

# Mindfulness Classes

## Class One: Mindful Bodies, Listening, and Breath

### Key Points:

- This first class is very important. Set them up to view mindfulness as a special time and how to be prepared when you come in. Do not move on until they understand the instructions and activities of this first day.
- Be simple when introducing mindfulness, especially for the youngest classes. Too much talking is less effective but older students can benefit from hearing how mindfulness will be relevant to their lives.
- Set the bar high. After introducing “mindful bodies”, see if they can sit with mindful bodies and closed eyes for 1 min. Same for mindful listening. Increase the time each day if they can do it. If they don’t make it, then reduce it.

### Introduction:

- I am here today to teach you something called mindfulness. Has anyone ever heard the word Mindfulness? Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening in the present moment. Mindfulness can help us learn to pay close attention to many things. It can also help us calm down when we are angry, sad, frustrated, or have any difficult emotion. Mindfulness can help us feel happy too. It can also help us focus and do well in school, sports (sailing) or music.
- I am going to be in your morning journaling class for just 15 minutes at a time. Every time, I will teach you something new about mindfulness.

### Mindful Bodies:

- There are a couple very important things that help us be mindful.
- *If students are at their desks, have them all move their chairs away from their desks and turn them toward the front of the room. Explain that they can do this each time you come in. Remind them each time until it is a habit.*
- The first thing that will help us during mindfulness is to keep our bodies very still... let’s try that?
- The second thing automatically happens when we get still... what is the noise like in here right now, when you get still?
- Yes, it gets very quiet.
- Now we have still bodies and quiet bodies. That’s what I call our mindful bodies. Now, let’s close our eyes and just sit like that for one minute.
- You did a great job at your first practice of a mindful body. Was that easy or hard?
- We won’t have to be this still and quiet all the time, but often I will remind you to get your mindful bodies on and this is what you can do.

### **Mindful Listening:**

- There are a lot of things that we can learn to be mindful of. Today we are going to practice being mindful of sound.
- I brought something to help us with that. *Bring out bell.*
- Would you like to hear what this sounds like? Ok, but we have to get our mindful bodies on.
- *Demonstrate a mindful body again and let them get ready. Make sure they are as still and quiet as you think that class is capable of.*
- *Ring bell.*
- Great job. Would you like to hear it again? Ok, but this time, get your mindful ears on. That means you listen very carefully, the whole time. So, see if you can pay attention from the very first moment you hear the bell all the way to the end. Raise your hand when the sound is gone.
- *Ring bell.*
- Since you are so good at this, let's try it one more time with our eyes closed. Let your eyes close. Listen just like you did before to the entire sound and raise your hand when the sound is gone for you.
- *Ring bell.*
- We can also listen this carefully to any sound. There are lots of sounds around you all the time. If you listen very carefully, you might hear things you don't normally hear. Let's keep our mindful bodies on, with our eyes closed, and listen to the sounds around us. You might hear sounds in the classroom or outside, or even in your own body.
- *Mindful listening for about one minute.*

### **Raise your hand if you would like to share some sounds that you noticed.**

- *Comment on the quieter sounds and how quiet it had to be to hear them.*
- You have just learned how to pay attention better. In mindfulness, we learn how to focus and pay close attention to many things. Do you think it's important to be able to focus? Why? When could you use mindful listening?

### **Mindful Breathing:**

- Now we are going to learn how to be mindful of something new. What am I doing right now?
- *Take an obvious inhale and exhale; let them identify that you are breathing.*
- Yes, we are going to learn to be mindful of that. We are always breathing. We don't need to learn how to breathe, but we are learning how to pay attention to our breath. Even though we are always breathing, we usually don't notice.
- Let's try it and see how we feel. Get your mindful bodies on.
- *Take a few obvious deep breaths with them.*
- Now let's just breathe normally like we usually breathe.
- Keep breathing like that and let your eyes close. Just feel your breath; pay attention to your breath while you are breathing in and breathing out. *Continue this in silence as long as they are calm, quiet and participating.*

- Now, put one hand in the air. Good, now take that hand and put it on your belly. Now take some of those slow, normal, quiet breaths. What happens to your belly when you breathe in and out? Yes, it goes up and down (or in and out). When we are mindful of our breath, that's what we pay attention to; every time we breathe in and out, we notice that movement in our belly.

#### **Anchor:**

- Our breath right here is going to be our anchor. What is an anchor? What does it do for a boat? Yes, an anchor helps keep the boat where it is. If the boat starts to drift away, the anchor pulls it back in. Well, that is what our breath is doing for our mind. Sometime when you try to focus on your breath, you might find that your mind starts thinking instead of focusing on your breath. When our mind wanders away from our breath or starts to think about things; we can notice it and bring it right back to our anchor.
- Let's try one minute. Get your mindful bodies on and let your eyes close. Let's focus on our breath for one minute and feel that movement in our belly, our chest or at our nose every time we breathe in and every time we breathe out.
- How did that feel to focus on your breath?
- *Allow many answers if you sense they really did feel calm. If the class comments are "calm, relaxed, happy," etc, point that out. Identifying it for them allows them to be mindful of that feeling. "Notice how you feel right now." Also, point out that they became calm/relaxed/happy in just a few seconds.*

#### **Wrap-Up:**

- I will see you again on \_\_\_\_\_. When you see me come in next time, you will know it's time for mindfulness and you can just get ready in your mindful bodies. I might not even say anything. I'll just come in, sit down, wait for your mindful bodies and ring the bell. We will listen to the bell every day I come to start and end the class. It will be our way of saying "hello" and "good-bye."
- Now that you've learned mindful listening, see if you can remember to listen to sounds between now and the next time I see you. You might stop and listen while you are on the playground, or in the classroom, or at home. And you can tell me what you heard next time I come.
- Now you have learned how to be mindful of sound and mindful of breathing. You can try being mindful of breathing between now and the next time I see you. Since you are always breathing, you can try any time! You can practice mindful breathing while you are sitting at your desk, walking in the hallway, on the playground, even when you are trying to fall asleep at night. Raise your hand if sometimes it's hard for you to fall asleep. Well, if that happens tonight or tomorrow night, you can practice your mindful breathing and see if it helps you fall asleep.

#### **Reflections:**

- How did it feel today? What did you like? What did you not like?
- *Ring bell.* ☐