

GUIDED MEDITATIONS: PEACE AND MINDFULNESS

USING THE BREATH, BODY, AND VOICE TO CREATE PEACE AND STABILITY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

We all need a break and time to reset, cleanse, and pace ourselves in this time of anxiety and stress. Educators are having to be even more resourceful, resilient, creative and flexible due to the upheaval caused by COVID 19. This year's chaos, pressure, and intensity has the potential to wreak havoc on a mind, body, and emotional state. Using the tools of mindfulness can help release stress in the mind, restore calm to the body, and bring stability to emotions.

UMOCA and Lyra Zabriskie created video meditations and lesson plans in support of the educators of Utah. The lesson plans included here, as well as the meditation videos and reference materials, are intended to support both educators and their students during the stressful times of 2020. Our intention is to not add another to-do to your list, but rather to introduce free, accessible, and easy to use meditation tools to support your mind, body and emotions.

You are so worthy of support and we send these exercises and videos to you wrapped in love and gratitude.

About UMOCA

The Utah Museum of Contemporary Art has been an award-winning aesthetic force and community leader since it was established in 1931. Located in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City, UMOCA's rich past has resulted in the creation of a cornerstone for contemporary culture in Utah, providing for artistic experimentation, community enrichment, and connection to the world as it occurs through our related experiences. The Museum strives to be a place where all points of view, experiences, and ages feel welcome to explore the pressing issues of our time through socially relevant art exhibitions and educational programming.

About Lyra

Lyra is a Voice Empowerment Coach based in SLC, UT who loves to help people feel more confident in their singing, speaking and personal self expression.

INTRODUCTION

USING MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION TO CREATE MORE PEACE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Why mindfulness and meditation?

Our world is being rocked by immense events this year and as a result it is easy to feel more anxious, depressed, fearful, reactive, frustrated, out of control, confused, fatigued, etc. These feelings and reactions are natural and understandable given the extreme elements that we are all dealing with in our personal and professional lives. Thankfully there are tools that every human has access to which allow the body, mind, and emotions to find stability, peace, comfort and strength.

Why guided meditations?

The accompanying recorded guided meditations will help deepen these lesson plans and written explanations. It is by feeling the results of guided meditation that often make it meaningful. And by hearing the words of another guiding you into your own peacefulness, we hope that you will be inspired to guide your students into their own sense of peace, calm, and stability.

RESOURCES TO TAKE IT DEEPER:

- The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation By Thich Nhat Hanh (<https://books.google.com/books?id=0RMJU5e-4YcC&printsec=frontcover&dq=editions:k86p2DIABRAC&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwimzOa2wqPgAhUB5awKHVODCZ0Q6AEINjAC#v=onepage&q&f=false>)
- Waking Up by Sam Harris (<https://www.wakingup.com>)
- Making Time for Mindfulness by Grace Tatter (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/19/01/making-time-mindfulness>)

LESSON 2

BREATHING LIKE A TREE: K-12 & Adults

INTENTION

The symbol of a tree is often used to help illustrate a grounded, centered, calm way of being. The image of the tree reminds us we are connected deeply to the earth. Trees also are a wonderful teacher about how to live in balance between rest and produce, be and do. Guide your students through this exercise at the beginning, middle or end of class in order to help their minds to focus and their energies to balance. This meditation uses imagination, breath, and awareness of sensations to create mindfulness.

EXERCISE: BREATHING LIKE A TREE

Step 1: Come to a comfortable standing position. Keep your feet firmly planted on the ground hip width apart with knees slightly bent. Shift your body's weight from one foot to another and feel the bottom of your feet pressing into the ground.

Step 2: Balance your weight evenly between your feet. Close your eyes and take five slow breaths in and out. Imagine small roots growing like little seedlings from the bottom of your feet. These little shoots grow out of your shoes and press into the ground. With each exhale, imagine you are pouring energy into these growing roots. Your feet roots thicken and move deeper into the earth. Imagine how dark, cool and solid the earth is as your roots press downward. Using your exhale and imagination, consciously push your roots down past rocks, bones, and underground caves on their journey toward the center of the earth.

Step 3: Imagine your roots have gone so deep that they begin to sense the heat of the earth's core. That heat begins to be absorbed by your roots. Continue taking deep breaths and this time imagine every time you inhale, you pull up the enormous energy from the center of the earth into your roots. Allow the energy and heat from the earth to travel up your roots until it reaches your feet. Continue to draw the heat and light from the earth's core up into your feet, into your body, until it begins to fill your entire body.

Step 4: Raise your arms above your head and reach your fingers as high as they can go. On your inhale, imagine pulling up the heat from the center of the earth through your grounding roots. On your exhale, imagine the energy exiting your body through your fingertips and the top of your head. The heat and energy from the earth travels up through your roots, into your feet, fills your body and leaves out the top. Imagine light beaming out of each of your fingers. Shake your head and imagine droplets of liquid light showering all around you.

Step 5: Relax your arms, relax your breath, and come to a sitting position. Close your eyes again and notice all the sensations of your body. Do you feel more energized or relaxed? More or less emotional? More spacious or more tense? Take some time to become aware of how you feel before moving on to the rest of the day.

ADDITIONAL CUES

- Younger children cues:
 - "Pretend your fingers are like the leaves of a tree. How do they blow when the wind comes?"
 - Play like they are baby trees close to the ground. With each breath they grow a bit taller until they are fully stretched out.
- Older children cues:
 - "What emotion are you feeling right now? Imagine that emotion floats up and out of your body on each breath. More emotion will take it's place but allow what's in your body to flow up and out of you like steam."
 - "Tilt your head back and let out a big noise on your exhale. Notice how the sound feels as it leaves your body."
 - For lifting sluggish energy breathe deeply but at a faster pace and focus on how hot and energy filled the earth's core is.
 - For slowing down manic or surplus energy, deeply squat through the exercise until you feel your thighs burn.
 - If sitting, instead of standing, for this meditation imagine the root grows from the base of your spine down into the ground.

RESOURCES

Younger children

- Meditation and visualization practices for children (<https://www.waterford.org/resources/mindfulness-activities-for-kids/>)
- Youtube video with 3 minute meditation (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwcw_ofuME)

Older kids

- Youtube video on what is mindfulness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>