

We started with the physical literacy. Now, I'm going run through the mental literacy, working with attention, working with distraction, working with awareness of thoughts. And then we'll do some little practice teaching.

What we can explore by doing it is we can continue playing mindfulness, playing attention, understanding how to meet each of our students in a way where the attention is really a game and attention really can be played like that. What we can start with is we are continually finding an anchor of attention. We are finding you can call it whatever works for you like a home base, base camp whatever it is. We are trying to help them understand how the mind want us and then how we bring it back and we build those muscles of attention. That's kind of core aspect of what we are doing in mindfulness in general, but really here would be attention lessons, strengthening these attention muscles.

One way especially for little kids, but for older kids as well and even adults it's really helpful to do it in such a way where your teaching mindfulness you really know that they are getting it. So if I just started by saying let's look inside and feel your breath and notice that sensation is going in and out that works pretty well, but sometimes I don't actually know if the kids are really kind of getting that. They might be a little bit lost, you know, they might just be day dreaming which is okay. What I usually do is I tell them to use their eyes. So mindful seeing exercises. So it's just a really clear way to get them to focus. There is no spots on the wall, but pretty much in all classrooms there's cool letters all over the place where or animals or pictures of different figures or whatever it is.

So what I usually do is I find a spot on the wall and we can just use this beautiful little rock and put on my knee and can everybody see that rock on my knee? What I would do is I would say okay we are going to do is we are going to get our focussing eyes on maybe with little

kids I would say like what type of animal has really sharp eyes that can see really well. They hawk whatever like let's get our hawk eyes on it.

And what I want people to do is just really simple exercise. Let's just put our hawk eyes on and let's just use our really sharp seeing and just look at this for a minute, do you think you can do that. You are up for it or no, it's pretty easy. So let's all put our eyes on the rock and see if you can keep your eyes there and an easy thing to notice is all of a sudden if you are looking over at this knee then you know spaced out and this is the helpful thing for doing it with your eyes you are like it's easy your eyes are over here and what you got to do is you got to pull it back right that's the rip, pull it back to this part oh maybe I will go over here. Let just keep the eye just for a minute are you ready?

Okay good job everyone. Okay were you able to keep who can keep their eyes on that. Okay pretty impressive anybody get distracted at any point? A couple of you. So, you know, often I get like I go around and teach the stuff so I can remember I was in Atlanta a little while ago and I was on a stage and I was doing this and I was like "everybody look at this spot" and I like look behind the stage and I guess it's really the kids did their theatre and there is like these like crazy headdresses and these are like big boas and stuff and I like had them look and then I was like coming out of these outfits.

So different things I kept it kind of obtain for all of you. So when we talk about attention we immediately talk about distraction right. We are getting into these distraction games right let's put our eyes on this thing and let's really focus in and maybe the first time you just have them focus and you just have them hold their attention there. Okay how was that? Was that easy? Okay I am going to go you a chance, I am going to make it little bit harder, right. I often do it right is draw A little dot on the wall on the board and then I like have them work for a

minute and then I start growing other callers around it and things and try to get them and then you get a great discussion, you get to have a great discussion what is, you know, we are working with attention here and distraction. What is that did you feel wanting to be pulled, was that hard, was that easy what is that?

We are actually kind of like we are like opening up the hood of the mind and being like what is that about our brains, you know, like we get distracted all the time why is it hard to keep? You know it's pretty simple an idea just keep your on that rock why is that so hard? So there is a lot of different places that you can put the attention. We can use our listening, make a beautiful sound whether you are strumming a guitar or you are ringing a bell or you are playing some beautiful piece of music and you are trying to get them to focus on the sound as it moves. Again you could try to distract them or you can just see if you they could listen, keep their attention or just listen to the silence and see what they play a little game or see how many different sounds you could hear and write them down.

So you can do all of these different ways of choosing an attention point. You don't want to start what we get to thinking later. We want to start with things which are really sensory experiences. Sensations in the body, sounds, sights anchoring there. We are trying to get them out of the head or at least to witness how the head takes them away.

Another really usual basic one is if we take I will tell them okay let's take a hand we will put a hand up and their little kids I will let's zoom it down to the belly landing strip right there, but even older kids I will say let just put the hand on the belly and just notice seeing what you notice when you are breath in and out, what going on underneath your hand?

So we are just feeling the breath going in and out and just noticing. So this is, you know, we can call base camp breath or home based breath or anchor breath there is something like that.

And this becomes something that we use again and again so this is an important one and this is something that I sometimes do like write in the beginning with kids so I am just like let's put a hand on the belly and just notice what you are experience I might not have given much explanation and so it's a really physical literacy as well as a mental literacy because they are learning what their body feels like as they breath. You will get them saying oh God that's like a balloon, given big and then small and interesting note to it is that I don't like to fill in information, I don't say like okay feel like how your belly gets big and then it get small. Some kids that's not actually the experience, some kids it's actually the opposite, some kids when they breath in their belly comes in and then they breath out which is usually because they are not like having a full breath, they are not having like full diaphragmatic breathing and I don't want to I am not trying to like change that, I am not like no, no, no, when you breath it supposed to be like this.

So it's just like just notice what is happening, notice what's happening there in the breath. Once they have this kind of base camp breath and they have an idea of it, you know, I will come back to it over and over again just for a minute okay let's come back to our base camp breath, just come back to home base breath just notice it see if you can be aware usually you know, it's good to do the eye focussing first because then like you can say let's use our inner focus eyes to see if we can feel the sensations going in and out from there I like to get into other distraction games like what I actually call the distraction games in a lot of schools I mean they will ask for this game again and again and again.

Externally it doesn't look like a very fun interesting game, but for some reason the kid seem to really enjoy. So what I will do is I will say what we are going to do is we are going to really use our home based breath, but who thinks that they are good enough at this. That if I

tried to distract you will be able to stay focused on your breath and things you could do. So usually a lot of kids will try to do it and what I will say is okay is who thinks they can do it anybody you think okay.

So Mac you can just stay there and what you would say is these guys were following me, but is watching. So what I am going to do is I am going to kind of go around the room and usually, you know, there is pencil jars and there is like light shades on the window like it make noises. So I will just go around the room and make some noise. So I will first say like okay Mac we get into your home based breath and tell me when you feel like you really like undistractable. Okay he is ready. So let's all be really mindful and do our own breath with him to support him while he is doing it. Okay good job Mac that was awesome. How was that what do you notice?

Guest: Well a lot of things. I was trying to focus on this is more the foreground and this is the background.

Daniel: So what ends up happening, so you know, first I will do that I will go around the room and I will make some noises and then I will usually say okay that was such a great job Nick, you know, and sometimes a kid maybe looks a few times you like you only look 3 times that was great. I find positive and then I will say okay who else think they can do it and usually everybody does and I am like let's everybody try and I am going to go around the room. So like everybody just the whole room will do it and I will do. Then I will say okay now who wants to be my distractors assistant and those kids want to help distract and I will pretty much always choose the most distracting kid.

So little Jimmy who is always distracting everybody and I will be very clear with him or her and I will say okay we are not going to touch anybody, we are not going to make noises too close, you know, we just want to keep it safe and like and so Jimmy go around and like things

the kids have gotten to in the school I was been working with in San Francisco. They have got into becoming like comedians and they are like they have taken it to where they are like to stand up like make all type of silly jokes and silly noises and they even do it where they try to see if kids cannot laugh and they can just keep focused on the breath.

So they have got I am actually like really good at it, you know, they do it all the time. They are like trying to see if they can get people to look, get people to move, get people to even laugh and really seeing if they can do it and that opens up the most fascinating discussion.

So when a class that I am in starts laughing. I don't say it stop laughing. What I primarily do is I say how do I notice some laughter because some of you might notice this you go into your room, mindfulness is very kind of if you haven't done this before it's a very different thing the kids are little bit is like what are we doing and some kids might make little jokes or might kind of start laughing and so for me I am like okay cool I notice there is some laughter that's totally fine see what it feels like when laughter start coming and if you are trying to stop laughing notice what that feels like to like to try to stop and even if it comes you can just feel the way it feels to laugh. And usually that really kind of kills it I mean there is once it's open like you can laugh that's fine sometimes you end up just getting like a mindful laughing session which actually is kind of cool if you know these little kid laugh aloud, you know, that's great. I'd love to spend the session just laughing with kids, but usually what ends up happening is afterwards you can ask them that question well what was it like to try not to laugh and, you know, like yea it's like a soda bottle it was like going up and I was trying to keep it down or like when you open the door I can notice the muscles in my body wanting to turn I have to like hold myself back and like what Mac said and I hear those types of things from kids all the time is like inner technique he said what I ended up having to do is keep the foreground of the breath and

then keep those things in the background you will get to start having those dialogue about the mechanisms of the mind like oh like that's how our minds work we have seen in the foreground, we have seen in the background how did you do that? How did you keep one thing in the foreground and one thing in the background? It's just like these and that's my favorite thing about this work is getting to grab this like you know, psychology, neuroscience, discussions with kids about the way how they can kind of take control of their own brains. These are all types of ways that you can play that distraction game as you see with the eyes, with listening and different things and you will get a lot of leverage out of that.