

The social literacy lessons, one of the ways that I really am interested in kind of evolving what we mean by mindfulness, what we mean by mindfulness in education is that you know, we've just gone through this physical literacy, the mental literacy, the emotional literacy. That's-- that is where often we kinda stop with mindfulness, and its a--it would be a fine place to stop, right? We've supported kids to cultivate they're attention, they're relaxation, their emotional regulation, cultivating kindness to self, you know, all of these positive inner qualities. So that's beautiful. But then once we got them there, then the real hope if we're looking at, you know, systems change, if we're looking at school, how to actually change the environment of the school, how to create global citizens, that have created mindfulness ambassadors. And we take the--what we're working on in the last emotional literacy lessons and we work out empathy. And empathy is huge and you know, that social emotional learning, but there's a very clear idea that we have of building the muscles, the mindful muscles, we can really build the empathy muscles.

One of the lessons that I have in the workbook, it is a really clear easy one which is just a phrasing of a just like me so, what I often have kids do is I'll have them picture somebody that annoys them and, you know, act again, when where doing this, I wouldn't say like, "picture somebody you don't like." I really wanna be particular 'cause I don't want them to be bringing into their mind somebody who's abusing them or something like that, right? So, it's more like, picture somebody who just annoys you just a little bit, right? or I might start by saying, you know, start with a friend, you know picture a friend. Or, just picture somebody you don't know, just a little bit. And just take those through some of the phrases right, like, so your picture them in your mind, maybe picture something that they're doing, why don't we all try it actually?

Could be lesson for the kids give to the adults. So if you kinda let your eyes close for a moment.

Actually I'll just tell a story before and we if we don't, so I was at dinner here, one of the first nights and I sat down with somebody who I had never met before and there's a friend who our friend and I sat down with him and immediately and I'm sure you've all noticed this at moments like when in interactions, I immediately it was like my heart was closed in, and being a good mindfulness practitioner, I was like, this isn't as hard-- I was just kinda like, I was like, you know, if my mind went there, it would have been like, I don't really like this guy and like immediately--and you know, how the mind immediately like flips out like--and I, ignored the, just like something about the way he was kind of moving and I was just like, "I don't like this guy." [laughter].

And so, I just, you know, observed my mind and my body, right? It's my mind and my body. So, you--it's not like I can deny my, "Oh, that's not good, I'm not--I should like this guy." You know, like I could--you can't do that, like for some of the reasons like the body it was actually closing to this person. So, the best I could do at that moment was just like be open to the experience, and keep myself interested and while I feel like, "okay." and to be fully honest, I'm sitting there and I'm like just trying to get interested, "what is this?" "why am I closing" right? And I'm sitting there with my friend who is a woman and her friend, two ladies, and this guy, and the guy was just this like very kinda charismatic so I think I am--I also think I wanted--am I jealous of this guy? [laughter] like I am trying to figure out like what is it?

What is happening in myself, that is closing myself to this person, right? 'Cause like, I don't know this person, this is completely like, this is just completely my mind reacting, right? And I--so I just kept inquiring, kept interest, kept open, kept on.

By the end of the night, me and him we're like had like this total bond and we're like totally friendly with each other, I mean I'm like, "I think he's a really nice guy." you know. So, I'm like, I don't exactly know what it was that closed it, but my mind--I do know that my mindfulness like allowed me to stay present and not just judge and calcify and like close, right?

Attendee: What about me sharing is the last part of this story, remember ....

Oh, thank you, Morris, fill it in. I told this to Barry and Morris

I love stories.

Yeah, so, I think that a piece of it, of where that shift came was when we were training for a while and he started calling me about, yeah there's this guy who like I always feel like I'm not as good as him. He's kind of shared some vulnerability to me about you know, and security and of course like immediately I'm like a sucker.

[Laughter]

So let's practice a little bit of that same thing of getting that interest. The reason I told this story is because we're getting interested, why, why do we curse? Why do we tighten, why do create these assumptions and judgments, right? It's not a problem as we all do it, so we're not judging ourselves for it, but we're getting interested. So bring in to mind a person that you're a little annoyed about, not something that you don't really like, just somebody that you notice you just have a little charge with when you're, the way they say something, or when they do something, when they just kind of like kind of you cringe a little bit around them. I'm sure you can find one.

You don't have to find the perfect one, just anything. And so just picture them and picture maybe the thing that they do that makes you a little annoyed. Just kind of picturing them and seeing what that's like, that feel in your body, how's that feel like, what thoughts kind of populate in your mind about them? What judgments do you carry? Tracking them the way we

do, down the arm into the body, what's the feeling in the body that you have around this person.

Tightness somewhere maybe. And so what I want us to do is we can just do a couple of phrases, so you can say to this person. Just look at this person, imagine them, kind of get an image of them and say just like me, this wants to be happy, just see if you can actually look at them and actually get that, yeah I know this person wants to be happy, meet them, picture them and see how that is true. Just like me this person wants people to like them and see if you can get that. See if you can get to this person who really wants people to like them. Just like me, this person sometimes feels really sad and be alone. See if you can see that in this person. Just like me, this person wants to feel strong, powerful, capable and see if you can spend another minute just picturing this person, see if you can get in there, getting just like me other ways this person just wants to feel good, or sometimes they hurt.

Okay, good job. So it's a practice that kids I really often amazed by how well they can do it and how like interesting it seems to them, they're like, they'll very often be like, oh it's weird, I think I could actually like that person a little bit, and so this also goes to kind of the idea of assumptions and biases, and I love that that there's this research that's been coming out around mindfulness that is showing how mindfulness limits assumptions and biases and it's the more you practice which obviously makes sense that metacognitive awareness, that open awareness that compassionate awareness; when you see somebody and you can actually watch your thoughts around them, just like the story I was saying. Instead of me being like, oh yeah this guy is a jerk, you know. I did do that but then I was like ha, interesting, my mind's making that assumption, I wonder why my mind did that, I wonder if that's about me. Maybe this person is, who knows, let's see, let's see what's true.

I've been playing around a lot with that around assumptions and biases and getting creative in terms of, like one practice that you can do is like if I take this bottle and if I did a practice, which I don't think I can do right now, but if I had you all stare at this for a couple of minutes and just put all of your... So if I put this out and have everybody stare at it and I said just fill it with your assumptions or just fill it with like not assumptions but associations, just look at it and watch what your mind does, watch your mind in association with this then and see what happens. Look at it, keep your eyes focused, see what the mind does. It's amazing if you do this for 15 minutes, people will be like, I love that bottle I like to get one just like it. And somebody else is like, I don't know I just like hated looking at it because I always lose bottles and it pisses me off so much and so I don't ... you get like all of these like totally random emotions in relationship to the same bottle. And so I'm so wary, just kind of static thing, but what you could do is you could put up some, do a little slide show and you can do some images and you could have people make associations, right. Put up an image of a cop car and say, let's make some associations. One person's like, ah that makes, how does make you feel when you look at it, or that makes me feel really safe, or that makes me feel like freaked out. You know you get just like all these different types of people you put up there, different types of settings, right. You just get like wow, look at the way our minds do this immediately, it's not a problem and you can really get into a discussion with each other around how the mind works. Of course from our experiences we generate this type of assumption and assumption turns into a bias, if it's kind of left around to tighten long enough right and if this gets thick. So those ones also kind of pulled together, so let's become aware of our assumptions and then let's put some of that hard fullness practice into it. Let's kind of hold that compassion gaze on it.