

## **Pocket Reference:** Mindfulness for Parents

Add: teaching your child mindfulness, mindfulness practices/exercises (from newsletter)

Mindfulness helps you manage stress better.

**Taking care of your physical health** enables you to cope better with mental distress and emotional challenges. The acronym *PLEASE Master* can remind us what we can do regularly in order to keep ourselves healthy and stable.

- Treat **Physical Illness** (take care of yourself both physically and mentally)
- **Eat** healthy (diet, especially sugar, affects your mood and can cause mood swings)
- **Avoid** mood-altering substances (don't use alcohol or drugs in response to emotional distress)
- **Sleep** well (practice good habits: no electronics before bed, limiting caffeine)
- **Exercise** regularly: walking or stretching for 15 minutes in the morning or evening counts even if you're not a gym rat.
- **Master:** Do something daily (outside of your job or family responsibilities) that gives you a sense of achievement or ability.

◆ ◆ ◆

### **Homework for becoming a more positive thinker:**

- Think about how your mind may race when you've got a few minutes to spare – sitting in your in the car-pool line or at the corner waiting for school bus to drop-off your child. Are you replaying the feedback you got at work from your boss, or the argument at breakfast that morning? If you focus your awareness on the present moment, feeling each breath, how the sun or drizzle feels on your skin, or how the ground feels under your feet, you are detaching your mental energies from your usual preoccupations.
- By working these muscles routinely, when faced with an upsetting situation or confrontation, you will be able to respond from a position of better well-being, a position of strength; the kind of strength that allows you to draw on your inner resources not in an impulsive, emotional way, but in a manner that will allow for a resolution where everyone comes out a winner.
- This may not come naturally, and you learn to do it by repeating the effort; think of the movie "Groundhog Day" as a kind of metaphor for working toward developing this kind of mental refocusing.

### **How to Make a Mindfulness Jar ( <http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/time-out-timer/> )**

This is a jar filled with water, clear gel glue, and ultra-fine glitter. You shake it and the glitter settles slowly, which is very relaxing to watch, providing something to focus on in order to relax.

#### **Materials:**

- A clean empty water bottle, with label removed, that will fit in your child's hands
- Clear gel glue
- Super glue
- Glitter
- Hot water

**Directions:**

- **Fill the bottle** about 3/4 of the way with hot water, then add a bottle of glitter glue and a small tube of glitter.
- **Screw on the cap** and play with the mixture until it takes about five minutes (our standard time out time!) for the glitter to settle at the bottom of the bottle. Add more clear gel glue to make it go slower or more water to make it settle faster.
- **Super glue the cap** onto the water bottle so it can't come off in your child's hands.

**Looking to Learn More?****Mindfulness: What it is and How to Explain it to Kids and Adults**

(<http://blissfulkids.com/what-is-mindfulness-and-how-to-explain-it-to-kids>)

**Active Listening: (delete if need more room for mindfulness)**

The basics:

1. Be present. Don't multitask – that means put the phone on mute and put all electronic devices away.
2. Re-set your own mind to assume that you can learn something from the conversation.
3. Show that you are listening: use non-verbal signs to show that you are listening: make eye contact; sit or stand facing the person, give them your full attention.
4. Give cues along the way: nod your head, smile in encouragement, or say “un-huh,” “wow,” “oh” or by repeating something the other person has said, restating it to show that you heard and understand. You can also echo what they say to show you understand: “it sounds like you are still upset.”
5. Ask open-ended questions. Use who, what, where, when, or how. Ask “What was that like?” instead of “Was that terrible?” or “How are you feeling?” instead of “Are you still angry?” Ask questions that seek to make clear what the person is telling you.
6. Summarize what the person has said. This demonstrates that you heard what was said and allows the other person to clarify any misunderstanding.
7. Empathize. Show that you hear what the other person is saying. You don't have to agree, but it's important to acknowledge that you understand what the person is saying.

**Hints on putting this into practice: Active Listening Skills – 4 Tips to Practice**

<http://bemycareercoach.com/soft-skills/communication-skills/active-listening-skills.html>

**Tune in to any (or all) of these TedTalks/YouTube videos hear and see what it takes to really listen to someone and turn any conversation into a meaningful exchange.**

*TedTalk--Celeste Headlee: 10 Ways to Have A Better Conversation*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1vskiVDwl4>

*6 Tips for Active Listening*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWe\\_ogA5YCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWe_ogA5YCU)

*The Power of Listening*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saXfavo1OQo>

## *A Teen's Summary of Active Listening*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WER63AY8zB8>

## **Self-Care**

*TedTalk: The Importance of Self-Care*

[https://www.ted.com/talks/guy\\_winch\\_the\\_case\\_for\\_emotional\\_hygiene?referrer=playlist-the\\_importance\\_of\\_self\\_care](https://www.ted.com/talks/guy_winch_the_case_for_emotional_hygiene?referrer=playlist-the_importance_of_self_care)

*Self-care is Active Participation in Enhancing the Quality of Your Health*

<https://counseling.dasa.ncsu.edu/self-care/>

## **Active Listening and Better Communication**

*The Skill of Listening*

<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/healthy-communication/the-skill-of-listening/>

*7 Ways to Reinforce Active Listening at Home*

<http://truparenting.net/getting-kids-listen-7-ways-reinforce-cycles-active-listening-home/>

## **Mindfulness**

*On our website, [www.spenj.org](http://www.spenj.org), you can find these related articles: *Mindful Parenting: Getting Your Emotions Under Control* and *Can Meditation Positively Impact Your teenager? It Absolutely Can! At the end of each article there are links to additional resources.**

*Benefits of Mindfulness*

<https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>

*Free Mindfulness Apps*

<https://www.mindful.org/free-mindfulness-apps-worthy-of-your-attention/>

*Free web-based guided meditations*

<https://heromovement.net/blog/free-guided-meditation-resources/>

*All It Takes Is 10 Mindful Minutes*

[https://www.ted.com/talks/andy\\_puddicombe\\_all\\_it\\_takes\\_is\\_10\\_mindful\\_minutes?language=en#t-74188](https://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes?language=en#t-74188)

*Breathe. Exhale. Repeat: The Benefits of Controlled Breathing*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/09/well/mind/breathe-exhale-repeat-the-benefits-of-controlled-breathing.html>

*Bill Murray's Surprising Wish + Meditation*

<https://www.improvisedlife.com/2015/07/06/bill-murrays-surprising-wish-meditation/>

