



MEDITATION MANUAL

Thank you for having the insight to take this journey with me. The child/children you wish to expose this practice to will never forget it. I can almost certainly promise that.

This version of MB8 is in Beta (testing phase), and I appreciate any [feedback](#) you can offer for refinements to the program, so others in the future can benefit. Think of yourself as a pioneer in this wide-open space.

First, I want to unpack our working definitions of mindfulness and meditation so we are on the same page. This is important because of the variety of explanations that exist, and we need clarity on these points to build a solid foundation of understanding.

What Is Mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is observation in its purest form.
- Mindfulness is intentionally observing human experience from a place of calm objectivity, anchored in the present moment.
- Mindfulness is state of be-ing, in which a person can condition oneself to experience transcendent cognitive functioning, and adapt/cope with life in a positive and holistic manner.
- Mindfulness is simply a state of mind, not owned by any form of spirituality or religious dogma. A truly secular tool, it can also deepen your own personal spiritual path.

You don't need to believe anything about the deep mysteries of the Universe, quantum physics, or religion to become interested in your own consciousness and to experience the benefits of mindfulness practices.

Now, how to tell a child/teen what mindfulness is ...

“Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose.”

What Is Meditation?

Meditation is a form of mindfulness that has been practiced since antiquity. It is a way of training your mind that elevates your awareness (state of consciousness).

When this happens, your intuition becomes stronger, matters of the heart have a higher priority, and you will see things more clearly.

Practicing meditation instinctually builds a bridge between the socially constructed sense of self that caters to your ego and your authentic self that resides deep within.

Over the past 10 years, over 2,000 studies have been done working with meditation.

Meditation is recommended by virtually every domain of health professionals throughout the world. Although we have learned a great deal about this ancient practice, we are still waking up to more beneficial mysteries surrounding this “universal medicine.”

Prevailing science suggests meditation has the capacity to evolve practitioners on virtually every level of the human experience.

Meditation serves as one such method for stimulating new synaptic connections in the brain. By practicing meditation, people can improve the strength and functioning of their brain while also changing its functionality. This means children do better in school.

And to maximize such cognitive function, it seems essential that meditation be practiced with repetition and intention. Yet, as science is beginning to understand, even a brief investment of meditation can have profound effects.

Read our [research on meditation's effects on the brain](#).

Attributes that make meditation a unique state of being:

- High levels of awareness, mental alertness, and very low levels of physiological arousal
- Utilize much less oxygen (whole night of sleep is equal to as much as three minutes of deep meditation)
- More blood flow to extremities
- Breathing slows
- Have alpha and theta brain activity

Proven physical and psychological benefits:

- Lower cholesterol
- Curb insomnia
- Boost the immune system
- Reduce depression
- Relieve anxiety and compulsive behavior
- Alleviate stress levels
- Improve decision-making ability
- Enhance memory
- Treat drug and alcohol abuse
- Lower high blood pressure
- Ease pain of arthritis
- Speed up the healing response
- Relieve digestive disorders
- Reduce symptoms of PMS and menopause

Benefits of meditating over time (1+ years) include:

- Have a younger physiology (bio markers of aging are five to 12 years younger)
- Notable improvements in brain functioning, hearing, and seeing
- Lower levels of cancer and heart disease
- Accelerated stages of psychological development* (you get wiser, faster)

*Stages of Development are major developmental markers over the span of someone's life, i.e. maturation. Most people go through only five or seven stages, even well-developed people. Someone who's really trying to grow and wake up to higher levels of development can maybe go through one stage in five years; meditators can go through two stages in as little as two to three years.

Now, what to tell a child/teen what meditation is ...

“Meditation is paying attention to the present moment while sitting quietly with your eyes closed.”

Why Should Children Learn to Meditate?

Historically, meditation has mainly been an activity/practice for adults. However, this trend is changing, as there has been an increased interest of the practice by children and teens. There's a new understanding that when meditation is introduced in the early stages of a child's development, it can have more far-reaching benefits than when adopted in adulthood.

Meditation was originally meant to nurture a person's spiritual well-being, but the modern generation is largely interested in its relaxation and stress-busting benefits. We now know that when we meditate regularly, our emotional intelligence and cognitive capacity tend to develop rapidly and our physical well-being becomes amplified.

Research

More studies are showing direct links between meditation and health benefits. A study led by researchers at [John Hopkins University](#) found that just eight weeks of meditation training was as effective as medication in treating depression, anxiety, and pain.

At [Harvard](#), scientists using neuro-imaging technology showed how meditation positively affected the brain activity of the chronically stressed, a condition that the [Benson-Henry Institute](#) reports is related to more than 60 percent of all doctor's visits.

Schools have also begun experimenting with the practice, discovering that its techniques can help students. When a [school in New Haven, Connecticut](#) required yoga and meditation classes three times a week for its incoming freshman, studies found that after each class, students had significantly reduced levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, in their bodies.

In San Francisco, [schools that participated in Quiet Time](#), a Transcendental Meditation program, had twice as many students score proficiently in English on the California Achievement Test than in similar schools where the program didn't exist.

Visitacion Valley Middle School had the following positive results:

- Reduced suspensions by 45 percent during the program's first year.
- **Attendance rates climbed to 98 percent.**
- Grade point averages improved.
- **The school recorded the highest happiness levels** in San Francisco on the annual California Healthy Kids Survey.

[Other studies](#) have shown that mindfulness education programs improved students' self-control, attentiveness, and respect for other classmates, enhanced the school climate, and improved teachers' moods.

What is the right age to start?

Parents and adults who wish to teach children about the practice of meditation often wonder what the ideal age to begin the process is.

The earlier, the better.

Experts have ranging views on this, but sometime during the first few years of a child's development, parents can introduce meditation, positively shaping the child's personality and kicking off intuition.

How should you present the practice?

Simply show and allow them to see you meditate. Just being around a calm and relaxed parent imprints nourishing energy onto the child.

A Consistent, Safe, Quiet Atmosphere Is Key

Pick a room/place that you can consistently use for each session. It's crucial this place feels warm, safe, and comfortable. It should provide an atmosphere that fosters calm energy and has as few distractions as possible (i.e. no toys lying around, no TV on in the background, etc.).

Why Children Tend to Learn Meditation Easily

Meditation isn't something you "do," it is a state of consciousness that occurs, a state of just "be-ing." The mind of a child hasn't had time yet to become disproportionately developed, so their thinking-self (cognition) eclipses their meditative-self (intuition).

Additionally, **children are naturally in the present moment;** they're rarely concerned with the past or future. They are in the Now. Adults struggle with being in present, and that is half the battle with meditation.

Why does this occur? Adults go through a lifetime of conditioning that fosters cognition (i.e. rational thinking). At the same time, we are taught not to pay attention to anything in the gray area, "stuff" science can't explain. This includes our intuitive capacity and "sixth sense" (if you believe that exists).

It's well-documented that young children have the highest propensity for psychic/paranormal experience. It turns out that before social conditioning sets in and rewires our perceptions, young children express extraordinary abilities to see/sense "stuff" adults can't see/sense.

Imaginary or not, children are consistently having these experiences.

“One of the major challenges faced by [spiritually sensitive children](#) is that parents and teachers often misidentify the sensitivities of these children as weaknesses and defects, instead of teaching them to harness and use their personal energy.”

—Dr. Paula Wilkes, psychologist

Mindfulness Practices That Help

Let's Have Some Fun

It's important to make meditation fun for kids and offer a variety of mindfulness practices to play around with.

The main goal here is not make meditation seem like a chore; rather, we are trying to get them curious and comfortable with the idea. If you make meditation a fun and positive experience now, they are more likely to keep it up as they get older.

First, Show Them

Children copy the behavior of their parents.

I want to reiterate that one of the most important aspects to teaching children meditation – or anything, for that matter – is to show them. Almost all mammals intrinsically learn through observation, first and foremost.

In other words, 80 percent of success is to simply sit and meditate with them.

Bite-Sized Silent Retreat

Schedule a day or even just a half-day to dedicate to silence, where there's no talking or technology (TV, Internet, radio, etc.). Adults can do a longer version of this for days/weeks at a time, called, "Silent Retreats."

Even if it's only for two to three hours, it'll give you a mini-vacation of sorts, and serves as a great mindfulness practice for your little ones. This will also help strengthen their meditation practice.

If there's more than one child participating, you can even turn the silent retreat into a fun game, like "Who can be the quietest?" Perhaps even have an award for everyone at the end.

Fire Watching

Have them gaze at a burning candle. And then after a few minutes, have them express what they are noticing. This is a mindfulness practice of focus and discipline, and fire works great because it naturally captivates and holds our attention.

Body Scan Practice

Body scans are an ancient mindfulness practice that brings your awareness to different areas of the body while lying in stillness. For younger children, you can have them imagine that magical golden pixie dust is being poured on different areas of the body, and have them focus on that area and how it feels. For older children, ask them to image a color of vibrant light being streamed into different areas of their body.

This can be a bedtime routine that can help children calm down and relax at night. It's great for body awareness, and you can even do a version of this for yourself to prime yourself for better sleep.

Create a Meditation Fort

Create a meditation space, and call it a meditation "fort" or a meditation "space station" or something fun like that. Kids get really into this, and they somehow inherently know this is creating a sacred space.

Tasks and Supplies:

- Go shopping for pillows that feel cozy and comfortable.
- Go on a nature walk, and pick out colorful stones to hold while meditating.
- Find candles with the color and fragrance they like.
- Get palo santo wood for burning (it's an ancient form of incense).

Time to Get Started

A simple, easy start and gradual progression proves to be an effective strategy with meditation. We start with two minutes in the first week and build up to 15-16 minutes in the sixth week.

In addition to the 2-minute meditation described in Weeks 1-2, listen to the "Bedtime Meditation" (guided meditation) at night.

Please proceed to Weeks 1-2 in the [Members Area](#).