falling into these old habits, we can replace those outdated phrases with new language that allows our child to feel their emotions deeply and to experience your support while they're doing the important work of emotional identification and regulation. It will help to have a unified front from any adult caregivers in your home to ensure your efforts are reinforced.

Try these phrases on for size:

- "It sounds like you're having a hard time. Let's talk about it."
- "Oh no, I see you're upset. Let's sit together 'til you feel better."
- "Anger can make us feel out of control. Is that how you feel? Do you want a hug?"
- "Feeling out of control can be scary. Would a cuddle help you feel better?"
- "It's okay to feel upset. I'm here and you're safe."
- "I really don't like it when I feel the way you're feeling. When I feel that way I like to (insert mindfulness exercise you enjoy here)."

Next, we need to find appropriate times to introduce the discussion of emotions into your family's life. First is during your daily lives. Examples of this could be sharing books where emotions are the main plot line, discussing the outbursts of others as you encounter them, and allowing room in discussions for emotional responses. All are ways to recognize and normalize emotions while also paying attention to our surroundings, which is mindfulness in action!

The second time is during your child's emotional outbursts. This part is difficult because part of your reaction to your child is also rooted in your protection of yourself and your emotional well being. Traditional parenting toolkit options would include things like losing your own temper to show the severity of the situation or threatening a time out for the display of uncontrolled emotions from your child. However, these efforts only show your child that acting out is an acceptable response to anger (in the case of you losing your temper), or that experiencing emotion deeply is worth of isolation or punishment (in the case of the time out). Instead, we can build our mindfulness parenting toolboxes here with more empathic responses that guide and reassure our children. Instead of losing your temper, take a quick mindfulness moment to Recognize, Accept, and Focus on what's really happening to you as well. Then try employing some of that new language we shared. Instead of threatening or following through with a time out, you can model a healthy response to such emotion for your child by again utilizing some of the language we shared above. Our goal in these moments is not to shut down the emotions of our children, but rather to guide them through the emotions to better understand what they're experiencing and what healthy strategies they can employ to begin feeling like themselves again.

Also, it's okay to get it wrong as you're learning. Remember, it's called a mindfulness *practice* for a reason: it takes practice! Ultimately, there is no right way to begin this work; just keep taking steps along your mindfulness journey.

Getting Your Child Ready for Mindfulness

Now that you've got some tools in your mindful parenting toolkit, you're ready to begin helping your little one to build their own mindfulness toolkit.

First, timing is everything. Attempting to introduce a mindfulness exercise like meditation to a child who is in the throes of a temper tantrum won't work. Instead, try introducing mindfulness exercises during play. It's much easier to introduce such ideas when you're both in a low-stakes emotional environment.

Second, listen to and believe your child. When we ask those questions about emotions or when we're making observations about our surroundings, it's on us to *really* listen to their responses. If they tell you a particular mindfulness exercise is not working, they mean it. If they identify a trigger for a specific emotion, don't gloss over it or try to "fix" things. Their reality can be difficult for adults to understand, but that doesn't make it any less real. It's up to us to honor their experiences and assist them in the cultivation of what works for their own mindfulness toolkits.

Finally, keep trying! Try the same mindfulness exercises over and over, try new ones on for size, incorporate the language we've shared about recognizing, accepting, and focusing on emotion into your daily conversations and activities. When put together, all that language and the variety of mindfulness exercises you introduce will give your child a wonderful toolkit of experiences to draw upon when they're needed.

Working it into Your Daily Life

This is where you get to really dive into mindfulness together and as solo family members. It's worth mentioning that mindfulness does take a commitment from your family in order to work properly. In fact, one study showed that, unless it is practiced at home, mindfulness school initiatives didn't work as they were intended. (Boyce 2022)

Creating time for mindfulness discussions or exercises can happen in so many ways:

- When witnessing the emotional needs of another
- While sharing books together
- While watching television or movies together
- After everyone has cooled down following a tantrum
- As part of a bedtime routine
- During shared meals to prepare for or reflect on what's happening in your worlds
- When your child does something that affects the well being of you or others
- During your child's emotional experiences

- During your own emotional experiences (It's worth noting that crying in front of your child is okay. In fact, it can be good for them to see you model healthy emotional behaviors.)

Keep the conversation going

To keep your conversation going, we've included discussion and observation questions along with suggested books, based on what we've gone over in this Discussion Guide. We recommend reading through each book before sharing it as a family.

Resources

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[BBC World Service | Learning English | Moving Words \(archive.org\)](#)

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Healing Activities

Mindfulness is the culmination of a lot of skills. One of the great things about mindfulness is that there's no right or wrong way to do it. Instead, there are a variety of activities, language, and experiences you can try out to see what works for you and your family. The following activities can be done individually or together as a family.

As you begin exploring these activities, keep in mind that a great mindfulness toolkit for you or your child will have multiple types of tools and skills available. What works for one experience, setting, or mood may not work for another. Similarly, there may be strategies you're using now that you want to keep in the rotation, and that's great! Having a robust toolkit will provide you and your child with the skills and tools needed to be adaptable.

We've compiled and created multiple activities for each of the types of mindfulness exercises mentioned in this kit's Discussions Guide:

- Breathwork/Breathing Exercises
- Mantras/Devotionals/Prayer
- Grounding
- Gratitude
- Meditation

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

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Breathwork + Breathing

Breathwork and breathing exercises can be a great place to start exploring mindfulness exercises, because all that's needed is you! At their very core, breathwork and breathing exercises center around a "variety of breathing techniques utilised individually and in groups, to cultivate self-awareness and the enhancement of physical, emotional, cognitive, or spiritual well-being." (Breathwork Definitions, 2021)

At its core, breathwork engages our parasympathetic nervous system, which controls our body's ability to relax. (Long, 2021) Breathing deeply and slowly into our belly, so that we're engaging our diaphragm, is an easy way to engage the parasympathetic nervous system and begin reaping some relaxing benefits. (Long, 2021)

Because nothing is needed to participate, breathwork can be a great first tool to introduce to kids – it can be as simple as seeing your little one having a hard time and saying, "Let's take a slow, deep breath together." Try out some different breathing exercises and see what works for you!

As you begin, some folks will feel comfortable counting seconds in the traditional "one, one thousand, two, one thousand, three, one thousand" way. Others may feel more comfortable tracking time with a clock, watch, or other tool. While there are no right ways to begin, it's worth noting that some kids (or grownups) may feel such tools interrupt their practice. Pay attention to what's working for you and your kiddos and adjust accordingly.

Mindfulness Minute

This breathing exercise can be used to calm down and refocus when kids are feeling stress, anxiety, anger, or the need to relax before sleep. Don't be surprised if kids don't "get it" right away. Doing it regularly and reflecting on how they feel afterward will help them add it to their toolboxes of ways to deal with stress. To do this, they can sit upright in a chair or they can lie down, whatever they find comfortable.

- Close your eyes (if this is comfortable for you. Otherwise, relax your eyes and focus your gaze on something far away.)
- Breathe in steadily for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 1 second.
- Breathe out steadily for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 1 second.

Do this 6 times and a minute will have gone by. If they want to keep going, allow them to do so.

It's easiest to keep track with a clock that shows seconds, not just minutes or a stopwatch (many cell phones have these).

While your child is doing this you can offer any or all of the following directions in a gentle voice:

Breathing In:

- "Follow the trail your breath takes into your body."
- "Pay attention to the cool air entering your body."
- "Fill your lungs and belly slowly with fresh, clean air."
- "Breathe in calm, cool air all the way down to your belly."

Holding Breath In:

- "Pause."
- "Hold your breath."

Breathing Out:

- "Let the breath out slowly, emptying your lungs."
- "Slowly exhale, letting the air back out."
- "Imagine you are slowly blowing a bubble."
- "Imagine you are blowing on a cup of hot cocoa (or tea, or cider) to cool it down."
- "Exhale now, letting the clean air go."
- "Now exhale slowly, and feel the calm stay with you."

Holding Breath Out:

- "Pause again."
- "Hold your breath."

Environment Needed:

- A place where you can be as quiet as you're able. Ideally, that would mean no TV, no music, and no phones or tablets.

Feather Breath

Experimenting with breathing during play is a wonderful, low stress way to introduce breathwork to your child. In this exercise children learn breath control while experimenting with a feather in a playful way.

- Normal Breathing
 - Put your face in front of your feather and breathe out normally so your feather moves across the table.
 - What did your feather do? Did it move quickly or slowly? Did it go off the table?
 - If more than one person is playing, talk about how your feathers acted differently
 - Did one go farther than another? Was one faster than another? What other differences did you see?

- Powerful Breathing (This kind of strong exhale can feel great when we're experiencing big feelings.)
 - Take your feather and place it in front of you on the table.
 - Fill your lungs up with a slow, deep breath.
 - Breathe out in a controlled, strong gust.
 - What did your feather do? Did it move quickly or slowly? Did it go off the table?
 - What feels good about breathing this way?
 - If more than one person is playing, talk about how your feathers acted differently.
 - Did one go farther than another? Was one faster than another? What other differences did you see?
 - Try it again!
 - Sit in your chair with your feather on your lips. Exhale strongly again and see what happens.
 - Change the shape of your mouth before your exhale. How does this change what your feather does?
- Controlled Breathing (This kind of breathing is great for helping us to regain control.)
 - Take your feather and place it in front of you on the table.
 - Fill your lungs up with a slow, deep breath.
 - Breathe out slowly, controlling your breath so your feather moves across the table slowly.
 - What did your feather do? Did it move quickly or slowly? Did it go off the table?
 - What feels good about breathing this way?
 - If more than one person is playing, talk about how your feathers acted differently.
 - Did one go farther than another? Was one faster than another? What other differences did you see?
 - Try it again!
 - Can you make your feather get to the opposite edge of the table without falling off?
 - Sit in your chair with your feather on your lips and your head tipped back. Exhale and see if you can make your feather float in the air. How long can you keep it in the air?

Environment Needed:

- A place with a table and chairs where you can move around together. It will work best with no added distractions from TV, music, phones, or tablets.

Pinwheel Breath

This exercise from the *New York Times* “allows us to see how different ways of breathing affect how our mind and bodies feel.” Together, you can create a real pinwheel, as they suggest using, or you can absolutely use an imaginary one as well: [Breathing With a Pinwheel - Well Activity - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/27/well/fitness/breathing-with-a-pinwheel-well-activity-the-new-york-times-nytimes.com)

Step 1: With pinwheels for your child and yourself, sit with your back straight and your body relaxed.

Step 2: Blow on your pinwheels together using long, deep breaths, and notice how you feel. Do you feel calm and relaxed? Is it easy or hard to sit still?

Step 3: Now blow on the pinwheels using short, quick breaths. How does your body feel now? Do you feel the same way after breathing quickly as you did after breathing slowly?

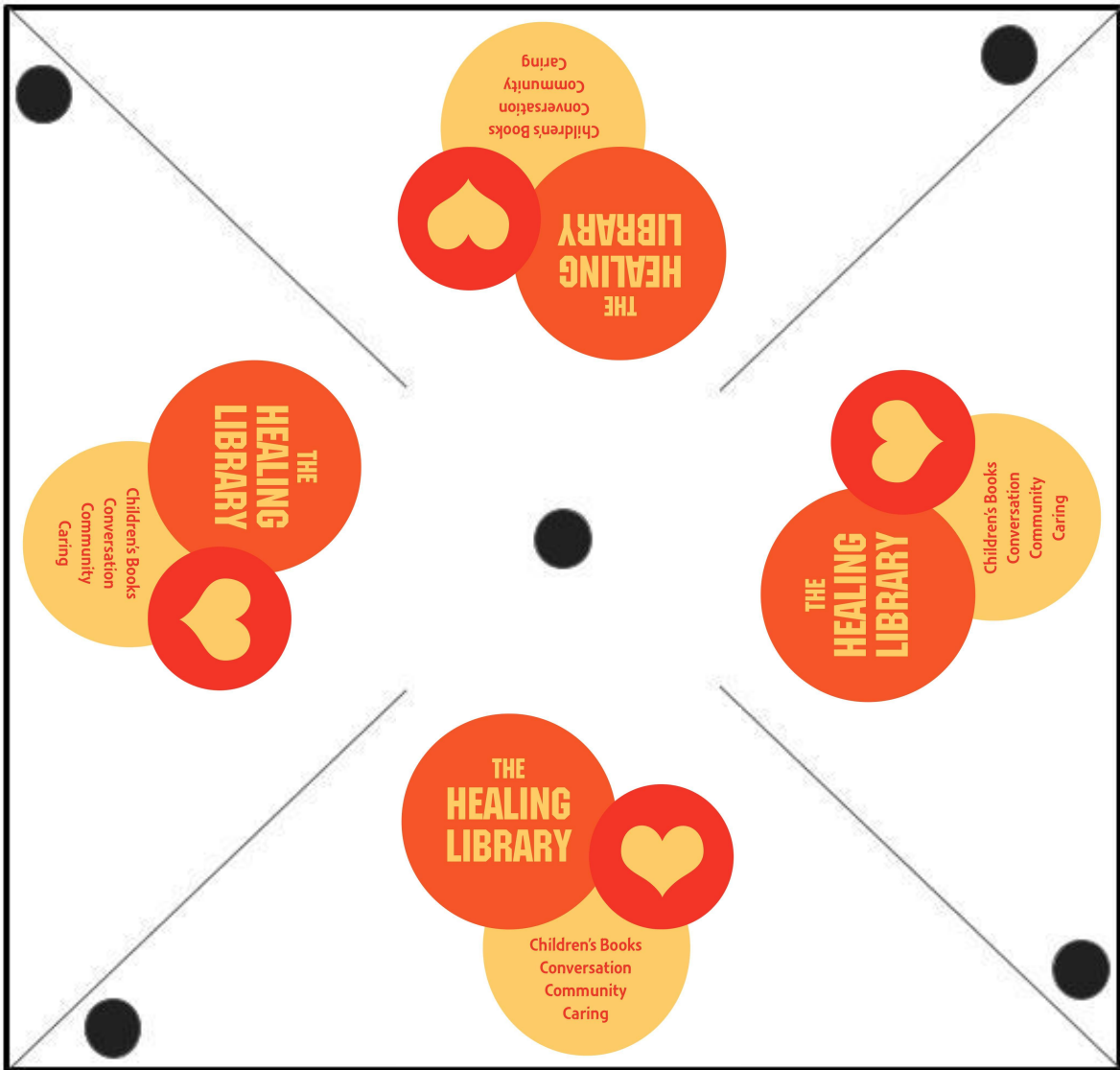
Step 4: Now blow on the pinwheels normally. How does this feel?

Step 5: What did you notice about how different ways of breathing makes you feel?

To make your own pinwheel:

- Decorate one of the pinwheel templates.
- Cut out your pinwheel by cutting along the solid lines on the template, also cutting the lines that go toward the center of the pinwheel, creating four triangle-like shapes.
- Punch a hole in the center of your pinwheel template using the hole punch. (Tip: If your punch can't reach the center of the paper just punch it while the paper is folded in half!)
- Punch a hole on the left corner of each of the triangle-type shapes of your pinwheel.
- Put a single glue dot next to each of these triangle corner hole punches.
- Without making any creases, fold your triangle holes up to the center hole, so that all holes line up with the center hole and your glue dot holds everything in place.
- Cut a small paper circle, about the size of a dime, out of your leftover paper from the pinwheel template.
- Using a thumbtack, pierce the center of the circle.
- Choose a chenille stick, or pipe cleaner, and create a knot in one end (to keep your pinwheel parts from falling off by accident).
- Thread the non-knotted end of your chenille stick through your paper circle 'til it reaches your knot.
- Next, thread the pinwheel behind the paper circle.
- Choose a paper straw, then cut a small notch about an inch down from the end of your paper straw – careful not to cut all the way through!
- Thread your chenille stick through the notch in your straw and through the bottom of the straw, pulling your pinwheel into place. (Remember not to pull it too tight so it can spin!)
- Wrap the end of your chenille stick around the base of your straw to hold it in place.

For a helpful video, check out: [How To Make A Pin-less Paper Pinwheel That Spins - Raising World Children](#)



Additional Breathwork/Breathwork Resources:

[Black Girls Breathing](#) – “is a safe space for black women to actively manage their mental health through breathwork and community.” Virtual breathwork circles are offered on a sliding cost scale (meaning there are free slots!) so all can participate.

[Emergency Breathing Kit for Parents and Kids](#) - This resource guide from the International Breathwork Foundation is a Coronavirus-inspired guide with a ton of breathwork ideas and scripts for families to explore.

[Insight Timer Playlist: Huff and Puff for the Monkey Mind](#) - Over 20 guided breathwork exercises designed for kids are included for free in this playlist designed to “Help your kids to settle and calm down with these accessible practices. Designed to introduce children to breathwork, the thoughtful guidance will allow them to connect to and become aware of their precious breath.”

Mindful Moments

Mantras, devotionals, prayers, or whatever else you like to call them are phrases we focus on instead of worrying about the past, present, or future. They can help us calm down during periods of stress and focus on a positive solution instead of an emotional reaction to our thoughts, situations, or feelings.

How we participate in them can vary. Below, we offer a variety of ways to tap into them creatively in addition to the common participation techniques you may already be familiar with.

Mindfulness Prompts

Making time in your day for moments of mindfulness allows your mindfulness practice to grow and your skills to hone before they're needed in times of emotional, situational, or spiritual stress.

Having a container with different mindfulness prompts inside is one easy way to work it into your daily routine.

To start, cut out the following prompts and put them into whatever container works for your family. Then, get creative about how you use them! Here are a few ideas to get your started:

- Take one in the morning to consider on your child's way to school.
- Take one and have a quiet moment when they return from school so they can reflect on their day.
- Pull one before family dinner to prompt a mindful discussion at the table. (Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Instead, this is a time to listen to your child without judgment.)
- Leave the jar out for your family to access as they need.
- Beyond the prompts below, write your own as a family and add them to the jar. This is a great opportunity for the mindful conversations you've had to lead to "inside jokes," prompts only your family may understand.

What went well today?	What could have gone better today?
What makes you smile?	Name one kind thing you did today.
What are you looking forward to tomorrow?	Is there anything that's bothering you today?
Breathe in silence for 1 minute. What feelings did you have?	I wish I were better at _____.
Here are three things I love about myself:	If you could do anything right now, what would you do?
Name something that is easy for you to do.	Name something that is challenging you lately.
Something that always makes me angry is _____.	I'm really good at _____.
What was the last thing that made you laugh?	I feel like a good friend when I...
I feel loved when _____.	When I need to calm down I like to _____.
The last time I said thank you was when _____.	Who are three people who love you?
I'm looking forward to _____.	I don't look forward to _____.

Mindfulness Calendar

Similar to the activity above, you can write mindfulness prompts onto a calendar in your home daily, so that as a family you each are focusing on a similar mindfulness prompt each day. Then, discuss what your experience was with the prompt during dinner, before bed, or in the car.

This could be for a single week, a month, or leading up to/following a big change in your family's life.

You can use the prompts above to create your own calendar, or if you're looking for a version to get you started, you might like the [Happiness Calendar](#) from Berkeley University's *Greater Good Magazine* that gets updated monthly and can be added to your own online calendar or printed and hung.

Let It Go

Sometimes it's hard to move past an emotion we're experiencing. It can be helpful to participate in that emotion in a physical way and watch it disappear before your very eyes. This exercise lets you create an artistic representation of your current mood, emotion, thoughts, or experience and then watch it evaporate. This can work not only when we're feeling bad about things, but also if we're too excited, giggly, or just need to calm down.

One way to engage in the process is with a Buddha Board. A Buddha Board allows you to paint on its surface with water. "Then, as the water slowly evaporates, your art will magically disappear, leaving you with a clean slate and a clear mind, ready to create a whole new masterpiece." (Buddha, N.D.)

Here's how to begin:

- Open up the Buddha Board and fill its tray with some water.
- Use the brush to paint what you're experiencing. It doesn't have to be perfect or pretty; in fact, it probably shouldn't be. Just get out your emotions.
- When your painting is done, watch it slowly evaporate. Take a deep breath and repeat any of these phrases that resonate with you:
 - Let it go.
 - It's okay to feel this way. It isn't good or bad.
 - I am not my emotions.
 - This feeling is temporary.
 - This moment is temporary.
 - I love myself.
- When your painting has completely evaporated, you can get up and continue with your day. If you need to do this again, feel free to repeat.

- If a Buddha Board is not available to you, you can use a large flat stone to paint on with whatever paint brush you have available. No paint brush? Take a piece of fabric, wrap it around your finger, dip it into water, and get painting!

Grounding

Grounding exercises are opportunities to focus not on the emotions, thoughts, or settings that are affecting us, but instead on immediate and tangible parts of our world. Recognition of physical points of contact allows us to focus on the now, which allows us to move past whatever is bothering us. Give the following examples of grounding exercises a try to see if any resonate with you.

5 Senses Exercise

Before beginning this exercise, get yourself a glass of water. You're welcome to do this exercise standing up or sitting in a chair.

- Close your eyes.
- Take a moment for a slow, deep breath.
- Listen to the **sounds** around you.
 - What do you hear?
 - Is there anything you didn't notice before you closed your eyes?
- Take another deep breath and **smell** the air where you are.
 - What do you notice?
 - Can you notice more than one smell?
- Take another deep breath and feel your **connection** to the earth. It could be the surface you're standing on or sitting on. Feel how solid your connection is. You are supported.
- Take a deep breath and notice the sensations in your **mouth**. If you'd like, take a drink of water and notice the refreshing sensation it gives you.
 - How does the water change the sensations in your mouth?
 - Do you feel different?
- Take another deep breath and open your **eyes**.
 - Do you notice anything you didn't notice before?
 - Have your feelings, thoughts, or experience changed?
- Feel free to repeat.

Barefoot Exercise

This exercise works best in a place where you can remove your shoes safely. You're welcome to do this exercise standing up or seated in a chair.

- Start by taking your shoes off.
- Let your bare feet make contact with the ground.
- Close your eyes and feel the sensation of the hard floor, soft carpet, or tickly grass under your feet.

- Dig your heels into the ground to feel your connection with your environment.
- Wiggle your toes and feel the variation of the surface against your body.
- Take a deep belly breath in slowly, then exhale slowly.
- Feel free to add a mantra to this experience, such as:
 - I feel the earth. I am supported.
 - I feel the stillness of the ground. I am solid.
- Feel free to repeat.

Grounding Objects

Sometimes, we experience feelings or situations that stick with us, things we can't shake off, especially if we're new to mindfulness. During these times it can be helpful to carry a small object we can discreetly interact with throughout the day as a form of grounding comfort. Keeping this object in a pocket is an easy way to have it handy when it may be needed.

Please be sure that the object your child carries is suitable for their safety. For example, toddlers should not carry objects they may put in their mouths. In addition, be aware that there may be other children or pets in your home who may be tempted to pick up or pop objects into their mouths. If that's the case in your home, consider keeping grounding objects in a special, designated safe space. Another solution could be keeping grounding objects at school or in the care of safe adults.

Examples of grounding objects:

- Smooth stones
- Seashells
- Coins
- Beads
- Marbles
- A piece of texturally interesting fabric

If your child has chosen a stone for their grounding object, they may enjoy this podcast: [Ammi's Adventures: Stones](#). (Feinberg, 2022)

It's worth mentioning the difference between a grounding object and a fidget spinner. Bonnie Thomas, LCSW, says "Fidgets tend to be used for sensory input and/or nervous system regulation. Grounding objects can be used for fidgeting, transitional objects, sensory input, comfort, a reminder of connection to a special moment or relationship, and more." In addition, fidget spinners can be dangerous in the hands of toddlers. (Fidget, 2018)

Gratitude

The act of expressing gratitude is good for us on so many levels. It strengthens our relationships, allows us to see silver linings during tough situations, and literally makes the world a better place! You see, gratitude is considered a socially rewarding experience as well as a personally rewarding one, reducing physiological stress for everyone involved. (Henning, et. al, 2017) Expressing gratitude can be done in many different ways. We hope these examples will get you ready to make the world a better place!

Saying Thank You

A great way to get started with gratitude is simply by saying thank you regularly! When you stop to think about it, people help you out all day long. When you physically participate in gratitude by saying thank you, not only is it a kindness you can share with others, it can be surprising how many times a day we find ourselves saying those words and realizing all the help and assistance we're regularly offered.

The act of giving thanks may seem like a small gesture, but "each of these small moments string together to create a web of well-being that, over time, strengthens your ability to notice the good." (Staff, 2022)

Thank-You Notes

Beyond saying thank you out loud, it can be a wonderful gesture to send a thank-you note to someone you care about. You can stick to writing words and ideas, or you can include drawings, collages, poems, recipes, or whatever creative ideas your child may have. If you don't have stamps to mail your note, don't worry! You can always take a picture or a video of you reading the note and send it virtually. When writing your note, the following writing tips may be of help:

- Get Deep
 - It turns out that the benefits tied to expressing gratitude increase when folks consider the depth of a single experience, rather than a broad set of experiences. For example, you might love your grandmother for a LOT of reasons, but can you use this letter to speak about just one in a deeper way?
 - If you're working with a young person who can't write yet, these questions might help you discover their gratitude in this area:
 - What's something (the person you're writing the note for) did for you that you really loved?
 - What was the last thing you did with (the person you're writing the note for) that was wonderful?
- Be specific
 - Let's imagine that the specific experience you want to explore in sending your grandmother this note is a sweater she got you for your birthday. Being thankful for a sweater is lovely. But expressing your thanks for the details

will make for a more meaningful experience with gratitude. Is it soft? Does it include your favorite colors? Is it knit in a fancy or out of the ordinary way that makes it unique? Is it intended for you to use during a favorite activity of yours to give you comfort and warmth? Noticing and reflecting on all those details are what will really help you express your gratitude.

- If you're working with a young person who can't write yet, these questions might help you discover their gratitude in this area:
 - What was special to you about that?
 - Did you ever notice (special detail about object or experience)? How does that make you feel?
 - Are there ways you love (using the object) that you didn't expect?
- Get personal
 - It turns out that focusing on the people we're grateful for has a deeper impact on us than focusing on physical things. So, you might be grateful for the sweater, yes, but what you're really grateful for is the person who put the thought into finding it and the reasons you know they chose it for you. All those details you noticed above are what will make this exercise more impactful for you and your recipient.
 - If you're working with a young person who can't write yet, these questions might help you discover their gratitude in this area:
 - (The person you're writing the note for) is really special to have done that for you, don't you think? How does that make you feel?
 - Do you think it was a lot of work for (the person you're writing the note for) to give you this (object or experience)? How does that make you feel?

Gratitude During Tough Times

Sometimes when we're feeling our worst, it can be a good time to reflect on gratitude to understand that we're only feeling low because there have been good times in our lives. Some of the following thinking, writing, or conversation prompts may be helpful for this exercise:

- Think back on a time when you felt really happy. Describe that time.
- The last time I got the giggles was when _____...
- Something I'm looking forward to is _____...
- Take a look around your physical space. What objects do you see that remind you of feeling loved and happy times?

Altars

Altars have been used for centuries throughout the world by numerous cultures to show gratitude. We can express gratitude through altars for people, pets, experiences, ideas, knowledge, or even our own hopes. The oldest surviving Chinese dictionary, dating to 100 AD, The *Shuowen jiezi*, refers to the Chinese word for altar as *tán* (坛) (Gao, 2016), and the

ancient Greek word for altar, θυσιαστήριον, appears in the New Testament of the Bible.

For kids, creating a physical representation of gratitude in the form of an altar can sometimes feel easier than putting gratitude into words. In addition, leaving an altar set up provides a physical reminder of their gratitude that they can interact with, reengaging them in the benefits of gratitude and allowing their gratitude to evolve.

Try considering the following things when you make your own altar:

- Sometimes we can include a photo in our altar, but not always. Can you draw or write a representation if you have no photo available?
- Add a memento or item that reminds you of a special time.
- Try to see the things that have happened in your life as gifts. How does that change your representation of your altar?

The way that you create an altar can also vary in truly beautiful and meaningful ways. In the Yoruba tradition of Africa, altars can incorporate adimu egun, or food offerings, as a way to give back to the ancestors you honor and from whom you seek guidance. (Coleman, 2022) A recently discovered altar in the former Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan revealed the skeleton of a female jaguar surrounded by thousands of seashells and hundreds of starfish whose appearance mimicked the coats of jaguars. (Atwood, 2022) Truly, there are so many ways to create your own.

Here are a few ways to make an altar:

Nature Altars

Creating a temporary altar can be as fulfilling as creating one with a place in your home that's more of a permanent installation. And doing so with elements found in nature can add to the benefits of gratitude! (Team, 2018)

Stopping on a hike to use the materials nature has provided to create an altar of appreciation for your experience, your location, or for another person are all ways to participate.



Photo credit: Lindsay Frank

Next time you're on a hike, consider these tips for creating a nature altar from artist Day Schildkret that he shares in his book *Morning Altars: A 7-Step Practice To Nourish Your Spirit through Nature, Art, and Ritual*:

1. **Wander & Wonder:** This is a treasure hunt that transforms the mundane into the magical as you forage the treasures that will fill your altar.
2. **Place:** Practice listening to the place that calls you. Sit on the earth and experience a "Place Meditation." Connect more deeply to where you are and witness the place come alive as it might have never before.
3. **Clear:** Use a brush or your hand to clear the space at your feet and reveal your blank canvas. It is an act that helps you clear the space so that a new creative inspiration can flow in again.
4. **Create:** It's all play! Explore shapes and patterns as you learn the language of how to bring together many different pieces into one gorgeous work of art, which is what the universe is doing all the time.
5. **Gift:** Practice generosity. Learn to set an intention for your Morning Altar (nature altar). Devote it as an offering for your life, as a celebration of your family's well-being, as a gift to your ancestors, or as a way to mark an occasion.

6. **Share:** Photograph and share your beauty-making and intentions with your friends, community, or even with people you've never met.
7. **Let Go:** Practice walking away. Bearing witness to the impermanence of the art is an exercise that will strengthen your capacity for unattachment, grace, and change.

Day recommends you not stick too closely to these tips, but rather treat them as a guide. Pick and choose what works for you in a moment, or in general.

Picture Frame Altars

This variation on an altar, which is great when space is limited, is made entirely on a picture frame.

You can insert a photo of a loved one you're grateful for into an altar, such as in the Mexican tradition of ofrendas (the movie *Coco* has some gorgeous ofrendas your child may remember). But not having a photo doesn't have to stop you! Draw a picture of what you're grateful for, write a poem, or even write or draw the name of what you're grateful for, and put that in your frame!

Then decorate the photo frame with all the details you wish to include; there is no wrong way to proceed!

Diorama Altars

Altars don't have to be set up and on display to be "permanent." In this variation, kids can create their altar inside a shoe box, shipping box, cereal box, or whatever you have on hand. The altar can then be tucked into a drawer, closet, or under a bed until they wish to engage with it again. It's a great solution if space is limited.

Meditation

Meditation can be accomplished in a lot of different ways. When we think of meditation, we tend to picture a person sitting perfectly still on the floor, legs crossed, with their eyes closed. Maybe they're chanting or humming, maybe they're completely silent. And while this *is* one form of meditation, the benefits can be accomplished in a wide variety of ways, many of which are more appropriate for kids who love to wiggle and move.

Guided Meditation

Guided meditation can be a great way to get a feel for what meditation really is, especially for folks new to meditation. Typically, you sit or lie comfortably as a person leads you on a meditative exercise, reads a story, or guides you through a breathing exercise or grounding exercise.

The following are excellent guided meditations to try with kids:

- [I Am The Sun](#) by Devin McCrorey
- [I Am A Wave](#) by Soul Mates
- [Morning Meditation For Kids](#) by Happy Minds
- [Little Hunters Beach](#) by Ocean Sounds
- [Ammi's Adventures](#) by Heather Hawk Feinberg

Nature Walks

A study from 2020 found that “children who perceive themselves as more connected to nature tend to perform more sustainable behaviors, and the more pro-ecological, altruistic, frugal, and equitable the child is, the greater his or her perceived happiness will be.” (Barrera-Hernández, et al., 2020) Basically, what that means is that getting outside to play literally makes our kids happier people.

In that vein, a nature walk can be a wonderful form of meditation for kids, especially kids who have a harder time sitting still. Nature walks work best in areas like forests or hiking trails, but can also take place in urban environments like parks. If you're not located near a park, trying a nature walk outside when it's a quieter time of day can also benefit your child.

If you're not in an area where outside is easily accessible because of weather, construction, or other barriers, consider contacting local libraries to find out whether they have passes available for local museums, national parks, or other alternative locations.

The basics are simple: get yourselves outside and go for a walk! Then while you're on your walk, try these exercises:

- Try a breathing exercise the child enjoys while stopping in a comfortable spot.
 - How is the experience different compared to when it's done at home?
 - Does anything surprise your child about those differences?
- Bring a bottle of bubbles to practice breathwork in a fun way.
- If it's cold where you are, bring a thermos of hot cocoa, tea, or cider, and practice breathwork in a yummy way. (This can also be done with cool drinks, just focus on making gentle ripples on the surface of the drink, as opposed to “cooling it down.”)
- Try the 5 Senses grounding exercise we shared, either while walking or when stopped in a comfortable spot (no need to take your shoes off if there isn't a grassy area nearby).
 - How is the experience different compared to when it's done at home?
 - Does anything surprise your child about those differences?
- Participate in gratitude by saying out loud what you're thankful for in the environment where you find yourself. Again, consider all five senses.
- Create an outdoor altar to show gratitude for this moment with found materials.

- Your child may become upset at the idea of leaving the altar behind or what may happen to it after you've gone. If this is unsettling for your child, you may want to avoid this activity. On the other hand, it can open up opportunities to discuss ideas like how moments, emotions, thoughts, and ideas are temporary. What happens to them when we're done with them is not important. Instead, being present to enjoy them or learn from them is what's most important.
- If your child is enjoying this activity, consider taking a few safe materials home, such as leaves, pine needles, or clover, to reflect on the experience with gratitude (if this is allowed).
- Locate a labyrinth! Labyrinths aren't only in books and movies, they're all over the place! Unlike a maze, a labyrinth is a single path that leads from the outer edge in a circuitous way to the center. Since there are no dead ends, they're excellent for walking meditations or for participating in mindfulness in a physical way - stay focused on the path, move forward, repeat!
The [World Wide Labyrinth Locator](#) is a great tool to locate the closest labyrinth to you!

Putting It All Together

Once your family has participated in these activities a number of times, it's okay to give your child a safe space where they can regain emotional regulation on their own. This safe space should be easily accessible to your child when they're experiencing big emotions, and a safe space to engage in exploring anger, overstimulation, and other big feelings. Bonnie Thomas, LCSW, says, "When your child is ready to use mindfulness strategies on their own, consider creating a designated space for them to do so. Some cues that your child is ready to use strategies independently include:"

1. They are already using them on their own, with or without being reminded.
2. They tell you they don't need help doing them and you agree with them.
3. It's a safe space where an adult is readily available if/when needed.

This safe space can have a box, bag, or other storage container with a variety of materials related to healthy activities that have resonated with your child, which they can use on their own to participate in emotional regulation. In addition to these tools, you can put up artwork related to emotions or other soothing decorations if that's safe for your family's lifestyle.

What your safe space might look like:

- An open closet (no door)
- A single cubby on a bookshelf
- A small tent
- A corner of a bedroom
- A portion of a bedroom wall

When to employ your child's safe space:

- As big emotions start rising in your child, you can offer suggestions like:
 - Would you like to go to your safe space?
 - I think it's time to visit your safe space until you feel like yourself again.
 - The way you're behaving is not safe. Please visit your safe space until you're feeling in control.
 - You sound upset. How about we share a hug and then you go to your safe space to take care of your feelings?

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Acts of Kindness

Participating in mindfulness is not only good for you, but also benefits the folks you interact with! Studies have shown that gratitude predicts reciprocal prosocial behavior, meaning it creates environments in which folks want to be better to one another and society. (Henning, et al, 2017)

The following activities were designed to help you tap into the greater goodness that can be created by actively participating in mindfulness. These activities can be done individually or as a family.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

Thank-Yous

Saying thank you in a meaningful way doesn't cost a lot of money. In fact, a heartfelt and intentional "thank you" to the folks that help you throughout the day (grocery store clerks, school drop-off assistants, bank tellers, etc.) can really go a long way.

However, if you'd like to surprise someone in your world with a gift to say thank you to them, here are some universal items you could include:

- Handmade thank-you notes or cards
- Tea bags
- Granola bars, packets of peanuts, candy, chips, or other individually wrapped, non-perishable snacks
- Bottled water, juice, or other beverages
- Individual tissue packet
- Instant or canned soups
- Local gift cards
- Packets of seeds to grow flowers or vegetables

In addition, you can create little handmade notes or cards in advance to thank folks. You can keep a few in your car, wallet, or diaper bag to pass out as you encounter the folks who help you throughout your day. Creating these in advance with your child is a great opportunity to experience gratitude both in the creation phase and in the giving phase.

Positive Public Art

Decorate a public space with chalk drawings encouraging others, hang a homemade sign in your window that says “Hello!” to folks outside taking a walk, or leave positive messages to the world in any creative way you’d like!

Volunteer

Giving back can be a wonderful experience, especially for families who are gaining traction in their mindfulness practice. It provides excellent opportunities for building empathy, sharing your world, and spreading gratitude in a physical, helpful way. We can give back by donating money, items, or our time to a number of worthwhile organizations or causes. In addition, simply being a helpful neighbor can be a fulfilling way to better our communities. Consider assisting a neighbor with childcare, helping a senior citizen with online tasks, or helping folks without transportation to the polls on voting day.

No matter how your family chooses to volunteer, you can extend the benefits of your contribution by:

- Getting started early. If you want to volunteer with an organization(s), contact them as early as possible, because there are usually application processes in place to begin volunteering.
- Volunteering during time when there’s the most need. Many of us think about volunteering around Thanksgiving, for example, but because so many of us are thinking about it then, there’s less of a need for volunteers at that time.
- Donating items that are in good condition, clean, and making sure that any food items have not expired.

To begin searching for the right opportunity for your family try starting with [Volunteer Match](#), an online matching database where you can search by your location, the type of organization you’d like to help, or many other factors.

Resources

Henning, M., Fox, G.R., Kaplan, J., Damasio, H., and Damasio, A. (2017) *A Potential Role for mu-Opioids in Mediating the Positive Effects of Gratitude*. *Front. Psychol.* 8:868. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00868



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Community Helpers

The following are suggestions for types of helpers that may exist within your community. As all our communities are a bit different, some are resources for you to look up yourself, and others may be directly accessed.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

Local Mindfulness/Meditation Centers

This kit may include local offerings from your librarians. If not, there are a variety of offerings which can assist your family's continued journey with mindfulness. Try searching out or asking your librarian to help you find:

- Mindfulness Centers
- Meditation Centers
- Holistic Wellness or Health Centers

National & International Mindfulness Organizations or Events

Mindfulness Day - September 12th, every year. Mindfulness Day was created by the nonprofit Wisdom Publications to spread awareness about mindfulness.

[World Meditation Day](#) - May 21st, every year. This holiday seeks to celebrate the practice and spread awareness about the benefits of meditation. Celebrate with a family mindfulness outing, activity, meal, or whatever else suits you best!

[World Mental Health Day](#) - October 10th, every year. "The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health." Celebrate this day by sharing books about mental health topics together, participating in each family's member's favorite mental health activity, or hosting a gathering with like-minded friends to talk about mental health initiatives that are working for your families.

[American Mindfulness Research Association](#) - www.goamra.org - "AMRA serves as a professional resource to the sciences and humanities, practice communities, and the broader public. Resources offered by AMRA include professional and affiliate membership

and networks, monthly research bulletins, a database and resource repository, training and educational support, and communication channels to support mindfulness research and practice.”

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](http://www.casel.org) - www.casel.org - “CASEL’s mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool through high school.” Here, parents can learn more about building their child’s social and emotional health and education and the benefits of that health for our individual kids and our larger communities.

[Yoga Finder](http://yogafinder.com) - yogafinder.com - Yoga studios offer loads of courses beyond yoga! Take a look locally for classes on breathing/breathwork, mindfulness practices, meditation, and more.

Community Centers - If you don’t know how to find your local community center, give your library a call to ask for help. These spaces offer a variety of classes, experiences, and more to support community wellness. They’re great for both learning and tapping into the wellness community that already exists in your area.

Libraries! - Your local library may offer classes, workshops, speaker sessions, and more that revolve around a variety of wellness practices. An extra bonus is that they’re usually free of cost! If your local library doesn’t currently offer such courses, they tend to welcome public input on things you’d like them to host in the future, so just reach out and share what you’re thinking.

Counselors

Navigating what’s normal and what requires professional help can be confusing to a parent. If you’re concerned about your child, you can always contact a therapist or counselor. The National Institute of Mental Health says “In general, consider seeking help if your child’s behavior persists for a few weeks or longer; causes distress for your child or your family; or interferes with your child’s functioning at school, at home, or with friends.

If your child’s behavior is unsafe, or if your child talks about wanting to hurt themselves or someone else, seek help immediately.” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

Counselors use various approaches when working with children, often combining play therapy, art therapy, and/or traditional therapy methods (such as cognitive behavioral therapy).

If you’re interested in a counselor who incorporates mindfulness into their practice, you might ask whether they offer services like Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), which “adapts the (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program) model specifically for people suffering from depression and chronic unhappiness.” (Mindfulness, 2022)

Counselors are sometimes called clinicians, clinical social workers, or therapists, but they are all professionals with advanced degrees who are working with clients on a treatment goal toward improved mental health.

Therapists and counselors are available to work with:

- Parents
- Children
- Families

To find a therapist or counselor, try [Psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) and use the “Find a therapist” tool. You can search for a therapist using filters such as location, their speciality, the age groups they work with, their nationality, gender identity, languages spoken, which insurances they take, etc. You will be provided a selection of therapists with business profiles you can read. Many profiles let you know whether the provider uses a sliding fee scale and/or if they provide telehealth options. Many providers are currently utilizing telehealth services.

Some people like to share traits of their identity with their therapist or counselor. This could include their race, sexual orientation or identity, experience with trauma, and more, as well as the intersectionality of those identities. Luckily, there are a wide variety of resources available to help you find the right fit. You can also reach out to your local library for help locating other options suited to your needs. Here are a few examples to get you started:

- Therapy for Black Girls - <https://therapyforblackgirls.com>
- Therapy for Queer People of Color - therapyforq poc.com
- The Trevor Project - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>
- South Asian Therapists - southasiantherapists.org
- LatinX Therapy - <https://latinxtherapy.com>

You may also find assistance locating mental health services at lower costs by calling 211 or through the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

Medical Professionals

Mindfulness is no substitute for the work of medical professionals. If you're concerned by something your child is experiencing, please contact your pediatrician. Utilize your time with these professionals by asking questions, asking for clarification if you don't understand something they say, and identifying more resources.

The National Institute for Mental Health says “How can you tell the difference between challenging behaviors and emotions that are a normal part of growing up and those that are cause for concern? In general, consider seeking help if your child's behavior persists for a few weeks or longer; causes distress for your child or your family; or interferes with your child's functioning at school, at home, or with friends. **If your child's behavior is unsafe, or**

if your child talks about wanting to hurt themselves or someone else, seek help immediately.” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.)

If you, your child, or someone you know is in immediate distress, danger, or is thinking about hurting themselves, you can call 911 or visit the closest emergency room. If suicide is the concern, you can also call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) (<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>) toll-free at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), text the Crisis Text Line (HELLO to 741741) or use the Lifeline Chat on the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.

If you're interested in diving deeper into the science of any wellness topics, [Know the Science](#) is a great tool for discerning fact from fiction from the National Institutes of Health and the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. It's filled with tools to help you make sense of the science behind health and empower you to recognize misinformation so you can make informed decisions.

Telehealth Services

You can call any insurance provider to inquire whether telehealth services are covered for the service you need.

For example, “Will counseling sessions using telehealth be covered? If so, what type of telehealth is covered? Are only video sessions covered? Are phone sessions covered at this time as well?”

Please note that telehealth sessions may only be covered for a limited time, so you may want to ask what the coverage time is. Some companies are only providing telehealth coverage during peak pandemic months.

If you do not have insurance coverage, there may be care providers who provide a sliding fee scale for services.

Teachers and Schools

If your family is beginning to incorporate mindfulness exercises and practices into your lives, your child's teacher may be an important source of information for you. If your child is expressing concerns, frustration, or social anxiety around school, having conversations with their teacher to understand what's going on can be helpful. In addition, if the teacher is utilizing mindfulness techniques in the classroom, they may have tips for you!

For example, many classrooms incorporate mindfulness exercises or practices into their daily routines. You can ask your child's teacher if mindfulness is part of their routine and if they have handouts or resources to share with you to use at home, reinforcing what they're

already receiving at school. You can also talk to your child to ask if they participate in yoga, breathwork, meditation, or more while they're in school.

Spiritual Leaders

Many find that spiritual support can be a source of relief during times of distress. Even if you don't consider yourself an active church member, your religious community can offer support in a variety of ways.

Mindfulness connections can be made to numerous types of spiritual traditions, including Buddhism, Taoism, Indigenous religions, and more.

Resources

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Books to Share & Discuss

Sharing stories together is a very bonding and comforting experience for children. In addition, having discussions with our children while reading books can give them lots of new tools, including strategies for managing their emotions, allowing them to empathize with different people, and seeing examples of ways to take action when situations seem tough.

The following suggested books include guides with discussion questions and observation prompts to enrich your experience with each title.

We recommend you read the book and its accompanying discussion guide first, before sharing it with your child, so there aren't any surprises.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

Finding These Books

Check your local library's online catalog to see whether the book is available for free download as an ebook. If it isn't, consider reaching out to your librarians via email to see if they can get it for you.

Also, consider taking a peek at streaming platforms to see if there are videos of the authors reading the titles themselves!



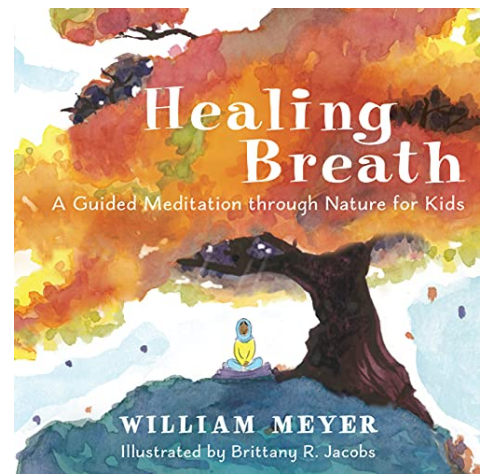
Book Discussion: Healing Breath: A Guided Meditation Through Nature for Kids

Healing Breath: A Guided Meditation Through Nature for Kids

By William Meyer

Illustrated by Brittany R. Jacobs

New World Library



This beautiful book can be shared as a story or can be read as a guided meditation. The opportunity for your child to have your voice lead them through a guided meditation can be a wonderful way to introduce the concept of meditation, because they already find your voice a reassuring comfort. Designed to share the beauty of our planet's unique habitats, the book centers around an appreciation for nature. It will be especially helpful for children who love nature walks (such as we shared in the Healing Activities Guide) or other outdoor activities, or those experiencing anxiety about the health and future of our planet.

Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

You and your child may want to read the book once or twice together before discussing it, especially since the illustrations are pretty, and your child may want to read it before trying it as a meditation. While you enjoy reading it, remember that what's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain its hidden meanings to your child in place of a conversation with you. Feel free to skip any pages that aren't relevant to your family's experience.

Wherever there is a “_____” you may insert the name of a person, idea, or emotion you may be discussing while sharing the book. You don't need to use all these suggestions, just what feels right for the moment or the family member you're reading with.

When/if you ask your child a question, please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

The following suggestions from www.mentalhealth.gov are great tips for discussing mental health with our kids:

- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to the child or adolescent's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers).
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Title Page

You may want to explain to your child that this is a special book, different from other books you've shared because it can be read two ways: as a story (like they're used to) or as a guided meditation, which is a kind of story to listen to while relaxing. A good way to get ready for the book as a guided meditation is to find a cozy place where they can lie down and close their eyes, if they're comfortable doing so.

If you're reading this book as a guided meditation for your child, you might consider these tips from Professor Alice Gregory & Christy Kirkpatrick: "Try to make your voice calm and soothing, and read the [story] slowly and quietly." (Gregory & Kirkpatrick, 2019)

Pages 2 & 3

The book opens with "A message to the reader" that is designed to reassure kids experiencing anxiety about the future of the planet. If your child isn't experiencing such fears or anxiety, it's perfectly fine to skip this part.

Pages 4 & 5

One of the great things about this book is that it shows kids participating in meditation in a variety of environments.

"Look at that, they're all going to meditate in different places they find comfy. Would you like to try meditating? Where is a comfy place you'd like to try this?"

Some good options could include:

- **Their bed**
- **A soft chair or couch**
- **On a favorite blanket on the floor**

Go ahead and read through the prompts. If your child is participating, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!", "Wow, nice job!", or "That's wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration. If you feel they would benefit from encouragement like this as the book continues, feel free to support them in that way. However, as you try the meditation in the book again, try to eliminate such praise so you're just focusing on the meditation. After all, other guided meditations they may want to try may not include such specific praise.

If your child does not want to try meditating, that's okay too. They may want to try after you've shared the book a few times. If that is the case, you can encourage them to try to "remember the pictures in their head," as they're now more familiar with the story you're reading.

Pages 6 - 21

You'll notice certain words printed in a larger or more artistic font as you read the story to your child. Those words may be great to slow down or emphasize or exaggerate in another gentle way as you're reading.

Pages 22 & 23

These fun pages let you turn the book on its side as you're sharing the story. Your child may want to look at this page if they're meditating. This is perfectly alright. If, however, you've done the meditation a few times and they still want to look, you may want to take the advice of Alice Gregory & Christy Kirkpatrick and explain to your child that "over time you would like them to be quiet and peaceful when listening...." (Gregory & Kirkpatrick, 2019)

Pages 24 - 27

Continue reading the story slowly and gently to your child.

Pages 28 & 29

Let your child take their time opening their eyes before asking the questions printed on page 29. If they choose to answer the questions out loud, please remember there are no “right” answers.

They may need reassurance that they “did it right” or may be worried they didn’t pay attention properly. Reassure them that the most important part is trying, and that building their mindfulness muscles takes work, like learning any other skill.

Pages 30 & 31

There’s no need to read the “Author’s Note” at the end. However, it can be helpful for kids to hear stories from adults about their own experiences with mindfulness. If your child would benefit from hearing how Bill’s experience with meditation has helped him, you’re welcome to share the note or just a part of it.

Further

If your child enjoyed this book, you might consider trying out other meditation activities, nature walks, or nature altars we shared in this kit’s Healing Activities guide.

Resources

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

Gregory, A., Kirkpatrick, C. (2019). *The Sleepy Pebble and Other Stories: Calming Tales to Read at Bedtime*. London, UK.: Flying Eye Books.



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Book Discussion: I'm Just a Kid: A Social Emotional Book on Self-Regulation

I'm Just a Kid: A Social Emotional Book on Self-Regulation

By Chandele Morris

Illustrated by Jeric Tan

In this story, Ben gets frustrated by an activity he's participating in and begins to throw a tantrum. However, with a little help from his mom, he taps into strategies he has for regaining control and turns things around. It's a great book for kids prone to tantrums, as it offers a window into what their future tantrums could look like once they begin developing their own mindfulness toolkit with strategies and language that works for them.



Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

You and your child may want to read the book once or twice together before discussing it, especially since the illustrations are pretty, and your child may want to read it before trying it as a meditation. While you enjoy reading it, remember that what's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain its hidden meanings to your child in place of a conversation with you. Feel free to skip any pages that aren't relevant to your family's experience.

Wherever there is a " _____," you may insert the name of a person, idea, or emotion you may be discussing while sharing the book. You don't need to use all these suggestions, just what feels right for the moment or the family member you're reading with.

When/if you ask your child a question, please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

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The following suggestions from www.mentalhealth.gov are great tips for discussing mental health with our kids:

- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to the child or adolescent's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers).
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Page 3 - Dedication

If you'd like to read this, it can be supportive for a child to know the author of this book, Chandele, wrote this book for you and that she loves your child already.

Pages 4 & 5

"Ooh, Ben is good at puzzles and loves to do that activity! What's an activity you love and are good at?"

Pages 6 & 7

"Ha! This sounds like how I/we talk to you!"

Pages 8 & 9

Frustration or Anger are emotions we tend to want to gloss over, "fix," or stop in our kids. But exploring anger will allow kids to identify this emotion, and then begin employing strategies they'll learn can calm them down.

"Ooh, can you tell what the word frustrated means from the way Ben looks in this picture?"

"Do you know that word, frustrated? It means you feel bad because you know what you *want* to do but you can't *do* what you want to do. (American Psychological Association) Have you ever felt that way?"

"Can you say that word, frustrated?" **Don't worry about their pronunciation of the word frustrated. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged.**

"Can you tell me about a time you felt frustrated?"

Pages 10 & 11

"Oh boy. He doesn't seem in control right now, does he?"

"Have you ever felt that way? Do you want to tell me about it?"

"Remember the time you felt that way?" **Share a story from a time you remember your child was frustrated recently.**

"Whew, I know what it feels like to feel like this." **Go ahead and share a story about a time this happened to you. While you're sharing it's okay to show emotion to your child. In fact, it can be good for them to see an adult they love and trust experiencing emotions in a healthy way. However, if you feel you are going to lose control of your emotions and cry uncontrollably (for example), excuse yourself for a moment to regain composure so you don't scare your child. (Zucker, 2016)**

Pages 12 & 13

This page feels funny to read with the spacing but it's meant to sound like when your child is having a tantrum and can't get their words out smoothly.

"He's really having a hard time right now, isn't he?"

"It looks like he's trying to help his anger by using his body. That can feel really good when you're angry. But I don't think hitting and kicking like this is safe. Do you? What could he do instead?"

If you've already read *Anh's Anger*, you might discuss some of the themes from that book at this point. You could ask your child:

"What would Anh do if he were the boy in this book?"

"How does Anh use his body to get his anger out?"

"What do you think Ben's Anger is saying to him right now?"

Pages 14 & 15

"When we're angry, our anger can want to do things quickly, but that doesn't always make us feel better. It can feel good to do quick things with our bodies, but not with our brains. That can make us feel worse."

Pages 16 & 17

"Oh, I like that. Can you say that – 'It's okay to feel upset.' – That's true!"

"What are some things that help you to calm down when you're feeling upset? **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.** Good answers! I wonder if Ben will have any of the same strategies. Let's find out!"

Pages 18 & 19

"Ooh! Neat! I like all these ideas."

"Do you want to try Pizza breathing with me? Okay. Pretend you're smelling the pizza while you breathe in through your nose. Good! Now exhale and pretend you're blowing on your pizza to cool it down."

Got a kid who doesn't like pizza? Just insert their favorite hot food in the place of pizza.

Pages 20 & 21

"I love this idea! As well as things we can do, there are also places where we can go to feel in control again. Do you have a place that makes you feel safe and in control?"

"A blanket is a good idea! It's like a big hug! A sweatshirt could work too. Do you have anything cozy like that that makes you feel safe and cozy?"

"Sometimes when we're feeling upset, it can be good to spend some time alone. Do you ever feel like you need alone time when you're upset?"

Pages 22 & 23

"When you cry, it makes me feel sad too. That's called empathy. Can you say empathy?"
Don't worry about their pronunciation of the word empathy. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged.

It can be good for them to see an adult they love and trust experiencing emotions in a healthy way. However, if you feel you are going to lose control of your emotions and cry

uncontrollably (for example), excuse yourself for a moment to regain composure so you don't scare your child. (Zucker, 2016)

"It is hard to be so small with such big feelings, huh?"

"You know, even if you're frustrated or angry you can always ask me for a hug or kiss."

Pages 24 & 25

"I think he looks back in control now, don't you?"

"This page reminds me of you. I think you're smart and fun and I think it's okay for you to have big emotions too."

Pages 26 & 27

These mantras are great for beginners. You can suggest your child repeat them after you as you read them.

"I love all of these. Do you have a favorite?"

"There are other ways we can use these if you'd like to try it out." **Check out the section on Mantras in the Healing Activities Guide in this kit.**

Further

If your child enjoyed this book you might consider reading *Anh's Anger* and trying the discussion guide we provided in this kit.

Your child might also like some of the breathing exercises recommended in the Healing Activities Guide or the books with breathing titles mentioned in this kit for techniques specific to anger.

Finally, the mantras in this book can be used in the Healing Activity Guide's section on mantras, which your child might like to explore with you.

Resources

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. American Psychological Association. Retrieved October 13, 2022, from <https://dictionary.apa.org/frustration>

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

Zucker, B. (2016). *Something Very Sad Happened: A toddler's guide to understanding death*. Washington, D.C.: Magination Press



Book Discussion: Listening to My Body

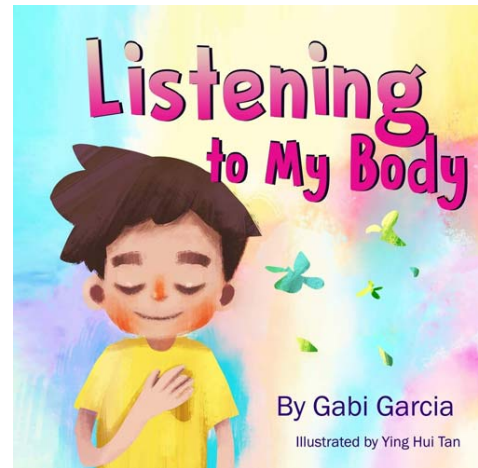
Listening to My Body

By Gabi Garcia

Illustrated by Ying Hui Tan

Skinned Knee Publishing

This dreamily illustrated story will be useful for a variety of readers. It's a wonderful introduction to identifying and trusting emotions, it introduces coping strategies similar to those suggested in this kit's Healing Activities guide, and it encourages making connections between our sensations and feelings. As a bonus, there are also helpful pages for caregivers who want to support the mindfulness of young people.



Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

You and your child may want to read the book once or twice together before discussing it, especially since the illustrations are pretty, and your child may want to read it before trying it as a meditation. While you enjoy reading it, remember that what's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain its hidden meanings to your child in place of a conversation with you. Feel free to skip any pages that aren't relevant to your family's experience.

Wherever there is a "_____" you may insert the name of a person, idea, or emotion you may be discussing while sharing the book. You don't need to use all these suggestions, just what feels right for the moment or the family member you're reading with.

When/if you ask your child a question, please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

The following suggestions from www.mentalhealth.gov are great tips for discussing mental health with our kids:

- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to the child or adolescent's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers).
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Title Page

This book's title page looks a bit like the story begins on the first page, but it doesn't. It's just the long version of the title.

Pages 2 & 3

The book opens with "A note to parents & teachers" that has helpful tips and language for those of who are adults looking to bring mindfulness into the lives of our kids. It also explains the formatting of the book, specifically the "Let's practice" prompts you'll see at the bottom of some pages.

A note about the "Let's practice" activity suggested at the bottom of some pages: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you're reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there's no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 4 & 5

"Hey! Your body is your friend too! You do lots of the same things as this kid."

"Wow, I've seen you yawn when you're tired too!"

"Do you ever feel your tummy growl when you're hungry?"

"Have you ever gotten goosebumps when you felt cold?"

"Can you tell me about any other things your body tells you?"

If your child participated in any of this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!” “Wow, nice job!” or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

A note about the “Let’s practice” activity suggested at the bottom of this page: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you’re reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there’s no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 6 & 7

“Ooh, I like that word – sensations. Can you say that word?” **Don’t worry about their pronunciation of the word sensations. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged.**

The sentence “Have you ever felt those sensations before?” is followed immediately by a “Let’s practice” activity. You can wait and try these activities at a later time if it’s too much to do at the moment.

“Can you name any other sensations your body has felt before?”

A note about the “Let’s practice” activity suggested at the bottom of this page: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you’re reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there’s no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 8 & 9

“Ooh! Let’s try these! Show me your wiggly, squiggly self! I can do it too!” **Go ahead and wiggle with your child.**

“How does moving like that make you feel?”

“I like this one too - let’s try it together again, let’s be very still together.” **Go ahead and be still with your child.**

“How does staying still like that make you feel?”

If your child participated in any of this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!” “Wow, nice job!” or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

Pages 10 & 11

"I bet we can do this too. Can you clap your hands quietly like his tapping heart?" **Go ahead and clap gently with your child.**

"Can you clap your hands loudly like his pounding heart?" **Go ahead and clap loudly with your child.**

If your child participated in any of this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!" "Wow, nice job!" or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

A note about the "Let's practice" activity suggested at the bottom of this page: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you're reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there's no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 12 & 13

"I like that idea - 'Feelings are not good or bad.' Can you say that?" **Don't worry about the pronunciation of the words. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged.**

"What other feelings can you name?"

Pages 14 & 15

"What sensations do you notice when you're excited or nervous?"

"I love to feel excited, do you? Can you tell me about a time you felt excited?"

A note about the "Let's practice" activity suggested at the bottom of this page: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you're reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there's no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 16 & 17

When your child sees this child looking sad, they may make a sad face in response. Before starting to read the words on the page you might ask your child:

"How is this little boy feeling right now?"

"Have you ever felt that way?"

"Do you want to tell me about a time you felt sad?"

"Let's see what happens next..." **Go ahead and begin reading the story now**

"What do you need when you're sad?"

This particular "Let's practice" activity is one we recommend doing each time you read the book, if that's comfortable for you and your child. In addition to hugging themselves, you can also share a hug with your child and talk about:

"How do the hugs we give ourselves feel the same as when you and I hug?"

"How do the hugs feel different?"

"I think I'll try giving myself a hug next time I feel sad. Do you think you can remember to try that too?"

Pages 18 & 19

"Whew, I know what it feels like to have your emotions surprise you and make you feel knocked over." **Go ahead and share a story about a time this happened to you. While you're sharing, it's okay to show emotion to your child. In fact, it can be good for them to see an adult they love and trust experiencing emotions in a healthy way. However, if you feel you are going to lose control of your emotions and cry uncontrollably (for example), excuse yourself for a moment to regain composure so you don't scare your child. (Zucker, 2016)**

"Have your emotions ever surprised you? Do you want to tell me more about that?"

Pages 20 & 21

Anger is an emotion we tend to want to gloss over, "fix," or stop in our kids. But exploring anger will allow kids to identify this emotion, and then begin employing strategies they'll learn can calm them down.

"Do you ever feel this way?"

"It's okay to feel angry sometimes. Especially when something unfair has happened like here."

"I don't like it when I feel that way. Do you?"

"I don't think kicking the door is a good idea. Do you? What could he do instead?"

"One of the hardest parts about feeling anger is feeling like we're out of control. When we recognize we are angry, we can do things to feel better and get control again. What are positive things you do to get back in control when you're angry?"

- Positive examples:
 - Taking deep, calming breaths
 - Running hard to burn off energy
 - Closing our eyes and counting to ten
 - Taking time to be alone
 - Talking with a grownup about what we're feeling

Pages 22 & 23

"Look at that! He found a positive way to feel better AND a positive way to prevent the same thing from happening again! I like that!"

A note about the "Let's practice" activity suggested at the bottom of this page: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you're reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there's no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 24 & 25

"I know I've felt nervous before. Have you? Do you want to tell me more about that?"

"I've noticed this kid is getting really good at taking deep breaths when he's losing control. Can you show me what taking a deep breath looks like?"

"A snack and a little quiet time are both good ideas for how to feel better when you're feeling out of control."

"Who is an adult that helps you?"

Examples of adult helpers could include:

- **Teachers**
- **Parents**
- **Grandparents**
- **Adult family friends**
- **Coaches**

Pages 26 & 27

"Do you think you can learn about your feelings by listening to your body?"

Pages 28 & 29

"Those are all good ideas for how to feel better. Do you think doing those would make you feel better? Let's try to remember those together the next time you feel upset."

A note about the “Let’s practice” activity suggested at the bottom of this page: to effectively share this story with your child, start by using only a few of these. As you’re reading, try using the activities from the pages your child finds most entertaining. As you reread the title, you can try layering more of these in, so that eventually you try all of them. But there’s no need to do every single one in a single sitting.

Pages 30 & 31

These final pages have additional opportunities for you to continue your family’s conversation about emotions, sensations, and activities.

Further

If this title resonated with your child, consider trying some of the other titles and discussion guides we’ve provided in this kit. Especially *I Am a Peaceful Goldfish* or *I’m Just a Kid*. In addition, you’ll find mindfulness exercises to explore in the Healing Activities section of this kit.

In addition, you might enjoy more of Gabi’s books. You can see more at www.gabigarciabooks.com, and ask for them at your local library.

Resources

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

Zucker, B. (2016). *Something Very Sad Happened: A toddler’s guide to understanding death*. Washington, D.C.: Magination Press



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Book Discussion: Breathe With Me: Using Breath to Feel Strong, Calm, and Happy

Breathe With Me:

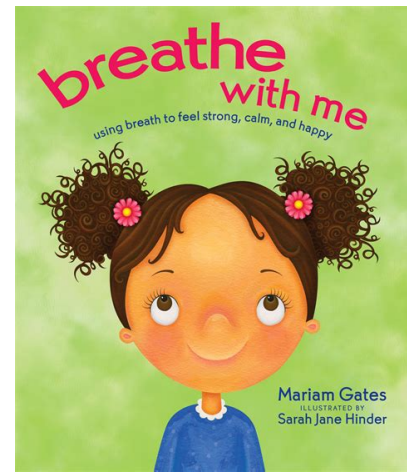
Using Breath to Feel Strong, Calm, and Happy

By Mariam Gates

Illustrated by Sarah Jane Hinder

Sounds True

In this story, a young girl shares a variety of breathing exercises with the reader as she goes about everyday activities. Sharing this story during a calm moment is a wonderful way to introduce this tool to your child's mindfulness toolkit. Later, when your child is experiencing heightened emotions, you can remind them of the exercises here and try them out.



Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

You and your child may want to read the book once or twice together before discussing it, especially since the illustrations are pretty, and your child may want to read it before trying it as a meditation. While you enjoy reading it, remember that what's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain its hidden meanings to your child in place of a conversation with you. Feel free to skip any pages that aren't relevant to your family's experience.

Wherever there is a "_____" you may insert the name of a person, idea, or emotion you may be discussing while sharing the book. You don't need to use all these suggestions, just what feels right for the moment or the family member you're reading with.

When/if you ask your child a question, please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

The following suggestions from www.mentalhealth.gov are great tips for discussing mental health with our kids:

- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to the child or adolescent's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers).
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Endpapers

These feature dandelion seeds that are also on the pages where the main character does a breathing exercise she calls Dandelion Breath.

Title Page

Reading the title together is a great way to introduce that this book is a little different than the usual books you may read together.

"This book is special; it's going to tell us a story but also has breathing exercises we can try together! Breathing in different ways can make us feel good when things are hard. Would you like to try some with me?"

Pages 2 & 3

"Look at that! You do all those things!"

Pages 4 & 5

"Do you ever feel like that? Can you show me how you can breathe like that?"

"Can you tell me about a time when your breath felt that way?" **Some potential answers might include:**

- **During exercise**
- **When I'm feeling angry**
- **When I'm feeling scared**

Pages 6 & 7

"This is a pretty picture. How do you think she is feeling in this picture?"

"Can you show me how you can breathe this way? Long and slow?"

"Can you tell me about a time your breath felt like this?" **Some potential answers might include:**

- **When I'm sleepy**
- **When we meditate**
- **When I'm feeling relaxed**

Pages 8 & 9

Now starts the part where you'll really explore breathing exercises together. Remember that kids don't have experience with this kind of exercise yet, and that "Until they get the hang of it, kids have a tendency to associate deep breathing with rapid breathing, which has the opposite effect." (Hurley, 2016) It may be helpful to gently remind your child to breathe slowly and to breathe into their belly, not their chest, to ensure they're engaging their parasympathetic nervous system. (Long, 2021)

"Oh, yay! Here's our first breathing exercise to try! Let's slowly take a deep breath in and then slowly let the breath back out."

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!" "Wow, nice job!" or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

If your child does not want to try the breathing exercises, that's fine too. It can still be helpful to them to see you doing the exercises, so model them for your child. After a few exercises, or maybe even a few times reading the book and watching you, they may feel ready to join you. If they don't feel like trying, you can offer encouragement by saying something like:

"It's okay if you're not ready to try this. I'm still going to do the exercises. If you change your mind, we can try together."

Pages 10 & 11

"Ooh! Rainbow Breath sounds so nice! I can't wait to try that! Let's turn the page and try it together."

Pages 12 & 13

Go ahead and read the breathing exercise, and try it together or model it for your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!” “Wow, nice job!” or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

“I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?” **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 14 & 15

“I’ve felt that way. Have you ever felt that way?”

“Let’s turn the page and learn about the Dandelion Breath exercise she uses to feel better when she feels this way.”

Pages 16 & 17

“Do you see what they’re playing with? Dandelions! I love playing with dandelions, don’t you?”

Go ahead and read the breathing exercise, and try it together or model it for your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!” “Wow, nice job!” or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

“I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?” **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 18 & 19

Anger and frustration are emotions we tend to want to gloss over, “fix,” or stop in our kids. But exploring anger will allow kids to identify this emotion, and then begin employing strategies that they’ll learn can calm them down.

“Ooh, how is she feeling on this page? I’ve felt that way, have you?”

“I wonder what happened that made her feel that way, can we figure it out?” **Take a look at the clues in the illustration together to figure it out.**

“I don’t like it when I feel this way, do you?”

"Let's turn the page and learn about the Counting Breath exercise she uses to feel better when she feels this way."

Pages 20 & 21

"Wow, she looks totally different on this page! How is her Counting Breath exercise making her feel? Let's try it together.":

Go ahead and read the breathing exercise, and try it together or model it for your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!" "Wow, nice job!" or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 22 & 23

"Oh, my. Here's another big emotion! Look at her, can you tell me how she's feeling? What's happening to make her feel that way? Do you ever feel that way?"

"Let's turn the page and learn about the Belly Breath exercise she uses to feel better when she feels this way."

Pages 24 & 25

"I love this picture! She looks so peaceful! Let's try Belly Breath together!"

Go ahead and read the breathing exercise, and try it together or model it for your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!" "Wow, nice job!" or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 26 & 27

"Ooh, she's having a hard time falling asleep right now. I've felt that way before."

"Let's turn the page and learn about the Balloon Breath exercise she uses to feel better when she has trouble falling asleep."

Pages 28 & 29

"Wow! This is beautiful!"

Go ahead and read the breathing exercise, and try it together or model it for your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!" "Wow, nice job!" or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 30 & 31

"I like this idea! Our breath is like a friend who can help us feel better."

"Did you like those exercises? I'd like to try them the next time I'm having some big feeling, what about you?"

Endpapers

The dandelion seeds that you saw on the page featuring the Dandelion Breath exercise are here as well.

"Look! There are those dandelion seeds again! Do you remember how to do the Dandelion Breath exercise? Let's do it together once more."

Further

Remember, incorporating breathwork into your daily routine doesn't have to involve great effort. Instead, it will do more good for your child to have it woven into small moments throughout their day. When you see a small frustration, suggest you take a slow deep breath together, then solve the problem. When your child is feeling happy, suggest taking a slow deep breath to feel even better. With this kind of practice, your child will build the skill so that when it's needed during times of big emotions, they'll trust the process and have the skill to utilize breathwork properly.

If this title resonated with your child, consider trying some of the additional breathwork exercises we've shared in this kit's Healing Activities guide. Your child may also like the books *Healing Breath*, *I Am a Peaceful Goldfish*, *Hurry Up!*, or *Anh's Anger* and the accompanying guides we've included in this kit.

In addition, they may like other mindfulness books that Mariam and Sarah Jane have teamed up to create. You can learn more at www.mariamgates.com or www.sarahjanehinder.com and ask for them at your local library.

Resources

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

Hurley, K. (2016). *How to help your child manage frustration*. PBS. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-teach-frustration-tolerance-to-kids>

Long, C. (2021, August 30). *How the parasympathetic nervous system can lower stress*. Hospital for Special Surgery. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from https://www.hss.edu/article_parasympathetic-nervous-system.asp



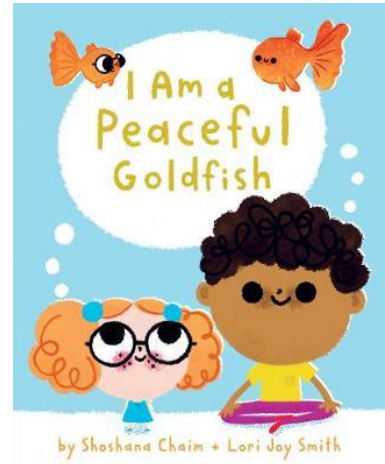
Book Discussion: I Am a Peaceful Goldfish

I Am a Peaceful Goldfish

By Shoshana Chaim

Illustrated by Lori Joy Smith

Skinned Knee Publishing



This playfully illustrated book shares a variety of breathing techniques two children share after things have gone wrong. Sharing this story during a calm moment is a wonderful way to introduce this tool to your child's mindfulness toolkit. Later, when your child is experiencing heightened emotions, you can remind them of the exercises here and try them out. This book is especially helpful with building language skills around mindfulness for you and your child. Phrases like

"good" or "bad" can be hard for kids to understand. Using the word "peaceful" for example, is more specific than a general word like "good" or "fine". When kids expand their feelings vocabulary they can help us and others understand them better.

Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

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When/if you ask your child a question, please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

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- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Endpapers

"I see a lot of kids having big feelings. Can you tell me how these kids are feeling?"

"But look up there, the goldfish feels peaceful, just like the title of this book! Let's find out how to feel peaceful like the goldfish."

Title Page

"Oh, I love that word – peaceful. Peaceful is a feeling we have when our emotions and our surroundings are calm. Can you say peaceful?" **Don't worry about their pronunciation of the word peaceful. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged.**

"This book is special, it's going to tell us a story, but it also has breathing exercises we can try together! Breathing in different ways can make us feel good when things are hard. Would you like to try some with me?"

Pages 1 & 2

"There is a LOT going on here. Can we figure out what's gone wrong?" **Some of the objects you see here will become breathing exercises as the book continues. If you read the book more than once, see if your child can remember any of these objects turning into breathing exercises.**

"Do those things ever happen to you? How does that make you feel? How do these two kids feel right now?"

"When you feel like that, is it hard for you to calm down?"

"Did you notice the goldfish? Do they look peaceful to you?"

Pages 4 & 5

"Oh, look! Now they've noticed the goldfish too!"

Pages 6 & 7

Now starts the part where you'll really explore breathing exercises together. Remember that kids don't have experience with this kind of exercise yet and that "Until they get the hang of it, kids have a tendency to associate deep breathing with rapid breathing, which has the opposite effect." (Hurley, 2016) It may be helpful to gently remind your child to breathe slowly and to breathe into their belly, not their chest, to ensure they're engaging their parasympathetic nervous system. (Long, 2021)

"Oh, yay! Here's our first breathing exercise to try! Let's slowly take a deep breath in like these kids." **Breathe in here, and turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

If your child does not want to try the breathing exercises, that's fine too. It can still be helpful to them to see you doing the exercises, so model them for your child. After a few exercises, or maybe even a few times reading the book and watching you, they may feel ready to join you. If they don't feel like trying, you can offer encouragement by saying something like:

"It's okay if you're not ready to try this. I'm still going to do the exercises. If you change your mind, we can try together."

Pages 8 & 9

Blow out pretending to make bubbles with your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!", "Wow, nice job!", or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"Look at that, these goldfish look just like the kids! See, this one has the same glasses!"

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 10 & 11

"I bet we can do this one too. Let's get down and pretend to be elephants. Should we get a couple blankets or towels like these kids are using?" **Replicate the elephant pose, if possible, with your child, and turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

Pages 12 & 13

Blow out, making a gentle trumpeting sound with your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!”, “Wow, nice job!”, or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

“Now they’ve turned into elephants! How fun!”

“I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?” **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 14 & 15

“Let’s turn into pinwheels like these kids.” **Replicate the pinwheel pose, if possible, with your child, and turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

Pages 16 & 17

Blow out as if you’re trying to make a pinwheel spin with your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!”, “Wow, nice job!”, or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

“They look great as pinwheels! So do you!”

“I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?” **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 18 & 19

“Let’s become dandelions like these kids.” **Replicate the dandelion pose, if possible, with your child and turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

Pages 20 & 21

Blow out as if you’re blowing away dandelion seeds with your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!”, “Wow, nice job!”, or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

“I love the way they look as dandelions, don’t you? You make a good dandelion too!”

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 22 & 23

"How can we become wind chimes?" **Replicate your child's suggestion, if possible, with your child and turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

Pages 24 & 25

Blow out as if you're blowing on a windchime to make music with your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!," "Wow, nice job!," or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"It's fun pretending to be a windchime like this! I like the wind chime pose you taught me!"

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 26 & 27

"How can we pose like dragons?" **Replicate your child's suggestion, if possible, with your child, and turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

Pages 28 & 29

Blow out as if you're blowing fire with your child.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!," "Wow, nice job!," or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"These dragons are so cute! Can you tell which kid is which dragon?"

"It's fun pretending to be a dragon with you! I like the dragon pose you taught me!"

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 30 & 31

"Let's stretch up to the sky like these flowers." **Stretch up high, if possible, with your child and, if it's comfortable, close your eyes. Turn the page for the exhale prompt.**

Pages 32 & 33

Blow out and bring your hands to your heart. Your first time reading the book, you may need to keep your eyes open to show your child how to do this.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a “You’re great at that!” “Wow, nice job!” or “That was wonderful!” kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

“It feels good to stretch and breathe at the same time!”

“Hey, look! They aren’t flowers anymore. They’re back to being kids!”

“I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?” **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 34 & 35

“Do you feel calm too?”

“Those breathing exercises are all great ways to make ourselves feel calm. Let’s try to remember those together the next time you feel upset.”

Pages 30 & 31

This sweet “Author’s Note” can be nice to read to your child to show that the author empathizes with them and wants to support them. It also opens a door to discuss other creative deep breaths your child may want to invent and utilize.

Endpapers

“Hey, look! It’s those kids again! Are they all feeling peaceful like the goldfish now?” **Feel free to flip between the front endpapers and back endpapers to discuss the differences you and your child observe.**

Further

Remember, incorporating breathwork into your daily routine doesn’t have to involve great effort. Instead, it will do more good for your child to have it woven into small moments throughout their day. When you see a small frustration, suggest you take a slow deep breath together, then solve the problem. When your child is feeling happy, suggest taking a slow deep breath to feel even better. With this kind of practice, your child will build the skill so that when it’s needed during times of big emotions, they’ll trust the process and have the skill to utilize breathwork properly.

If your child enjoyed this book, consider trying the books *Breathe With Me*, *Healing Breath*, *Hurry Up!* or *Anh's Anger* next. They may also enjoy the breathing exercises we've included in this kit's Healing Activities section, especially the Pinwheel Breathing activity.

Resources

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

Hurley, K. (2016). *How to help your child manage frustration*. PBS. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-teach-frustration-tolerance-to-kids>

Long, C. (2021, August 30). *How the parasympathetic nervous system can lower stress*. Hospital for Special Surgery. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from https://www.hss.edu/article_parasympathetic-nervous-system.asp



Book Discussion: Hurry Up! A Book About Slowing Down

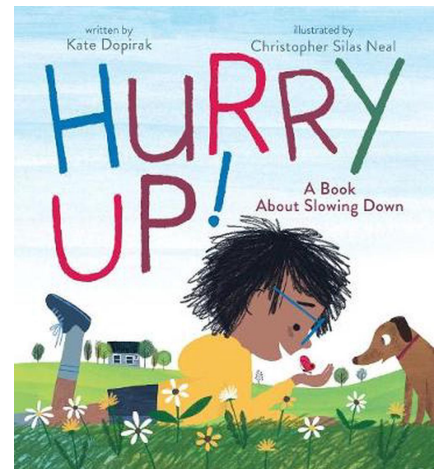
Hurry Up! A Book About Slowing Down

By Kate Dopirak

Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal

Beach Lane Books

This story will be super useful to any families starting their mindfulness journey. It features a phrase we're all guilty of using, "Hurry Up!" While there are times we are legitimately in a hurry, it's also a phrase we overuse with kids, who need time to simply be, play, and engage with their world in an unorganized, unplanned way. It could be fun to have your child begin reminding you when you're acting stressed out or in a hurry. After all, you're all on your mindful journey together; their observations are valuable and can be helpful!



Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

You and your child may want to read the book once or twice together before discussing it, especially since the illustrations are pretty, and your child may want to read it before trying it as a meditation. While you enjoy reading it, remember that what's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain its hidden meanings to your child in place of a conversation with you. Feel free to skip any pages that aren't relevant to your family's experience.

Wherever there is a "_____" you may insert the name of a person, idea, or emotion you may be discussing while sharing the book. You don't need to use all these suggestions, just what feels right for the moment or the family member you're reading with.

When/if you ask your child a question, please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

If you would like to keep any of the printed sheets in this section, you are welcome to do so.

The following suggestions from www.mentalhealth.gov are great tips for discussing mental health with our kids:

- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to the child or adolescent's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers).
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Title Page

"This book is Called '*Hurry Up!*' Can you guess what it will be about? What are some times we are in a hurry?"

This book will be most effective for conversation if simply read through without discussion the first time or two you share it.

Pages 2 - 5

"Oh! How is this kid feeling in these pictures? Do you ever feel that way?"

"How does it feel when you have to hurry to get out of bed/leave the house in the morning?"

Pages 6 & 7

"Do you ever have to hurry when you're leaving school? Tell me about that."

Pages 8 - 12

"Wow. This book is kind of stressing me out. How do you feel?"

"Whew. I'm glad we stopped. All that hurrying was making me feel anxious. How about you?"

Pages 13 & 14

"Slowing things down can feel good. And look at what this kid gets to experience when he slows down! Tell me what's going on in this picture."

Pages 10 & 11

"It's so good for us to take breaks! Do you take breaks? Tell me about that."

"Do you see anyone else taking a break in this picture?"

Pages 12 & 13

"Wow! Look how beautiful it is there! Let's take a break from reading and look around our space for something beautiful. What do you see?"

Pages 14 & 15

"Look at that! A breathing exercise! Let's try to breathe like we're sniffing flowers and blowing bubbles."

Go ahead and replicate the breathing exercise together, or model it for your child. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, as if you were smelling a beautiful flower. Hold that breath in for just a moment, and then slowly exhale through your mouth, as though you were blowing bubbles.

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!" "Wow, nice job!" or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"I like that. Do you? How do you feel after doing that breathing exercise?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers.**

Pages 16 & 17

"I love doing all the things on this page! Do you?"

"Should we make a wish right now?"

"Next time we're playing outside let's listen to nature together."

Pages 18 & 19

"Wow! The kid met a squirrel! I wonder what we might see the next time we go exploring outside. What do you think?"

Pages 20 & 21

"Ooh! Splashing in puddles is fun! And look how happy they both are!"

Pages 22 - 27

"Slowing down when it's nighttime is so good for our bodies and our brains. What are some things we do to slow down at night?"

Pages 28 & 29

"You know, slowing down in nature is fun during the day OR at night. Maybe we could do something outside in nature in the evening soon. What do you think?"

Pages 30 & 31

"I like that idea. Do you think we should maybe start to slow down a little more? Can you tell me when you feel you're going too fast?"

"Sometimes grownups don't realize we can make kids feel like this kid felt at the beginning of the book. Like everything is too fast and overwhelming. Can you tell me if I'm making you go too fast?"

"You know, if I ever make you feel like this kid felt at the beginning of the book, I hope you'll tell me."

Further

If your child likes this book, you might enjoy trying out the nature walks, breathwork, or altar activities that we shared in this kit's Healing Activities section. In addition, if your child liked the breathing exercises here, they might also like the books *Breathe with Me*, or *I Am a Peaceful Goldfish* for more fun breathing exercises to try while sharing a story.

One opportunity this book presents is the chance for kids to recognize in themselves when they're feeling overwhelmed. As mindful parents, we should try to create environments and circumstances for our children that do not overwhelm them. With extra planning, some of these stressors can be reduced. Will it always be perfect and stress free? Of course not. But it can improve. In addition, allowing our children to speak openly to us about how

we're impacting them can be hard. It may not always be convenient, and it may also sting a little when your child tells you you're rushing them or hurting their feelings somehow. But keeping those lines of communication open can allow for a more robust and deep connection between you.

Resources

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>



Book Discussion: The Me I Choose to Be

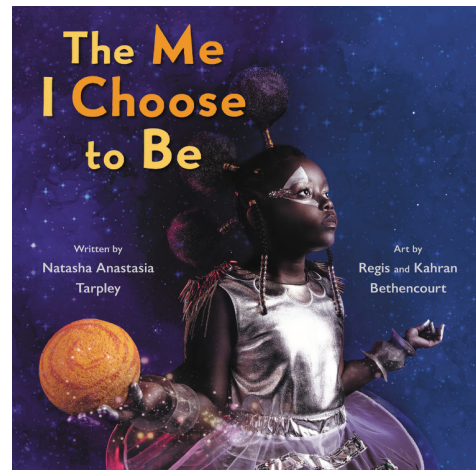
The Me I Choose to Be

By Natasha Anastasia Tarpley

Art by Regis + Kahran Bethencourt

Little, Brown, and Company

This powerful book is filled with gorgeous photos of kids in enchanting scenarios. The photos are paired with powerful words that can be used as mantras, should they resonate with your child. Also, the children in the photos are not all smiling and happy, providing your child an opportunity to discuss emotions and empathize with others. It also provides an excellent opportunity to discuss how people are complex and aren't just one thing, or one feeling. Sometimes we feel lots of things at the same time, and that's okay. As you engage in discussing the pictures and ideas in the book, please remember there are no right or wrong answers from your child.



Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. If it's written in **bold face**, it's a note for you as the parent to read and consider. If in quotations, it's a discussion prompt for you and your child. There's no need to use all the notes, just what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

You and your child may want to read the book once or twice together before discussing it, especially since the illustrations are pretty, and your child may want to read it before trying it as a meditation. While you enjoy reading it, remember that what's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain its hidden meanings to your child in place of a conversation with you. Feel free to skip any pages that aren't relevant to your family's experience.

Wherever there is a "_____" you may insert the name of a person, idea, or emotion you may be discussing while sharing the book. You don't need to use all these suggestions, just what feels right for the moment or the family member you're reading with.

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- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
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- Watch for reactions during the discussion, and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Endpapers

The front and back endpapers of the book feature the kids inside the book in additional poses. If a particular image (or images) resonate with your child, try continuing the conversation by finding the child, or children, on the endpapers. Do they look the same? Different? How?

If at any time your child enjoys an image, emotion, or idea in this book, encourage them to say the first sentence from it ("I am Wind," "I am a superhero," "I am joyful," etc.) out loud. Don't worry about their pronunciation of the words. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged.

Pages 2 & 3

"Ooh, this is a powerful picture. What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt limitless."

"Can you say 'I am the me I choose to be?'" **Don't worry about their pronunciation of the words. Just trying it out should be celebrated and encouraged. If your child participated, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!", "Wow, nice job!", or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.** "Let's say that everytime we see it in this book, okay?"

Pages 4 & 5

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt hope."

"Tell me about a time you felt like a connector."

Pages 6 & 7

"What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a storyteller."

Pages 8 & 9

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a creative magician."

"Tell me about a time you felt like a creator."

Pages 10 & 11

"What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a storyteller."

"There it is again! Say it with me – 'I am the me I choose to be.'"

Pages 12 & 13

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt joyful."

"Tell me about a time you felt sad."

Pages 14 & 15

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a tiny bird."

"Tell me about a time you felt like a friend."

Pages 16 & 17

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you didn't feel cool."

Pages 18 & 19

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a free spirit."

Pages 20 & 21

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a star."

"Tell me about a time you felt unnoticed like the night sky."

Pages 22 & 23

"What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like this."

"There it is again! Say it with me – 'I am the me I choose to be.'"

Pages 24 & 25

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a superhero."

"Tell me about a time you felt like laughter."

Pages 26 & 27

"What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a gardener."

Pages 28 & 29

"What do you like about these pictures?"

"Can you tell me how these people are feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like the wind."

"Tell me about a time you felt like light."

Pages 30 & 31

"What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"Tell me about a time you felt like a winding road."

"Tell me about a time you felt like a home."

Pages 32 & 33

"What do you like about this picture?"

"Can you tell me how this person is feeling?"

"Have you ever felt this way?"

"There it is again! Say it with me – 'I am the me I choose to be.'"

Further

If any of the images, ideas, or emotions resonated with your child, consider using the text from that page as a mantra for your child. Take a look at the Healing Activities portion of this kit and plug it into any of the mantra activities we've shared.

If your child liked this story, you may want to consider listening to the Song "[I Like The Me I See!](#)" by Culture Queen. The chorus pairs so nicely – "I like the me I see! I'm who I choose to be!"

Resources

For parents and caregivers. *For Parents and Caregivers* | MentalHealth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>



Book Discussion: Anh's Anger

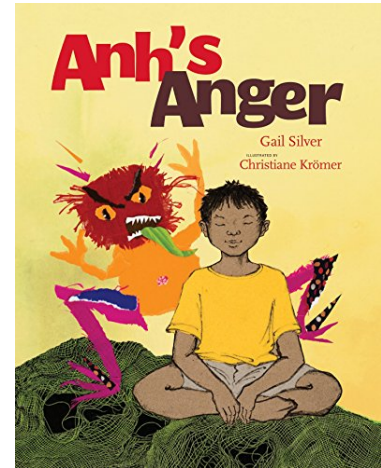
Anh's Anger

By Gail Silver

Illustrated by Christiane Krömer

Plum Blossom Books

In this story, we learn that anger is an emotion that is neither good nor bad. Instead, it is an emotion we can learn from, care for, and deeply connect with in order to regain a feeling of control. Anger is an emotion we tend to want to gloss over, “fix,” or stop in our kids. But exploring anger will allow kids to identify this emotion and then begin employing strategies that they’ll learn can calm them down. This book will be especially useful for families with children who have tantrums and are looking for healthy ways for their child to de-escalate.



In addition, the book is a wonderful resource for adult caregivers to begin understanding co-regulation, the process of guiding your child through the process of emotional regulation together, similar to the way we begin riding a bike with the assistance of our training wheels. We’ve included additional information on coregulation in the “Further” section at the end of this guide.

It is worth mentioning that the technique shared in this book of asking a child to go sit with their anger on their own should not be done immediately. You will need to spend time patiently with your child when they are experiencing anger in order for them to begin understanding this emotion. If you send your child away when they are angry without working with them, they will perceive anger as an emotion to be punished. This could lead them to hide their anger from you or themselves, which is not a healthy response.

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- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about his or her feelings and worries.

Discussion/Observation:

Endpapers

The polkadots on the front and back endpapers are similar to the bedspread in Anh's room and to the legs of his Anger at different points in the story. It is interesting that Anh wraps himself in the blanket for comfort when he is feeling distressed and that his anger also takes on the form of the object Anh turns to for comfort as they're talking.

Title Page

The funny looking figure shown here is Anger. He can be a bit scary looking for some children. If your child finds this image of anger distressing, you may want to put the book away to try again another time, as Anger's appearance when Anh is upset is more menacing.

Your child being frightened by the appearance of anger is a good opportunity to discuss anger, even if you don't read the book. Helpful discussion prompts may include :

"I think Anger looks scary too. It can also feel scary when we feel angry."

"Can you tell me about a time you felt angry?"

Go ahead and share a story about a time you felt angry. You're sharing that it's okay to show emotion to your child. In fact, it can be good for them to see an adult they love and trust experiencing emotions in a healthy way. However, if you feel you are going to lose control of your emotions and cry uncontrollably (for example), excuse yourself for a moment to regain composure, so you don't alarm your child. (Zucker, 2016)

"What do you think Anger is doing? Stomping? Dancing? Sometimes when we're angry, it can feel good to use our bodies in safe ways. Using our bodies in safe ways means that we are safe, others are safe, and our environment is safe as well. What are some safe ways we can use our bodies when we're angry?" **Possible answers could include:**

- **Dancing**
- **Running**
- **Jumping**
- **Tensing and releasing our muscles**
- **Squishing playdough**
- **Popping bubble wrap**
- **Stretching**
- **Pushups**
- **Situps**
- **Jumping Jacks**

Pages 2 & 3

"Hey, you like to build with blocks too! Do you like Anh's tower?"

"Can you tell me how Anh is feeling right now?"

"What do you think Anh's grandfather is making for dinner?"

Pages 4 - 7

"Hmmm, is Anh being a good listener right now? Why do you think he isn't listening to his grandfather? Have you ever felt like that?" **Flipping back and forth between these pages while you're discussing is a good idea.**

"Let's turn the page and see if you're right."

Pages 8 & 9

"Poor Anh. You were right. He wants to keep playing and he feels frustrated/disappointed/angry that it's time for him to stop playing."

If you've already read *Listening to My Body*, you may want to talk about the sensations Anh is experiencing as he's growing angry. This would be a good time to ask your child

"Do you ever feel the sensations Anh is feeling? Do you feel those sensations when you feel like Anh does?"

Pages 10 & 11

"How does Anh look like he's feeling now?"

"Sometimes when we're angry, we don't want to feel better right away. Sometimes we just need to feel angry for a little while before we can get back in control."

Asking your child to be alone when they're angry is something to aim for, not start with. For tips on assisting your child while they're angry, take a look at the "Further" section at the bottom of this discussion guide.

It's worth mentioning that Grandpa says he plans to support Anh once he's "calm and able to talk." This is a nice phrase to use with kids because we aren't telling them we'll talk when they're "happy," which suggests that anger is bad or that the child is being bad for feeling angry. Instead, the emphasis is put on Anh's ability to be in control of himself.

Pages 12 & 13

"I know what he means about feeling his anger all the way down in his belly. Sometimes when I'm angry, my body feels that way. What do you feel in your body when you're angry?"

Pages 14 & 15

"Wow! Look at that creature! What do you think of the way it looks?"

"I think it looks kind of wild and a little scary. And wild and scary is how my anger feels sometimes. How about you? What does your anger feel like?"

Pages 16 & 17

"Even though we said it looked a little wild and scary, Anh doesn't look scared on this page, does he? I think he recognizes that that is his anger, so it's not scary to him."

"When we lose control of ourselves, recognizing what we're feeling is a really good first step toward feeling better. When we know what we're feeling, we don't have to feel scared."

Pages 18 & 19

This is an important page, because Anh takes charge of his anger here. Instead of allowing it to control him, he acknowledges what is the right thing to do in order to protect himself, his grandfather, and their home.

"I really like this page. I like that Anh is making a choice to not let his anger make him do unkind things to his home or the people he loves."

Pages 20 & 21

"When we feel angry, it can feel good to use our bodies. Have you ever danced when you're angry to get some of your feelings out in a physical way?"

"What are some other safe ways we can use our bodies when we're angry?" **Possible answers could include:**

- **Dancing**
- **Running**
- **Jumping**
- **Tensing and releasing our muscles**
- **Squishing playdough**
- **Popping bubble wrap**
- **Stretching**
- **Pushups**
- **Situps**
- **Jumping Jacks**

"Oh, they're doing a breathing exercise too! Can we try to breathe like Anh and his anger together? How can we sound like a strong, howling wind?" **Replicate your child's suggestion, if possible, with your child.**

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!," "Wow, nice job!," or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

"I also want to try drumming like Anh and his anger. Do you want to try too?" **Get down on your knees and pound the ground with your hands, if possible, with your child.**

If your child participated in this, feel free to follow up with a "You're great at that!," "Wow, nice job!," or "That was wonderful!" kind of statement to encourage their exploration.

Pages 22 & 23

"Now let's try being still and breathing, just like Anh and his Anger." **Rest together quietly for a few moments, and prompt your child to breathe in slowly for about 4 seconds, then to breathe out for about four seconds. After repeating this a few times, you can ask** "How do you feel now? Do you think this might feel good to try next time you're angry?"

"How does Anh look now? Does he look like he's getting back in control now?"

Pages 24 & 25

"Look at them now! They both look a bit different!"

Flip between these pages and pages 22 & 23 to see differences in how Anh looks and how Anger looks.

"Anh looks like he's starting to smile now! He's not just back in control, he's feeling better!"

"Anger is getting smaller! And I don't think he looks nearly as scary now, do you? When we get control over our anger, it acts just like this. It gets smaller and smaller."

Pages 26 & 27

"Look at that! Anh's Anger looks happy now! I think all that exercising and breathwork made the anger feel better, just like Anh feels better now too."

"I like that idea. Anger is your friend. What do you think about that?"

"I know when you're angry, you sometimes say or do mean things. Do you think that spending time with your anger could make you feel better during those times?"

Page 28

"Look at that! Anh is still doing his slow, deep breathing and his Anger is so tiny now! Anger looks very silly and happy!"

Page 29

"And here's Anh's grandfather. I like that he's being gentle with Anh. It's hard to feel angry, and when we do feel like that it's nice to know people care about us. Do you know that when you're angry I still love you and care about you?"

Pages 30 & 31

"Oh my gosh! Look at Anger now! It looks like a happy flower!"

"Look at that! Anh and his grandfather are talking about what just happened. That's what we do!"

"Now I see. Anh did all those things that made him feel better, but he was also taking care of his Anger at the same time. Sometimes, listening to our Anger will tell us what it needs, and what we need to feel better. That could be exercise or deep breathing, it could be getting a cuddle from someone we love, or talking about what happened. What are things you can do to get back in control when you're angry?"

Taking a moment to cuddle and sit together after your child has experienced anger can be very reassuring for them. Just like adults, they can feel embarrassed or shameful about what just happened. Telling them, and then showing them with compassion that they are still loved can be an important part of allowing them to gain comfort with their anger. While you're cuddling, it's helpful to talk about things:

"Do you want to talk to me about what just happened? What do you want to say?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is an opportunity for you and your child to explore the experience of, and ramifications of, their anger.**

"What happened?"

"How can we fix this?"

"How will I make things right?"

"How will you make things right?"

"It really hurt my feelings when you said _____ to me. I love you so much, but you shouldn't say unkind things like that. Do you understand?"

"I love you so much, that's why I can't let you treat me or other people that way."

"Thank you for talking to me about this. Can we try again now?"

Like Anh's grandfather, it can be helpful for your child to hear about your own experiences with anger. While you're sharing, it's okay to show emotion to your child. In fact, it can be good for them to see an adult they love and trust experiencing emotions in a healthy way. However, if you feel you are going to lose control of your emotions and cry uncontrollably (for example), excuse yourself for a moment to regain composure so you don't scare your child. (Zucker, 2016)

Pages 32 & 33

You may notice on these pages that the tower is still smashed apart in the other room and that now they have finished their dinner, Anh and his grandfather are enjoying ice cream. If you're working on moving past an angry incident, it can be important when "trying again" for the parent to really mean that. The blocks can be picked up after dinner when Anh is feeling supported and in control again.

"Huh, look at that. Even though Anh's grandfather is sharing a story about a time he was angry, he looks happy. Why do you think he looks happy?" **Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is an opportunity for you and your child to explore their experience with, and their interpretation of, their anger.**

Further

Up to this point, this kit has shared many examples of how to coach your child through the process of self-regulation. What we're sharing in this section is referred to as Co-regulation. Co-regulation is "the supportive process between caring adults and children, youth, or young adults that fosters self-regulation development." (Rosanbalm & Murray, 2017) "One way of thinking about this [...] is that, for optimal functioning in the moment, children, youth, and young adults need to have their self-regulation "bucket" filled. Depending on developmental stage, environmental circumstances, and individual differences, young people themselves have the capacity to fill their self-regulation bucket to varying levels." (Rosanbalm & Murray, 2017)

Here are a few more tips for helping your child when they're angry:

First, understand that when your child is angry, it is not an appropriate time to try to reason with them or teach them. In moments of anger, their sympathetic nervous system is responding to whatever stress has caused their anger by triggering a defense mechanism called fight-or-flight. "That high level of stress keeps your heart rate elevated, dilates your pupils, raises your blood pressure, and keeps everything in your body on high alert." (Long 2021) Instead, they need your compassionate support at this moment.

Second, stay calm. One of the hardest things about parenting in a mindful way is putting your own practice into action during these times of high emotion, when you are also being triggered. Your sympathetic nervous system is experiencing the same things. Remember, you are the parent, and you can respond mindfully, with love and respect. Acknowledge your own environment, emotions, and needs. Take a beat to remind yourself that this is not your child giving you a hard time, but rather having a hard time. Then, move forward, supporting your child in a calm way. As you practice, it will get easier.

Third, show compassionate support. We recommend three steps to compassionately support your child:

- First, make sure they're in a safe space. Some children will need to burn off energy in a physical way when angry. Is there an appropriate place within your home for this to be accomplished safely? Some kids go a step beyond and will throw things or destroy things. They may need their rooms to be set up in a way where they can be in there safely without such opportunities.
 - A safe place could be their entire room, or a space within the room. Consider the following to make your own safe space:
 - A tent, open closet with a curtain to pull, or a corner of their room with comfy blankets, pillows, or stuffed animals.
 - Comforting tools in a basket or box. This could include things like:
 - Stress balls, play dough, or other manipulative objects
 - A book that calms them down
 - A sand timer to use while taking slow, deep breaths
 - A favorite doll or toy
 - Grounding objects from happy times spent outdoors
 - A poster, picture, drawing or other art they find soothing
- Second, keep the talking to a minimum. Instead of reasoning, use simple, short phrases to show your intentions. When they've calmed down, you can try some of the language we shared above for pages 30 & 31 to explore what just happened. Licensed Mental Health Counselor Janine Halloran recommends phrases such as:
 - "I'm here for you."
 - "I love you."
 - "I want to help you."
 - "Let me know when you're ready." (Halloran, n.d.)
- Third, normalize anger. It is a part of being human that is neither good nor bad. It is an emotion we all experience. Discussing anger and frustration regularly can make them less scary and more manageable when they do appear. Instead of putting the child in a timeout or raising your voice, you can simply let it be part of your life. Try saying things like:
 - "Uh oh, you look like you're starting to feel frustrated. Can you tell me what's going on?"
 - "That activity tends to make you feel upset. Are you sure you want to try that right now?"
 - "Okay, if we're going to do something we know can make you feel upset, let's talk about what you can do if you start to feel that way."
 - "Your body (or words) are showing me that you're feeling angry. What can we do to help your anger?"

Resources

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Family Survey

Hello again, friends.

We hope this kit has been useful for your family. If you're comfortable sharing, we'd love to hear the ways in which this kit was helpful to your family or ways it could be improved for future families. Simply respond to as many of the following questions on this two-page survey as you'd like; we'll do the rest.

You can return this form at the library by leaving it inside the bag. Thank you so much.

Please circle a number:

1. I found this kit easy to navigate and use.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

2. The books selected were appropriate and useful for my family.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

3. I discovered connections in the local resources that will be useful after returning this kit.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

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The Healing Library would like to thank Laura Efrom, Assistant Branch Manager at the Severn Community Library, for her assistance in designing this survey



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4. Tell us about the book and/or activity you liked the best...

5. The most important part of this kit for our family was...

6. Something that could be improved is...

7. Anything you'd like to pass on to the next family checking out this kit?

8. Do you have any suggestions for other ways families could easily access this resource?

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