Mindfulness for Teachers: A Plan for Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Growth

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Mindfulness for Teachers: A Plan for Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Growth

Bryan Meyer

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in TESOL degree at
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Abstract

Stress is a malady pervasive in today’s culture, which schools are not immune. Teachers are under pressure to raise standardized test scores while students spend more of each day sitting in their seats trying to learn increasingly more abstract concepts at younger ages. All of this leads to a stressful environment. However, there are tools and skills that can be learned to minimize the stress an individual encounters and provide a means to live with more engagement, creativity, and happiness. The author uses his twenty years of meditation and yoga experience to create materials that teachers can implement in their personal lives and in the classroom. This project begins with an introduction to mindfulness and a review of the exciting research demonstrating the benefits of regular mindfulness meditation practice. Next, the author reflects on his experiences working with classes and what he gleaned that can be applicable to teachers wanting to implement mindfulness in their classrooms. Finally, there are a multitude of mindfulness practices for teachers to use in their lives to create more balance and harmony within.
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Introduction

One of the joys of working with the TESOL faculty at SIT is their willingness to allow students to pursue interests and passions that can be beneficial to others without being limited by a narrow pedagogical proscription. This materials development project is such an example—my desire to create a more positive school environment through mindfulness practices.

The idea for creating a materials development project centered on mindfulness was hatched last summer during conversations with faculty and cohort members. A theme that kept arising for me as we had these discussions is teaching from the heart and allowing my true self to come through in my teaching and interactions with colleagues. I realized at that time that if I were going to allow my authentic self to come through to my work colleagues that I would have to be willing to make myself vulnerable by showing an aspect of myself that I have kept sheltered, namely, a teacher who draws joy and energy by loving my students and opening my heart to them.

I decided that the pain of not showing my true self was greater than the risk of somehow being rebuffed for showing my true self. I was buoyed by the prospect of stepping into the unknown by the experience I had during Sandanona. Before coming back to the Brattleboro campus last summer, I thought I would do a presentation about student-centered learning. However, during our class discussions in Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers (ICLT) the topic of race kept coming up. One day I was sitting next to one of my cohort members when the topic came up again, and she said to me, “You should do your Sandanona on this!” Without thinking, I replied, “You’re right!” I knew it was the right thing to do because the answer was spontaneous and I had chills thinking about. I did not know how I would present this topic, but I felt that it was something that needed to be explored. The class instructor, Leslie
Turpin, was very encouraging and helpful in guiding me to resources on how I could find a meaningful way to present this. I decided on a workshop format where I would introduce the Way of Council as a method to engage in honest conversation about race. The Way of Council draws on indigenous traditions and is a simple practice: A group of people sit in a circle and use an object as a talking piece. The talking piece grants the holder permission to speak and encourages him to speak from the heart. From this place of heartfelt revelation, new solutions to problems may emerge from the collective wisdom of the group. I was nervous because I had no idea how it would go, but my fears were put to rest when we gathered in the circle. I was very centered and able to lead the group from a grounded place that comes from years of practicing meditation. The energy in the circle was palpable and I knew that somehow my presence anchored the rest of the participants. It was at this time that I could sense my true self emerging and I knew that I needed to walk in this sense of self to be truly integrated as a teacher in my school.

I came back to my school last fall with the intention of first tuning in to a sense of what the teachers and students needed and where I could provide a heartfelt presence without forcing my ideas as to what I thought they needed.

What I saw and felt first and foremost was stress. The pressure to improve standardized test scores flowed down from the federal level to the state level to school administrators to teachers and finally to the students. This pressure has forced teachers to become too narrowly focused on the reading and math scores while ignoring educating the whole child. What is being pushed aside in the rush to improve students’ learning is the heartfelt connection between teachers and students which is, in my opinion, the foundation for learning. It became clear to me...
that reconnecting teachers and students through the heart is how I could make our school environment better for everyone.

When I trace the origins of this project, they go back twenty years to the time I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand. I was a TEFL teacher in a junior high/high school in a small village in the northeast of the country. The province I lived in, Nong Khai, bordered the Mekong River. The small provincial capital served as a crossing point for backpackers going to Laos. A small tourist area developed within the city to meet the needs of these people. I would describe this area as “funky” because a popular, small street contained a beautiful guest house run by a witty Brit, Julian, and his Thai wife, Pao; an eclectic bookstore run by Michael, a former Nepal Peace Corps Volunteer; and a yoga and meditation center run by Pancho and Beatrix, an American/Swiss couple.

An interesting side story to my relationship with Pancho and Beatrix is that I knew them before I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand. A couple of years earlier, I taught conversational English in Tokyo, Japan, and it just so happened that they lived in the same guest house as me. They lived in Japan during the warm months selling jewelry and clothing they made, and they lived in Thailand in the winter to teach yoga and make their wares. I became friends with them and we would have engaging conversations about Eastern spirituality. This was my first time outside the United States and I was being exposed to a whole new world that I did not know existed, and my sense of identity was expanding beyond what I had conceived. One evening, out of nowhere, Pancho told me that he wanted to show me some basics of meditation. We sat on the walkway outside my second floor apartment, where he introduced me to meditation and a simple practice. I was earnest in my practice, for a while, and then it started to fade away as I moved back to the United States. When I applied to and was accepted into
Peace Corps a few months later I was ecstatic when I found out I would be in Thailand because I would see them again. I was even more ecstatic when I was placed near them and I could see them on a regular basis.

They taught a four-day introductory course to yoga and meditation in Nong Khai. I took the course, and I was hooked from the beginning. I realized the benefits of moving the body in an attentive way led to an overall sense of well-being and relaxation. I noticed that the benefits extended into everyday life; I was aware of when I was holding tension in certain areas of my body, and I was able to consciously relax those areas. The practice of meditation helped me to understand the nature of my mind—thoughts and feelings come and go, but they are never permanent. With regular practice, I noticed that I was not holding onto negative thoughts or emotions. I also learned not to judge the emotions that would arise; good and bad feelings are part of the human experience and I can simply watch them rise and fall.

Thailand was a wonderful place to begin my journey with yoga and meditation. The country is Buddhist, so the people are steeped in an attitude of acceptance, kindness, and generosity. It was also the place where I began my journey into teaching. I realized during this time that I wanted to teach as my profession. I enjoyed the interaction with students and felt connected and at ease in the classroom. I decided on elementary education because I wanted to work with young children and maybe set them on a positive course for their lives. I applied to Bank Street College in New York City, and I was accepted.

I was excited to start the graduate program in Early Childhood and Elementary Education at Bank Street College because its philosophy of education meshed with my own. I believed that learning comes from within and that a teacher’s role is to provide an atmosphere where students can make discoveries and connections on their own. We all have an innate desire to learn and
that somehow dampens as we progress through school because learning is imposed on us from the outside rather than the inside. I learned about the work of Jean Piaget, for whom knowledge is not passively absorbed from the environment. Rather, it is being constructed by the child through interactions between his mental structures and the environment (Labinowicz, 1980). My understanding of learning was deepened by the work of Lev Vygotsky and his idea of Zones of Proximal Development. Vygotsky stated (1978), “The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in the embryonic state” (p. 86).

While I was excited about the coursework I was doing, I was in shock when I returned to the United States. Gone were the gentle smiles and slow place of life, replaced by a premium on efficiency and speed. I was frankly dismayed to see my fellow Americans living in such disharmony. You can find anything in New York City, yoga included, so I continued to deepen my practice of yoga, which served as a buffer against the onslaught of daily life I experienced there.

The stress due to the constant hustle I experienced in everyday life was apparent in schools also. I started teaching fourth grade in 2000, the beginning of the “Accountability” era and No Child Left Behind. I felt the stress levels in school immediately rise, as there was the pressure to make sure that all students were proficient in the state-mandated standardized tests. Our focus of instruction became narrowly confined to reading and math scores. We were preparing our students to be test takers and not actively engaged citizens of our society. My teacher preparation courses made me think about the role of schools in society.

Education is not insulated from a societal context and it is disingenuous to think so. The school is embedded in a societal structure and the school can have an influence on shaping that
societal structure (Counts, 1932). I was dismayed after a couple of years because education did not seem to have a soul. I questioned where the noble craft of teaching was because I was not experiencing it. So, I left public education and worked with AmeriCorps for a couple of years.

I came back to life again during my service with AmeriCorps. I was working with passionate people who wanted a better society. My yoga and meditation practice went to another level during this time also. I came into contact with the couple who would further advance my practice. Charles and Carol Crenshaw ran a small yoga center in Indianapolis, Indiana. I knew I was home when I first walked into the place and met Charles. The physical space was unpretentious and charged with a palpable energy. Charles had a great depth of knowledge about yoga and meditation. He showed a commitment to teaching the subtler and more profound aspects of yoga, such as, meditation and not a preoccupation with just teaching the physical postures. I was also starting to pass along some of my yoga knowledge to my fellow AmeriCorps members, who were open and eager to learn about the practice. I look back on this time with fond memories because it was a time where I brought my inner self to the fore and lived fully exposed to the world.

I eventually took a yoga teacher training course through the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. This is where Charles and Carol had studied, so I knew it was the type of training I was looking for. I became acquainted with many more wonderful teachers who graciously passed along their knowledge. Through my practice and study of yoga, I was learning that we are citizens of two worlds—an inner world of thoughts and emotions and an outer world with which we interact—and yoga serves as a bridge between these two worlds (Anderson & Sovik, 2000). I was so enamored of the place that my wife and I moved there for a year to continue to deepen our practice, and our daughter was born there.
After we left the Himalayan Institute, I taught yoga and meditation for several years. I then decided to go back into public education nine years ago. The problems I experienced when I left were still there, and I felt afraid to offer yoga and meditation as a means to help because I thought it would be viewed as some kind of religion. I was living in Kentucky, a very conservative and religious state, so I never broached the subject of yoga and meditation at school.

It seems, however, that we have reached a time in our society when these practices are accepted. Mindfulness is a topic that is in in the public consciousness and seems to have gained a foothold like yoga. The once-spiritual practice of mindfulness meditation has been secularized for an audience that wants to reap the physical, mental, and emotional benefits the practice can confer.

I continue to see the stress the teachers and students endure at school, but I believe the time is right for me to expand my role and offer support to them by developing these mindfulness materials. This is an opportunity to meld two aspects of myself that I have kept separate in the school workplace; I can be an ESL teacher, and I can be a mindfulness teacher. We have reached a point where our inner lives cannot keep pace with the change happening in the world, and we need practices to help us cope with the change. I do not offer these materials as a panacea to all of the stresses and pressures teachers face in their daily lives. But it is a start, and it can help bring harmony within and without.
Part I: Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a practice and state of consciousness that has its origins in religious and contemplative traditions that stretch back millennia, and they span the globe from east to west, transcending cultures. Many of today’s religious and spiritual traditions—Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist—contain a contemplative tradition that has existed in the relative shadows of their liturgical traditions.

Although contemplative and meditative traditions have historically been on the fringes of most societies, there has been a surge into popular consciousness in recent times. Images of a contemplating Buddha with a serene, content smile or a meditating Indian yogi with crossed legs and hands upturned on knees have seeped into contemporary Western society. However, these images leave us with the perception that mindfulness is something mysterious and exotic performed by holy men and women, but not relevant or applicable to our everyday lives. Also, consumerism’s appropriation of mindful images as a means to liberation through consumption create even more confusion to what a mindfulness practice entails. But I believe that if we understand what mindfulness is, then we are able to see that it is a practice readily available to us at any moment that can potentially have lasting positive effects.

Contemporary secular mindfulness practices owe much to Buddhism. The Buddha presented a systematic format to explore our experiences and touch the reality of our awareness. The Buddha and those that followed him mapped out a territory of human consciousness transcending thoughts, belief systems, and cultures. The fruits of their explorations are free from
ideologies or –isms and resemble scientific discoveries in their universal applicability and replicability (Kabat-Zinn, 2005).

The Buddha presented a teaching on the four foundations of mindfulness known as the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (see Appendix A). The Buddha’s discourse on establishing mindfulness offers a broad range of instructions on understanding the body and mind. We do not need to attempt all of the practices, but once we have established a baseline practice we may begin to explore and expand our inquiry into our selves (Goldstein, 2013).

**The First Foundation: Body**

Mindfulness of the body is the first of four ways of establishing awareness. The body is an excellent place to start because our bodies are the vehicle to express ourselves in the outer world and serve as the container for the thoughts and emotions that reside within.

The simplest place to focus our awareness is on the breath, a constant companion that we cannot literally live without. Meditation teacher Joseph Goldstein (2013) notes that the breath is suitable for all personality types, and focused awareness leads to deep concentration and penetrating insight. Likewise, it serves as an antidote to distraction and discursive thoughts and becomes as a stabilizing force throughout our daily lives.

The Buddha gave simple instructions, inviting us to put aside “worldly grief and greed” and to mindfully breathe in and mindfully breathe out (Weisman & Smith, 2001). The idea here is to not try and control one’s breath. This is not a breathing exercise; we are merely aware of the breath. Through experience, we realize that the breath calms down naturally, as does the mind (Gunaratana, 2012).
Next, we can extend mindfulness to our bodies. The Buddha instructed contemplations of four bodily postures—walking, standing, sitting, and lying down—that move from active to more passive (Anālayo, 2003). When we notice our bodies moving from one position to the next, we have a proprioceptive awareness of them moving through space, which helps us develop our capacity to maintain mindfulness, and experience impermanence. Our body posture shifts over time and never endures for long before we become uncomfortable and shift our bodies for relief. Moreover, awareness of our bodies and movement reveal our state of mind—often when we have a harried mind, our actions (such as walking) will be rushed, or in the opposite, slumping in a chair shows the sloth and lethargy present in our minds.

Awareness of our postures leads to the next aspect of mindfulness—awareness of activities. Our bodies provide multiple avenues to explore mindful activities. We can feel the water run over our hands as we wash dishes. We can feel the stretch on the sides of our bodies as we reach for a sweater in the closet. And we can notice the hum of the air conditioner as it keeps us cool on a hot summer day. Whatever you see, hear, smell, touch or taste provides an opportunity to be aware of the present moment (Weisman & Smith, 2001).

The final aspects on mindfulness of body lead us to be aware of the constituent parts of the body and finally the death and decay of the body. We glimpse the impermanent nature of the body through these contemplations. Modern science has even identified this truth—all things break down eventually—through entropy. Contemplations on these aspects lead us to realizations that “I” and “self” simply do not exist (Goldstein, 2013). As Anālayo (2003) states, “The aim is a balanced and detached attitude towards the body. With such a balanced attitude, one sees the body merely as a product of conditions, a product with which one need not identify” (p. 122).
The Second Foundation: Feelings

In the first establishment of mindfulness through the body, the Buddha’s contemplations went from rudimentary, the breath, to subtler awareness of the body’s anatomy and mortality. The increased subtlety develops the capacity to shift from the physical aspects of experience to the realm of feelings (Anālayo, 2003).

The first step in working with our feelings is developing an understanding of and detachment to the various kinds that arise. The Buddha recognized three types: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. Anālayo (2003) places a great importance on understanding the types of feelings because they can lead to liberation from our suffering. He says our liberation is possible, “based on the simple but ingenious method of directing awareness to the very first stages of the arising of likes and dislikes, by clearly noting whether the present moment’s experience is felt as “pleasant”, or “unpleasant”, or “neither” (p.157).

Gunaratana (2012) gives simple instructions on how to maintain awareness of the three types of feelings as they first arise:

When we pay attention, we notice that when we are experiencing a pleasant feeling, no unpleasant or neutral feeling is present. The same is true of an unpleasant and a neutral feeling. In other words, we experience one emotion or sensation at a time. (p. 83)

Gunaratana (2012) also explains that we very quickly understand that our feelings change without any conscious control. For example, we may start the day in a wonderful mood because it is a beautiful sunny day. However, that does not endure and before long the mood changes to neutral. Then we may remember a fight we had a while ago with a co-worker that puts us in a
bad mood. So, we know from our experiences that all feelings—pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral—are impermanent.

When we practice mindfulness of feelings, we have the insight that the feelings are fleeting. With this insight, we can loosen our attachment to our feelings.

**The Third Foundation: Mind**

The third foundation of the Buddha’s discourse on cultivating mindfulness brings the practitioners awareness to the mind. To understand the foundation of mind, it is best to start with a definition of mind. Gunaratana (2012) gives the following definition of mind:

Mind is a nonphysical phenomenon that perceives, thinks, recognizes, experiences, and reacts. It is clear and formless, which means that thoughts and other objects can arise in it. It is also described as luminous, which means, “able to shine light on things”—in other words, “knowing.” (p. 107)

Although the mind is present with every thought, experience, and perception, we know the mind not as independent, through its contents. Gunaratana (2012) notes that when the mind comes in contact with objects it is pure, however, almost instantaneously, desire, hatred, or delusion arises. These states distort our ability to see reality as it really is.

The contemplation on these unwholesome states of mind that the Buddha prescribed does not involve active engagement with them. Rather, we remain aware of the state of mind arising without reacting to it. Maintaining a non-reactive awareness counters the impulse to react or suppress, and it thereby deactivates the strength of the unwholesome state (Anālayo, 2003). This practice is illustrated by simile of the mind being like a mirror: It simply reflects whatever is
presented to it. A mindfulness practitioner should maintain awareness of the condition of her mind without allowing reactions to arise (Anālayo, 2003).

Moreover, we can begin to cultivate beneficial thoughts that strengthen the purity of the mind. If we put effort into thoughts of generosity, compassion, and loving-kindness, we strengthen them and begin to weaken the harmful ones (Gunaratana, 2012). As the Buddha taught (Gunaratana, 2012):

As rain gets into an ill-thatched house, so craving gets into an untrained mind. As rain does not get into a well-thatched house, so craving does not get into a well-trained mind.

(p. 110)

The Fourth Foundation: Mind Objects

The fourth foundation is mindfulness of mind objects. Here our attention is directed toward all that the mind encounters internally and externally (McCown, Reibel, & Micozzi, 2011). The Buddha’s instruction on the contemplation of the final aspect of mindfulness again reminds practitioners to observe the objects arising, lingering, and passing.

The first of the phenomena the mind encounters are the five hindrances: sense desire, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt.

Desire is the first hindrance. We all have had experiences of delighting is the senses that have taken us away from the task at hand. For example, music hinders concentration when one is doing homework, or the television distracts one from fully paying attention to a conversation with another. These distractions are a desire for physical pleasure arising from the senses. We can also have desires arising from the mind. The first step in eliminating the hindrance is to recognize that we have it. Next, we are aware that these desires are temporary once they are
fulfilled, they will leave us disappointed. Finally, after the desire passes, we are vigilant about it recurring again and interrupting it before it has a chance to take hold in the mind (Gunaratana, 2012).

The second hindrance is aversion, or ill will. The roots of ill will are in the wish to be away from the things that cause us pain. The suggestion for overcoming ill will is similar to that for desire. First, we recognize that it has arisen in us. We can then focus on loving-kindness as a way to overcome this. We can look deep within ourselves for compassion for others that leads to a greater understanding and connection with others (Gunaratana, 2012).

Sloth and torpor comprise the third hindrance. They may manifest themselves physically or mentally. When we feel physically lazy after we have had too much food or drink, often the remedy is to get up and move around. We can also do breathing exercises to energize us or splash some cold water on the face. Mental laziness causes the mind to be foggy and sluggish. When we are experiencing this, we can first recognize what is happening. Then it helps to talk to the laziness. We can gently acknowledge what a rare gift it is to be born as a human and that we can achieve lasting happiness and peace (Gunaratana, 2012).

The mind can swing through a wide spectrum. The opposite of sloth and torpor is restlessness, the fourth hindrance. Where unlike the sluggishness of torpor, the mind is hyperactive. The mind moves from thought to thought filled with worry about what might happen. As with other hindrances, the first step is to acknowledge that the mind is agitated in the moment. Then we can focus on the breath, which will calm the body and the mind. The interplay of this tandem helps to reestablish an equilibrium within us (Gunaratana, 2012).
Doubt is the fifth hindrance to progressing in mindfulness practice. It is natural for the mind to have doubt, and in some instances it is beneficial to our growth. However, it becomes a hindrance when it cripples us from practicing. An obvious doubt that arises is the question, “Why am I doing this?” We have doubts about this particular practice or the instructions for the practice. These questions and doubts can grow and may cause us to stop practicing. Once we have noticed that doubt has crept into our minds, we can acknowledge its presence. Then we can reflect back on our past experiences in our practice, to the times where we felt calm and peaceful, or the times where we gained clear insights into the workings of the mind. Also, we can recognize others who have practiced mindfulness and the depth of awareness they achieved from the practice (Gunaratana, 2012).

Comprising the next level of contemplation of mind objects are the five aggregates: material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. These components make up the sense of “self”—therefore, the great importance of contemplation on these aggregates is the insight that arises.

Joseph Goldstein (2013) explains that the aggregates are objects of clinging and that from this clinging we see that they are impermanent, unsatisfying, and “selfless.” Beginning with impermanence, we notice and experience the rising and passing away of physical sensations, emotions, and such. This insight into impermanence reveals a truth: The aggregates are all part of a never-ending show, and ultimately they are all unsatisfying. We can notice this in ourselves when we fulfill a sense desire. Once it is fulfilled, the unsatisfied feeling returns. Finally, we open up to the deepest insight that all of the aggregates are not the “self.” This is a radical shift that frees us from the notion that they are “I” or “me.”
The next topic for contemplation involves the *six sense-spheres*. Each of the sense-spheres includes a sense organ (eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body) and a corresponding object (sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch). The mind is the sixth sense with its object of thought (Anāyalo, 2003). These six sense-spheres can be likened to train stations from which trains head out to various destinations. These destinations can be ones of suffering or freedom (Goldstein, 2013).

If we investigate the interplay of the sense organs with the sense objects, we begin to realize the interdependent nature of them, and ultimately their “selfless” existence. For example, when food, tongue, moisture, and attention come together, we have taste. If one of the elements was taken away, then we would lose the consciousness of taste along with a “self” that experiences the taste (Goldstein, 2013).

The next contemplation are the mental qualities that are conducive to awakening, hence *awakening factors*. As the first objects mentioned in this foundation are hindrances, these objects can be considered anti-hindrances because they counteract the forces that keep us in delusion (Goldstein, 2013). There are seven awakening factors: mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity.

The whole of this teaching has been on mindfulness. However, for mindfulness to be an awakening factor, it must be strong, focused, and specific. Gunaratana (2012) tells us now this is the time to be ardent and alert with effort and enthusiasm in our meditation. Moreover, mindfulness will permeate every activity we do, not just meditation.

Inquisitiveness helps us understand the phenomena arising, lingering, and passing in our minds. We can inquire into ourselves by asking questions. For example, when a thought arises,
we ask, “Does this reduce my desire or increase it?” We can investigate our daily actions by asking, “How many times did I get angry today?” Through this inquiry, we begin to manage our lives and make decisions beneficial to us.

As we continue to grow in mindfulness, our energy in this pursuit also grows. But this energy is not hyper-intense; it is calm and focused. We recognize and start to glimpse the freedom that is available to us, further energizing our efforts.

Joy also begins to arise as an awakening factor. This emotion relaxes the body and mind, and generates feelings of serenity. Tranquility arises out of perfected joy. We feel satisfied, safe, and secure. No longer are we moved by our desires as we abide in letting things be (Gunaratana, 2012).

Our concentration becomes much stronger as it awakens with the other factors. We use it as a powerful tool to penetrate into the three characteristics of conditioned things: impermanent, unsatisfying, and “selfless.”

Finally, we achieve equanimity, which can be thought of as a scale to achieve balance. We are able to fine tune the factors to what we need. If we are sluggish, we can apply energy to rebalance ourselves. If we are overexcited, we can apply tranquility to achieve a more stable awareness. When we have awakened these factors, we no longer view things as good, bad, or indifferent. It is all impermanent, unsatisfying, and “selfless,” which we cease to cling to (Gunaratana, 2012).

The Buddha instructed the final contemplation to be on the four noble truths. The four noble truths are the truths the Buddha discovered in his quest for enlightenment. They are:

1. Dukkha exists.
2. Dukkha arises from attachment to desires.

3. Dukkha ceases when attachment to desire ceases.

4. Freedom from Dukkha is possible by following the Eightfold Path.

Dukkha is a word from Pali, the language of much of the Buddhist canon, which has a range of implications difficult to capture in one English word. It conveys a sense of “uneasiness”, “uncomfortableness”, or “unsatisfactoriness” (Anālayo, 2003).

Anālayo (2003) further describes how the everyday world provides opportunities for contemplation on the four truths. Our clinging to our desires, thoughts, and beliefs creates the condition for dukkha to arise. Understanding then forms the basis necessary for letting go and the cessation of dukkha.

The contemplation on the four noble truths concludes the Buddha’s teaching on developing mindfulness.

**Mindfulness Today**

Although the origins of modern mindfulness have roots in the Buddhist tradition, it can be applied in a secular setting. More people from scientific backgrounds are beginning to filter the teachings of the Buddha through contemporary language. We can now say mindfulness means monitoring, in real time, your experience, and doing so in a nonjudgmental way (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). When we begin to pay attention to our thoughts through this lens of attention, we realize that much of our mental energy is spent thinking about the past or future. When we are practicing mindfulness, we are not ruminating about the past, such as, “I wish I had chosen a different career path” or worrying about the future, “I don’t know how I will finish the project at work on time?” Rather, we allow those thoughts to surface, and we allow them to move through
Mindfulness is surging in popularity similar to yoga a couple of decades ago. We see people from all walks of life coming to the practice of mindfulness, from business people, to athletes, to artists, to politicians. This explosion of awareness of the practice can largely be attributed to the work started by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the 1970s. He created the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, an eight-week course at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Kabat-Zinn (2013) highlights an important facet of MBSR by stating that it’s not a rescue service where people are passive recipients of support. Rather, it is a program for active learning in which people can begin to take charge of their lives. This outlook on personal development is in a similar vein to the Buddha’s admonition to “Be a lamp unto yourself.”

Since developing a mindfulness meditation practice is a commitment, Kabat-Zinn (2013) provides seven attitudinal foundations for practice: non-judging, patience, beginner’s mind, trust, non-striving, acceptance, and letting go.

1. Non-Judging

Almost everything we experience or thought we have is labeled and categorized by the mind. We have an attraction or repulsion to these phenomena that leaves us at their mercy by constantly trying to hold onto what we consider “good” and avoiding the “bad.” It has the detrimental effect of locking us into habitual reactive patterns. If we can put aside these
judgements, then we are better able to see things as they really are rather than through our distorted lens.

A paradox to this practice is not to judge our judging minds. Rather, we simply acknowledge and bring awareness to what is happening with the mind. With practice, the mind will lose its judgmental grip and we can live with more impartiality.

2. Patience

Patience is the wisdom to understand that everything happens in its own time. This quality is most helpful when the mind is agitated. We can accept what is happening without becoming more agitated because we know that this mental state will not last. Practicing patience reinforces the notion that we do not have to fill each moment with activity or more thoughts; we can be open to each moment, accepting it as it is.

3. Beginner’s Mind

So much of our time is spent in thought with what we “know” that we neglect the ordinariness of our lives. We become so habituated to our routines that we live in a world of thought while performing the routines, never aware of the moment and the unique qualities of each moment. But a beginner’s mind allows us to see each moment as a fresh experience and keeps us from getting into a habitual cycle of retreating to the realm of thought.

This habituation to routines is actually mindlessness, and Ellen Langer (1989) uses the term *premature cognitive commitments* to describe it. We form a mindset when we first encounter something and then cling to the categorization when we encounter it again. We see the world inaccurately because the habit of creating categories pulls us into the illusion that the world is a stable, unchanging place rather than being a dynamic and evolving reality. We also create a mindset of limited resources when we jump to categorizing every event we encounter.
A quote from the Japanese Zen master Shunryu Suzuki (2011) perfectly captures the essence of a beginner’s mind that can be used for any experience, even one that has been repeatedly encountered: “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, in the expert’s mind there are few.”

4. Trust

Developing trust in yourself and your feelings is integral to the practice of mindfulness. So much of our time we look for outside authorities to validate us. It is better to make some mistakes on your own than to rely on outside guidance all the time.

People often find themselves emulating a teacher or thinking they do not measure up to the teacher’s standard. They believe that the teacher must be much wiser and better, and they should follow the words of the teacher without question. This goes against the spirit of mindfulness, which emphasizes growing self-awareness and self-reliance.

5. Non-Striving

Most of the actions we perform are to achieve some goal. Ironically, mindfulness is about non-doing. The only goal is to be yourself, which you already are.

Striving actually takes us further away from who we are. For example, if I sit to meditate with the goal of getting relaxed, then I have introduced the idea that something is not right in the present moment. If I were relaxed, then everything would be okay. But it is not okay because I am not relaxed. Striving undermines mindfulness because it prevents staying attuned to what is happening in the present moment.
6. Acceptance

Acceptance means seeing the situation as it is in the present. Now, we may not agree with the situation in the present, but if we argue with reality, reality will win every time. Byron Katie (2002) tells a funny story about arguing with reality:

If you want reality to be different than it is, you might as well try to teach a cat to bark.
You can try and try, and in the end the cat will look up at you and say, “Meow.”
Wanting reality to be different than it is is hopeless. You can spend the rest of your life trying to teach a cat to bark. (p.2)

Even though we lose by not accepting reality, if we pay attention, we repeat this habit many times a day, often with the word “should.” “People should drive slower on this road.” “The children should behave better.” “I should lose weight.” We end up spending a lot of time resisting what is and trying to create a situation to our liking, which ends up only creating more tension.

This does not mean that we passively accept what is happening in our lives. It does not mean that we do not try to make changes. Nor does it mean that we are resigned to our fate. Acceptance means that we have come around to seeing things as they are. What is powerful about acceptance is that once we come to terms with our situation, we provide the space for change to occur.

7. Letting Go

Letting go is being unattached to our ideas. When we begin to practice mindfulness, we notice there are thoughts and feelings that the mind wants to hold onto. Likewise, we notice there are thoughts and feelings we try to push aside. The attraction and repulsion are both forms
of attachment because we are giving energy and attention to thoughts, even the ones we try to repress. Mindfulness dissolves the tendency to hold on or push away thoughts and feelings, and instead we observe the thoughts from moment to moment.

A couple of comparisons help illustrate the attitude of letting go. First, the mind is like the sky with clouds, or thoughts, moving by. We simply observe the clouds moving past. We hold no attachment to them as they move across the sky. Or the mind can be compared to a movie screen, with thoughts being the images that flicker across it. Like before, we are simply observers of the images changing on the screen without being attached to them.

Dan Siegel (2007) has gone further to create a definition of the mind for today’s secular practice of mindfulness, supported by science from various disciplines. He defines it as “a process that regulates the flow of energy and information” (p. 5). Siegel (2007) further describes the flow of energy and information:

Our human mind is both embodied—it involves a flow of energy and information that occurs within the body, including the brain—and relational, the dimension of the mind that involves the flow of energy and information between people.” (p. 5)

He uses the symbol of the wheel (Figure 1) to create a visual metaphor of the mind. The hub is our awareness. The rim contains all the objects of awareness with the spokes being our modes of attention.
We can imagine the hub of the wheel as our open and spacious mind that allows elements from the rim to enter our consciousness but not overtake it. The elements enter the hub of awareness through the *four spokes of attention*: sensation, observation, conceptualization, and knowing.

The first five senses on the rim of the mind are the bodily senses of sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste. These senses give us input about the external world. Patricia Jennings (2015) uses the example of a rose engaging our senses. We see the subtle tones of color on the flower; we feel the soft texture of its petals, and we smell the sweet fragrance it emits. Likewise, we can taste the sourness of a lemon, or listen to chimes ringing in the gentle breeze.

We move to the sixth sense, which is our bodily perceptions. These include the sensations in our limbs, the tension and relaxation of our musculature, and the awareness of our
internal organs. Siegel (2007) notes that developing the awareness of this sense heightens our sense of intuition. Hence the term “gut feeling.”

The seventh sense deals with the contents of the mind—thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and biases. When we practice mindful awareness, we notice the mind’s nature to wander from thought-to-thought, often disconnected and random thoughts. The understanding of these cognitive processes develops what Siegel (2007) calls “mindsight.” We are more able to clearly perceive the mind.

The eighth sense is relational. It is the ability to attune to others, and we feel part of the larger whole (Jennings, 2015). When I share a joyful moment with someone, I am applying the eighth sense.

**Why Mindfulness?**

The evolution of our brains and nervous systems goes back billions of years to the common ancestors we share with all living creatures. Mammals arose around 200 million years ago, with primates arriving on the scene about 60 million years ago. Our own species, Homo sapiens, has been around for 200,000 years. The world that we live in today is much different from the one our hominid ancestors lived in. Their survival challenges—such as avoiding predators and procuring enough food—were much different than ours (Hanson, 2013).

Up until ten thousand years ago, with the advent of agriculture, our ancestors lived in small hunting-gathering groups. Every individual in the group knew each other, so any strange face was a potential threat. About one in eight men died in conflicts with other groups compared to one in a hundred who died in warfare in the twentieth century (Hanson, 2013). The rhythm of everyday life was one of pursuing pleasure—food, shelter, companionship—and avoiding pain—
starvation, injury, and death. While both pleasure and pain drove the actions of our ancestors, the painful factors of life had a stronger impact on their survival. One mistake with a potentially painful experience may have meant death. It is for this reason that we have a negativitv bias. We react more intensely to an unpleasant experience than to an equally pleasant experience (Hanson, 2013).

Because of this evolutionary disposition to overestimate the size of a threat, we are preoccupied with threats that are smaller in reality. In essence, we are paranoid by design, a response by three parts of the brain: the amygdala, the hypothalamus, and the hippocampus. In a situation with a perceived threat, the amygdala sends an alarm signal to the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus, in turn, sends out stress hormones: adrenaline, cortisol, and norepinephrine—that activate the body by increasing heart rate and blood flow. The hippocampus prioritizes the event and stores it in long-term memory, thus creating fear from the event (Hanson, 2013).

Hanson (2013) describes how these three parts of the brain can create a vicious circle. Negative experiences make the amygdala more sensitive to negative experiences over time. Likewise, the cortisol released by the hypothalamus flows to brain where it strengthens the amygdala. Moreover, the cortisol eventually weakens and shrinks the hippocampus, which helps to calm the amygdala and signals the hypothalamus to stop releasing stress hormones. So, feeling stressed today makes us more vulnerable to feeling stressed tomorrow, and so on.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Meditators through the ages have known of the benefits of meditation. Now these benefits are described through the modern language of science as nine aspects of well-being have been identified as improving through mindfulness.
1. Bodily regulation – a state of coordination and balance between the brakes and accelerator of the nervous system. Too much “braking” leads to under-arousal, sleepiness, rigidity; too much “acceleration” results in chaotic energy. When our bodies are regulated, our level of alertness and energy is appropriate to the setting.

2. Insight – “self-knowing awareness.” Our sense of ourselves, creating a coherent life story by connecting present awareness, our life story, and images of the future. Insight is key to building positive social connections. Also known as “autonoetic consciousness,” this function creates memories that contain emotional texture.

3. Attuned communication with others – “resonance.” This involves the coordination of input from another’s mind with the activity of our own: receiving signals from another and allowing our state to be influenced by hers. This leads to the other person’s experience of “feeling felt,” of being understood. When we become more “tuned in” to ourselves, the ability to tune in to others is enhanced.

4. Empathy – builds upon insight into ourselves, and upon attuned communication with others (#2 and #3 above). Empathy enables us to “see from the stance of another person’s mind,” imagining others’ reality and perspective. Our brains are designed to enable us to imagine what might be going on inside someone else, and this ability can be cultivated.

5. Emotional balance or regulation – emotional experience that is appropriately activated, so life has vitality and meaning. When emotions are overactive, we
become overwhelmed and emotionally chaotic. When emotions are not active, we may experience stagnation or depression, a sense that our life is not meaningful.

6. Fear modulation – our ability to calm, soothe, and even unlearn our own fears.

7. Response flexibility – the capacity to pause before taking action; being able to consider a variety of possible options, and to choose among them; the flexibility to move beyond habitual response, with a sense of spaciousness of mind and possibility.

8. Intuition – access to awareness of the wisdom of the body, particularly the complex neuronal webs around the viscera, the hollow organs that include the heart and intestines. These areas constitute a separate “brain” that processes information and experience, learns, and makes decisions. This intuitive intelligence can inform and influence our reasoning.

9. Morality – taking into consideration the larger picture, imagining and acting on what is best for the larger group rather than just for ourselves – and doing this even when we are alone. (Mindful Schools, n.d.)

These nine aspects of well-being represent the beginning of understanding how mindfulness benefits practitioners.

Until recently, there was a dearth of information about the benefits of mindfulness, or studies trying to measure the tangible value of the practice. But there has been a surge in research into the benefits of mindfulness in recent times. The research findings on mindfulness point to positive advantages accruing to those who take up the practice (see Appendix B).
Part II. Mindfulness in the Classroom

There are now a multitude of resources available to implement mindfulness activities in the classroom. I will share my experiences of implementing mindfulness with groups of students, rather than a mere list of resources. I believe it is important to share what the interior landscape is like during these lessons, so that teachers wanting to conduct mindfulness lessons with their students will know how to be prepared and what to expect.

This is truly something that we must practice if we want to do it with children. We cannot speak with any authenticity without a personal practice, but I also know that it is difficult to establish a practice without support. That is why I started a mindfulness group for teachers after school. We meet once a week for thirty minutes to practice and also address any questions or problems about it. I also conduct a brief mindfulness session at the end of our faculty meetings. The purpose for this is two-fold. I want everyone to have a brief experience with it to eliminate any misconceptions about the practice, and I hope to start their day calmer and more aware.

I had the opportunity to work in three classrooms this spring, providing lessons in mindfulness from an online course I enrolled in. I approached three teachers from different grade levels (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) about presenting mindfulness to their students. The curriculum—sixteen lessons spread out over eight weeks—was very methodical in its approach: beginning with simply learning to pay attention to a sound and moving to more abstract notions such as how our thoughts can affect our emotions and how we have some control over our thoughts.

The objectives of the first lesson were to understand the idea of mindfulness and practice mindfulness on one thing. I told the students that mindfulness is about paying attention, and
today we would pay attention to sound. I had a Tibetan Singing Bowl that I used to make a sound. I gave them the instruction to listen to the sound from the moment that I struck it until they could no longer hear it. This exercise helped them sustain their attention on one thing. Later, I had them sit quietly for one minute and be mindful of the sounds they heard, so that they understood there is so much to be aware of that we normally do not process because we are caught in our worlds of thought.

In a subsequent lesson, the objective was to focus on thoughts and how they affect our emotions. I had the students think about someone they felt very close to and to notice the emotions that arose. They were able to generate positive emotions. Likewise, I had them think about an unpleasant experience and the emotions that came from it. As expected, this experience evoked negative emotions. I concluded the lesson by reiterating that our thoughts influence our emotions and that we actually do have control over our emotions.

The first thing I noticed about spending time with classes over several weeks is that we developed a sense of community. Our very nature is to be social creatures that want to belong and contribute to a community (Jennings, 2015). I believe taking the time to create a classroom community will further enhance all aspects of the school community, and we, as teachers, can be models for caring and prosocial behavior.

This sense of community developed, in my opinion, because we had a chance to interact with each other on an unconditional level: I had something to share with them, but I was not requesting that they ‘learn’ something from the lessons or ‘get something out of it.’ A demand (whether explicit or implicit) threatens listeners with blame or punishment if they fail to comply with the request (Rosenberg, 2003). We simply sat in a circle and communed with each other
about our experiences. I was very happy that a level of trust developed organically within the
group that allowed members to share without feeling embarrassed or inhibited. I could see this
as a problem in some classrooms where it would be necessary to build confidence to share
experiences. However, it was not a problem with the classes I worked with.

Teachers play a significant role in allowing a classroom community to thrive. We often
have expectations of what we want our students to learn, and when they do not meet those
expectations, behaviorally or academically, we view them through a deficit model: “Student X
does not show appropriate behavior. I don’t know what is wrong with her.” Or “Student Y does
not comprehend the material, and I don’t know if he ever will.” When I met with each class, I
had no expectation, and I viewed them simply as members of the group who all have equal value
and worth.

I also became a much better listener during these lessons. Rather than preparing a
response to a comment while a student was speaking, I would listen with a quiet mind and then
respond after the student was finished speaking, or just acknowledge the student’s message when
no response was needed. I truly heard what the student was saying and felt much more relaxed
in my responses. Because teachers are in positions of authority, I think we believe that we must
have an answer to every question or comment made by a student. But if we have inner stillness,
then we are comfortable saying, “I don’t know” at those times when we are stumped for an
answer.

This enhanced sense of listening came from a whole body experience. I would feel my
body as I was listening. Sometimes I would feel my bottom and legs touching the floor, and
other times I would feel the breath moving in and out of my body. I noticed as I did this that my
mind quieted and I just focused on what the student was saying. Interestingly, I also stopped
hearing specific words or phrases to pick up on and get ready to respond to, instead tuning into the whole message and keying into the feeling or emotion attached to the words. I think this heightened awareness of listening is what some would consider ‘intuitive’ listening. I believe what I was experiencing is what the Chinese philosopher Chuang-Tzu (as cited in Rosenberg, 2003) stated about listening with the whole being:

> The hearing that is only in the ears is one thing. The hearing of the understanding is another. But the hearing of the spirit is not limited to any one faculty, to the ear, or the mind. Hence it demands the emptiness of all the faculties. And when the faculties are empty, then the whole being listens. There is then a direct grasp of what is right there before you that can never be heard with the ear or understood with the mind. (p. 91)

Finally, I became more internally attuned to any triggers that might cause disturbances within me, anything from a restless child sitting in the circle to multiple PA announcements while I was giving a lesson. The attunement gave me the awareness that I was becoming upset by some external circumstances, but that I had a choice in how I responded. One way was to acknowledge how I felt and just let it pass. I have realized through my own meditation practice that all emotional states are temporary and they will pass with time. In this case, I stayed aware of my breath and used it as an anchor until the emotional energy passed. Another way I dealt with emotional situations was to honestly express how I was feeling in the moment. If it was a child’s behavior that was upsetting me, I would speak in terms of how ‘I’ felt in the moment rather than shifting focus on the student’s behavior. This way of communicating my feelings and needs is based on Marshall Rosenberg’s method of Non-Violent Communication. I felt much more responsive using this manner of communication rather than immediately reacting to a behavior.
The time that I spent in classrooms reaffirmed my belief that our internal state affects our external environment. We do not have control of all the external factors that come our way, but we do have control in how we respond. We can instantaneously react, usually with poor outcomes, or we can take just an extra moment or two and decide how we will respond. I think this ability to create a short gap between stimulus and response makes all the difference in the well-being of our emotional lives and the lives of our students.

**Part III. Materials for Mindfulness**

We all entered the teaching profession because we wanted to connect with students and have a positive impact on their lives, a means to connect to the larger world and give meaning to our lives. However, our work presents challenges on a daily basis: We face pressure to be accountable for learning through state-mandated testing; we work with children coming from challenging circumstances, which they bring to the classroom; we need to communicate with parents the difficulties their child is experiencing in the class; and we are trying to educate children in a society that, quite honestly, does not place a premium on education or the work that teachers do. In light of this, we give our best efforts to create a space where children can explore with curiosity and a desire to understand the world around them.

In the face of these challenges, the following materials are designed to help reduce stress in your life and to provide awareness and tools to live with more balance and harmony in your life. The first section is dedicated to your self-care. The metaphor of the oxygen mask on the airplane is apt here. If you do not take care of yourself, you will not be able to take care of others. The activities are meant to benefit you on the physical, mental, and emotional levels.
Yoga (Asana) Sequence

This sequence of postures (asanas) will help build strength, flexibility, and coordination. More than developing these physical aspects, practicing the postures will refine body awareness. As you practice the sequence of postures, remain focused on awareness of the breath. Creating an unbroken awareness trains the mind and body in an integrated whole.

Although the postures of yoga are timeless, belonging to no institution or person, I am indebted to the Himalayan Institute for the knowledge and wisdom I gained there. I completed a 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training through the Himalayan Institute, and this sequence of asanas is adapted from my training with them.
Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)

INSTRUCTIONS

The sun salutation is a sequence of postures that traditionally begins a session. The sun salutation warms-up the body and prepares it for the upcoming session. Pay attention to the inhalations and exhalations corresponding to each pose.

1. Mountain Pose - Stand with the feet hip-width apart and weight centered equally on both feet. Gently press the feet into the floor while extending through the spine to the crown of the head. Bring the palms together at the chest for a moment of inward reflection. Lower the hands to the side and gently sweep the arms overhead on an inhalation.

2. Standing Forward Bend - On an exhalation, bend forward from the hips as you sweep the arms down to the floor. Bend the knees as much as you need to place the hands on the floor.

3. Lunge Pose - On an inhalation, step the right leg back, lowering the knee and top of the foot to the floor. Keep the left knee over the left ankle and gently extend the right leg back.

4. Table Pose - Keep the hands in place while bringing the left foot back in line with the right foot. Keep the feet hip-width apart.
Sun Salutation (continued)

INSTRUCTIONS (Continued)

5. **Eight-Point Pose** - Exhale and lower the knees, chest and chin to the floor. Arms are close to the sides of the body.

6. **Unsupported Cobra Pose** - Inhale as you lower the pelvis. Press the pelvis into the floor as you raise the torso from the floor. Pull the shoulders away from the ears with the arms close to the side.

7. **Downward-Facing Dog Pose** - Exhale and press the hands into the floor as you turn the toes under. Lift the hips and press them back toward the feet. Continue pressing through the hands and hold for 1-3 breaths.

8. **Lunge Pose** - Inhale and step the right foot up between the hands with the toes in line with the fingertips. Lower the left knee and top of the foot to the floor. Extend the left leg gently back.
INSTRUCTIONS (Continued)

9. Standing Forward Bend - Turn the toes of the left foot under. Exhale and bring the left leg forward as you lift the hips into a standing position. The torso folds over the thighs. Bend the legs as much as you need to keep the hands on the floor with the torso in contact with the thighs.

10. Overhead Stretch - Inhale and sweep the arms to the side as you raise the torso. Continue sweeping the arms overhead with the palms pressing together.

11. Mountain Pose - Exhale and sweep the arms down to the sides. Again bring the hands together at the chest.

Repeat the sequence. This time initiate the left leg backward and forward. Doing the sequence for both sides comprises 1 set. Do 1-3 sets of the Sun Salutation.
Triangle Pose (Trikonasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. From the mountain pose, bring the feet about one leg’s length apart.
2. Turn the right foot 90 degrees, and turn the left foot in slightly by moving the heel away.
3. The heel of the right foot should bisect the arch of the left foot.
4. On an inhalation, smoothly raise the arms to shoulder height while keeping the shoulders down.
5. Exhaling, shift the pelvis slightly to the left as you extend the right arm out.
6. Continue the movement as you bend down and find a comfortable place to rest the hand on the leg with the left arm extended up.
7. Turn the head up and focus your gaze at the left hand.
8. Maintain smooth even breaths. Hold the pose for 5 breaths.
9. To come out of the pose, press through the feet and keep the spine long as you inhale and come up.
10. Repeat the pose on the other side.

BENEFITS

Stretches the spine laterally. Increases flexibility in the hips joints. Stretches the backs of the legs. Improves structural alignment.
Angle Pose (Parshvottanasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Stand with feet about 3 feet apart, and turn the right foot 90 degrees and angle the left foot in slightly more than in Triangle Pose.
2. Rotate the torso over the right leg. Bring the arms behind the back and grab right wrist with the left hand.
3. Press through the feet and lengthen the spine.
4. Exhale and bend from the hips bringing the torso over the right leg.
5. Keep drawing the right hip back and the left hip forward.
6. Focus on smooth even breaths and hold the pose for 5 breaths.
7. On an inhale, press through the feet and slowly raise the torso back to center.
8. Repeat the pose on the other side.

BENEFITS

Stretches the backs of the legs. Builds strength and flexibility in the legs. Improves balance.
Standing Spread-Legged Forward Bend (Prasarita Padottanasana)

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Stand with feet about 3 feet apart and parallel. Bring the hands to the hips.
2. Inhale and press through the feet and lengthen through the spine.
3. On the exhale, bend the torso forward and continue to lengthen through the spine.
4. Release the hands from the hips and bring them to the floor.
5. If you cannot reach the floor, place blocks under your hands for support.
6. Continue to press the feet into the floor while lengthening the spine toward the floor.
7. Hold for 5 smooth, even breaths.
8. On an inhale, come out of the pose by pressing the feet in the floor while slowly raising the torso back over the hips and bringing the hands back to hips.

BENEFITS
Increases flexibility in the hip joints. Stretches the insides of the thighs. Strengthens the lower back muscles.
Tree Pose (Vrikshasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Stand in mountain pose with the feet parallel.
2. Focus the gaze on a spot a few feet in front.
3. Bring the sole of the left foot to the right ankle to begin steadying your balance. Draw the left knee back to open the hip.
4. Bring the palms together at the chest.
5. When you feel steady, lift the sole of the left foot to the inner right thigh.
6. Press the left sole into the right thigh to steady your balance again. Continue to draw the left knee back to open the left hip.
7. On an inhale, raise the arms overhead.
8. Keep the breath even and smooth. Hold for 5 breaths.
9. On an exhale, slowly bring the arms and hands back to the chest and lower the left foot to the floor.
10. Repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS

Improves balance and concentration. Strengthens the legs. Improves the quality of the breath.
Chair Pose (Utkatasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Stand with the feet together.
2. Inhale and raise the arms overhead with the palms pressing together. Keep lengthening through the spine as you press the feet into the floor.
3. On an exhale, bend the knees and press them together while lowering the hips to the floor.
4. Maintain the pose for 5 smooth breaths.
5. Exhale and lower the arms and straighten the legs.

BENEFITS

Strengthens the legs. Increases vitality.
Child’s Pose (Balasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit in a kneeling position.
2. Exhale and bring the torso over the thighs with the forehead resting on the floor and the arms along the thighs with the palms turned up.
3. If the posture is uncomfortable, spread the knees so the torso can lower between them.
4. Rest until you feel rested and then slowly raise the torso on an inhalation.

BENEFITS

Gently stretches the spine. Relieves lower back tension. Massages the internal organs.
Kneeling Pose (Vajrasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit on the heels with the tops of the feet on the floor.
2. Lengthen through the lower back to the crown of the head.
3. Close the eyes and follow the breath for 5 breaths.

Caution: Do not practice this pose if you feel pain in the knees.

BENEFITS

Stretches the feet, ankles, and knees. Develops good spinal alignment.
**Leg Lifts**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Sit on the floor with the legs extended.
2. Lean the upper body back on the forearms with the chin tucked toward the throat.
3. Bring the right foot in toward the buttock and place the sole on the floor.
4. Keep the left leg straight and on an inhale lift it toward vertical.
5. Exhale and lower the leg to lightly touch the floor before lifting it on the next inhalation.
6. Do 5 repetitions with the left leg then switch and do 5 with the right leg.

**BENEFITS**

Strengthening the abdomen. Improves digestion. Increases vitality.
Reclining Twist Pose

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on your back with the arms extended to the sides, palms facing down.
2. Bend the knees and draw them toward the abdomen.
4. Keep the shoulders and arms on the floor while twisting.
5. Do 5-10 repetitions.
6. Place the feet back on the floor.

BENEFITS

Strengthens abdomen. Increases flexibility in lower back.
Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on the floor with the forehead resting on the floor, legs pressing together and tops of the feet pressing into the floor.
2. Place the palms on the floor next to the shoulders.
3. Inhale and bring the head off the floor.
4. Draw the shoulders and shoulder blades down and the elbows into the sides of the torso.
5. Feel the abdomen press into the floor with each inhalation.
6. Hold the pose for 5 even breaths.
7. Exhale and lower the torso and head to the floor.
8. Turn the head to one side and take a few resting

BENEFITS

Strengthens the back muscles. Improves circulation to spinal discs. Opens throat and shoulders.
Locust Pose (Shalabhasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on the floor with the chin on the floor, arms alongside body with palms facing down. Feet and legs are together.
2. Point the toes of the right foot as you inhale and bring the leg off the floor.
3. Avoid twisting the pelvis and keep both sides on the floor.
4. Keep the chin on the floor with the palms pressing into the floor.
5. Hold for 5 breaths.
6. Lower the leg on an exhale.
7. Repeat with the left leg.

BENEFITS

Strengthens the legs, buttocks, and lower back. Adjusts alignment of the pelvis.
Boat Pose (Navasana)

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Lie on your abdomen with arms extended overhead and legs extended back, hip width apart. Forehead resting on the floor.
2. Inhale while extending the spine and lifting the arms and legs from the floor.
3. Keep extending through the arms and legs as you feel the abdomen press into the floor with each inhalation.
4. Hold for 5 breaths and lower on an exhale.

BENEFITS
Invigorates abdominal organs. Strengthens entire back side of the body.
Knees-to-Chest Pose (Pavanamuktasana)

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Lie on your back.
2. Draw the knees in toward the chest.
3. Bring your hands around your knees and gently press the lower back into the floor.
4. Rock gently from side-to-side to release tension in the lower back.

BENEFITS
Relieves tension in the lower back and hips.
Staff Pose (Dandasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit with the legs together and extended in front. Draw the toes gently toward the torso.
2. Place the fingertips behind the hips with the fingers pointing forward.
3. Press into the fingers while lengthening through the back to the crown of the head.
4. Keep lifting through the torso while pressing the backs of the legs into the floor and extending the heels.
5. Hold for 5 breaths and release on an exhale.
6. If the lower back rounds in this posture, place a blanket or pillow under the buttocks to maintain the curve of the lower back.

BENEFITS

Strengthens lower back. Improves alignment.
Head-to-Knee Pose (Janu Shirshasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit on the floor in staff pose. Bend the left knee and bring the sole of the left foot into the inner right thigh.
2. Turn the torso over the right leg and lengthen through the spine.
3. Exhale and bend from the hips over the right leg while sliding the hands along the extended leg.
4. Maintain a straight back and fold from the hips while keeping the back straight.
5. Hold for 5 breaths.
6. To deepen the stretch, lower the torso over the leg as you slide the hands farther down the leg.
7. Hold for 5 breaths and slowly extend the torso up on an inhalation.

BENEFITS

Stretches the hamstrings. Improves flexibility in the hips. Improves hip alignment.
Child’s Pose (Balasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit in a kneeling position.
2. Exhale and bring the torso over the thighs with the forehead resting on the floor and the arms along the thighs with the palms turned up.
3. If the posture is uncomfortable, spread the knees so the torso can lower between them.
4. Rest until you feel rested and then slowly raise the torso on an inhalation.

BENEFITS

Gently stretches the spine. Relieves lower back tension. Massages the internal organs.
Seated Spiral Twist Pose (Ardha Matsyendrasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit in the staff pose. Fold the right leg under the left and place the foot near the left hip. Bring the left foot over the right thigh and place it on the floor next to the thigh.

2. Wrap the right arm around the left knee while placing the left hand behind the left hip. Press the hips down and lengthen through the spine.

3. Exhale and twist to the left. Begin the twist from the lower back and move up through the spine and ribs and shoulders.

4. Hold the pose for 5 breaths.

5. Release the pose and repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS

Strengthens the diaphragm. Tones the abdominal organs. Improves digestive and reproductive systems.
Rocking Chair

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit with the knees bent and soles of the feet flat on the floor.
2. Place the hands behind each thigh.
3. Round the spine and gently roll back to the shoulder blades and straighten the legs.
4. Roll back to the starting position.
5. Repeat 10 times.

BENEFITS

Massages the spinal column. Improves balance.
Inverted Action Pose (Viparita Karani)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start from the rocking chair pose.
2. Roll backward while straightening the legs.
3. Slide the hands under the hips while placing the upper arms and elbows on the floor.
4. The torso extends away from the head around 45 degrees.
5. Come out of the pose by bending the knees and releasing the spine down one vertebra at a time.

BENEFITS

Relieves fatigue. Nourishes the upper body and cleanses the lower body. Strengthens the diaphragm.
Reclining Twist Variation

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on your back with the arms extended out from the shoulders, palms facing down.
2. Keep the right leg straight, bend the left leg placing the foot near the pelvis.
3. Slide the pelvis slightly to the left. Bring the left knee over the right leg toward the floor. Keep the shoulders and arms in contact with the floor.
4. Turn the head to the left and gaze at the left hand.
5. Maintain the pose for 5 deep breaths.
6. Release the pose and repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS

Increases flexibility in the spine. Tones abdominal organs.
Knees-to-Chest Pose (Pavanamuktasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on your back.
2. Draw the knees in toward the chest.
3. Bring your hands around your knees and gently press the lower back into the floor.
4. Rock gently from side-to-side to release tension in the lower back.

BENEFITS

Relieves tension in the lower back and hips.
Arch Pose

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on the floor with knees raised, feet on the floor hip-width apart.
2. Keep the arms alongside the body with palms down.
3. Exhale and press the lower back into the floor. Tilt the pelvis until the lower back begins to raise off the floor.
4. Continue raising the back off the floor on vertebra at a time.
5. Hold for 5 breaths.
6. Slowly release the pose by starting with the upper back and coming down one vertebra at a time.

BENEFITS

Increases spinal flexibility. Develops control of the spinal muscles. Relieves lower back tension.
Corpse Pose (Shavasana)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on the floor with legs slightly more than hip-width apart. Bring the arms slightly away from the body with palms facing up.
2. Use a thin cushion to support the head and neck.
3. Close the eyes and focus on the rhythm of the breath.
4. Visualize the breath moving up and down the body. Inhale up from the feet to the crown of the head and exhale down from the crown of the head to the feet. Continue for 2-3 minutes.
5. When you are finished, gently stretch the arms overhead and extend the stretch through the legs.
6. When ready, roll over on your left side and push yourself up to a sitting position.

BENEFITS

Calms the mind. Refreshes and rejuvenates the body.
Seated Breath Awareness

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit in a cross-legged position. A cushion helps to make it comfortable.

2. Bring the mind's attention to the breath. You can focus on the in-flow and out-flow of breath at the nostrils or feel the movement of the abdomen with each breath.

3. Sit for a few minutes and allow the breath to find its own comfortable rhythm.

4. When ready, gently open your eyes and externalize your awareness. Spend a few moments simply sitting and resting in this awareness.

BENEFITS

Calm the mind. Brings composure and equanimity to everyday life.
**Breath Training**

The breath is a constant with us our entire lives, from the first inhalation as a newborn to the last exhalation as we leave the Earth. We breathe on average 20,000 times a day, yet most of the time we are unaware that we are breathing. Our autonomic nervous system is responsible for regulating our respiratory system, as it is for other systems such as the cardiovascular system. However, breathing is unique in that it is controlled by skeletal muscles that can be brought under conscious control. For example, if you want to breathe more quickly or slowly or more deeply—you can at will (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

Since we are able to regulate our breathing, we are able work with the breath in a way that creates more well-being and counteracts the stresses of daily life. Practicing the following four steps will help create breathing patterns that are beneficial to our bodies and minds.

**Step One: Breath Awareness**

The first step in breath training is to develop an awareness of the breath as it flows in and out of the body. Simple movements can help accomplish this.

*Stand with the feet hip-width apart and the arms by the side. Inhale and bring the arms to shoulder height, then exhale and lower the arms back to the sides. Continue this for several repetitions. Next, inhale and bring the arms up, and continue until the arms are parallel overhead, then exhale and lower the arms to the sides. Again, repeat this movement several times. Finally, inhale and lift the arms overhead and keep them there as you clasp the hands and turn the palms upward. Hold the arms overhead as you continue to breathe and notice how the sides of the ribcage expand and contract with each inhalation and exhalation. Exhale and lower the arms when you are ready.*
Each inhalation and exhalation serves a purpose: The inhalation brings energy to the body while the exhalation cleanses and releases tension in the body (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

**Step Two: Breathe Through the Nose**

At first glance, this step may seem inconsequential to improving the quality of breathing, but it is essential to breathe through the nose to develop equanimity with the breath. Our bodies are designed to take air in through the nose. The air is filtered, warmed, and moistened as it passes through the nasal cavity on the way to the lungs. We may at times need to breathe through the mouth during heavy exertion, but breathing through the nose if preferred because of the benefits it bestows by following the design of nature (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

**Step Three: Breathing with the Diaphragm**

As mentioned earlier, the muscles of the body are responsible for breathing rather than the lungs having muscle to contract. The primary muscle of breathing is the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a dome shaped muscle below the lungs. When the diaphragm is stimulated by a nerve impulse, it contracts and flattens. This creates a vacuum in the lungs and air can enter the lungs. Conversely, the diaphragm returns to its dome shape on the exhale, forcing the air out of the lungs.

The Crocodile Pose is a posture that helps bring awareness to diaphragmatic breathing.

1. *Lie on the front side of your body with the arms folded so the forehead can rest on the forearms. The chest is slightly elevated off the floor with the feet separated just beyond hip-width. The toes can be turned out or in.*

2. *Initially, bring the minds attention to the in-flow and out-flow of the breath. Notice that it nourishes and cleanses the body. Observe the breath without trying to control it.*
3. **Continue to breathe as you bring you attention to the lower back. The back will raise with the inhale and fall with the exhale. Follow this motion for several breaths. You may notice you are able to release tension in the lower back by simply observing the movement there.**

4. **Next, notice with the inhalation that the side ribs expand and then contract with the exhalation. Again, follow this motion for several breaths.**

5. **You will be able to move the attention of the breath next to the abdominal area. Feel the abdomen press into the floor and release with each breath. Keep the mind’s attention here for several breaths also.**

6. **Remain in the crocodile pose for at least 5 minutes (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).**

**Step Four: Five Qualities of Good Breathing**

The steps outlined above will give the tools to shape the breath and develop good diaphragmatic breathing. Work with these steps in a gentle manner without trying to force the breath or body. This will only create more tension. Good breathing has five qualities:

1. Deep
2. Smooth
3. Even
4. Without Sound
5. Without Pause
Meditation Postures

The foundation of a formal mindfulness practice is a comfortable sitting posture. For many, it may seem trivial to address sitting since we do it every day. However, most of the time we spend sitting is done mindlessly; it is because of this that we turn our attention to sitting and incorporating that into our field of mindfulness.

Your first image of a sitting meditation posture may be of a supple person with hands resting on contorted legs, and you may think to yourself: “Mediation’s not for me. I could never get my body in that position.” The good news is that you do not have to—the placement of the head, neck, and torso is more important than the placement of the limbs. Specifically, we are searching for a comfortable posture that maintains the alignment of the head, neck, and torso. As we increase our time in mediation, comfort becomes more important allowing us to refine our awareness in mediation.

Experiment with the following four sitting postures and find the one that allows your upper body to stay upright with comfort.

**The Easy Pose (Sukhasana)**

The Easy Pose is a good place to start since it is the most comfortable for people. In this pose, the legs are crossed at about mid-shin with the hands resting comfortably on the thighs. There are a couple of trouble points in this pose that need to be addressed. First, the lower back has a tendency to round and collapse over time. Also, the knees rest above the hips putting a strain on them over time. Even though it is called the Easy pose, these problems make the pose anything but easy. The solution to the problems of the lower back and hips is to use cushions as supports. You can place cushions under the pelvis to stabilize the pelvis, and cushions under the knees to relieve the strain at that location. Do not be afraid to use a lot of support in this pose,
especially if you are new to meditation and sitting on the floor. Over time, your body will become more flexible and you can take away some of the supports (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

**The Auspicious Pose (Svastikasana)**

The Auspicious Pose is more stable than the Easy Pose because it draws the feet and legs closer into the torso and the knees rest on the floor. The pose can be performed with either foot drawn in first. To come into the pose with the left foot first:

- Place the sole of the left foot against the right inner thigh.
- Place the right foot against the left thigh by tucking the toes between the crease formed by the folded leg.
- Do not let the top ankle bone press on the bottom foot. Draw the top foot in closer to the torso relieving any pressure on the bottom foot.

Place a cushion under the pelvis to help maintain the natural curve of the lower back and to keep it from collapsing. You may also need to place thin cushions under the knees to relieve pressure if you are sitting on a hard surface (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

**The Chair Pose (Maitryasana)**

If hip, knee, or lower back flexibility is a problem for you, sitting in a chair will let you maintain a comfortable upright posture.

- Use a chair with a flat, firm surface. Sit away from the back of the chair with the feet flat on the floor. Be aware of the height of the chair. It is more comfortable for the hips to be resting above the knees. The thighs will slope downward and relieves the pressure of the thighs jamming into the pelvis. You can use a cushion or folded blanket to raise the height of your hips.
- Let the hands rest comfortably on the thighs (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).
The Bench Pose

A bench provides an alternative to those who would like to sit on the floor but cannot sit in a cross-legged position. The shins and tops of feet rest on the floor which is more stable than sitting in a chair.

- Kneel on the floor and place the bench over your calves.
- Sit back on the seat as you keep the thighs parallel. The heels can fall outward with the toes pointing inward.
- The height of the bench can be adjusted by placing a cushion on the bench (Anderson & Sovik, 2000).

Formal Sitting Meditation

Come to a comfortable sitting position, which may be on the floor or in a chair. Find a position that is upright, feeling alert without being rigid or holding tension.

Next, bring your awareness to your body by scanning the body. Start at the head and move your attention down through the head into the throat and neck area. You are simply noticing what is happening in the body without trying to change anything. Move down through the upper and lower arms into the hands and fingers. Travel back up through the arms into the shoulders. Take your mind’s awareness down through the torso: chest, upper back, shoulder blades, middle and lower back, sides of the torso, and abdomen. Continue down through the hips and pelvis. Move down into the lower body: thighs, knees, calves and shins, ankles, feet, and finally the toes. Let your awareness rest for a few moments at the toes, then begin to bring your awareness back up through the body. Bring your attention through the lower body, moving up through the torso, and finally back up through the neck and head, returning to the crown of the head. Let your attention rest at the crown for a few moments.
You will shift your mind’s attention from the crown of the head to the breath. There are a couple of places that seem to be natural places of attention for the breath—the nostrils and abdomen. You may focus at the nostrils and feel the sensation of the breath there. You may notice the sensation of cool air is cool at the nostrils on the inhalation and warm air as it leaves the body on the exhalation. Likewise, the abdomen expands and contracts with each breath. Simply notice the sensation in the abdominal area with each expansion and contraction. Continue holding your attention here—one breath at a time.

This instruction is simple but not easy. You will quickly notice that you may be able to keep your attention on the breath for one or two breaths, and then the mind will wander off to a thought. When this happens, simply acknowledge what has happened and bring the mind’s attention back to breath. Again, the mind will lose focus and go to another thought. Do not be concerned, or think, that you are not doing this right. It is the mind’s nature to go from thought-to-thought. The practice is to keep coming back to the object of attention—the breath. Your ability to focus on the breath will increase with the more you practice, but even seasoned meditators still bring their attention back to the breath time-after-time.

An important note to what I believe is most beneficial—daily practice. It does not matter how long you do it. A few minutes is fine, but doing it every day starts to condition the mind to expect it every day. Once you have established the daily habit of practice, you can lengthen the time that you sit. Moreover, practicing the same time every day helps strengthen the habit, and you will notice the mind will be ready to start the practice at your daily appointed time.

Finally, be gentle with yourself. Mindfulness meditation is not about accomplishing anything, it is about being with yourself moment-to-moment. We have so many tasks to get done during the course of the day. Here is the opportunity to move away from the outward-
focused life of everyday life and move into the quiet recesses of our inner-life that is refreshing, restoring, and renewing.

**Lovingkindness (Metta) Meditation**

*Metta* means lovingkindness. When we practice lovingkindness meditation we see the conditions that have caused us to be the way we are. This makes it easier for us to accept ourselves. When we practice, we see all of the emotions that reside in us—good and bad. Our understanding deepens as we see these emotions more clearly. We see how negative thoughts and emotions contribute to lack of peace, and we see the value of cultivating loving thoughts and emotions. Sit still, calm your body and breath, and recite this meditation to yourself.

*May I be peaceful, happy, and light*

*in body and spirit.*

*May I be safe and free from injury.*

*May I be free from anger, afflictions,*

*fear, and anxiety.*

Begin the meditation using the pronoun “I.” Until you are able to love yourself, you cannot help others. After practicing with “I”, you can replace it with the pronouns “he”, “she”, or “they.” Do this with first with someone you love, then someone you like, then on someone neutral to you, and finally on someone the mere thought of evokes a strong negative emotion.

If you like, you can continue the meditation using the following aspirations.

*May I be peaceful, happy, and light*

*in body and spirit.*

*May she be peaceful, happy, and light*

*in body and spirit.*
May he be peaceful, happy, and light in body and spirit.

May they be peaceful, happy, and light in body and spirit.

May I be safe and free from injury.

May she be safe and free from injury.

May he be safe and free from injury.

May they be safe and free from injury.

May I be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety.

May she be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety.

May he be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety.

May they be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety.

May I learn to look at myself with the eyes of understanding and love.

May he learn to look at himself with the eyes of understanding and love.
May she learn to look at herself with the
eyes of understanding and love.

May they learn to look at themselves with the
eyes of understanding and love.

May I be able to recognize and touch the seeds
of joy and happiness in myself.

May he be able to recognize and touch the seeds
of joy and happiness in himself.

May she be able to recognize and touch the seeds
of joy and happiness in herself.

May they be able to recognize and touch the seeds
of joy and happiness in themselves.

May I learn to identify and see the sources
of anger, craving, and delusion in myself.

May he learn to identify and see the sources
of anger, craving, and delusion in himself.

May she learn to identify and see the sources
of anger, craving, and delusion in herself.

May they learn to identify and see the sources
of anger, craving, and delusion in themselves.
May I know how to nourish the seeds of joy in myself every day.

May you know how to nourish the seeds of joy in yourself every day.

May we know how to nourish the seeds of joy in ourselves every day.

May I be able to live fresh, solid and free.

May you be able to live fresh, solid, and free.

May we be able to live fresh, solid, and free.

May I be free from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.

May you be free from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.

May we be free from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.

We begin with an aspiration: “May I be…” Then we transcend the level of aspiration and look deeply with all of our being in order to understand. The intention to love is not yet love. Looking deeply at ourselves and at another person or group, our aspiration to love will become a deep intention. Love will enter our thoughts, words, and actions, and we’ll become more peaceful, happy, and light in body and spirit (Hanh, 2012, p. 59-66).
Suggestions for Reducing Work Stress

The following suggestions are presented to provide opportunities throughout the day to touch awareness. When we develop moment-to-moment awareness, our lives become richer and any task, however mundane, can be infused with meaning.

1. When you wake up, take a few moments to be aware of your breath and body. You can review what you think will happen during the day. Remind yourself that this may or may not happen.

2. Be aware of the processes that you do to get ready to go to work: showering, dressing, eating, and relating to the people you live with. Be aware of your breath and body during these processes.

3. As you are driving to work, feel your hands gripping the wheel and your body in contact with the seat. Notice the rhythm of your breath to see if it changes while in traffic. When you arrive in the parking lot, turn off the car and take three mindful breaths before exiting the car.

4. When you are walking at work, walk mindfully and feel your feet making contact with the floor and your arms swinging by your sides.

5. From time-to-time at your desk, tune-in to your bodily sensations and notice any places where you may be holding tension—jaw, shoulders, abdomen.

6. When you have a prep period, go outside and breathe in the fresh air. Notice the sights, sounds, and smells of the outdoor environment.

7. Eat mindfully. Take the time to chew your food and notice the flavors and textures of the food in your mouth.
8. When you leave work, enter the car and take three mindful breaths before you turn on the ignition.

9. Make arrival at home as a transition—taking off your shoes and changing your clothes. Be aware that you are in a new space, noticing the new sights and sounds of your home.

10. Be mindful of your breath and body as you lie in bed before going to sleep. Do a body scan from head-to-toes noticing any places you may be holding tension and see if you can soften those areas. Take three mindful breaths—inhaling in cleansing energy and exhaling tension (Kabat-Zinn, 2013).
Appendix A

Translation of SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA by Anālayo

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country at a town of the Kurus named Kammāsadhamma. There he addressed the monks thus: “Monks.” “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Blessed One said this:

[DIRECT PATH]

“Monks, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of dukkha and discontent, for acquiring the true method, for the realization of Nibbana, namely the four satipaṭṭhānas.

[DEFINITION]

“What are the four? Here monks, in regard to the body a monk abides contemplating the body, diligent, clearly knowing, and mindful, free from desires and discontent in regard to the world. In regard to feelings he abides contemplating feelings, diligent, clearly knowing, and mindful, free from desires and discontent in regard to the world. In regard to the mind he abides contemplating the mind, diligent, clearly knowing, and mindful, free from desires and discontent in regard to the world. In regard to the dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas diligent clearly knowing, and mindful free from desires and discontent in regard to the world.

[BREATTHING]

“And how, monks, does he in regard to the body abide contemplating the body? Here, gone to the forest, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, he sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

“Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, knows ‘I make a long turn,’ or when making a short turn knows ‘I make a short turn’ so too, breathing in long, he knows ‘I breathe in long,’...(continued as above).

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally, or he abides contemplating the body externally, or he abides contemplating the body both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or he abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or he abides contemplating the nature of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body.

[POSTURES]

“Again monks, when walking, he knows ‘I am walking’; when standing, he knows ‘I am standing’; when sitting, he knows ‘I am sitting’; when lying down, he knows ‘I am lying down’; or he knows accordingly however his body is disposed.

[REFRAIN]
“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally…externally…and both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…and of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body.

[ACTIVITIES]

“Again, monks, when going forward and returning he acts clearly knowing; when looking ahead and looking away he acts clearly knowing; when flexing and extending his limbs he acts clearly knowing; when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl he acts clearly knowing; when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting he acts clearly knowing; when defecating and urinating he acts clearly knowing; when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent he acts clearly knowing.

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally…externally…and both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…and of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body.

[ANATOMICAL PARTS]

“Again, monks, he reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, enclosed by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: ‘in this body there
are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrows, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, bowels, mesentery, contents of the stomach, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.’

“Just as though there were a bag with an opening at both ends full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good eyes were to open it and review it thus: ‘this is hill rice, this is red rice these are beans, these are peas, this is millet, this is white rice’; so too he reviews this same body… (continue as above).

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally…externally…both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body.

[ELEMENTS]

“Again monks, he reviews this same body, however, it is placed, however disposed, as consisting of elements thus: ‘in this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’

“Just as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at a crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too he reviews this same body… (continue as above).

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally…externally…both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of
arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body.

[CORPSE IN DECAY]

“Again, monks, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground – one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter…being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms…a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews…a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews…disconnected bones scattered in all directions…bones bleached white, the colour of shells…bones heaped up, more than a year old…bones rotten and crumbling to dust – he compares this same body with it thus: ‘this body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally…externally…both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body.

[FEELINGS]

“And how, monks, does he in regard to feelings abide contemplating feelings?”
“Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel a pleasant feeling’; when feeling an unpleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel an unpleasant feeling’; when feeling a neutral feeling, he knows ‘I feel a neutral feeling.’

“When feeling a worldly pleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel a worldly pleasant feeling’; when feeling an unworldly pleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel an unworldly pleasant feeling’; when feeling a worldly unpleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel a worldly unpleasant feeling’; when feeling an unworldly unpleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel an unworldly unpleasant feeling’; when feeling a worldly neutral feeling, he knows ‘I feel a worldly neutral feeling’; when feeling an unworldly neutral feeling, he knows ‘I feel an unworldly neutral feeling.’

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating feelings internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in feelings. Mindfulness that ‘there is feeling’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to feelings he abides contemplating feelings.

[MIND]

“And how, monks, does he in regard to the mind abide contemplating the mind?

“Here he knows a lustful mind to be ‘lustful’, and a mind without lust to be ‘without lust’; he knows an angry mind to be ‘angry’, and a mind without anger to be ‘without anger’; he knows a deluded mind to be ‘deluded’, and a mind without delusion to be ‘without delusion’; he knows a contracted mind to be ‘contracted’, and a distracted mind to be ‘distracted’; he knows a great mind to be ‘great’, and a narrow mind to be ‘narrow’; he knows a surpassable mind to be
‘surpassable’, and an unsurpassable mind to be ‘unsurpassable’; he knows a concentrated mind to be ‘concentrated’, and an unconcentrated mind to be ‘unconcentrated’; he knows a liberated mind to be ‘liberated’, and an unliberated mind to be ‘unliberated.’

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to the mind he abides contemplating the mind internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in regard to the mind. Mindfulness that ‘there is a mind’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to the mind he abides contemplating the mind.

[HINDRANCES]

“And how, monks, does he in regard to dhammas abide contemplating dhammas? Here in regard to dhammas in terms of the five hindrances. And how does he in regard to dhammas abide contemplating dhammas in terms of the five hindrances?

“If sensual desire is present in him, he knows ‘there is sensual desire in me’; if sensual desire is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no sensual desire in me’; and he knows how unarisen sensual can arise, how arisen sensual desire can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed sensual desire can be prevented.

“If aversion is present in him, he knows ‘there is aversion in me’; if aversion is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no aversion in me’ and he knows how unarisen aversion can arise, how arisen aversion can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed aversion can be prevented.
“If sloth-and-torpor is present in him, he knows ‘there is sloth-and-torpor in me’; if sloth-and-torpor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no sloth-and-torpor in me’; and he knows how unarisen sloth-and-torpor can arise, how arisen sloth-and-torpor can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed sloth-and-torpor can be prevented.

“If restlessness-and-worry is present in him, he knows ‘there is restlessness-and-worry in me’; if restlessness-and-worry is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no restlessness-and-worry in me’; and he knows how unarisen restlessness-and-worry can arise, how arisen restlessness-and-worry can be removed, and how future arising of the removed restlessness-and-worry can be prevented.

“If doubt is present in him, he knows ‘there is doubt in me’; if doubt is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no doubt in me’; and he knows how unarisen doubt can arise, how arisen doubt can be removed, and how future arising of the removed doubt can be prevented.

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in dhammas. Mindfulness that ‘there are dhammas’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of five hindrances.

[AGGREGATES]
“Again, monks, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the five aggregates of clinging. And how does he in regard to dhammas abide contemplating dhammas in terms of the five aggregates of clinging?

Here he knows, ‘such is material form, such its arising, such its passing away; such is feeling, such its arising, such its passing away; such is cognition, such its arising, such its passing away; such are volitions, such their arising, such their passing away; such is consciousness, such its arising, such its passing away.’

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in dhammas. Mindfulness that ‘there are dhammas’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the five aggregates of clinging.

[SENSE SPHERES]

“Again, monks, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the six internal and external sense spheres. And how does he in regard to dhammas abide contemplating dhammas in terms of the six internal and external sense spheres?

“Here he knows the eye, he knows forms, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both, and he also knows how an unarisen fetter can arise, how an arisen fetter can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed fetter can be prevented.
“He knows the ear, he knows sounds, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both, and he also knows how an unarisen fetter can arise, how an arisen fetter can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed fetter can be prevented.

“He knows the nose, he knows odours, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both, and he also knows how an unarisen fetter can arise, how an arisen fetter can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed fetter can be prevented.

“He knows the tongue, he knows flavours, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both, and he also knows how an unarisen fetter can arise, how an arisen fetter can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed fetter can be prevented.

“He knows the body, he knows tangibles, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both, and he also knows how an unarisen fetter can arise, how an arisen fetter can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed fetter can be prevented.

“He knows the mind, he knows mind-objects, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both, and he also knows how an unarisen fetter can arise, how an arisen fetter can be removed, and how a future arising of the removed fetter can be prevented.

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to dharmas he abides contemplating dharmas internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in dharmas. Mindfulness that ‘there are dharmas’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to dharmas he abides contemplating dharmas in terms of the six internal and external sense-spheres.
[AWAKENING FACTORS]

“Again, monks, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the seven awakening factors. And how does he in regard to dhammas abide contemplating dhammas in terms of the seven awakening factors?

“Here, if the mindfulness awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is mindfulness awakening factor in me’; if the mindfulness awakening factor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no mindfulness awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen mindfulness awakening factor can rise, and how the arisen mindfulness awakening factor can be perfected by development.

“If the investigation-of-dhammas awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is investigation-of-dhammas awakening factor in me’; if the investigation-of-dhammas awakening factor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no investigation-of-dhammas awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen investigation-of-dhammas awakening factor can arise, and how the arisen investigation-of-dhammas awakening factor can be perfected by development.

“If the energy awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is the energy awakening factor in me’; if the energy awakening factor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no energy awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen energy awakening factor can arise, and how the arisen energy awakening factor can be perfected by development.

“If the joy awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is the joy awakening factor in me’; if the joy awakening factor is not in him, he knows ‘there is no joy awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen joy awakening factor can arise, and how the arisen joy awakening factor can be perfected by development.
“If the tranquility awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is the tranquility awakening factor in me’; if the tranquility awakening factor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no tranquility awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen tranquility awakening factor can arise, and how the arisen tranquility awakening factor can be perfected by development.

“If the concentration awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is the concentration awakening factor in me’; if the concentration awakening factor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no concentration awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen concentration awakening factor can arise, and how the arisen concentration awakening factor can be perfected by development.

“If the equanimity awakening factor is present in him, he knows ‘there is the equanimity awakening factor in me’; if the equanimity awakening factor is not present in him, he knows ‘there is no equanimity awakening factor in me’; he knows how the unarisen equanimity awakening factor can arise, and how the arisen equanimity awakening factor can be perfected by development.

[REFRAIN]

“In this way, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in dhammas. Mindfulness that ‘there are dhammas’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the seven awakening factors.
[NOBLE TRUTHS]

“Again, monks, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the four noble truths. And how does he in regard to dhammas abide contemplating dhammas in terms of the four noble truths?

“Here he knows as it really is, ‘this is dukkha’; he knows as it really is, ‘this is the arising of dukkha’; he knows as it really is, ‘this is the cessation of dukkha’; he knows as it really is, ‘this is the way leading to the cessation of dukkha.’

[REFRAIN]

In this way, in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas internally…externally…internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising…of passing away…of both arising and passing away in dhammas. Mindfulness that ‘there are dhammas’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

“That is how in regard to dhammas he abides contemplating dhammas in terms of the four noble truths.

[PREDICTION]

“Monks, if anyone should develop these four satipaṭṭānas in such a way for seven years, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or, if there is a trace of clinging left, non-returning. Let alone seven years…six years…five years…four years…three years…two years…one year…seven months…six months…five months…four months…three months…two months…one month…half a month…if anyone should develop these four satipaṭṭānas in such a way for seven days, one of two fruits could be expected for him:
either final knowledge here and now, or, if there is a trace of clinging left, non-returning. So it was with reference to this that it was said:

[DIRECT PATH]

“Monks, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of dukkha and discontent, for acquiring the true method, for the realization of Nibbana, namely the four satipatthānas.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.
Appendix B

Studies on Mindfulness


Appendix C

Resources

Books on Mindfulness/Meditation


Hanh, T. N. (2010). *You are here: Discovering the magic of the present moment*. Boston, MA: Shambala.


Programs for Children

Calm Classroom
Chicago, IL
http://calmclassroom.com

Every Kid’s Yoga
New York, NY
http://www.everykidsyoga.com

Mindful Schools
Oakland, CA
http://www.mindfulschools.org/
MindUp
Santa Monica, CA
http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup

Programs for Teachers

Center for Courage and Renewal
Courage to Teach
Seattle, WA
http://www.couragerenewal.org/courage-to-teach

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE for Teachers)
Garrison Institute
Garrison, NY
http://www.care4teachers.org
References


