



MINDFUL PARENTING

By Ruth Grigg ©2020

What is Mindful Parenting, you may ask?

Mindful parenting is being with your children, on purpose, in the present moment, and not judging it. The focus is on them – scheduled time and space for them. Leave your judgements and corrections for later on.

Mindful parents is choosing to be with your children on purpose, for enjoyment and connection – choosing to give your time and attention to build healthy and wholesome relationships.

Mindless parenting is when we fall into old habits that do not benefit the child or parent, and it is something we do on a regular basis, without thinking about it. We can turn this around and teach good habits. Good habits are extremely important to succeed in life and to become independent.

We can build mindful parenting into our daily lives with our children and teens, by changing our old responses and habits, and replacing them with some new ones. In this booklet we explore some different techniques that parents can use with their children to build their character, their mindsets, their ability to be mindful of sight, colours, and sound and their ability to show kindness and gratitude.

MINDFULNESS TOOL AND TECHNIQUES

1. MINDFUL QUESTIONS

Reframing your questions on your child's day -

When we ask our children questions, we need to frame them so that they are **specific**, and not too generalized, otherwise you will get a very short answer. e.g. Instead of asking them, how was school?

Ask specific questions, like –

- What went well for you today at school? (it sets a different tone)
- Who was your good friend today? Who was helpful in any way?
(it sets a positive tone, based on reality)
- What was your favourite part of the day?
- What was your sad/disappointing part of the day?



2. Character Building - When your child / teen, says **they are no good at ...**

Whenever your children say, “I’m not good at” maths, science, spelling etc, add the word YET, onto the end of their sentence, e.g. I’m not good at maths, YET.

This makes room for change in your child’s mind – things are NOT STUCK, they can and will improve with practice and time, and they could get good at it! Don’t let your children feel defeated and give up. Give them hope.

So ask your child to repeat the sentence and say YET on the end. “I’m not good at spelling, YET – but I will improve.”

Give your child a growth mindset. Their minds and brains are not fixed. Show your children their approach to challenges matters. Teach them that challenges are exciting, rather than threatening, and that challenges grow their brains, because they learn to process (think) things in a new way and learn to overcome obstacles; each time they overcome or make progress, their brain is growing. When they tell you maths is hard, don’t say, “well keep trying” but say, “that feeling of maths being hard is the feeling of your brain growing and stretching.”



3. For character building – and when they want to give up

Ask your child / teen, who is your favourite (human) hero?

Listen to the answer.

Ask, why do you like them so much? What their hero's talents are? How did they achieve so much? Again, listen to the answer.

Ask your child / teen to do some research on their hero. Ask them to find out what it took for them to become a hero? How did they get where they are today?

(if your child is quite young, help them do the research).

Your child or Teen will find it, that it wasn't their hero's talents or ability to do whatever made them a hero but their hard work, even when they failed to begin with, their perseverance, their emotional GRIT and attitudes...

This will make your child/teen admire them even more and give them a real role-model.

Then you can ask them – what is it that they need to do, to become successful in their own life, like their hero? Where could they start?

This will get them thinking and start a conversation that could be helpful to their character growth.



4. Character Building – Building Gratitude, especially when feeling ‘low’

Ask your child to picture a perfect moment, a moment that made them happy in the week (day).

You could ask them to draw it, if they are younger, then explain what the picture is all about?

If your child is older or a teen, they could picture the scene in their minds, and describe it to you, and why it makes them happy.

This recreates the joy and good in our children, and it creates gratitude for the good things in life. It is positive psychology, but it is grounded optimism – grounded in the truth. We also learn what makes our children happy.



5. Character Building – Building more Gratitude & Positivity

Every night, with your child (or teen) write down 3 good things that happened TODAY. You could all do this! Make it fun. It increases happiness and gratitude.

OR you could have a **Gratitude Jar**, which can be done with the whole family.

So, we focus on something good that happened today, that we feel grateful for. Write it down at the end of the day, then pop it in the Gratitude Jar.

At the end of the week, open it up together. Each person can take out one or two and read them out aloud. Discuss what this means and let the next person have a turn.



6. Building Character – Unexpected Kindness

When we do acts of unexpected kindness, it builds our character. It brings happiness to the recipient and the giver. It grows awareness of other people's needs and builds compassion inside your child/teen.

We need to teach our children to do acts of kindness, purposefully, and we need to model it.

If anyone has been kind to us today, we can note that, and be grateful.

An activity –

Cut out paper hearts, and have your child/teen write down on the heart, when they do something kind for others or someone does something kind for them. You could have different coloured hearts for different people in the family. Then find a place you can display the hearts, and read them often.

It makes children more mindful of themselves and others and makes children feel better about themselves.



7. Character Building – Blowing Bubbles – Releasing

This can be used in the daytime – using real bubbles, or in the evening, at bedtime, using **imaginary** bubbles.

Ask your child to fill a bubble with something that happened that day - they can be words or pictures that they put in the bubbles.

Then ask them to imagine/see another bubble coming their way, and to fill that bubble with something they are grateful for in the day. Repeat this a few times.

The bubbles float up and away from the child – and helps to release bad feelings and thoughts and positive feelings and thoughts. Great for bedtime.



8. MINDFUL EXERCISES - Using the SENSES

- A. MINDFUL SEEING – Make a very big pair of specs! Tell the children that we are going on a walk and we need to use these glasses to help us see and notice things we haven't noticed before! This is particularly useful if you are going on walks in the woods, in the park, or for spotting particular things you want them to notice.

Draw or write down things you saw on your walk. Children can read their lists when they return home (or to school).

This teaches children to SEE and be in the present moment. This exercise is good for **focus and concentration**.



B. MINDFUL SEEING. Can also be used with colours. In the morning, ask your child to pick a colour – any colour – then throughout the day, ask them how many times they can see something that matches that colour?

This activity will help to keep your child focused throughout the day and enhance their focus on colours.

When your child comes home from school, discuss what they saw, and how many they saw of that colour.

(This can also be done as a class activity, or a family activity).



C. MINDFUL SOUND MEDITATION – With chime bars or xylophone

Ask your child to sit down, still and quite, close their eyes, and listen to the sound. Ask them to raise their hand, as soon as they can no longer hear the chime sound. Play the chime bar. Repeat this exercise 3 times.

This helps children with focus and concentration, and awareness of sound.

(This can be done as a class activity or a family activity.)



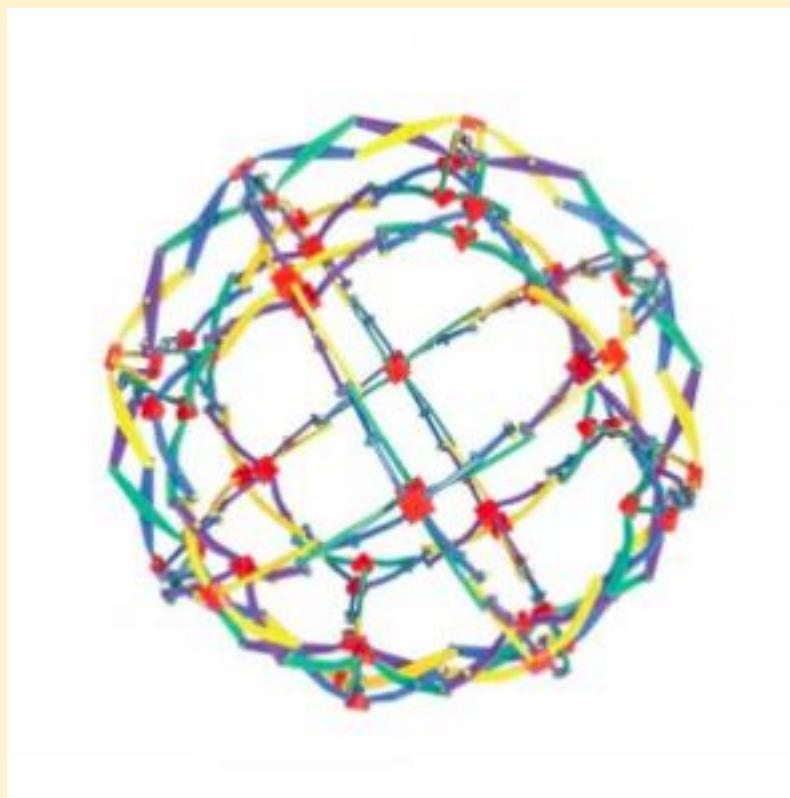
D. MINDFUL BREATHING

Mindful breathing can be used to keep an anxious or angry child / teen calm.

They should breathe in deeply and slowly, and breath out slowly using the Hoberman Sphere. Parent should hold the Sphere and ask their child to follow them – when you Inflate/expand the sphere, they should breath in deeply, hold, when you deflate the sphere, they should breath out. Repeat this several times.

This could be combined with visualising their favourite quite place.

This exercise helps with calming and focusing.



(Can be bought on ebay or Amazon)