

Pebble Meditation

Fresh | Stable | Calm | Free

Mindful Breaks

Short Practices for
Young Hearts & Minds



Cultivating Qualities of Resilience

Practicing mindfulness not only helps us to tame our monkey mind or appreciate the small things in life; it can help us cultivate qualities that will keep us strong and happy, even when we face the more challenging things in life. This is called resilience, and these qualities are already within us. We can also see them in the natural world around us, and the four natural elements in this meditation can help us connect to them and cultivate them in our lives.

FRESH like a FLOWER

We can be full of energy and life, offering a lot to ourselves and others.

When we lose our freshness, we can smile, take a walk, or practice mindfulness.

STABLE like a MOUNTAIN

No matter what kind of weather passes over it, the mountain is still there, standing tall. It has a strong foundation. We can be like a mountain: solid and secure in ourselves.

CALM like STILL WATER

Still water reflects things just as they are, without trying to change them. When we are calm like that, we can see more clearly and be more accepting of ourselves and others.

FREE like the BREEZE

Sometimes we feel like a bird in a cage. Our own thoughts and worries can keep us caged in. We can feel the freedom of the open air and create more space inside of us as well.

Practice: Pebble Meditation

1. **Settle your body** into a comfortable, upright seated posture, placing your four pebbles to the left of you.
2. **Pick up the first pebble** – looking at it closely, with fresh eyes. Contemplate its quality as you hold it close to you and take three mindful breaths. Then place it to the right of you.
3. **Repeat for each pebble** – contemplating each quality as you hold each pebble.
4. **Return pebbles to their container** – keeping them safe until your next practice, or carry them with you as a reminder of each quality.

Pebbles of Peace



The Pebble Meditation was written by Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who experienced some real challenges in his lifetime, including a devastating war in his homeland. He used these qualities to rebuild war-torn villages and lives, and has spent his life teaching others to practice mindfulness and cultivate these qualities in order to build a more peaceful world.

Illustration by Tanya Zabinski
T. Zabinski, *Peace, Love, Action!...*, (2019) Parallax Press
T.N. Hanh & K. Weare, *Happy Teachers Change the World*, (2017), Parallax Press.