

Cultivating Presence and Mindfulness



A GUIDEBOOK FOR EDUCATORS

**MINDFULNESS PRACTICES TO ENHANCE OUR OWN AND
OUR STUDENTS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**



BREATHEFORCHANGE.com



Cultivating Presence and Mindfulness

How can we stay mindful, calm and present when things feel scary or unsafe? Although we do not have control over many of the challenges happening in our external world, we do have the power to take care of and nourish our internal world. Through practicing mindfulness, we gain a deeper awareness and acceptance of our present moment reality. It is from this place of acceptance, that we have the power to create our reality.

At Breathe For Change, we explore meditation through both mindfulness and manifestation practices by drawing on our breath, body, emotions and thoughts. The benefits of mindfulness and manifestation are numerous and have been substantiated by extensive scientific research. Mind-body practices help reduce anxiety, enhance well-being, and cultivate a deeper sense of calm and relaxation, and are especially beneficial during times of heightened stress - like we are collectively experiencing today in the context of COVID-19.

6 Practices for Cultivating Mindfulness and Presence:

- 3 Collective Breaths
- Body Scan
- Mindful Observer
- Belly Breathing
- 2 Word Check In
- Intention Setting



Draw on the following 6 mindfulness and manifestation practices to cultivate a deeper sense of awareness and presence, release stress, and take care of yourself, your students, and your communities during this challenging time.

THREE COLLECTIVE BREATHS

Mindfulness of our Breath

PURPOSE

This practice will help you and your students cultivate a deeper sense of calm, focus, and presence during this time of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear. This simple, yet powerful, breathing technique regulates the body, calms the mind, and nourishes the heart, especially during moments of heightened stress.

4 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Pause whatever you are doing.
2. Take a big breath in, and a big breath out.
3. Inhale again, exhale.
4. Breathe in, out with an audible sigh.



TIPS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING AND IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Classroom Instruction:

- Model this practice for students, and then invite them practice it with you and discuss specific scenarios when this practice could help them individually, and as a classroom community.
- Use this practice to start and end your school day, or draw on it whenever you and your students feel stressed or could use some calming.

Digital Instruction:

- At the start of each learning session, consistently settle students in by facilitating the 3 collective breaths. You can close each session this way too.
- [Live session] Once it becomes routine, invite a different student to lead the practice to increase engagement.



► [Click here to access the 3 Collective Breaths detailed lesson plan](#)

BELLY BREATHING

Mindfulness of our Breath

PURPOSE

This practice will help us and our students gain a deeper awareness of and connection to our breath, which can be our greatest anchor during periods of heightened stress. When feeling anxious and afraid, we are more likely to take quick, short breaths into our chest; belly breathing can help us reconnect to the natural flow of our breath and stimulate a parasympathetic, calming response.



5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Pause whatever you are doing.
2. Place your hands on your belly, and soften your gaze or close your eyes.
3. Breathe into your chest, ribs, belly; breath out.
4. Repeat this and notice any changes in your breath, body and emotions.
5. When you feel ready, return back to your natural flow of breath.

TIPS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING AND IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Classroom Instruction:

- Invite students to practice belly breathing together, ask them to reflect on how they feel, and then invite them to call it into the space so they realize the benefits.
- You can use this as a consistent practice, or in the moment to address challenges.



Digital Instruction:

- You can start your online class with this, or use it as a brain break or a centering practice (before a test). Invite students to find a comfortable position, standing or seated near the computer, to prepare for practice.
- [Live session] Have students type into the chat feature how they feel after belly breathing, or take a few shares in the large group. You can also do breakout rooms for them to reflect on the experience together.

► [Click here to access the Bear Belly Breathing \(Primary\) or Belly Breathing \(Secondary\) detailed lesson plan.](#)

BODY SCAN

Mindfulness of our Body

PURPOSE

This practice helps relax the body, calm the mind, and increase sensory awareness, and can be especially beneficial when fear or uncertainty is in the air. During stressful times, practicing the body scan can reduce anxiety and release tension in the body and mind.

6 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Find a comfortable seated position and mindfully connect to your breath.
2. Draw your attention to the sensations at the top of your head, and observe.
3. Move your awareness to your forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, lips, chin.
4. Draw your attention to the sensations in your shoulders, chest, belly.
5. Move your attention to your hips, legs, feet, toes.
6. Expand your awareness to your entire body, and notice any sensations.

TIPS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING AND IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Classroom Instruction:

- Students can do this standing, laying down, or seated at their desks or in community circle in the classroom.
- This can be part of a daily routine (e.g., before starting a lesson).



Digital Instruction:

- You can pre-record a video of yourself practicing the body scan aloud so students can see you talking through the steps, or model it live.
- [Live] Have students type how they feel in the chat. Read feelings aloud, create breakout rooms for discussion, or take shares in the whole group.



► [Click here to access the Body Scan detailed lesson plan \(Primary & Secondary\).](#)

TWO WORD CHECK IN

Mindfulness of our Emotions

PURPOSE

This practice allows us to gain a deeper awareness and acceptance of our own and each other's emotions. It is a great way to maintain a consistent pulse on how we are feeling, and gives us insight into how to respond appropriately to meet our own and each other's needs.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Pause, bring your hands to your heart, and connect to your breath
2. As you breathe, notice how you feel right now
3. Choose 2 words to describe how you feel right now
4. Reconnect to your breath, and open your eyes if they were closed.
5. If you are with others, have everyone share their 2 words; if you are by yourself, write down your 2 words in a journal to track your feelings overtime.

TIPS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING AND IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Classroom Instruction:

- After facilitating the practice, invite each person to share their 2 words with the community. Model first, and then invite students to go in order.
- This is a great practice to draw on before or after a meaningful learning experience as a community.

Digital Instruction:

- Facilitate the practice digitally by having everyone find a comfortable and guiding them through the short meditation. After, have them type their two words into the chat feature while you read it, share it in breakout rooms or with the large group, or post it on a discussion thread.
- If using the chat feature, read them out as they come in to honor the diverse range of emotions in the space.



► [Click here to access the 2 Word Check In detailed lesson plan \(Primary & Secondary\).](#)

MINDFUL OBSERVER

Mindfulness of our Thoughts

PURPOSE

This practice helps us create space between our thoughts and who we are, and increases our capacity to thoughtfully respond rather than react during stressful times.

4 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Find a comfortable position and connect to your breath
2. Draw your awareness to your thoughts. Notice what thoughts are entering into your awareness, without judgment.
3. As you observe each thought moving through your mind, acknowledge and accept it exactly as it is.
4. With each new thought, say to yourself, “I accept you, thought.”

TIPS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING AND IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Classroom Instruction:

- During stressful times, it's important to acknowledge that some of our thoughts may bring about feelings or stress, fear or anxiety, and that's ok.
- When a wide range of emotions are showing up in the classroom, draw on this practice to help bring awareness to our thoughts, and discuss how we can support each other as a community.

Digital Instruction:

- Acknowledge that it can be hard to stay engaged when learning online, and that our mindset matters. Share that this practice will allow us to bring awareness to our thoughts, and shift our mindset to support our learning.
- Use metaphor to explain this practice and increase understanding: imagine that each thought is like a cloud moving through the sky; watch it as an observer, without judging what the thought is.



INTENTION SETTING

Manifestation

PURPOSE

Setting intentions helps us bring clarity to what we want and who we want to be, and can serve as an internal anchor for us to return to, especially when our external world feels scary and stressful. When our limiting beliefs, fears, or anxiety surface, we can reconnect to who we truly are by reconnecting to our intention.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Settle into a comfortable position.
2. Place your hands on your heart, and soften your gaze or close your eyes.
3. As you breathe, take the next few moments to set an intention.
4. If you'd like, choose 1 or 2 words to represent your intention, which you can return to throughout your day as a reminder of your intention.
5. Rub your intention into your heart, write it down, or share it with a loved one.

TIPS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING AND IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Classroom Instruction:

- This is a great practice to draw on after facilitating any mindfulness of breath, body, emotions or thoughts practice.
- Students can write down their intentions in a journal and keep it at their desk so they can have a visual reminder of what matters to them. They can also share their intention with a partner to deepen connection.



Digital Instruction:

- Given that online learning can be less interactive than in-person, it's important to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.
- Facilitate this practice at the start of class, and invite them to reconnect to their intention throughout the learning session to ensure engagement.



BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS & MANIFESTATION

Cultivating these practices in our everyday lives allows us to harness the neuroplasticity of our minds and consciously refine our experience of reality.

Direct Benefits of Mindfulness

- ♥ Develops present moment awareness of sensations, emotions, and thoughts
- ♥ Creates space for conscious choice of and response to sensations, emotions and thoughts
- ♥ Reduces the perpetuation of sensations, emotions and thoughts that cause suffering
- ♥ Increases focus and attention
- ♥ Activates the parasympathetic nervous system and decreases toxic stress
- ♥ Calms the mind and body
- ♥ Strengthens mind-body connection
- ♥ Increases social and emotional awareness
- ♥ Cultivates sense of compassion and self-acceptance
- ♥ Creates space and freedom to grow

Long-term Outcomes of Mindfulness

- ♥ Increases overall health and well-being
- ♥ Increases social, emotional, and academic intelligence
- ♥ Improves behavioral, emotional, and mental regulation
- ♥ Enhances mental, physical, social, and academic performance
- ♥ Increases ability to respond vs. react
- ♥ Reduces overall stress, anxiety, and burnout
- ♥ Increases happiness and life satisfaction
- ♥ Reduces tension and risk of injury
- ♥ Increases coordination and proprioception
- ♥ Enhances spatial perception, proprioception, and athletic performance
- ♥ Significantly reduces anxiety

Direct Benefits of Manifestation

- ♥ Aligns thoughts, words, and actions with purpose
- ♥ Enables us to respond instead of react
- ♥ Fosters desired experiences and outcomes
- ♥ Cultivates joy, peace, and love
- ♥ Increases personal power and sense of autonomy
- ♥ Supports growth mindset

Long-term Outcomes of Manifestation

- ♥ Increases purpose and sense of fulfillment in life
- ♥ Enhances success in personal and professional goals
- ♥ Enables intentional reprogramming and reshaping of the mind and body
- ♥ Improves mental, physical, emotional well-being
- ♥ Generates harmony between internal and external realities
- ♥ Cultivates abundance in all forms
- ♥ Develops leadership qualities and capacity to serve others

Breathe For Change Meditation Framework

The B4C Meditation curriculum supports educators in understanding and embodying the practice of meditation in our lives, classrooms, and communities. Our meditation framework consists of a cyclical progression of three practices:

MINDFULNESS & MANIFESTATION

