



Mindfulness and Meditation

Helping students improve their well-being and readiness to learn.

Lesson 1: Mindfulness and Self-Inquiry

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn the fundamentals of mindfulness and develop an understanding of themselves through self-inquiry

CASEL-5 Competencies:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Relationship Skills
- Social Awareness

Awakening Practice

We often look outside of ourselves for authority, sovereignty, and knowing. The philosophy behind mindfulness teaches us that we have all that we need inside of ourselves, and as we grow mindfulness helps us become more aware and awake to ourselves and our surroundings.

Let's begin our journey of mindfulness and self-inquiry by grounding ourselves with a Body Scan meditation.



Instructional video available online

Consider the following questions and discuss them as a class:

- What makes you, you?
- How do you know and understand yourself, your thoughts, and your cultural identity?
- How do you identify how you feel about certain situations, and why you might feel that way?
- How do you identify with and define how you fit into your family, your community, your culture, and the broader world?

Awareness Practice

Develop an awareness of mindfulness with these essential questions:

- How often do you override your intuition?
- How often do you trust others' intuition before your own?
- How often do you allow the influence of others to infiltrate your actions even when you know something is not right, uncomfortable, or in contrast to what you know to be your truth?

Educator discussion points:

The Teacher Within

- When we practice mindfulness we can slow the brain down, and notice more, which in turn allows us to make choices based on our well-being, our intuition, and the next best steps.
- Slowing the mind down is our greatest work. As the outside world moves fast around us, we must learn to trust our inner world. This is our practice, to listen to our thoughts, notice our feelings, and become more aware of our actions and behaviors.
- Trusting ourselves and continuing to practice is our work.
- How does keeping an open mind help us with mindfulness? Being open-minded is about being influenced or taught something new. It's our work to broaden our view so we can see the bigger picture. This is where mindfulness helps us to notice we are not our thoughts, behaviors, and actions. These are all things we can change when our point of view changes.
- A one-track mind is limited and closed—just like a playlist with one song on repeat. We want our song/story/view to expand.
- When we are closed-minded we limit ourselves to what we can learn or be influenced by. Each experience that we have is an opportunity to grow and expand our awareness. This gives us a more rounded or vast experience so we can be open and influenced by those who are here to teach us, our parents, our peers, our teachers, and our experiences.
- Take a moment to think about what distracts you. Notice when you are tasked with something how often you are pulled by outside forces or opposing thoughts. Mindfulness is like a muscle, the more you practice the easier and more natural it becomes!



Self-Awareness

- What is self-awareness? Self-awareness is a practice of noticing, of opening up your mind. Our consciousness continues to grow the more we become aware of ourselves and our lives.
- Awake and aware are two principles that allow us to grow in this area in our lives. When we

become awake to something it expands our worldview, our understanding, and our way of seeing the world, experiences, and circumstances. This builds upon our ability to be more open-minded and to broaden the way we see the world.

- Self-reflection or flipping the mirror, is a practice that builds self-awareness. Are we telling ourselves the truth about what we see? When we slow our mind down, tune into ourselves, see more clearly, and stay open-minded this builds awareness of self.

Consciousness

- What is Consciousness? Consciousness is the expanded awareness of how our mind sees the world and ourselves. Consciousness brings deeper knowledge through a practice of self-awareness.
- Consciousness is different from our subconscious in that it is more thoughtful. It is our mindfulness on a continuum.
- Our mind and body operate as a team. The mind and body are always sending signals to each other. There are times when our subconscious steps in and operates for us, like brushing our teeth, going to the bathroom, getting ready for school or work, and even eating. When we are not paying attention, our brain kicks into autopilot and because our body is good with repetition it learns to do things without noticing or without our conscious direction.
- Our subconscious is like the hardware of a computer and our consciousness is the software. It can be programmed with our mindful awareness.



Values

- Our values are generally handed down to us from our parents, relatives, or caregivers. Those who we trust and those who influence us.
- Our ego allows us to make preferences, and as young children, we build likes and dislikes for things, events, and energy that we experience in the world.
- What we may dislike when we are young, then changes as our minds change through time. What we dislike we like and what we like we may grow to dislike.
- Mindfulness allows us to reflect upon our likes and dislikes and why we hold things, people, and experiences as valuable. Over time, experience changes our point of view as well. Who we thought we trusted we may no longer, and who or what we didn't understand, or know enough about, we now have perspective on. Change is real. Our time frame, experience, and open mind help us to grow and to understand.

Class Activity

Have your values changed as you have grown? What did you love as a child that you no longer love? What made you change your mind? Who and what have influenced you and your values? Break out into small groups or discuss as a class.

Use the following link to [Core Values List – Conscious Classroom™](#)

Your Story

- Visualize your life as a movie or a play. What part do you hold? Can you imagine that you are all parts? You are the director, the producer, the lead, and the supporting characters of the play. Even the villain, or nemesis!
- We are as great at self-sabotage as much as we are great at being the hero/heroine, the “good person.” This all stems from what we value, what we hold as truth, and what drives our subconscious and our conscious awareness.
- We all have scripts that include thoughts, feelings, and points of view that run through our minds. Who and what we choose to focus on is who and what shows up in our reality as our personality. Notice your sphere of influence and environment. Who you surround yourself with and the circumstances and situations you find yourself in continuously make up your reality.

Class Activity

People can have a grand influence on who we become and how we behave. Take note of what and who influences you. What practices, traits, and patterns are in your life and why? What does this mean to you and why have you embodied these practices as your own? If you could be a superhero or someone of impact in the world, what would you practice and who would you become and why? Break out into small groups or discuss as a class.

Boundaries

- We all have boundaries whether they sit within our conscious minds or our subconscious minds. Boundaries are barriers of protection we build up over time. Initially, they were established by our parents, care providers, or ego to keep us safe.
- As we experience life our boundaries can shift, like a river that ebbs and flows. Getting stuck in the middle of the river is uncomfortable, yet this is where most growth happens and we learn to become better swimmers. Expanding our boundaries can be scary and it’s our work to either hold our edge or to expand it.
- Comfort can keep our banks close and our river flowing slowly. There is nothing wrong with this but if we are looking at growing this is where mindfulness can help us to reflect and learn to expand.

Alignment Practice

Practice aligning your mind and your body with a mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness Practice

- Sit for 5 minutes and write down every thought that comes into your mind about yourself. Consider how you identify with family, social circles, cultural beliefs, and your connection with the broader world around you. In your mind’s eye, who are YOU?
- Review what you have written, sit in discovery, and notice. Write true or false beside each thought.



Discuss the following questions as a class:

- How did it feel to go within, and to think and write about yourself?
- What percentage of your thoughts did you find to be true? What percentage did you find to be false?
- Is your assessment truly based on how you feel about yourself, or is it influenced by what you perceive others to think of you?
- How loud was your inner critic? What did your inner critic tell you to be true about yourself that you know to be false?

Alchemize the mind-body connection through mindful movement.

Mindful Movement for Self-Inquiry



Activate Practice

Activate and embody these practices into your daily routine.

Closing Activity #1: Defining Your Story



Fact or Fiction?

We all have a story to tell. A history, a journey, from when our life began to where we are today.

- List 5 things that you know to be true about your story of origin.
- List 5 things you know to be true about your story today.
- What have you chosen to place attention on? Is it something that someone else has told you or has said about you or is it something that you know deep down as your truth?

Closing Activity #2: Your Life Philosophy

- List three people from your circle of friends and family that you admire. What qualities or actions of theirs would you like to adopt in your own life?
- If you had a billion dollars to improve the world and make lives better for people, what three things would you spend it on?
- What do you dream of doing? Who do you want to be? What gives you butterflies and excites you when you think about it?
- What do you stand for? What is the philosophy of your life?

Closing Activity #3: IRL (In Real Life) Practice at Home



What are you resistant to?

- Take 5 minutes and list the things you are resistant to.
- Consider what rubs you the wrong way based on your values, morals, principles, and practices of being in the world.
- What have you said no to because you didn't feel safe enough to say yes?
- What have you said no to out of fear of what others might say about you?
- If you were to go within and define what you know to be true, what you value, and what you desire for your life, how might you find and explore the edges and boundaries of your river so that you can choose what truly works for you and what doesn't?