Reflective Notes for
Interrupt Unhelpful Habits
Through Mindfulness Practices That Work!
Created by Renée K. Van Norman, PhD

Today’s objectives
• Learn the benefits of mindfulness practices for educators.
• Understand how unhelpful habits are formed and how mindful practices can help interrupt a habit loop.
• Learn and experience several mindfulness exercises.
• Create a Committed Action Plan.

INTENTION SETTING

Take a moment to reflect on why you became an educator.
Think about the values that motivated you.
Then, set your intention for your time here today.

My intention for today:

Definitions of Mindfulness
• “Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”
  • Jon Kabat-Zinn

Three fundamental processes:
• Forming intention
• Paying attention
• Adjusting your attitude

(Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006)
Mindfulness, as a practice, features two different types of attention:

Focused attention

- Before a staff meeting, a principal anchors her attention on the sound of a chime or the feel of the air entering her nostrils as she breathes.

Open awareness

- To calm himself after a difficult interaction with a parent, a teacher practices open awareness by observing a body sensation, such as a chill or a sneeze passing through him, and then by noticing a loud car drive by his classroom.

https://gie.berkeley.edu/my-well-being/mindfulness-for-adults/

How Mindfulness Empowers Us: An Animation Narrated by Sharon Salzberg

https://youtu.be/vzKryaN44ss

Practicing Mindfulness

What Skills

- Observe
  - Wordless watching
- Describe
  - Put words to experience
- Participate
  - Jump in and do

How Skills

- Nonjudgmentally
  - Not “good” nor “bad”
- One-mindfully
  - One thing in the moment
- Effectively
  - Do what works
Practicing Mindfulness (Linehan, 2015)
What Skills

| Observe | Pick up a rock and notice all the details  
Listen to music. Notice the space between the notes.  
The taste of a mint in your mouth.  
The urge to avoid someone or something.  
Is it tense in your body? |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Describe| Find things in nature  
What a person is doing  
I feel X, and my thought are Y |
| Participate| Dance  
Sing  
Fully immerse yourself in a conversation |

Practicing Mindfulness (Linehan, 2015)
How Skills

| Nonjudgmentally | “See, but don’t evaluate as bad or good. Just the facts.”  
Effective/ineffective vs. good/bad  
“When you find yourself judging, don’t judge your judging.” |
| One-mindfully | Just this moment, just this task  
Let go of distractions  
Refocus attention |
| Effectively | “Be mindful of your goals”  
“Focus on what works”  
Be willing |

How can you practice your how and what skills? What routine activities will you try?

Mindful Autearoa Program in New Zealand eight-week mindfulness in schools program designed for New Zealand school children in years 2 to 8. [https://youtu.be/awo8jUxIm0c](https://youtu.be/awo8jUxIm0c)

Promising results in initial pilot found statistically significant increases in student wellbeing:

- increased calmness
- improved focus and attention
- enhanced self-awareness
- helped with conflict resolution and the development of positive relationships
- reduced stress for teachers.

Video Notes:
## Benefits of Mindfulness Practices for Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased focus</th>
<th>Feel better</th>
<th>More adaptable</th>
<th>Better Mental Health Outcomes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in awareness, focused attention, and working memory capacity.</td>
<td>Greater well-being and self-compassion as well as an increase in positive emotions.</td>
<td>Increase in both emotion regulation and resilience</td>
<td>Reported decrease in burnout, stress, anxiety, and depression</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Improved Physical Health</strong></th>
<th><strong>Better Relationships with Students</strong></th>
<th><strong>Overall, More Effective Teachers</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better sleep quality and lower blood pressure</td>
<td>Report more likely to positively evaluate students with challenges and that they have a greater tendency to forgive them</td>
<td>Help teachers to navigate the sense of “time pressure” they feel in their classrooms while enhancing their sense of efficacy in the classroom—which can positively influence teaching effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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https://ggie.berkeley.edu/my-well-being/mindfulness-for-adults/#tab__2

### Two feet, One Breath Mindfulness Exercise

For the next minute, feel your feet on the ground and take a few deep breaths, feeling the sensations of breathing. To stay focused on the exercise, you might even repeat to yourself, “two feet one breath.”

### Ideas for Educators

- Focused attention
  - Paying attention to the simple, ordinary experience of breathing
- Intention setting
  - Reflect on your “why”
- Emotion journaling
  - The facts, physical sensations, thoughts
- Positivity Journal
  - Positive experiences, gratitude, and appreciation
- Centering
- Mindful walking
- Self-Compassion
Loving Kindness Meditation

Insight Timer https://insighttimer.com/
Calm App https://www.calm.com/
Headspace https://www.headspace.com/

Which app will you choose?

Brief Review

1. Many different definitions of mindfulness
2. What and How skills of mindfulness practices
3. Two features of mindfulness practices: focused attention and open awareness
4. Many ways to practice mindfulness in daily routines
5. Many benefits to mindfulness practices for educators

SEE POWERPOINT SLIDES FOR HABIT LOOPS
Too Much TV Watching Getting in the Way of My Other Values

Dr. Judson Brewer’s work *The Craving Mind: From Cigarettes to Smartphones to Love – Why We Get Hooked and How We Can Break Bad Habits*

See TV with favorite TV show on.

“What’s going on with...” Feel joy, excitement in body.

“Just one episode won’t be a big deal” You watch an episode
Perfectionism Getting in the Way of Other Things I Value

START

Just finished my lesson and I am putting the papers away in my bag for tomorrow.

Body tenses, heart rate increases, shallow breathing
“I’ve made a mistake; I know I have!”
“This isn’t good enough!”

How a Habit Loop Forms

Stay up late, neglecting other obligations which I value

Urge to continue working to make the perfect lesson

Start to feel better, escape some of those negative emotions and sensations

How a Habit Loop Forms

Rewards/Results
How a Habit Loop Forms

Too Much Social Media Getting in the Way of My Other Values

START
CUES AND TRIGGERS
See phone. “This is a heartwarming story about a teacher and his students”

MIND AND BODY
“Wow! It is so amazing! What an incredible teacher!” Feel joy, excitement in body.

HOW A HABIT LOOP FORMS

REWARD/RESULT
You got 3 likes!

ACTION
You share the post & wait for the reward

URGE
“(...)"
Simply notice what you are experiencing in your thoughts and body

“Paying attention with openness, curiosity, flexibility and kindness.” Dr. Harris
Recognize the craving and the possibility of NOT acting on it

“I’m having the thought that I want to keep working. It’s just a thought, I don’t have to act on it, I’ll put it on a leaf and let it float on by. I’ll go walk the dog, because that is something I value.”

Urge to continue working to make the perfect webinar
When I stay up late, although I seem to feel better in the moment, I miss out on a lot of things I enjoy doing. There are other things I value; I am also tired and unhappy the next day.

Mindful Curious Awareness & Reflection

**ACTION**
Stay up late, neglecting other obligations which I value

**REWARD/RESULT**
Start to feel better, escape some of those negative emotions and sensations

Start to accept some of those negative emotions and sensations as part of life.
Self-Management for Habit Change

1. Specify a goal & define a behavior (action) to be changed
   - Decrease TV consumption, TV (2-hrs a day, 2, 1-hour shows)
2. Self-monitor the behavior (action)
   - Count how frequently I watch TV and the duration
3. Set up new triggers (cues) and rewards for your new behavior
   - Keep remote control in a drawer, reward self for using new time constraints
4. Go public with your commitment to change your behavior
5. Get an accountability partner
6. Continually evaluate your progress and adjust if necessary

Adapted from Cooper, Heron, Heward, 2020
**Committed Action Plan**

**Values (What I care about):**

**Being an effective and healthy educator.**

**What do you want? (Goal):**

Start a 5-min mindfulness practice to interrupt perfectionism

**What action will get you there?**

Downloading Insight Timer app on my phone; listening to a mediation 1 x per week for 5-min

**What gets in the way?**

Stress; other people invading my space; time management

**What strategy will get you unstuck?**

Using an accountability partner; setting a timer; going public with my commitment; setting up a private space

**Level of Commitment to your Goal 0 to 5**

- 5 = Totally Committed, Going to Start Today
- 4 = I will do it as soon as possible
- 3 = Will try
- 2 = More likely than not
- 1 = I’ll get around to it, eventually
- 0 = Not going to do it

*If less than 4, what would have to happen to get to a 4 or 5? Is that a goal?*

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**Wellness Warrior Wednesday**

Cognitive Wellbeing

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**Mindful Monday**

“We have only now, only this single eternal moment opening and unfolding before us, day and night.”

—Jack Kornfield
Resources


Meditations and Related Apps

Insight Timer https://insighttimer.com/
Hugh Byrne https://insighttimer.com/hughbyrne
Calm App https://www.calm.com/
Body Scan Meditation https://www.mindful.org/a-3-minute-body-scan-meditation-to-cultivate-mindfulness/ (Greater Good Science Center)
Intention Setting https://chopra.com/articles/a-guided-meditation-for-setting-intentions
Leaves on a Stream http://actforpsychosis.com/pdfs/A11_Leaves_on_the_stream.pdf
Mindful Activities for Adults and Children
Observe Describe One-Mindfully and Non Judgmentally

Videos

Mindfulness Explained by Kids (www.mindfulautearoa.nz) https://youtu.be/awo8jUxIm0c

Other

Meditation 101 for Beginners by Happify https://youtu.be/o-kMJBWk9E0
Judson Brewer TED Talk A simple way to break a bad habit https://youtu.be/-moWjvvMr4
Jon Kabat-Zinn https://www.mindfulnesscds.com/