



# MINDFUL PARENTING



# LESSON PLANS



**Calming the monkey mind**

Begin the class by showing the group the monkey. Explain that it often seems like there is a monkey in our mind and the monkey likes to jump from thought to thought. Sometimes the monkey likes to jump to thoughts about the past and sometimes the monkey jumps to thoughts about the future, ourselves and other people. Explain that scientific research shows that we spend about half our time caught up in thoughts.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Give the group an example of where your monkey mind typically jumps to and then ask them to reflect on where their monkey mind jumps to. Ask the group to get into smaller groups of three and ask them to reflect on where their monkey mind jumps to.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the larger group to share where their monkey mind typically jumps to. Now invite the group to reflect on whether it is helpful to think about the past and the future. Ask the group to reflect on when thinking about the past is helpful or unhelpful and when thinking about the future is helpful or unhelpful.

Explain that when we bring our focus into the moment scientific research shows that we are happier, healthier, and our relationships improve.

Explain that mindfulness is the practice of bringing our attention into the moment on purpose, without judgement and with kindness. Explain that one way we can do this is by giving the monkey in our mind a job to do and one of the best jobs we can give it to do is noticing our breathing. Explain when we notice our breathing we are bringing our focus into the "here and now".

(Duration: 10 mins)

Guide the group in short mindfulness of the breath meditation.

(Duration: 3 mins)

Enquire with the group how they experienced the meditation and answer any questions they may have.

(Duration: 3 mins)

**Calming the monkey mind**

Guide the group again in a short mindfulness of the breath meditation.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Enquire with the group how they found the meditation and answer any questions they may have.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Now guide the group in the suitcase meditation.

(Duration: 7 mins)

Invite the group to reflect on how thinking about the past has impacted their mental health, peace of mind, their parenting, relationships with others and their work.

Invite the group to reflect on how thinking about the future has impacted their mental health, peace of mind, their parenting, their relationship with others and their work.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Now ask the group to reflect on how would life be different for them if they could let go of the past, let go of the future and be more present in the here and now.

Ask them how would this impact their mental health, peace of mind, their parenting, their relationship with others and their work.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Close the class with one more short mindfulness of the breath exercise. Encourage the group to notice when their monkey mind jumps to the past and the future and to practice bringing their awareness back to the moment by noticing their breath.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to practice bringing their attention to their breath throughout the coming week.

**Bringing mindfulness to parenting and mindful listening**

Welcome the group and invite them to share how they found the last mindfulness class and whether they had practiced mindfulness since.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Show the group the monkey again and explain that we can also give the monkey in our mind other jobs to do such as focusing on sounds. Explain that we can bring our attention into the "here and now" by focusing on our breath or any of our senses. Explain that our breath and our senses will always bring our mind away from the past and future and into this moment.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in a mindful listening meditation.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Enquire with the group about their experience of the meditation and answer any questions they may have.

(Duration: 2 mins)

Give each person a stone. Guide the participants in the mindful stone exercise. Ask participants can they touch, smell, hear, taste or see the past, ask them can they ever be in the past, whether they can ever change the past. Ask participants can they touch, smell, hear, taste or see the future. Ask participants how the now is different to the past and future. Ask participants can they touch, smell, hear, taste or see the present and can they choose how they respond to the present.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Ask participants to open their eyes. Explain that no matter what is happening in our environment and our lives we always have a choice in how we respond to this. We might not be able to change the external characteristics of our lives but we can always change how we respond. Explain that mindfulness gives us the choice to respond to our lives with calm and kindness for ourselves and others and that this is what makes it so empowering.

(Duration: 5 mins)

**Bringing mindfulness to parenting and mindful listening**

Explain that one way we can bring mindfulness to our lives is to change how we respond to our children and our parenting. Explain that mindfulness helps us to be more present with our children and to strengthen our relationship with them.

Tell the group that in this mindful parenting course we will be learning to respond to both ourselves and our children with more awareness and more compassion.

Explain that just like the wings of a bird, one wing is awareness and one wing is compassion. For the bird to fly it needs both wings. Tell the group that what children need and desire more than anything else from us is awareness or attention and kindness and compassion. Explain that when we bring these qualities to our children's lives they will flourish and thrive.

Tell the group that one way of bringing more awareness or attention to our children is to be more present with them.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Guide the group in the child's story mindful listening practice.

(Duration: 3 mins)

Enquire with the group how they experienced the practice and answer any questions they may have.

Invite the group to reflect on what it is like for them when they are not being listened to?

Invite the group to reflect on what it feels like to be listened to?

Ask the group how it feels when they are speaking to someone and the other person is on their phone?

Ask the group how do they think it feels for children when they are not being listened to?

(Duration: 10 mins)

Encourage the group to practice mindful listening with their children as an informal practice. Ask them to mindfully pay attention when their child is speaking and when they notice their mind wandering to gently bring it back to the child's words.

Close group

Invite the group to practice bringing their attention to their breath throughout the coming week.



**Building presence and connection**

Introduce the group with a short mindfulness of the breath meditation

(Duration: 5 mins)

Ask the group to get into smaller groups of three and discuss together how they found the mindful listening practice with their children. Ask them to reflect on how their children responded.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Bring the group together and invite them to share any insights they had.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Explain that although we can practice mindfulness formally as meditation, what is most important is that when we are with our children we practice mindfulness informally by simply being present with them.

Invite the group to practice being present for the rest of the class ask them to notice when their mind wanders and then gently and kindly bringing their focus back to the present moment by noticing their breath and what they can see, hear, touch, smell and taste around them.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in the Mindful Raisin exercise

(Duration: 5 mins)

Explain that just like we can be mindfully aware when we are eating the raisin we can be mindfully aware when we are with our children. Explain that this is not always something that comes naturally and this is something that we need to practice but the more we practice it, the easier it gets.

Give examples of how we can be mindfully present with children.

(Duration: 5 mins)

**Building presence and connection**

Ask the group to close their eyes and to reflect on how thinking about the past, particularly negative aspects of the past influences their parenting. Ask them how their children respond to them when they are focused on the past.

Ask them to reflect on how thinking about the future particularly worrying impacts on their parenting. Invite them to reflect on how their children respond to them when they are focused on the future.

Ask them to reflect on how being in the present and having a calm, clear, peaceful mind influences their parenting. Invite them to reflect on how their children respond to them when they are present with a calm, clear focused mind.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to journal for 5 mins on any insights they had during the reflection.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in the suitcase meditation.

(Duration: 10 mins)

For the coming week invite the group to practice bringing mindful awareness to their children when they are with them. Ask them to practice simply being in the moment with their children and when their mind drifts to the past or the future to gently and kindly bring their focus back to the present moment

Close the class

**Cultivating mindful presence and reflective listening**

Lead the group in a short 3 minute mindfulness of the breath meditation.

Invite the group to get into smaller groups of three and to share any insights from their practice bringing mindfulness to their interactions with their children. Invite them to reflect on what went well, what was difficult and how did the children respond.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to share any insights they had with the larger group.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Ask the group to close their eyes and to reflect on what is most important for them as a parent. What qualities would they like to cultivate in their parenting. What do they feel is most important in their children's lives and what do they feel their children need most.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to journal on any insights they had for about 5 minutes.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Explain that actually what children need most from parents is their attention and love. Explain that children need both these qualities, attention on its own is not enough and love on its own is not enough.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Ask the group to close their eyes and reflect on how their parents related to them. Ask them what was most important to them as a child, was it holidays, trips and presents or was it attention and love.

Ask the group to journal for about 5 mins on this reflection

(Duration: 5 mins)

**Cultivating mindful presence and reflective listening**

Explain that when we are practicing mindful parenting we are cultivating these qualities of attention and kindness in our parenting.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Explain that one way we can cultivate this loving attention in our parenting is to not just practice mindful listening with our children but show them that they are being listened to. Explain one way we can do this is to reflect back to children what we have heard them say.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the groups to get into smaller groups of two. Ask each person in the group to take turns telling the other person a story about a time when they felt very happy for 1 minute. The listener is instructed to practice mindful listening. When the story is finished the listener needs to tell the speaker what they have said in their own words.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to practice mindful listening and reflecting back with their children over the coming week.

Close the session

# LESSON 5

## The child's brain, being the mountain

Introduce the class with a short mindful breathing meditation.

(Duration: 3 mins)

Ask the group to get into smaller groups of three and to discuss how they experienced the mindful listening and reflecting back practice. Invite them to reflect on how they found it personally and how their children responded to it.

Invite the group to share as a larger group

(Duration: 5 mins)

Demonstrate the Hand Model of the brain. Explain to the group that when children flip their lids it is unhelpful if we as parents flip our lids also. Demonstrate this with two mind jars.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Explain than one way we can keep our lids on is to practice mindfulness. Guide the group in the mountain meditation.

(Duration: 20 mins)

Invite the group to share their experience of the meditation and answer any questions they may have.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to reflect on which occasions cause their child to flip their lid. Ask the group to reflect on what situations cause themselves to flip their lid.

Invite the group to reflect on how their child reacts when both child and parent flips their lids.

Ask them to reflect on how their child reacts when they stay calm when their child flips their lid.

Ask the group to journal on these questions

(Duration: 10 mins)

Invite parents to practice being the mountain in how they relate to their children in the coming week.

Close the class

# LESSON 6

## Practicing self compassion and compassion for our children

Guide the group in a short mindfulness of the breath practice.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to get into smaller groups of three and invite them to reflect on and discuss their experience bringing the mountain practice into their parenting. Invite the group to share their experience as a whole group.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Refer back to the two wings of the bird and that we need to balance our awareness with kindness. Explain that we always need to start with practicing kindness towards ourselves and that the practice of mindfulness is about befriending ourselves.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in the self compassion break meditation.

Ask the group how they experienced the meditation and answer any questions that they may have.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Ask the group to reflect on what nourishes them in their lives in small groups of three.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group through the cup of sunshine activity.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Ask the group to reflect on when their cup is full how does this reflect on themselves and their parenting.

Ask the group to reflect on when their cup is empty how does this reflect on themselves and their parenting.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in the compassionate letter exercise

(Duration: 10 mins)

Invite the group to practice self kindness and self compassionate through the coming week.

Close the class

# LESSON 7

## Loving kindness and gratitude practices

Guide the group in a short mindfulness of the breath practice

(Duration: 3 mins)

Ask the group to get into small groups and share their experience of last week's practice

Ask them to share how it impacted them and share how it impacted their parenting and their children.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Explain to the group that through our mindfulness practice we can also cultivate positive mind states.

Ask parents to reflect on what they would like to cultivate in themselves, their parenting and their children.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in the gratitude meditation.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Ask the group to journal on what they are grateful for in their lives

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to share how they experienced the meditation and the reflection on gratitude.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in the loving kindness meditation. .

(Duration: 10 mins)

Invite the group to share how they experienced the meditation

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to keep a gratitude journal for the coming week.

Close the class

# LESSON 8

## Teaching children mindful awareness practices

Invite the group to share their experiences from the previous week.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Guide the group in a short mindfulness of the breath meditation.

(Duration: 3 mins)

Demonstrate to the group the mind jar exercise and explain how to practice this with children.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Demonstrate to the group some variations on mindful breathing for children.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Demonstrate to the group mindfulness exercises for touch, smell, taste, sound and sight.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Highlight the importance of mini mindfulness practices and mindfulness as a way of being.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to reflect on how they might model mindfulness at home.

Give the group suggestions on how they might model mindfulness at home and highlight the importance of modeling mindfulness.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Invite the group to make the mind jars with their children and practice the mini mindfulness practices in the coming week.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Close the class



# LESSON 9

## Teaching children mindfulness of emotion practices

Guide the group in a short mindfulness of the breath meditation.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to share about their experiences the previous week.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Discuss the three main messages that we give children about emotions

1: All their feelings are OK to have

2: Feelings are like visitors

3: It is important to talk about feelings

(Duration: 10 mins)

Show the group the everything belongs heart, the heart house and the feeling visitors. Demonstrate and explain how they are used with children.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Demonstrate other ideas and resources for dealing with emotions

(Duration: 10 mins)

Highlight the importance of modeling mindfulness of emotions at home.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to reflect on how they might model mindfulness of emotions at home.

Give the group suggestions on how they might model mindfulness of emotions at home.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Close the class

**Teaching children kindness and compassion practices**

Guide the group in a short mindfulness of the breath meditation.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Invite the group to share their experience from the past week.

(Duration: 5 mins)

Introduce the concept of teaching children to be a kind, caring compassionate friend to themselves.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Demonstrate the inner friend activity

Demonstrate other ideas and resources around kindness to ourselves

(Duration: 10 mins)

Introduce the kind and fearful wolf activity

Demonstrate other activities and resources around kindness to others

(Duration: 10 mins)

Highlight the importance of modeling self compassion and kindness at home

Invite the group to reflect on how they might model self compassion and kindness at home.

Give the group suggestions on how they might model self compassion and kindness at home.

(Duration: 10 mins)

Close the class

# MEDITATIONS



# MEDITATION 1

## Mindfulness of the Breath

When you are ready to begin to bring your attention to your breathing. Just begin to notice what it feels like to breathe right now, you don't need to change your breath in any way, allowing it to be exactly as it is, allow yourself to be exactly as you are. You can notice the breath in the belly, the chest, around the nose and mouth. You can notice when you are breathing in and notice when you are breathing out. As you do this you will notice your mind wandering away from the breath from time to time, that's ok, this is the nature of the mind, but for this meditation, when you notice your mind wandering gently and kindly bring your focus back to the breath. Coming back to the feeling of your breath as you breathe in and out, coming back to noticing your breathing in and breathing out.

(Pause: 30 Secs)

And noticing where your focus is now, noticing whether your mind has moved to the past or the future, to ideas, worries, plans. Wherever your mind moves to, just notice that and with kindness and gentleness bring your focus back to the breath back to noticing what it's like to be breathing right now.

And just resting with the breath, just relaxing with the breath, letting you mind calm and clear

(Pause: 30 Secs)

Noticing again where your focus is now, noticing if your mind has moved or wandered into thought, knowing that it is ok if it has, but choosing to bring your focus back to the moment, back to your breath, to the "here and now"

Knowing that the "Here and Now" is always there for you to connect with, no matter what is happening in our lives. We can always come back to the "Here and Now" by noticing our breathing, the sensations and feelings of breathing in this moment.

(Pause: 30 Secs)

And coming back to the breath for the last few moments, allowing the mind to relax, calm and let go. Resting our minds in the moment, letting go of thinking and doing and allowing our minds to "be". Noticing your breathing moment by moment until you hear the sound of the bells

(Pause: 30 Secs)

Ring bells.

# MEDITATION 2

## Mindfulness of sounds

When you are ready bringing your focus to the sound of your own breath. Just noticing the sound of your breath, as you breathe in and out and letting this be the focus of your attention now.

(Pause: 30 Secs)

If your mind wanders, noticing this and bringing your focus back to the sound of your breathing, letting the sound of your breath be your anchor to the present moment.

(Pause: 20 Secs)

Now, expanding your awareness to any sounds you can hear from the room you are in. Just notice what you can hear right now. Bringing a sense of openness and non judgement to your attention. Watching when the mind wanders into thought, letting any thoughts that arise go as soon as you notice them and redirecting your attention to the sounds you can hear.

(Pause: 30 Secs)

And now expanding your attention again to any sounds you can hear from outside. You may notice nature sounds, traffic sounds or voices. Bringing a sense of openness and non judgement to your awareness, just listening, just noticing!

(Pause: 20 Secs)

Watching the mind, watching when the mind moves into thought again, and letting any thoughts that arise go with kindness and no judgment, bringing the focus back to listening to the sounds that you can hear from outside.

(Pause: 20 Secs)

And now, letting your awareness rest with whatever sounds you can hear, whether from your own breath, from the sounds inside the room you are in or from outside. Just listening, just noticing what you can hear right now. Letting your mind rest with the sounds, noticing the sounds as they move and change in every moment, just like every moment is moving and changing and different to the moment before. Continuing this practice until you hear the sound of the bells.

# MEDITATION 3

## Mantra Meditation

In this meditation, we will use a mantra to help bring our attention to the present moment. This simple mantra is the words "here and now". Say "here" as you breathe in and "now" as you breathe out, bringing your focus to your breath when you are ready, letting your breath anchor you in the present moment.

As you breathe in say "here" as you breathe out say "now", in your own time and your own pace, just resting, just relaxing with the breath. As you breathe in say "here" as you breathe out say "now" knowing that there's nothing else to do, letting your mind rest and relax.

(Pause: 30 Secs)

Again connecting with the breath, as you breathe in say "here" as you breathe out say "now" watching and staying with your breathing in and breathing out.

(Pause: 20 Secs)

And if you notice the mind wandering, letting go of any thoughts that arise and connecting back with the breath. Say "here" as you breathe in "now" as you breathe out, letting the breath bring you home to yourself, home to this moment!

(Pause: 20 Secs)

And watching the mind, watching when it wanders into thought, and with kindness and gentleness letting go of any thoughts that arise and connecting back to "here" as you breathe in and now as you breathe "out", just continuing like this in your own time and your own pace, until you hear the sounds of the bells.

# MEDITATION 4

## Suitcase meditation

(letting go of the past and future)

In your right hand imagine that you are holding a suitcase, imagine it has the word past on it. Imagine this suitcase holds everything from your past, all of your memories, your regrets, your worries. Feel how heavy this bag is in your hands, feel how it weighs you down.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

In your left hand imagine you are holding another bag, this bag has the word future on it. This bag holds all of your thoughts, worries, fears and concerns about the future in it. Notice how heavy this bag is and feel how much it weighs you down.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Now slowly, very slowly, lower your right hand to the ground, gently let go of the past bag feeling the relief and lightness in your arm and hands as you let go of the bag and leave it gently on the ground. Notice the freedom you feel in letting go of the heaviness of the past. Now, gently lowering the future bag to the ground, and feeling the relief and freedom as you let go of your worries about the future.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Letting go of the past, letting go of the future and resting in the space in between "the here and now" the only time there ever is. Just relaxing in the present moment using your breath as an anchor for your attention.

Just relaxing with the waves of your breathing connecting to the still, spacious present, knowing there is nothing else to do, you can let go of the thinking and doing mind and simply be for this time.

(Pause: 30 Secs)

And noticing when the mind moves and wanders into thought again, recognising this with gentleness and compassion, letting go of any thoughts that arise and reconnecting with the stillness of the "here and now" through the breath.

(Pause: 20 Secs)

Continuing to rest in this moment, connecting with your breath, letting your breath bring you home to the moment and home to yourself, noticing when the mind moves into thought and bringing the focus back, always with kindness and compassion, without any judgement.

(Pause: 20 Secs)

And continuing to practice like this until you hear the sound of the bell, letting go of any thoughts that arise and just resting and relaxing into this spacious, stillness.



## Allowing Meditation

Begin by bringing your focus to your breathing. Noticing your breathing in and noticing your breathing out. You can say "here" as you breathe in and "now" as you breathe out, "here" as you breathe in and "now" as you breathe "out".

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Now bring your attention to your body and begin to gently scan your head and face, noticing any feelings or sensations there, noticing your neck, shoulders, chest and stomach, noticing your back, legs, feet and toes. Just noticing how your body feels right now and seeing can you open up to the feelings and sensations in your body. Seeing if we can open up the space to allow our bodies to be just as they are in this moment.

Seeing if we can let go of the battle we have with our bodies, allowing them to be just as they are, with how they feel like on the inside and with what they look like on the outside. If we notice, tension, pain or discomfort seeing if we can open up to this and bring kindness and compassion to the discomfort, letting go of judgement, being a friend to ourselves and our bodies. If our body feels good, being thankful for this.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Now moving our attention to your mind. How does your mind feel right now? Again seeing if you can open up space to allow your mind to be just as it is. Noticing how your mind feels right now, is it calm?

Tired, peaceful, tense, stressed or busy. Letting go of the battle we have with our mind, even for these few moments, giving it space to be exactly as it is, knowing that it is exactly as it needs to be right now, trusting that you are just as you need to be right now. If there is tiredness, or tension or discomfort, bringing kindness and compassion towards yourself. Treating yourself the way you would treat a good friend. If your mind feels good, being thankful, enjoying how that feels.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Now bringing your focus to your emotions. Noticing how your emotions feel right now. You might feel this in your belly, around your heart, chest and throat. You might notice a strong emotion, a mild emotion or nothing much at all, whatever way you feel, that's ok. Seeing can you open up to what emotions are there for you right now, seeing can you let go or judgement and allow yourself to just be as you are.

Knowing that you are ok as you are, you are just as you need to be. If you notice a painful or difficult emotion bringing kindness, gentleness and compassion to your that. If you are feeling good right now, being thankful for this, breathing into and enjoying this feeling.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

**Allowing Meditation**

So we are fully meeting ourselves, opening up to what we are feeling in our bodies, our mind and our emotions, giving them space to be just as they are, giving ourselves space to be just as we are.

Knowing that we are just right as we are, we are just as we need to be. If we notice any pain, tension or discomfort, remember to bring kindness and compassion to ourselves, if we are feeling good, breathing into that and being grateful for this feeling.

Knowing that we always have a choice to bring this kindness and compassion towards ourselves, we always have the choice to let go of the internal battle and give ourselves the space to be just as we are.

In the same way, we always have the choice to connect to the "here and now", we always have the choice to let go of our thoughts and come back to the present, to what is happening in this moment.

So to end the meditation, coming back to the breath, as you breathe in say "here" as you breathe out say "now", "here" as you breathe in and "now" as you breathe out,

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Ring the bell

**Rain meditation**

(Inspired by Tara Brach)

The beginning of RAIN is recognising, recognising where we are in battle with ourselves, noticing where we are telling ourselves something is not ok, feeling like we are falling short in some way.

It might be something to do with our parenting, in our relationships, in our work, in something we have done or said.

Noticing we have turned against ourselves or our experience, where we are saying an inner no.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

The A, of rain is allowing. Allowing what is there, noticing how this feels in our mind and in our body, opening up to the embodied experience. This is what it feels like to be in this trance of unworthiness.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

And investigating what beliefs are there, what am I believing about myself, that I should be different? That I am hurting others? That I am wrong or falling short in some way.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

And now opening up to the possibility of letting go of these beliefs, asking yourself what would it be like if I was longer telling myself that there is anything wrong

(Pause: 10 Secs)

The end of Rain begins with nurturing the self, putting a hand on our heart and beginning to turn towards ourselves with kindness, compassion and acceptance.

Feeling into the part of you that is most vulnerable, that feels the worst and asking what that part most needs.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

**Rain meditation**

(Inspired by Tara Brach)

Does it need to be seen, accepted, loved and nourished

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Knowing that each time we judge ourselves, we break our own hearts

(Pause: 10 Secs)

So turning towards the self, with love, compassion and kindness,

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Saying yes to ourselves, to our inner world and our outer experiences

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Knowing that we are always, just right as we are, knowing that we are always enough

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Infusing our awareness with kindness, and resting here for the last few moments of the meditation.

**Loving Kindness Meditation**

When you are ready, bringing your awareness to your breath. Letting your breathing connect you with the moment, with the "here and now", just noticing your breathing and letting everything else go.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Thinking of someone who you love very much. This could be a child, pet, grandparent, one of your children when they were little. This person should be someone who it is really easy to feel warm and loving towards. When you think of this person that a smile comes to your face and your heart warms.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Seeing this person as clearly as you can in your mind's eye. Looking into their eyes and noticing what are the good things about this person, what do you love and admire about them, what good things do they bring or have brought to your life. Wishing this person well now and saying the phrases of loving kindness towards this person.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

**May you be happy**

**May you be healthy**

**May you be safe**

**May you be loved**

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Now thinking of another person, someone who has been a good support to you in your life, who has made a positive difference in your life and seeing this person as clearly as you can now. Looking into their eyes and seeing them as clearly as you can. Noticing what you like and admire about this person, what are the good things about them, what good things have they brought to your life. Wishing this person well now, with the phrases of loving kindness,

(Pause: 10 Secs)

**May you be happy**

**May you be healthy**

**May you be safe**

**May you be loved**

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Now thinking of more loved ones, seeing them in your mind's eye, looking into their eyes and seeing the good things about them. Noticing what you love and admire about each one of them, what good things do they bring to your life. Wishing these people well now.

**Loving Kindness Meditation**

**May you be happy**

**May you be healthy**

**May you be safe**

**May you be loved**

(Pause: 10 Secs)

And coming back to yourself now. Seeing yourself now are clearly as you can, as you sit here. Trusting that just like all of these other people you have thought of, you are important too, you deserve kindness and compassion too!

Wishing yourself well now.

**May I be happy**

**May I be healthy**

**May I be safe**

**May I be loved**

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Noticing how you feel now, knowing there is no wrong way to feel as you do this meditation. Sometimes you might feel strong emotion, sometimes nothing at all, sometimes resistance. Whatever way you feel right now is perfectly ok.

And wishing yourself the phrases again.

**May I be happy**

**May I be healthy**

**May I be safe**

**May I be loved**

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Remember that no matter what is happening in our lives we always have this choice to turn towards ourselves with kindness and compassion, to wish ourselves well.

In the same way, we always have the choice to connect to the "here and now", and connecting back to the breath now. Bringing your awareness to the breath for the last few moments until you hear the sound of the bells.

**Self Compassion break**

(Inspired by Kristen Neff)

Begin the meditation by reflecting on something you are struggling with in your parenting right now. It can be a big thing or something small. Something you have been struggling with for a long time or a more recent difficulty. Trusting whatever comes to you.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

And noticing how it feels to reflect on this difficulty. Noticing the feelings and sensations in the body. Noticing that this is what it feels like to be in this situation, this is a moment of stress, of suffering.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Knowing that stress and difficulty are very much a part of being human, that you are not alone in your suffering, that it is ok to feel like you do. Reflecting on the fact that many other people are in a situation just like you right now, feeling just like you do.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Knowing that all human beings experience stress and difficulty in their lives, the intensity may differ, but suffering is part of all our lives to some extent.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

So you are not alone and it is ok to feel as you do.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

And now seeing if you can bring some kindness and compassion to yourself. Putting a hand on your hand, imagining gentle kindness coming through your heart towards yourself.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Speaking to yourself in a kind and soothing way, the way you would speak to a good friend. Breathing in kindness and compassion, breathing in gentleness and acceptance, and saying to yourself:

**Self Compassion break**

(Inspired by Kristen Neff)

**May I be kind to myself in this moment**

**May I be a friend to myself right now**

**May I give myself compassion and kindness**

**May I accept myself as I am**

Breathing in kindness, gentleness and compassion

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Saying the phrases again:

**May I be kind to myself in this moment**

**May I be a friend to myself right now**

**May I give myself compassion and kindness**

**May I accept myself as I am**

Again breathing in kindness and compassion for yourself

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Repeating the phrases one more time

**May I be kind to myself in this moment**

**May I be a friend to myself right now**

**May I give myself compassion and kindness**

**May I accept myself as I am**

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Noticing how you feel now, allowing whatever emotion is there and continuing until you hear the sound of the bells.



# MEDITATION 9

## Breathing light meditation

Beginning the meditation by connecting to your breathing, you can say "peace" as you breathe in "calm" as you breathe out, "peace" as you breathe in and "calm" as you breathe out.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

And noticing now any stress or heaviness in the body, any worry or tension, imagining this as a ball in your belly. And imagining now this black ball melting and dissolving, dissipating and turning into a thick black smoke.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Everytime you breathe out, imagine breathing out this thick black smoke, letting it all go, letting any stress or tension go, with every breath feeling, lighter feeling free.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

With every breath in, imagine breathing in light bright sunshine. Imagine this sunshine is filled with exactly what you need right now, filled with peace, calm and comfort.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

With every breath, breathing in this bright, white light, and see this light fill up your body, your head, face, neck, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, back, legs, feet and toes with peace, comfort and relaxation, filling every cell in your body.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

With every breath out, breathing out this thick black smoke, feeling so much light, free, with every breath.

And as you breathe in see this bright white light filling up every cell in your body, filling up the space where the black smoke was with peace, with calm, with whatever you need right now.

(Pause: 10 Secs)

With every breath feeling calmer, feeling lighter, more at peace

(Pause: 10 Secs)

Keep breathing like this until all the black smoke is gone, and now just breathing in the bright light sunshine, letting it penetrate every cell in your body with perfect peace, calm and comfort with whatever it is you need right now

Continuing this practice until you hear the sound of the bells.

## Gratitude Meditation

We can begin the meditation by connecting to our breath, just noticing our breathing in and our breathing out. Just noticing our breathing in and our breathing out and letting everything else go.

This meditation is about taking some time to focus on the good things in our lives or on what we are thankful for.

We can begin by noticing the people who we are thankful for. Who are we most close to. What people bring joy, love and happiness in our lives. What people help us and support us. Now take some time to imagine your children. Imagine looking into their eyes and seeing the good things about them. What do you most love and admire about your children, what good things do they bring into your life, perhaps joy, love, fun, meaning, happiness. And now say a silent thank you and you can smile very gently if you like.

Now, thinking about all the good things that you have. It could be the house that you live in, the clothes that you wear, the food that you ate today, the food that your children ate today. Considering that not everyone has a roof over their head, has a place for themselves and their family to live. Considering that not everyone has enough food to eat or food to feed their children. Considering what other material things we have that make life easier, electricity, running water, heating, a car perhaps a phone. Now saying a silent thank you to yourself.

Now, considering the positive experiences you have in your life in particularly the positive experiences you have with your children. What activities do you enjoy doing as a family, perhaps eating dinner together, playing games, going for walks, holidays and trips away. What are your most joyful moments together as a family. What have been your best memories of family life, your favourite moments. Saying a silent thank you to others.

Now for the rest of the meditation allowing anything else to come to mind that you feel thankful for. For the people in your life, for their health and well being, for your own health and well being, for the things you have, for the joyful experiences in your life and you parenting. Considering the things in life that bring you moments of joy, peace and happiness, perhaps listening to music, your child's smile, a warm cup of coffee, the roaring fire on a cold day. Just reflecting on all there is to be thankful for, to be happy about. Now smiling gently to yourself and saying a silent thank you.

Before we finish now, just noticing how you feel, how does your head feel? How does your heart feel? How does your body feel?

Relaxing with your breath now until you hear the sound of the bells

## Mountain Meditation Script adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn's

(Mountain Meditation, available at <http://www.mindfulnessstapes.com>)

This meditation is normally done in a sitting position, either on the floor or a chair, and begins by sensing into the support you have from the chair or the cushion, paying attention to the actual sensations of contact.

Finding a position of stability and poise, upper body balanced over your hips and shoulders in a comfortable but alert posture, hands on your lap or your knees, arms hanging by their own weight, like heavy curtains, stable and relaxed. Actually sensing into your body, feeling your feet... legs... hips... lower and upper body... arms... shoulders... neck... head... And when you are ready, allowing your eyes to close, bringing awareness to breath, the actual physical sensations, feeling each breath as it comes in and goes out... letting the breath be just as it is, without trying to change or regulate it in any way... allowing it to flow easily and naturally, with its own rhythm and pace, knowing you are breathing perfectly well right now, nothing for you to do... Allowing the body to be still and sitting with a sense of dignity, a sense of resolve, a sense of being complete, whole, in this very moment, with your posture reflecting this sense of wholeness... (Pause: 10 Secs)

As you sit here, letting an image form in your mind's eye, of the most magnificent or beautiful mountain you know or have seen or can imagine..., letting it gradually come into greater focus... and even if it doesn't come as a visual image, allowing the sense of this mountain and feeling its overall shape, its lofty peak or peaks high in the sky, the large base rooted in the bedrock of the earth's crust, it's steep or gently sloping sides... Noticing how massive it is, how solid, how unmoving, how beautiful, whether from a far or up close...

(Pause: 5 Secs)

Perhaps your mountain has snow blanketing its top and trees reaching down to the base, or rugged granite sides... there may be streams and waterfalls cascading down the slopes... there may be one peak or a series of peaks, or with meadows and high lakes... Observing it, noting its qualities and when you feel ready, seeing if you can bring the mountain into your own body sitting here so that your body and the mountain in your mind's eye become one so that as you sit here, you share in the massiveness and the stillness and majesty of the mountain, you become the mountain.

Grounded in the sitting posture, your head becomes the lofty peak, supported by the rest of the body and affording a panoramic view. Your shoulders and arms the sides of the mountain. Your buttocks and legs the solid base, rooted to your cushion or your chair, experiencing in your body a sense of uplift from deep within your pelvis and spine. With each breath, as you continue sitting, becoming a little more a breathing mountain, alive and vital, yet unwavering in your inner stillness, completely what you are, beyond words and thought, centered, grounded, unmoving presence...

As you sit here, becoming aware of the fact that as the sun travels across the sky, the light and shadows and colors are changing virtually moment by moment in the mountain's stillness, and the surface teems with life and activity... streams, melting snow, waterfalls, plants and wildlife. As the mountain sits, seeing and feeling how night follows day and day follows night. The bright warming sun, followed by the cool night sky studded with stars, and the gradual dawning of a new day...

## Mountain Meditation Script adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn's

(Mountain Meditation, available at <http://www.mindfulnessstapes.com>)

Through it all, the mountain just sits, experiencing change in each moment, constantly changing, yet always just being itself. It remains still as the seasons flow into one another and as the weather changes moment by moment and day by day, calmness abiding all change...

In summer, there is no snow on the mountain except perhaps for the very peaks or in crags shielded from direct sunlight. In the fall, the mountain may wear a coat of brilliant fire colors. In winter, a blanket of snow and ice. In any season, it may find itself at times enshrouded in clouds or fog or pelted by freezing rain. People may come to see the mountain and comment on how beautiful it is or how it's not a good day to see the mountain, that it's too cloudy or rainy or foggy or dark. None of this matters to the mountain, which remains at all times its essential self. Clouds may come and clouds may go, tourists may like it or not. The mountain's magnificence and beauty are not changed one bit by whether people see it or not, seen or unseen, in sun or clouds, broiling or frigid, day or night. It just sits, being itself. At times visited by violent storms, buffeted by snow and rain and winds of unthinkable magnitude.

Through it all, the mountain sits. Spring comes, trees leaf out, flowers bloom in the high meadows and slopes, birds sing in the trees once again. Streams overflow with the waters of melting snow. Through it all, the mountain continues to sit, unmoved by the weather, by what happens on its surface, by the world of appearances... remaining its essential self, through the seasons, the changing weather, the activity ebbing and flowing on its surface...

In the same way, as we sit in meditation, we can learn to experience the mountain, we can embody the same central, unwavering stillness and groundedness in the face of everything that changes in our own lives, over seconds, over hours, over years. In our lives and in our meditation practice, we experience constantly the changing nature of mind and body and of the outer world, we have our own periods of light and darkness, activity and inactivity, our moments of color and our moments of drabness. It's true that we experience storms of varying intensity and violence in the outer world and in our own minds and bodies, buffeted by high winds, by cold and rain, we endure periods of darkness and pain, as well as the moments of joy and uplift, even our appearance changes constantly, experiencing a weather of its own...

By becoming the mountain in our meditation practice, we can link up with its strength and stability and adopt them for our own. We can use its energies to support our energy to encounter each moment with mindfulness and equanimity and clarity. It may help us to see that our thoughts and feelings, our preoccupations, our emotional storms and crises, even the things that happen to us are very much like the weather on the mountain. We tend to take it all personally, but its strongest characteristic is impersonal. The weather of our own lives is not to be ignored or denied, it is to be encountered, honored, felt, known for what it is, and held in awareness... And in holding it in this way, we come to know a deeper silence and stillness and wisdom. Mountains have this to teach us and much more if we can let it in... So if you find you resonate in some way with the strength and stability of the mountain in your sitting, it may be helpful to use it from time to time in your meditation practice, to remind you of what it means to sit mindfully with resolve and with wakefulness, in true stillness... So, in the time that remains, continuing to sustain the mountain meditation on your own, in silence, moment by moment, until you hear the sound of the bells...

# MEDITATION 12

## Raisin meditation

Source – A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook, by Stahl & Goldstein

Place raisin in your hand. If you don't have raisins, any food will do. Imagine that you have just come to Earth from a distant planet without such food. Now, with this food in hand, you can begin to explore it with all of your senses.

Focus on one of the objects as if you've never seen anything like it before. Focus on seeing this object. Scan it, exploring every part of it, as if you've never seen such a thing before. Turn it around with your fingers and notice what color it is. Notice the folds and where the surface reflects light or becomes darker.

Next, explore the texture, feeling any softness, hardness, coarseness, or smoothness.

While you're doing this, if thoughts arise such as "Why am I doing this weird exercise?" "How will this ever help me?" or "I hate these objects," then just see if you can acknowledge these thoughts, let them be, and then bring your awareness back to the object. Take the object beneath your nose and carefully notice the smell of it.

Bring the object to one ear, squeeze it, roll it around, and hear if there is any sound coming from it.

Begin to slowly take the object to your mouth, noticing how the arm knows exactly where to go and perhaps becoming aware of your mouth watering. Gently place the object in your mouth, on your tongue, without biting it. Simply explore the sensations of this object in your mouth.

When you're ready, intentionally bite down on the object, maybe noticing how it automatically goes to one side of the mouth versus the other. Also notice the tastes it releases. Slowly chew this object. Be aware of the saliva in your mouth and how the object changes in consistency as you chew.

When you feel ready to swallow, consciously notice the intention to swallow, then see if you can notice the sensations of swallowing the raisin, sensing it moving down to your throat and into your esophagus on its way to your stomach.

Take a moment to congratulate yourself for taking this time to experience mindful eating.

**Questions For Reflection:** What did you notice with the raisin in terms of...sight? ...touch? ...sound? ...smell? ...taste?

What, if anything, surprised you about this practice?

Did any thoughts or memories pop up while doing this practice?

Were there elements of this practice that you found challenging, difficult, or easy?

What was your experience of eating with such focused attention on a single object?

What was the relationship between your expectation of eating the raisin and the actual experience of eating the raisin?



# REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS





# LESSON 1

## Calming the monkey mind

- Where does your monkey mind typically jump to?
- Is it helpful to think about the past?
- When is it helpful?
- When is it unhelpful?
- Is it helpful to think about the future?
- When is it helpful?
- When is it unhelpful?

# LESSON 2

## Bringing mindfulness to parenting and mindful listening

- What does it feel like for you when you are not being listened to?
- What does it feel like when you are being listened to?
- What does it feel like for you when you are talking to someone and they are on their phone?
- What does it feel like for children when they want your attention but you are not listening to them?
- What does it feel like for children when they want your attention but you are on your phone?
- What does it feel like for children when you listen to them?

# LESSON 3

## Building presence and connection

- How does thinking about the past, particularly regret, anger or worry impact your parenting?
- Does it help it in any way?
- Does it negatively impact your parenting?
- How does thinking about the future, particularly worry or fear impact your parenting?
- Does it help it in any way?
- Does it negatively impact your parenting?
- How does being in the present and having a calm focused and clear mind impact your parenting?
- How does your children respond to you when you are in the present moment?

# LESSON 4

## Cultivating mindful presence and reflective listening

### Reflection 1

- What is most important for you as a parent?
- What kind of parent do you most want to be?
- What qualities would you most like to cultivate in your parenting?
- What do you most want for your child?
- What do you feel is most important in your child's life?
- What do you think that children need most?

### Reflection 2

- What was most important to you as a child?
- What did you most want from your parents?
- What would you have liked more of?

# LESSON 5

## The child's brain, being the mountain

- When your child flips their lid what happens?
- When you flip your lid what happens?
- In what circumstances is your child most likely to flip their lid?
- In what situations are you most likely to flip your lid?
- When both you and your child flip your lids?
- What happens then?
- When you stay calm when your child flips their lid?
- What happens then?

# LESSON 6

## Practicing self compassion and compassion for our children

- What is it that most nourishes you?
- When your cup of sunshine is full how does that impact you and your parenting?
- How does your children respond to you when your cup of sunshine is full?
- When your cup of sunshine is empty how does that impact you and your parenting?
- How does your children respond to you when your cup of sunshine is empty?

# LESSON 7

## Loving kindness and gratitude practices

- What good things would you like to cultivate in yourself?
- Perhaps more kindness, self-compassion gratitude?
- What traits would you like to cultivate in your parenting?
- What traits would you like to cultivate in your children?

**(NO REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 8, 9 and 10)**



