

Meditation

Meditation has great calming effects. - that's a given and it also gives you greater insight to how you are.

Boosts brain development - Lessens negative reactions
It's been proven that people who meditate need less sleep.
Meditation makes it much easier to focus and achieve flow.

Allows you to procrastinate less, and get more done in the same amount of time.
Physically changes your body on a cellular level and boosts your immune system.

Meditation also helps you to recharge, so you have more energy throughout the day.
The practice of meditation and Mindfulness increases the blood flow in your brain, and according to one neurophysiologist, "rewires the circuitry in your brain".

Mindfulness

As described by Jon Kabat-Zinn :

"Is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally'
Mindfulness then, is being being truly present with what you are doing at all times, bringing awareness to even the most stressful of situations and being ok with how you are in the midst of it all.

Just for the sake of a teens description- My 16 year old's version is
"Mindfulness is being aware of everything around you and what you are doing with care oh and everything has value !"

Mindfulness in essence uses the practice and key elements of meditation in every day life, rather than trying too *find* time to meditate - make it a way of living and being .

Awareness

The more you are able to connect, the more you are able to understand your body and how your body communicates with you. And thus you develop a way of living that adheres to the natural rhythms and harmony of the body that in turn supports healing, health and well-being.

We touched on meditation in our brief workshop and you have felt what it is like to basically sit in your body with your breath.

This is the essence of meditation, to feel (rather than think) to be unconcerned of all else, including judgement of how you are doing it.
Let it be an exercise in wonder, just allow yourself to experience what ever it is you experience.

Give your self space to sit and feel your breath, your body, your space.
You can do this as you wake and greet the day, and you may take mindful moments throughout your day.
Allow yourself to check in regularly, notice your breathing, your posture, how you are.
Relax drop your shoulders, come into your body and soften allow yourself a few minutes of gentle breathing - luxuriate in it.
This practice is both relaxing and empowering and enables you, with practice to be truly present and available.

Don't be too serious about this
Enjoy it
Be curious
And allow yourself the space !

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

___ tool 1: Breathe Mindfully

Use your breath as an anchor to still your mind and bring your focus back to the present moment.

___ tool 2: Listen Deeply

Listen with intention; let others fully express themselves and focus on understanding how they think and feel.

___ tool 3: Cultivate Insight

See life as it is, allowing each experience to be an opportunity for learning.

___ tool 4: Practice Compassion

Consider the thoughts and feelings of others and let tenderness, kindness and empathy be your guides.

___ tool 5: Limit Reactivity

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

___ tool 6: Express Gratitude

Practice gratitude daily and expand it outward, appreciating everyone and everything you encounter.

___ tool 7: Nurture Mutual Respect

Appreciate our common humanity and value different perspectives as well as your own.

___ tool 8: Build Integrity

Cultivate constructive values and consistently act from respect, honesty and kindness.

___ tool 9: Foster connections with others

Engage fully in life and in community. Share your unique talents and generosity so that others can also be inspired.

___ Tool 10: Be Peace

Cultivate your own inner peace, becoming an agent for compassionate action and social good. Which tools do you use most often? Which tools do you use least often? Can you think of ways to incorporate those tools into your life? Which one could change how peacefully you live day to day ?

___ Tool 11 : Self nurture

What do you do for your self towards wellbeing and relaxation?

Are you taking care of your self? Do you honour your health and do you manage time and space well?

Please list the activities and or strategies you have adopted toward wellbeing ?

It could be as simple as taking a walk!

Gentle and inviting words for meditation and relaxation

It is best if you minimise the language of using your /yours instead use the words "the body" "the legs" "the feet"

This helps students cultivate objectivity and just become a silent observer of the movements and effects.

noticing finding your way becoming aware softening letting go

breathing watching letting it be coming to stillness feeling

moving without trying gentle breath relaxing your body inviting

filling your belly softening your body feeling your in- breath allowing

letting it be feeling your breath at the tip of your nose noticing your breath

let your breath be long and gentle allowing your breath in to be....

noticing tension and releasing allowing your body to be soft

Avoid use of the words

"Don't" "can't " "Not good" "should"

Do use the singing bowl to commence, have students notice your voice and instruction. Try not to shhhh students, place a hand at their shoulder should they distract others, or feel distracted.

If seated at the table have students feel their feet flat on the floor you may ask that they turn their chairs to face the front of the classroom and have them place their hands together on their lap.

Encourage students to close their eyes or gaze softly in front of them, or even to place their hands over their eyes.

Everybody is different - Encourage students to practice to their ability and to practice self acceptance, no one is judging them.

Allow students to move into a comfortable position, if there is discomfort allow them to settle into a better position. Allow them the space to wriggle and be unsettled .

To offer support to the body and back have students sit tall but comfortably, back upon the back of the chair, or wall or perhaps even lie down.

Remind students that this practice is not about overthinking or trying to change something or get "somewhere" , but simply being present with the body and the breath.

Go slowly, allowing students moments of both distraction and silence to settle and focus on the body and the breath and to notice feelings.

Meditation is not always a pleasant experience. There may be emotions coming up, allow them the space to notice what they are feeling.

Walk around gently placing a hand on a students shoulder or perhaps using a few encouraging words. A smile is a gentle connection too.

This is not about force, and it's best to keep this an invitation, to experience something different.

Being present with children that have special needs means you already have a very keen awareness, now expand on it and connect with your own awareness of self.

You may read any meditation that resonates with you or you may try your own words, that have particular meaning for your class this particular day and in this particular moment

You may wish to do several 3 or 5 minute practices.

Encourage a 1 minute PAUSE BREATHE FEEL several times a day !

Between activities would be perfect.

Try to create a habit of gently bringing your class to attention via the singing bowl and breath.

You have the language and the intention, simply enjoy and be present with your children.

The Gentle Smile Meditation

Feel a long gentle breath in at your nose
Feel what your breath feels like as it enters at the tip of your nose
Feel a soft gentle smile on your face
Make your smile bigger
Feel your cheeks now
Feel your breath slow down
Notice the shoulders drop and the belly soften
If your mind starts chatting
Just feel your breath coming in all the way down to the belly
Feel where your legs and body touch the floor or the chair
Notice this feeling is good and feels really nice
Feel each breath in as it comes and goes
Feel the cloud of peace gently holding you
Notice how supported and good you feel
Allow your self another big smile

💜 Let your voice be gentle slow and encouraging
Play with how you deliver this
You may change it as you wish - there's no right or wrong way
And remember the more you have a practice the more natural this will come to you
Don't worry if children are distracted it's natural bring them back gently
Stay in your body with your breath and hold space for them 💜

A favourite App I enjoy is Insight Timer
Here you will find thousands of meditations and courses
They are many and varies both for adults and children