Dare To Do Your Best:  
A Mindful Journey  
To Success

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What do we mean by:

- Mindful
- Journey
- Success
Mindful

• Being conscious or aware; alert, attentive, heedful, observant, vigilant, bearing in mind.
Journey

- The act of traveling from one place to another; trip, excursion, expedition, voyage, a quest.
Success

- The achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted; action, performance, outcome.
Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.

Coach John R. Wooden
Stephen R. Covey
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Four Dimensions of human nature:

- Body
- Mind
- Heart
- Spirit
How do you do this?

- By becoming knowledgeable of and mastering the basics and
- By practicing consistently
Activity

• Demonstration – introductory drum lesson
Positive, Practical Practices

"When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another." - Helen Keller
Let’s Practice – “Feet & Seat”
POP QUIZ

How are George Graham, a Tibetan monk, and the number 10,000 connected?
Want to Train Your Brain....
Use Your Mind

PREFRONTAL CORTEX –
THE WISE LEADER

AMYGDALA – The Security Guard

HIPPOCAMPUS - THE MEMORY SAVER
What’s more basic than.. BREATHING
Have a Heart
Save & Savor
Heart of Compassion
P. E. T.

• P = Practice
• E = Empathy
• T = Thankful
Make A Difference
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Resources/References


http://casel.org/ Gain understanding of social emotional learning (SEL), the fundamental skills for life effectiveness, and how developing SEL skills: help improve students' positive behavior and reduce negative behavior; are associated with significant improvements in students' academic performance and attitudes toward school; and prepare young people for success in adulthood.


Feet & Seat Mindfulness Exercise

Sit in a chair with both feet flat on the floor and your ankles underneath your knees. Notice that you have two feet resting on the floor. Lift your toes up slightly and wiggle them for a few seconds. Relax your toes. Focus on one foot. Scan your awareness through the bottom of the foot for a few seconds while sensing the pressure, temperature, and vibration. Repeat the scan on your other foot. Notice how one foot feels different from the other. Focus your awareness on both feet simultaneously. You don’t have to catch every sensation. Just keep a general feel of your feet in your awareness. Take a deep breath in. As you exhale, let your feet be heavy and sink into the floor. Next, notice that you’re sitting in a chair. Move your awareness into the back of your legs where they contact the chair. Scan your awareness up the back of your legs, across your seat, and up to the point where your back no longer contacts the chair. Sense the pressure, temperature, and vibration in your seat. You don’t have to catch every sensation. Just keep a general feel of your seat in your awareness. Take a deep breath in. As you exhale, let your seat be heavy and sink into the chair. If possible, hold an awareness of your feet and seat simultaneously. You don’t need to scan, just hold a sense of the pressure of feet on the floor and seat in the chair. If you prefer, you can hold awareness of just one, either your feet or your seat. Take a deep breath in. As you exhale, let your feet and seat be heavy and sink down.

Straw Breathing – Sitting on a chair or blanket, begin by noticing your breath. Count how your mouth and hold on to it gently with your hands. Don’t try to hold it without the help of your hands, or you will unnecessarily contract your facial and jaw muscles. Breathe in through your nose and then breathe out through your mouth into the straw, working gently so as not to push the breath out (Figure 34). When you take your next breath in, lightly touch your tongue to the roof of your mouth to prevent yourself from breathing in through your mouth. Continue for 3 minutes. At the end of each exhalation concentrate your attention on allowing the inhalation to arise spontaneously. When the diaphragm initiates the inhalation it will feel like a gentle “bounce” up through the center of your body. If you can allow this to happen, the incoming breath will be effortless. We usually don’t trust this to happen and jump in prematurely by initiating the inhalation with our upper chest and shoulders. Toward the end of your 3-minute session, count the number of breath cycles per minute again. Has it changed? Over time you can increase your straw breathing sessions to 10–15 minutes.

A word of warning. Some people feel a sense of panic when they first try the straw experiment. I believe this is because increasing the length of the exhalation is “counter-intuitive”—that is, we’re convinced we have to put the emphasis on the inhalation or we won’t get enough air. If you feel uncomfortable, just stop and take a few normal breaths until you feel relaxed and calm again. I encourage you to persevere, as I did, because the results are truly dramatic. After doing this exercise I have noticed that both my inhalations and exhalations dramatically lengthen and the action of my diaphragm becomes smoother and more languid. Some students have reported feeling calm and relaxed for 3 to 4 hours after only 10 minutes of straw breathing. In group classes most students halve the number of breath cycles they take after only 5 minutes of straw breathing, without feeling any strain whatsoever. Because this is such a powerful exercise I try to incorporate it into my daily routine as a way of setting the metronome of my breathing for the day. You can do this breath work as a part of your sitting meditation, or as a quietening exercise before you go to bed. You might also carry a straw with you and take a few long exhalations before every meal.

The following are some other ways you can increase your exhalation using the same principles as the straw work. These variations may be helpful for children (particularly those with asthma) who might otherwise be unable to maintain the concentration needed for the previous exercise.

These variations are also great for young-at-heart adults! • Blow through a musical instrument Recorders and harmonicas are cheap and ideal for children. • Blow bubbles into the air, or blow bubbles into water with a straw. See how long you can blow each stream of bubbles without straining. Sing a song Singing is nothing more than a melodious exhalation. If you are self-conscious, sing in the shower. • Licorice Whips Use a hollow licorice whip instead of a straw. This is a fun game to play with a child to help him or her calm down—or you can do your breath work surreptitiously on the bus or subway on the way to work. When you are through you can destroy the evidence by eating it.

Soothing Touch

One easy way to soothe and comfort yourself when you’re feeling badly is to give yourself a gentle hug or caress, or simply put your hand on your heart and feel the warmth of your hand. It may feel awkward or embarrassing at first, but your body doesn’t know that. It just responds to the physical gesture of warmth and care, just as a baby responds to being cuddled in its mother’s arms. Our skin is an incredibly sensitive organ. Research indicates that physical touch releases oxytocin, provides a sense of security, soothes distressing emotions, and calms cardiovascular stress. So why not try it?

If you notice that you’re feeling tense, upset, sad or self-critical, try stroking your arm or face, or gently rocking your body. What’s important is that you make a clear gesture that conveys feelings of love, care, and tenderness. If other people are around, you can often fold your arms in a non-obvious way, gently squeezing yourself in a comforting manner. You can also simply imagine hugging or caressing yourself if you can’t make the actual physical gesture.

Try giving stroking your skin or putting your hand over your heart during difficult periods several times a day for a period of at least a week.

Hand-on-Heart

- When you notice you’re under stress, take 2-3 deep, satisfying breaths.
- Gently place your hand over your heart, feeling the gentle pressure and warmth of your hand. If you wish, place both hands on your chest, noticing the difference between one and two hands.
- Feel the touch of you hand on your chest. If you wish, you could make small circles with your hand on your chest.
- Feel the the natural rising and falling of your chest as you breath in and as you breath out.
- Linger with the feeling for as long as you like.

Hopefully you’ll start to develop the habit of physically comforting yourself when needed, taking full advantage of this surprisingly simple and straightforward way to be kind to ourselves.

Save & Savor

Bring all your attention to your happy memory. Using all of your senses, remember the moment as you create a mini-movie in your mind. See the places and people involved. Remember nice things that you heard as well as the things that tasted and smelled good. Savor the memory resting in the good feelings this memory brings to you.
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