

Mind Full, or Mindful?

# Mindfulness and the Brain

## – How to Explain It to Children

### Amygdala “The Jumpy Superhero”

Tries to protect us at all costs, but often mistakes stress for real threats and stops the Prefrontal Cortex from getting the information it needs to help us make good choices. When the Amygdala is calm, it gives the PFC what it needs.



### Prefrontal Cortex “The Smart One”

Figures out stuff for us and helps us make good, well balanced choices. The PFC also sends and retrieves memories to and from the Hippocampus. When the Amygdala is upset, the PFC cannot help us.

### Hippocampus “The Librarian”

The Hippocampus stores and recalls memories. When the Amygdala is upset, poor Hippocampus cannot store memories or properly bring them to mind.

### Mindfulness To The Rescue

Mindfulness helps us to calm down, and this, in turn, calms the amygdala so that it allows the information flow to the prefrontal cortex—that part of our brains that helps us make good choices. When we’re calm, we can more easily be mindful and make good choices.



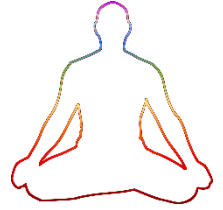


# Informal Practice Log Sheet

Daily Activity	Sight	Smell	Hearing	Taste	Touch
Eating	Colors, shapes,	Sweet, spicy, earthy, pungent	Slurping, crunchy, crackling, popping, crispy	Salty, sweet, spicy, bitter, sour	Hard, soft, sticky, squishy, slippery
Walking	Colors, shapes, sizes	Earthy, damp, sweet,	Rustling, crunching of leaves,	Salty (beach)	Wet, cold, grainy (sand), soft,
Washing Dishes	Color, shape of dish, weight of dish	Lemon, lavender,	Dripping, gushing, trickling, splashing	-	Soapy, slippery, hot, cold,

Mindfulness and meditation tools to use to help relax during times when you feel stressed, anxious, angry, upset, irritated or worried.

1. 10 Breath Cycle (sitting or laying down) - take a deep breath in through your nose and then slowly release by breathing out through your mouth.



2. Star Fish Breathing - Start with your left hand. Using your right index finger, trace each finger on your left hand starting from your pinky finger going up and down. As you trace up each finger, breath in, and as you trace down each finger, you breathe out.



3. Visualize my happy place where you feel calm and relaxed. Use your breath to help relax you as you visualize this happy space.



❖ *Practice all three mindfulness tools. Find your favorite technique and use it to practice mindfulness everyday!*

## **Suggested books for Mindfulness Meditation**

Sitting Still Like a Frog by Eline Snel

Meditation is an Open Sky by Whitney Stewart illustrated by Sally Rippin

Moody Cow Meditates by Kerry Lee MacLean

Doing and Being by Farahana Surya Namaskar

Breathe Like a Bear by Kira Willey

Moose the Worry Mutt Goes to Doggy Day Care by Jamie D. Crowley and Kristen M. Ohlenforst