

Mindfulness with Teens



Stefanie Goldstein, PhD
March 2016

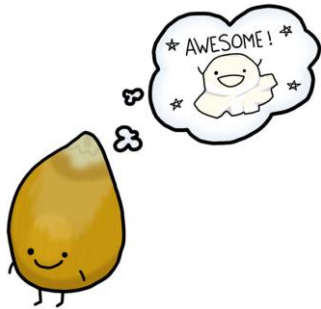
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Overview

- What is Mindfulness?
- Mindfulness for Teens
- How Can It Help Teens with Special Needs?
 - Focus
 - Emotion Regulation
 - Increased Emotional Intelligence
 - Impulse Control
 - Self-Compassion and Compassion

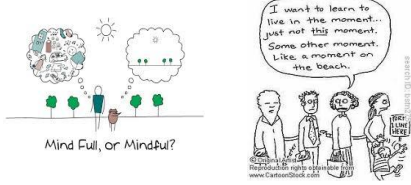
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Wandering Mind Symbol



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What is Mindfulness?



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Mindful Qualities

- Presence
- Non-judgment
- Empathy
- Self-attunement, Self-compassion, & Compassion
- Emotion regulation – salt in a glass/lake
- Learning to be okay with uncertainty
- Increased Focus



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Mindfulness for Teens: The **STOP** Practice



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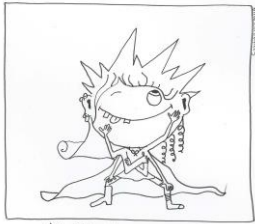
Discussion

- What did you notice?
- How is this relevant to teens?
- How is this relevant to you?



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Mindfulness with Teens Actually... Starts with YOU!



I'm embracing my crazy

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Mindfulness for Teens



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CALM Practices

- Body Scan Meditation: Scan of entire body
- Mindful Movement: mindful awareness of the body during yoga
- Sitting Meditation: mindfulness of breath, body, feelings, thoughts, and emotions
- Walking Meditation: mindfulness in action
- Loving-kindness/Compassion Practices
- Music Meditation
- Daily Home Practice: up to 15 minutes meditation and daily informal practice

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In Their Own Words:

- "From this class I learned about mindfulness, how to communicate better, how to manage stress, and how to be more compassionate with myself and others." - **Anna, 17**
- "I was very amazed and happy at the effects mindfulness has had on my panic, focus, and mood." - **Paula, 16**
- "Mindfulness for me, has become a practice in my life that helps me to have some perspective over my feelings instead of being lost in the middle of it all. It makes feelings less confusing." - **Lana, 17**
- "From this class I think I'll carry with me the idea that stepping back and being mindful can really help in dealing with conflicts that might arise." - **Ethan, age 16**
- "I learned that even though I may not be in complete control of what happens around me I can come to an awareness of my environment to better the way situations are approached." - **Maria, age 17**
- "I learned just how deeply I was masking my emotions." - **Joshua, age 17**
- "I learned that I need to stop holding onto to life really vigorously and just let life run its course. I was surprised that I was actually able to come to this conclusion and somewhat achieve it." - **Gabriel, age 16**

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Mindfulness for Teens with Special Needs



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Things to Keep in Mind

- Take the teens cognitive level into consideration and adjust accordingly
- Make the meditations and exercises playful, embodied, engaging and creative - shorter, bite sized practices
- Manage expectations (yours and theirs)
- Mindfulness is NOT a panacea and not always the best practice to use.

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How can Mindfulness Help Youth with Special Needs?

- Emotion Regulation
- Focus
- Increased awareness of one's thoughts, sensations and emotions
- Impulse control
- Increased compassion and self-compassion

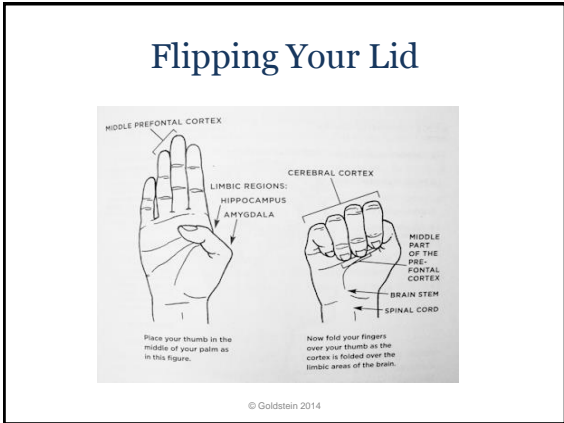
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Emotion Regulation



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“Putting Feelings into Words”



Jane



Dick

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“Putting Feelings into Words”



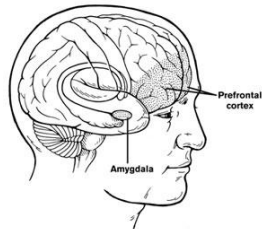
Fear



Anger

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“Putting Feelings into Words” Research Study Results



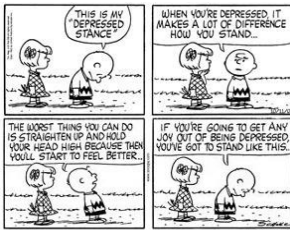
- Putting Feelings Into Words: Affect Labeling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli” *Psychological Science*, pp. 421-428.

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BJ's Story: The Rock



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Autism and Mindfulness: Finding the Rhythm

"Meditation is one of a few interventions that have been shown to effectively strengthen self control and character development simultaneously."

- Sequeira, S and Ahmed, M. (2012). *Meditation as a Potential Therapy for Autism*

Problem: Environment overwhelms the inner world = Short Circuit/Shut down

Solution: Mindfulness and Meditation can help to override impaired brain synchronicity/integration by restoring rhythm and safety

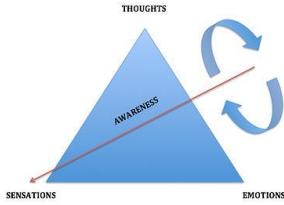
Examples: Focusing on the breath, mantra, rubbing hands, mindfulness of music

Sequeira, S and Ahmed, M. (2012). *Meditation as a Potential Therapy for Autism: A Review. Autism Research and Treatment, Volume 2012, Article ID 832847.* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2012/832847>

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AWARENESS

The Mindfulness Model



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What is the #1 Way
Humans Avoid Discomfort?

Thinking

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Working with Thoughts:
Thoughts are Not Facts

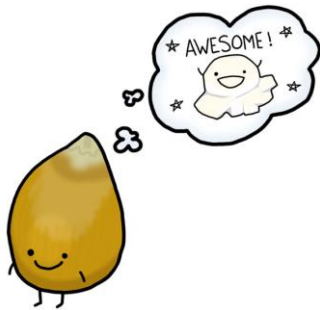


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Anna's Story: The Teachings of a Leaf



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Impulse Control



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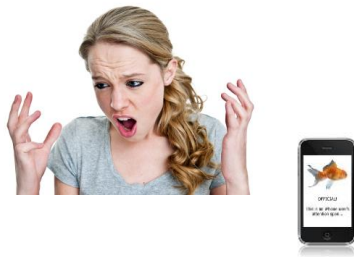
"Between stimulus and response there is space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom." – Viktor E. Frankl



- Helps to slow everything down (heart rate, breath, thoughts) and get the person more connected and grounded in their body.
- Helps to create a “pause” between stimulus and response, so one can turn a Reaction → Response.

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Sophie's Story: Finding Her Inner Calm



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RESEARCH

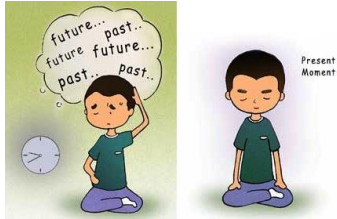
- Mindful Schools Study
 - 400 kids – 5 weeks, 3X/week - Student behavior improved significantly in all four areas measured—paying attention, self-control, classroom participation, and respect for others—and these gains were maintained seven weeks later.
- UK Study
 - 500 kids, in 12 schools, age 12–16. Half got 9 week Mindfulness class and half didn't. All students were followed up after a three month period which was timed to coincide with the summer exam period (a time of high stress).
 - The researchers found that those children who participated in the mindfulness program reported fewer depressive symptoms, lower stress and greater wellbeing than those in the control group.

Kuyken, W., et al. (2013). Effectiveness of the Mindfulness in Schools Programme: Non-randomised controlled feasibility study. *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

Black, D. S. & Fernando, R. (2013). Mindfulness training and classroom behavior among lower-income and ethnic minority elementary school children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*.

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FOCUS



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ADHD and Mindfulness

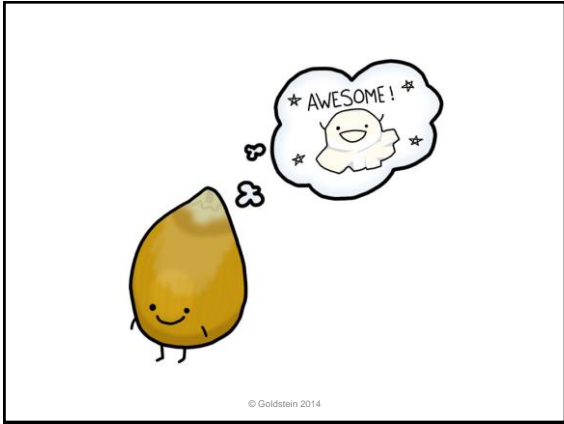
- A 2011 study published in the *Journal of Child and Family Studies* demonstrated the effectiveness of an eight-week mindfulness program for children ages 8-12 with ADHD, along with a mindful parenting program for their parents. The researchers found that the program reduced parent-reported ADHD behavior. It also increased mindful awareness among both parents and children, and reduced parental stress.
- “There are no long-term, lasting benefits from taking A.D.H.D. medications,” [James M. Swanson, a psychologist at the University of California, Irvine, told the New York Times](#). “But mindfulness seems to be training the same areas of the brain that have reduced activity in A.D.H.D... “That’s why mindfulness might be so important. It seems to get at the causes.”

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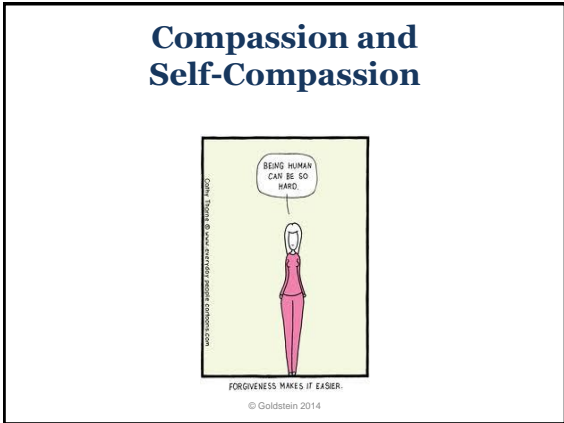
Maddy’s Story



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Self-Compassion Practice



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What is the Secret?

How
Did the rose
Ever open its heart
And give to this world
All its
Beauty?
It felt the encouragement of light
Against its
Being,
Otherwise,
We all remain
Too
Frightened.



from "The Gift"
(poems by Hafiz)

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"Can I call you back, Ed? I'm in the moment here."

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Go Forth and Be Mindful...

Stefanie Goldstein, PhD
www.stefaniegoldsteinphd.com
stefanie@stefaniegoldsteinphd.com

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Stefanie Goldstein, PhD
www.stefaniegoldsteinphd.com
stefanie@stefaniegoldsteinphd.com



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