## I'm not a robot



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Scroll To Top Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens. Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging themwithout believing, for instance, that theres
a right or wrong way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what were sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the future. Though it has its roots in Buddhist meditation, a secular practice of mindfulness has entered the American mainstream in recent years, in part
through the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, which he launched at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1979. Since that time, thousands of studies have documented the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness in general and MBSR in particular, inspiring countless
programs to adapt the MBSR model for schools, prisons, hospitals, veterans centers, and beyond. Studies have shown that practicing mindfulness, even for just a few weeks, can bring a variety of physical, psychological, and social benefits. Here are some of these benefits, which extend across many different settings. Mindfulness is good for our
bodies: A seminal study found that, after just eight weeks of training, practicing mindfulness meditation boosts our immune systems ability to fight off illness. Practicing mindfulness meditation boosts our immune systems ability to fight off illness.
emotions and stress. Indeed, at least one study suggests it may be as good as antidepressants in fighting depression and preventing relapse. Mindfulness changes our brains: Research has found that it increases density of gray matter in brain regions linked to learning, memory, emotion regulation, and empathy. Mindfulness helps us focus: Studies
suggest that mindfulness helps us tune out distractions and improves our memory, attention skills, and decision-making. Mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism: Research suggests mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism altruism altruism and altruism altrui
regulating emotions. Evidence suggests it might boost self-compassion as well. Mindfulness enhances relationships: Research suggests mindfulness training makes couples more optimistic and relaxed, and makes them feel more accepting of and closer to one another. Mindful couples may
also recover more quickly from conflict. Mindfulness affects the way we see ourselves: More mindful people have a stronger sense of self and seem to act more in line with their values. They may also have a healthier body image, more secure self-esteem, and more resilience to negative feedback. Mindfulness makes us more resilient: Some evidence
suggests that mindfulness training could help veterans facing post-traumatic stress disorder, police officers, women who suffered child abuse, and caregivers. Mindfulness training can reduce our implicit biases and the biased language we use. One way this works, researchers have found, is by
attenuating the cognitive biases that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business: Mindfulness is good for business: Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business: Mindfulness is good for business is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business: Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business: Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute to prejudice. Mindfulness is good for business that contribute the prejudice that
depression in expectant parents, and may even reduce the risk of premature births and developmental issues. Parents who practice mindful parenting practices, and better relationships with their kids; their kids, in turn, are less susceptible to depression and anxiety, and have better social skills. Mindfulnesses, more positive parenting practices, and better relationships with their kids; their kids, in turn, are less susceptible to depression and anxiety, and have better social skills.
training for families may lead to less-stressed parents who pay more attention to their kids. Mindfulness may be beneficial to teens: Practicing mindfulness and depression and increase their self-compassion and happiness. Once teens arrive at college, it could also reduce their binge drinking. Mindfulness helps schools:
Theres scientific evidence that teaching mindfulness in the classroom reduces behavior problems, aggression, and depression among students, and improves their happiness levels, self-regulation, and ability to pay attention. Teachers trained in mindfulness also show lower blood pressure, less negative emotion and symptoms of depression, less
distress and urgency, greater compassion and empathy, and more effective teaching. Mindfulness helps health care professionals by reducing negative emotions and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals cope with stress, connect with their patients, and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and limit their patients, and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and limit their patients, and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and limit their patients are negative emotions.
of self-compassion. Mindfulness helps prisons: Evidence suggests mindfulness reduces among prisoners by increasing their awareness of their thoughts and emotions, helping with their rehabilitation and reintegration. Mindfulness helps veterans: Studies suggest it can reduce the symptoms of Post Traumatic
Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the aftermath of war. Mindfulness fights obesity: Practicing mindful eating encourages healthier eating gain less weight during pregnancy, and have healthier babies. Jon Kabat-Zinn emphasizes that
although mindfulness can be cultivated through formal meditation, thats not the only way. Its not really about sitting in the full lotus, like pretending youre a statue in a British museum, he says in this Greater Good video. Its about living your life as if it really mattered, moment by moment by moment by moment by moment. Here are a few key components of
practicing mindfulness that Kabat-Zinn and others identify: Pay close attention to your breathing, especially when youre feeling intense emotions. Noticereally noticewhat youre sensing in a given moment, the sights, sounds, and smells that ordinarily slip by without reaching your conscious awareness. Recognize that your thoughts and emotions are
fleeting and do not define you, an insight that can free you from negative thought patterns. Tune into your bodys physical sensations, from the water hitting your skin in the shower to the way your body rests in your office chair. Find micro-moments of mindfulness throughout the day to reset your focus and sense of purpose. To develop these skills in
everyday life, you can try these exercises used in Kabat-Zinns MBSR program and elsewhere: Mindful breathing, a common component of many forms of meditation that involves bringing attention to different parts of your
body in turn, from head to toe. The raisin exercise, where you slowly use all of your senses, one after another, to observe a raisin in great detail, from the way it feels in your hand to the way its taste bursts on your tongue. This exercise is intended to help you focus on the present moment, and can be tried with different foods. Walking meditation,
where you focus on the movement of your body as you take step after step, your feet touching and leaving the groundan everyday activity we usually take for granted. This exercise is often practiced walking back and forth along a path 10 paces long, though it can be practiced along most any path. Loving-kindness meditation, which the GGSCs
Christine Carter explains in this post, involves extending feelings of compassion toward people, starting with yourself then branching out to someone giving you a hard time, then finally to all beings everywhere. When trying out these exercises, remember that different types of mindfulness
practices have different benefits. It might take some experimentation to find the practice thats right for you. If youre interested in more formal training, here are some successful programs for cultivating mindfulness that weve identified. Jon Kabat-Zinns Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR), in which students meet for two-to-three
hours per week for eight weeks, practicing at home between classes; it has helped tens of thousands of people build mindfulness. Mark Williams, and John Teasdale, MBCT
combines mindfulness practices with practices from cognitive therapy, and it has been backed up by a great deal of research. Megan Cowan, founder of the Mindful Schools program, offers tips for teaching mindfulness to kids in this Greater Good article. Dr. Karen Bluth shares her experiences and tips for teaching mindfulness to at-risk teens, and
Patrick Cook-Deegan has eight tips for teaching mindfulness in high school. In another Greater Good article, Margaret Cullen, founder of the SMART-in-Education program, explains how she uses mindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and keep from burning out. Programs like the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and keep from burning out. Programs like the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and keep from burning out. Programs like the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and keep from burning out. Programs like the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and keep from burning out. Programs like the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and the search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and the search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute and eMindfulness to help teachers take care of themselves and the search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute Institute Insti
are bringing mindfulness and emotional intelligence training to workplaces. Read Golbie Kamareis five tips for launching a meditation program at work. Nancy Bardackes Mindful Birthing describes her program and also offers
detailed instructions for cultivating mindfulness in everyday life. For more: Watch our videos of Kabat-Zinn for his take on how to build mindfulness and check out these Six Mindfulness in everyday stresses control you? In other words, how mindful are you? The practice of
mindfulness has been linked to happiness, health, and psychological well-being, but many of us may not know exactly what it is, let alone how to cultivate it. The quiz below draws on a mindfulness scale developed by researchers at La Salle University, led by psychology professor Lee Ann Cardaciotto. Please answer as honestly as
possible about how frequently you experienced each of the following 20 statements over the past week. When your can promote more of it in your life. Any responses submitted here will never be shared with any organization outside the Greater Good
Science Center under any circumstances, ever. All responses are anonymized and only used in aggregate for evaluation purposes. Source: Cardaciotto, L., Herbert, J. D., Forman, E. M., Moitra, E., & Farrow, V. (2008). The Assessment of Present-Moment Awareness and Acceptance: The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale. Assessment, 15 (2), 204-223.
Copy this HTML code and paste it into your Web page wherever you would like the quiz to appear. Be sure to include the script tag -- it allows the quiz to resize to fit the space properly. Scroll down for a transcription of this episode. This episode is supported by Tianren Culture, whose vision is One Wisdom, One Health. Tianren Culture and extension of this episode.
generation social platform that acts as a catalyst to foster positive global values and lifestyles. Episode summary: Many of us see yard work as a chore. But what if we shift our perspective and instead see it as an opportunity to practice mindfulness? This week on The Science of Happiness, our guest shares his experience of sweeping the steps of a
Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan, and the mindfulness and mental processes involved in the practice. Then, we hear from Shoukei Matsumoto, a Buddhist monk and author, about the practice of cleaning as a form of mindfulness. Practice of cleaning the plants, or doing other
chores, spend a few minutes practicing mindfulness by slowing down and really being present with the activity and your own bodies movements while you do it. Todays guests: Matt Heron is a Canadian who has been living and working in Japan for five years. Shoukei Matsumoto is a Buddhist monk and cleaning enthusiast in Kyoto, Japan. He is the
author of A Monks Guide to a Clean House and Mind, which has been translated into 18 languages, including English More episodes like this one: How to Make Work More Satisfying: We Should Seek Beauty in the Everyday Life: Happiness Breaks (a short, guided practice by The Science of Happiness)Contemplating Our Interdependence With Nature,
With Dekila Chungyalpa: Break: How to Be in Harmony in NatureWherever You Are, With Yuria Celidwen: us about your mindful gardening experiences! Email us at happinesspod@berkeley.edu or use the hashtag #happinesspod@berkeley.edu or use the hashtag #happinesspod.Help us share The Science of Happiness!Leave us a review on Apple Podcasts or share this link with someone who might
like the show: Kalantari: This episode is sponsored by Tianren Culture, whose vision is One Health, One Wellness. Dacher Keltner Hi, I'm Dacher Keltner Hi, I'm Dacher Keltner, and this is The Science of Happiness podcast. As a lot of you know, we're based out of UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center and we've been sharing our episodes on Greater Good's social
media platforms. But now, we have our own Science of Happiness Instagram, and we'd love for you to follow us. You can find us at @ScienceofHappinessPod, all one word.We're going to go behind the scenes of our episodes, and share how to do the practices we talk about on the show. The first 100 followers will be included in a raffle to win a signed
copy of my newest book, Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life. That's, Science of Happiness p-o-d on Instagram. We also have a link in our show notes. Enjoy this weeks episode. Matt Heron When I was living in Canada, I felt like I didn't necessarily have that much stress in my life. And now that I'm here in
 Japan, that's not the case for various reasons. I'm teaching English and that's every evening, usually starting at five, maybe finishing at nine or 10, so that's a little stressful 'cause it takes away from a lot of the time I would generally spend at home with my wife. And, I now own six properties, all of which are these abandoned old houses that require a
lot of renovation work. And, I'm trying to do myself. I feel very stressed out a lot of the time. It feels like it's, you know, 24 hours a day. And occasionally I find myself not necessarily lashing out at other people, but not being as happy as I want to be, or as open in the moment as I want to be. Dacher Keltner Welcome to The Science of Happiness. Im
Dacher Keltner. Feeling overworked and unable to show up for our loved ones in the ways we want to or to show up for ourselves, for that matter is something so many of us struggle with. But getting outside and plugging into the natural world can really help to settle our minds, ease our nerves, and allow us to feel that were a part of something
bigger than ourselves. In fact, studies show that just getting outdoors and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression, and we also know that just getting outdoors a bit reduces our feelings of anxiety and depression, and we also know that just getting outdoors a bit reduces our feelings of anxiety and depression, and we also know that just getting outdoors and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression, and we also know that just getting outdoors and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression, and we also know that just getting outdoors and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression, and we also know that just getting outdoors and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and enjoying nature increases our feelings of anxiety and depression and d
episodes of the Science of Happiness will be about things we can do outside to make us feel good on the inside. We'll travel to the boroughs of New York City, the deep ocean waters of South Africa, and for our show this week, we're visiting Japan, exploring a way to feel good to tap into nature through a Buddhist tradition, the practice of caring for
the temple grounds. In this case, sweeping leaves from some temple steps in Kyoto. It's a practice that any of us can do wherever we are, just find some place outdoors to pick up a little bit, whether that means weeding the garden or picking up the sidewalk near our homes. For today's show, we're going to hear from my friend Shoukei Matsumoto, a
Buddhist punk. Shoukei Matsumoto We tend to think that to cultivate our mindfulness, we need to practice some specific special set of meditation, but in reality, we can turn every single moment. In our daily life into mindful practice. Dacher Keltner we'll also hear from Matt Heron, a Canadian living in Kyoto, who's struggling like many of us with a
hefty workload. He shares how this sweeping practice went for him. And we'll also learn about the scientific findings that explain how practices like this, can have such a deep impact on our minds and bodies. All that, after this short break. Dacher Keltner Welcome to the Science of Happiness, I'm Dacher Keltner. Today we're exploring an ancient but
enduring contemplative technique, caring for a garden. In this case, by clearing leaves from the steps of a Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan. This might sound like a lot of yard work to you, and it absolutely is, but that doesn't mean that there isn't wisdom in finding meaning in mindfully working. Besides cultivating mindfulness, which supports us in so
many ways, there's a robust literature on both the benefits of gardening, which has been shown to help us feel happier or relaxed, less anxious and depressed, and more generally in spending time in nature. Our guest today is Matt Herron, a Canadian who's lived in Japan for the last five years. Matt joined my friend Shoukei Matsumoto, a Buddhist
monk, to learn about the Buddhist principles behind sweeping the temple steps. And, well hear some moments of their time together. Heres part of our conversation. Dacher Keltner So I want to get a sense of what it was like the day, or really the morning you went to the with temple with Shoukei, as you sort of pulled away from the stressful days and
what it was like for you. Matt Heron Yeah, it was very nice actually. But as I was walking, it's funny, we talked about it a little bit once I got there. I had emails coming in and customer who keeps asking the same question over
and over. So I'm like, okay, I think I will, whatever we're doing today will probably be a good time to do it. Dacher Keltner What was it like as you started your conversation and practice with him? Matt Heron He had a very calm demeanor about him, which was very nice. Shoukei Matsumoto Good morning. Welcome to Hnen-in Temple in Kyoto. Matt
Heron So, initially we went to the back of the temple and pulled out some bamboo, I think. So it's a very stiff broom. Somewhat like an old witch's broom, but a Japanese version. Shoukei Matsumoto I
don't know how. How it is called in English, but it's Chiritori in Japanese. Matt Heron Ah, a very large dustpan. Shoukei Matsumoto Dustpan, ok. You bring, thank you. Matt Heron So when we were starting off, heading towards the steps, we were walking down a stone path that was lined with trees and moss on the sides. So, it's a really beautiful old
temple grounds actually, so it's really well kept. There's lots of relatively large, white, traditional buildings, and then a small pebble path that leads through. What seems to be like a small forest on the mountainside. It was very green and lush with these gray steps in the middle. It was really beautiful. Dacher Keltner Walk me through exactly what you
did with Shoukei with this sweeping practice. Matt Heron Sure. Once we got to the stairs he kind of explained that these are the stairs we're going to be cleaning process is not about doing it perfectly. Shoukei Matsumoto You do half the left side. I do right but uh yeah
it's not competition, so okay. Matt Heron Sounds good. Shoukei Matsumoto All right You're sweeping the leaves, you're also sweeping from the sides into the middle. And when I do the sides, I feel much more
calm because I can do large sweeping motions. It's flowing a little easier. As we get into the middle, all the leaves start falling into the cracks of the stones, and then I have to start sweeping a little more aggressively to get them out. So it's an interesting ebb and flow. The start is very smooth and, oh, this is very nice and relaxing. And then I get to the
middle and it's like, okay, I need to be a little more aggressive here and then I can go back to the nice, relaxing part. It was interesting. We had actually talked about how, for me, it reminded me of living in Canada. So, in Canada. So, in Canada at living in Canada at living in Canada at living in Canada. I would do a lot of shoveling of snow, and it was similar in the sense that if you do it early enough and the snow is light
to push on this. You know, it sounds like parts of the exercise were frustrating those stacks of leaves in the middle of the steps and i'm just curious at that moment, you know what your attitude was towards the activity and your frustration. Matt Heron I think what I was taking away from it is that the whole idea of this mindfulness and, I guess, and
 Shoukei said interbeing, is, it's likely a skill more than it is simply something you can turn on and turn off. I assume if I was better with the broom. Assuming anyone who does this more often is a little less, uh, aggravated by the cracks than I am. Shoukei Matsumoto I think cleaning is a good way to leave our goal oriented mindset or mindset for
efficiency. So just enjoy without thinking of how I can do this better. Just become broom. Matt Heron Okay. Shoukei mentioned to be the broom and don't worry about it so much, and I certainly did get a little better at it by the time we got to the bottom of the steps, but I can do this better.
think, going forward, it's something that I need to be mindful of, that the whole idea of mindfulness is a skill I'll need to work on, and I don't think doing any particular activity is going to change anything necessarily. It's a matter of consistently keeping this idea in mind and practicing this mindset, regardless of the activity. And I think that's a big
thing that I took away is that if I have a goal in mind as far as mindset goes, or dealing with stresses, it's something that I need to work on little by little, and it's a skill that I'll develop and hopefully, eventually, have a lot more control over. Shoukei Matsumoto So, you may think cleaning is about perfectionism, so you need to clean 100%, but it's not
I'd say it's a practice to leave from perfectionism. So we cannot complete cleaning. There is no 100 percent cleaning, the leaves start falling. So that's the nature. Matt Heron I mean, even as we're talking now, I've seen maybe three leaves fall on the steps that we just spent however long cleaning. But, I think Shoukei is
right that it'll never be clean and done. There will always be more to do.Dacher Keltner That's good to hear. In a study in South Korea, they had these adults who had mild depression and anxiety and they did a 15 week gardening program and Twice weekly they did gardening activities and over that time their symptoms of depression and anxiety
Improved or lessened and I'm just curious how you feel this practice was showcase sweeping the steps affected all the stresses that you've reported on of you know, worrying about things sort of mind focused on the phone if you notice any changes. Matt Heron Being able to go into the temple and hear the birds chirping, be in the trees, have the light
rays coming through them was really nice and created a bit of a disconnect from all the stresses of normal life. Being away from all those stresses. Um, but I, I wonder part of it though is Sweeping is not typically a relaxing activity for me if I'm doing it, but I wonder if a lot
of that sort of enjoyment and Calmness that came out of it was because I was doing it with Shoukei. I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I thought, oh, okay I need to clean these steps and I need to get this done and I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I thought, oh, okay I need to clean these steps and I need to get this done and I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I thought, oh, okay I need to get this done and I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I thought, oh, okay I need to get this done and I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I thought, oh, okay I need to get this done and I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I thought, oh, okay I need to get this done and I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise where I would have been more of a goal oriented exercise when
finished. Whereas with Shoukei, it was, it wasn't about sweeping the activity and enjoying the activity and enjoying the activity with someone else
whether it was gardening or sweeping or hiking, can change the activity from something that is goal driven and I can see the light, I can feel the wind, I can hear the birds. There's nothing there putting pressure on me. I'm just
existing in that space surrounded by trees, birds, water, whatever have you. And I feel more open. I think the biggest thing I'm going to take away from this whole experience is that I will try to make more of a conscious effort to get into nature more. You can feel more connected with nature, you can feel more open and more fresh, and it's a nice
refresher from normal life and normal stresses, and then you can go back into normal life again and perhaps feel a little bit cleaner, if you will. Dacher Keltner Well, Matt, thank you so much. I enjoyed the whole experience. Shoukei
Matsumoto Cleaning outdoor is a great opportunity to come to understand that we are part of the nature. Dacher Keltner Up next, my conversation with Shoukei. Dacher Keltner Welcome back to The Science of Happiness. It's something that
most of us can do wherever we are. Maybe it's raking leaves in the yard or picking up trash at a park. Our guests for today's show had the privilege of visiting a beautiful Buddhist monk who guided him through that sweeping practice. My friend, Shoukei
gleaned from Buddhism, which is just this lovely space. the possibility of mindfulness or enlightenment or awareness just in every aspect of our behavior. You teach people that cleaning and sweeping becomes a form of contemplation. How is this possible? Shoukei Matsumoto We tend to think that to cultivate our mindfulness, we need to practice some
specific special set of meditation or some sort of practice in our time but in reality, we can turn every single moment in our daily life into mindful practice. So to cultivate mindfulness what is important is keeping practice, practicing, right. Sometimes your mind might be occupied with issues you're facing at or emotions of anger or whatever,
Compared to the meditation in silence, in stillness, cleaning practice is meditation in motion. So, at least you need to be aware of your physical motion or thought, try to concentrate on your emotion in cleaning, so that it reduces your attachment to
the issue or problem you are facing. Dacher Keltner We know from a lot of research that, you know, when you practice meditation outdoors, there's just greater reductions in stress. A recent study from the UK, other research finds people feel more connected to nature, which is so important today. How would you teach us about the deepening of a
meditative practice by doing it outdoors? What does it give to us? Shoukei Matsumoto So basically, I think that the role of Buddhism, the role of Buddhism, the role of Mahayana Buddhism is cultivating your sense of feeling interbeingness in this world. So, the great Mahayana Buddhism, the role of Mahayana Buddhism, the role of Buddhism and the role of Buddhism, the role of Buddhism and the role of Buddhism
interdependent. Everything is related, each other. So, cleaning outdoor is very, very powerful experience for us to remember that we are interbeing, interconnected. So we can feel the wind, we can see the change of the season and touch the soil and the microbes in the soil. And so we are beyond ourselves, right?Dacher Keltner Shoukei, I wanted to
ask you about something you wrote in your book about communing with nature. And first you write that it gives us richness to our minds. And that's a old idea, a very deep idea, you know. In indigenous traditions and Ralph Waldo Emerson writing, we learned some of our most important ethical ideas in being with nature. But then you go on to say
that, you know, examine nature and then examine yourself through the lens of nature. And that really struck me. You know, there's recent research coming out of the UK showing when students do mindfulness practices outdoors in nature, they do indeed become more reflective. So I'm curious what your thinking is about examining yourself through
the lens of nature. Shoukei Matsumoto Yeah. So, nature is my favorite cleaning garden is my favorite cleaning outside of yourself, but you are part of the nature. And in this consumerism, we tend to be obsessed with being very valuable, value
adding existence as a producer or as a consumer, but we could be neither consumer nor producer. We could be decomposer. So that's the great learning in cleaning practice. Dacher Keltner It's a whole shift in identity. It's not a subject object relationship in some way. It's right, right. A process view of what we do out in the world. Shoukei Matsumoto
Right. Right. Right. Dacher Keltner This has been such a rich conversation, Shoukei. Thank you so much for joining us on the science of happiness and Showing out guests Matt Herr on how to properly sweep the temple steps. Shoukei Matsumoto Yeah, thank you so much. Dacher Keltner This has been such a rich conversation, Shoukei. Thank you so much for joining us on the science of happiness, we're staying outdoors,
except instead of Japanese temples, our guest explores new places he's never seen before in New York City, where he lives. Aaron Heller On days when you explore more, you go to new places, you tend to report feeling happier, and that's partially driven by this novelty bonus that's intrinsic in people's brains. Dacher Keltner We travel through the
boroughs of New York and learn why visiting new places without traveling far can make us happiness. I'm Dacher Keltner. A special thanks to our research assistants and my former Science of Happiness students, Dasha Zerboni and Selina Bilal. Our associate producer is Aisha Wallace-Palomares. Our
sound designer is Jenny Cataldo of Accompany Studios. Our producer is Haley Gray. Our podcast's executive producer is Shuka Kalantari. Parenting & Family Articles & More Scroll To Top The five "resilience animals" can help children and caregivers learn to be mindful and self-compassionate in moments of difficulty. By Jamie Lynn Tatera | July 14,
2025 What resources do you find helpful when youre struggling? In the wake of the pandemic, a series of federal grants brought me into Milwaukee Public Schools to support childrens well-being and resilience. In one fourth-grade bilingual classroom, students were so engaged with our playful mindful self-compassion practices that I returned the
following year as a volunteer to continue our work. By 2025, we had taken things deeperexploring five resilience animal habits to help students cope when things go wrong. The resilience animalsa dolphin, a dog, a bunny, a giraffe, and a suncome from the Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Workbook for Kids, which I wrote with the help of 12
children. They are also part of the research-based Mindfulness and Self-Compassion for Children and Caregivers course and related teacher training programs I have created. The workbooks and programs are designed to teach kids (and caregivers) the essential skills of mindfulness and self-compassion. Mindfulness invites us to be present with our
thoughts, feelings, and surroundings in a curious, non-judgmental way. And self-compassion means we treat ourselves like a good friend when we are struggling. When kids learn to notice their feelings and respond with care, they can more easily handle lifes challenges and bounce back when life gets hard. Its delightful to witness how these animals
make learning mindfulness and self-compassion fun for both kids and their caregivers. (You can take the quiz yourself and discover your resilience habits take root in families when parents embrace them, and they take root in families when parents embrace them. Here are the five resilience habits and how you can work with
children on them. Spotting our feelings, thoughts, and sensations When I get stressed, I like to use mindfulness (Spots) like noticing my senses or how I feel. Ambika, age 12 Resilience begins with awareness, which is why the first resilience habit animal is Spots the giraffes spots can remind us to spot what is happening inside and around a round 
us, including our thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and five senses. We can also be mindful of our urges and actions. One way to help children grow mindfulness is through modeling. We can mindful awareness by asking them
how they feel and helping them be curious about what they can see, hear, and sense. For example, a parent waiting in a long line at a store could say to a child, I noticed Im feeling a little impatient and my shoulders are getting tight. How are you feeling? The two might then decide to name things that they can see and hear, or play a mindful seeing
game like Eye Spy together. Spotting our thoughts, feelings, and five senses can help us stay present and balanced when difficult things happen. Research on mindfulness suggests that it can also be a catalyst for cultivating healthy habits. Belonging to humanity When Im stressed, I use Buddy. I remember that Im not alone and most people go
through the same things. Kamille, age 11 The second resilience habit is remembering that difficult moments are part of the human experience. In the field of self-compassion, this habit is referred to as common humanity. When we practice common humanity, we remember that it is natural to sometimes struggle and falter, and we feel connected in
our shared humanity. Common humanity contrasts with the resilience-depleting habit of telling ourselves that we shouldnt be struggling. Whereas self-judgment tends to make us feel worse, remembering the universality of challenges boosts our ability to cope. Buddy the dog is the resilience animal that reminds us its OK to be fully human and feel as
we do. Just as a dog can be mans best friend, so too can Buddy help us to remember that we are not alone. In a not-yet-published study of the Mindfulness and Self-Compassion for Children and Caregivers program, many children share that they use the Buddy habit to soothe themselves when they struggle. Parents can help kids to internalize a sense
of belonging by appropriately sharing their own struggles, as well as highlighting the shared experience of challenges in daily life. Self-kindnessgentle and strong I feel like I have the Snuggles habit. When something goes wrong, I start thinking Its OK; Im going to be good. Denny, age 10 Self-kindness is a superpower, and perhaps thats why Snuggles
the bunny frequently dons a cape. Kindness can be tender and comfort us when things go wrong, and kindness is the third component of self-compassion as defined by researcher Kristin Neff. Wrapping ourselves in a blanket of
kindness as we go through challenges boosts our resilience and positive coping skills. Happily, self-compassion is a trainable skill. A simple self-compassion practice is to ask ourselves during a moment of struggle how we would respond to a close friend with a similar challenge. We can then turn that kindness back to ourselves. There are many
strategies for helping children grow self-kindness, including speaking to them in a compassionate voice that they can internalize. There are also Mindful Self-Compassion programs for adults, teens, and children. Taking kind actions I like to use the Doodles habit I go for a run or I journal. Maya, age 14 Self-compassion can also take the form of kind
actions. When things go wrong, Doodles the Dolphin asks us what we can do to support our own well-being. This sometimes involves turning toward our problems and focusing on a good book, the natural world, or spending times
with a friend. Helpful actions will look different for different people. Here are some favorites from kids who helped me create my workbooks: When stressed, Khalil likes to rest or move his body. Sofia finds comfort caring for her plants. Matteo feels better when he makes art or plays games, and Anjali calms herself with music. You can invite children
to make a list of activities that are kind to their mind, body, and heart, and they can look back at their lists when they are struggling. The litmus test for determining whether or not to feel discomfort, but rather what to do while we wait for
the pain to pass. Taking in the good When Im upset, I like the Sunny habit. I think about something different and just play songs that make me happy. Sunny thinks about the good things. When I work
with kids in schools on cloudy days, I sometimes invite them to look out the window and ask them, Is there sun? I receive a chorus of mixed responses, and then I remind them that the sun is there; its just hidden behind the clouds. There are always good things happening, even when life gets hard, which is why our last resilience habit is called Sunny
the sun. Our brains have a natural negativity bias, so we need to be intentional about helping our minds take in goodness. We can pause when we have an enjoyable moment throughout the day and take a few deep breaths as we bring our attention to our senses. This can help good things be more salient in our mind. We can also purposefully
remember a handful of good things each day. What would be helpful? Which of the five resilience animals is your best match? Do you like to observe the situation like Spots the bunny, or do you take action like Doodles the dolphin? Or maybe
you look for the good like Sunny? The five resilience animal habits create a robust toolkit for coping with difficult things, and we can be intentional about building these skills. When it comes to learning the habits, the key is to grow them when all is well so that they are accessible when things go wrong. If I were going to add a sixth habit, it would be
remembering to ask ourselves what we need during our moments of struggle. This comic from volume 2 of the Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Workbook for Kids highlights the power of asking ourselves what we need when things go wrong: When Im stressed, Im sometimes tempted to pick up my phone and scroll. But then I remember the
resilience animals and ask myself: What would actually be helpful? During moments of struggle, we can turn to the five choices from the Resilience Animal Quiz. Do we need mindful awareness like Spots? Or a Buddy-style sense of connection? Perhaps we need kindness like Snuggles, or to take helpful action like Doodles. Or maybe we need Sunny to
help us remember that good things are happening, too. One, two, or a collection of all the resilience animal habits might be helpful in the moment. The key is to pause during our moments of struggle and ask ourselves what we truly need. Greater Good wants to know: Do you think this article will influence your opinions or behavior? Scroll To Top By
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health crisis impacting young people on college campuses today. These issues affect people of all generations in the United States and accepted by others is a fundamental human need. In education, belonging and connection are critical factors in student success, engagement, and retention both face to face
and online, on college campuses and within K12 learning communities. In K12 settings, both student-teacher and physical and mental health problems among students. Given how essential social connections are to student well-being
and success, the CDC recommends educators devote more time to giving students the opportunity to develop and practice their social skills. To do this, educators need simple and effective ways to promote and facilitate positive connections. One promising way to do that is with relational mindfulness practices, which combine socializing with stress
reduction, helping students learn basic mindfulness skills and connect with themselves and each other more deeply. Developed at UCLA Mindful, where one of us (Natalie) trained as a mindfulness practices provide a structured, fun, and engaging way to initiate engagement between students and promote connection,
compassion, and belonging. The benefits of relational mindfulness practices Mindful awareness results from placing attention on present-moment experiences with openness and curiosity. Relational mindfulness involves extending that awareness on to the experience of interacting with another person. This awareness can focus on any social
interaction in daily life and can also be cultivated in structured, formal practices are suited to the needs of beginning and experienced mindfulness practitioners alike, and well discuss some specific practices below. Beyond fostering peer connections, relational mindfulness offers additional benefits. Its an accessible way to develop
basic mindfulness skills, including awareness and meta-awareness of multiple things simultaneously). This can help students feel less consumed by their experiences, like being lost in negative thoughts or overloaded by difficult emotions. Focusing attention on another person, rather than inward (e.g., on breathing), can make mindfulness
more engaging for young people. Part of the practice of relational mindfulness involves listening and speaking to others with greater attention, building both mindfulness and social skills. Students learn how to pay attention to someones emotional state and build empathy from listening to their perspective. Listening to another persons
experienceespecially one that feels relatablecan broaden their perspective as they reflect and perhaps start to understand themselves better. In this way, feelings and experiences can become more human and normalized. And research suggests that incorporating emotions into learning allowing students to think and feel not just for themselves but for
and with others toostrongly predicts healthy brain development in adolescents in the short and long term. Relational mindfulness practices often help students feel more comfortable being themselves. In part, this is because there is no two-way, back-and-forth conversation. One partner silently listens to another without responding. This no comment
and compassion. Relational mindfulness practices work well both in person and online for a variety of ages and needs. While relational mindfulness is often practiced in person, it is equally impactful in online learning environments. Digital spaces have unique challengesstudents may feel disconnected, distracted, or hesitant to engage. Relational
mindfulness practices may help bridge that gap, creating meaningful interactions in any setting. For Lucy, 19, who participated in a 14-week stress reduction and social connected her both to peers and to herself, which made her feel good. She remarked on how she
often came to the sessions feeling stressed and wondering if she truly had time to attend, given homework and other commitments. Yet each time she left the sessions feeling refreshed, revived, and happier. For her as a college freshman, experiencing meaningful connection and acceptance with the upperclassmen in the program buoyed her self-
confidence and inner strength. Lucy is not alone in her positive experience with relational mindfulness practices and found that they fostered peoples social connectedness and reduced their feelings of isolation. Lead researcher Tania Singer
                                  ulness as a form of social glue, helping participants stay actively engaged over nine months of practice. People reported enjoying partner (who changed weekly), and feeling more connected with the universal hun
experience. Different ways to practice relational mindfulness We took steps to systematically identify and understand the full range of relational mindfulness practices developed and taught at UCLA Mindful by Diana Winston and Marvin Belzer, and we cover some of the practices below. These can be brought into online and face-to-face learning
environments by educators and mental health practitioners. Check-ins: Check-ins can be done daily in small groups at the beginning of class, with each member of the group taking two minutes to share how they are feeling and reflecting on where they are in regard to the current lesson, noting what is clear and what they could better understand.
Group check-ins can help students feel more engaged, understand each others experiences, self-reflect, and normalize challenges. After check-ins, groups may share with the whole class any themes that came upfor example, We are all feeling pretty stressed and ready for break. We also had some confusion about the upcoming project that is due.
Thunder and lightning rounds: These teacher-led practices quickly sweep around the entire classroom. The teacher calls on each student to answer one questions that can be answered in a few words, such as What is your biggest takeaway from this unit? or
What are you most looking forward to doing this weekend? A lightning round focuses on a question that can be answered in just one word, such as What would you be? This can help build connections or advance learning. Each member of the classroom has a
low-stakes opportunity to participate, which can help students who have difficulty engaging in discussions feel more comfortable. Appreciative inquiry: In groups of two to four, students take turns speaking for two minutes about something that is going well, something that they are grateful for, or a big or small victory they have experienced recently.
This helps to reinforce positive circumstances or experiences, and students often find it uplifting to discuss and hear good things. Monologues: In pairs or groups of three, students can learn about each other, reflect on
what makes them happy and how this might relate to their classmates happiness, and focus on positive aspects of their own lives. Repeating questions: In pairs, students take turns asking a repeating question focused on, for example, the positive character traits of someone they know or a current or historical figure who is the subject of their
learning. The listener asks: What do you like (or admire) about them? The speaker answers the question fully. The listener and the speaker switch roles. Students have the opportunity to delve deeper into a topic, and the questions can be
tailored to focus on important themes like kindness or compassion. Several of these exercises can be easily adapted for online classrooms. Check-ins, monologues, repeating questions, and looping inquiry can all be done in breakout rooms, using the timer feature to keep track of time, posting the instructions in the chat for students to refer back to.
Some students find these online formats even more comfortable than in-person interactions, as the digital setting can provide a sense of structure and safety that allows for greater openness. Mental health practitioners may find these exercises beneficial to fostering cohesion in the rapeutic or social skills groups. They may be able to work on a deeper
level and explore other questions. Looping inquiry, for example, involves partners taking turns back and forth asking and answering the same question, such as Whats holding you back from (making a good choice)? for three minutes, with one partners taking the other after completing their response before switching roles. After time is up, partners
switch the looping question to In what way are you ready to (make a good choice?), saying thank you once their partner has finished responding and then switching speaker and listener roles for three minutes. Students
can also be encouraged to engage in mindfulness out loud by narrating their internal experiences. For example: As Im talking about what makes me happy, Im noticing that my stomach is fluttering. It feels exciting to share this and maybe a little sad, too. One of my big sources of joy is my grandmother. I don't get to see her that often. This helps to
further mindfulness skills by naming what is in the students awareness, also helping other students understand how their classmate is feeling and reflecting on their own experience, understanding they are facilitated in a light and positive way. If students are
uncomfortable and do not wish to participate, they can journal their responses to the questions separately. For their own enjoyment and embodied learning, reflection, and connection exercises that leverage positivity, promoting understanding and respect for oneself
and others. Whether practiced in person or online, relational mindfulness leverages the deeply human experience that is within the essence of all learning. The need for connection, presence, and reflection transcends physical space. Education, at its best, prepares learners for the journey of life and includes both heart and mind. By intentionally
fostering relational mindfulness in both digital and in-person classrooms, educators can create environments where students feel truly seen, supported, and engagedno matter where they are. In this age of constant distractions and long hours, its difficult to find even a few minutes of time to reflect. Yet finding that time and space can help ease the
stresses of your demanding working life. Peter Jaret of BerkeleyWellness interviewed Jason Marsh, director of programs for the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC), about the benefits of mindfulness at work, which will be the topic of our upcoming conference hosted by the GGSC on Nov. 13-14 in Berkeley, California. Jason Marsh Peter Jaret: First,
what exactly is mindfulness? Jason Marsh: Mindfulness describes a moment-to-moment awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Its a state of being attuned to what happened in the past. An essential
component of mindfulness is acceptance. Whatever youre thinking and feeling at that moment is neither right nor wrong. You notice it, and accept it, and move onto the next moment without getting caught up in judging what youre thinking or feeling. PJ: How is mindfulness different from meditation? JM: Theyre practically synonymous but theyre not
exactly the same. Mindfulness meditation is one form of meditation, but its not the only form. And formal meditation is one way to practice them at almost any moment of the daysitting at your computer, stuck in traffic, even eating. In fact, there has been a lot of
interest in promoting mindful eating as a way to help people be more aware of what they eat, to enjoy each bite more, and even to control how much they eat. And theres also growing interest in using the practice of mindfulness in the workplace. What are the benefits?
JM: There are many. Some of the earliest studies, which involved the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, showed that mindfulness can help ease stress. Mindfulness fosters positive emotions and helps provide resilience against negative experiences. Theres also
evidence that the practice of mindfulness promotes empathy and a sense of compassion. Indeed, brain imaging research shows that a half hour of mindfulness meditation a day increases the density of gray matter in parts of the brain associated with memory, stress, and empathy. Finally, mindfulness seems to increase concentration and focus.
Research looking specifically at mindfulness in the workplace is relatively new. But theres good reason to think it makes employees at the Dow Chemical Company, for instance, showed that mindfulness training increased vigor, lowered stress, and gave employees a greater sense of
resiliency. Preliminary studies suggest that a program in mindfulness also can increase productivity and reduce the number of sick days. PJ: Are there specific health benefits to mindfulness may also
lower the risk of heart disease. A 2015 study looked at people who score high on a mindfulness training helped decrease depression. PJ: How is mindfulness practice taught? JM: There are
many different approaches, from apps that provide audio of guided meditations to on-site workplace training programs run by outside facilitators. A growing number of companies are offering mindfulness exercises that
participants practice on their own. But people can learn mindfulness on their own. Simply learning to focus your attention on your breathing in the present moment is a big part of mindfulness practices. PJ: What kinds of companies are
taking an interest in mindfulness training? JM: Here in the San Francisco Bay area, were seeing growing interest. Initially, that was among tech and social media companies. Google first instituted a mindfulness training program there, which
has now become the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute, offering mindfulness training for companies around the world. Facebook has its own in-house mindfulness program. Pixar, the animation company, recently set aside a meditation room where employees can go to practice mindfulness. Nationally, General Mills, Ford, insurance giant
Aetna and other more traditional companies have also started to offer mindfulness training programs. So have financial firms like Goldman Sachs and BlackRock. PJ: Some tech companies have been criticized for harsh working conditions. Could mindfulness training become a Band-Aid fix to serious workplace problems? JM: I think thats definitely a
risk. But given that stress is a reality in many peoples working lives, I think mindfulness can be an effective tool to buffer its negative effects. And ideally, mindfulness may even help change workplaces for the better. Research suggests that mindfulness training helps make people more compassionate and empathetic toward others. By improving the
way people relate to one another, ideally it can change corporate culture for the better, creating a more supportive, friendlier workplace with better relationships. In many organizations, there are bigger, systemic changes from happening. At the
least, a mindfulness program provides workers with some relief from stress and anxiety while they campaign for systemic changes; at best, it helps to catalyze those bigger systemic changes; at best, it helps to catalyze those bigger systemic changes; at best, it helps to catalyze those bigger systemic changes; at best, it helps to catalyze those bigger systemic changes. PJ: What advice would you offer someone who works in a company that doesn't offer mindfulness training? JM:You can start by learning how to practice
mindfulness yourself, perhaps by taking a class, checking out a mindfulness app, or reading a book with instructions. If your enapproach human resource or training departments to see if they have any interest in sponsoring workshops or
providing a quiet place where people can go to practice mindfulness. PJ: How do you use mindfulness training at the Greater Good Science Center? JM: We had the idea a few years ago to institute five minutes of silent meditation before staff meetings. People were enthusiastic about the idea, and weve been doing it ever since. It helps people have a
break with whatever they were doing before the meeting, and to focus their thoughts and response to injustice can signal that the situation needs to change; sadness in response to loss can signal that wed like to keep the people we love in
our lives. Our Mindful Mondays series provides ongoing coverage of the exploding field of mindfulness research. Dan Archer Its when we ruminate, or get caught up in our emotions, that they might become maladaptive. Thats when we ruminate, or get caught up in our emotions, that they might become maladaptive.
help regulate our emotions. But why? A new model suggests that the ability to control ones behavior aconcept that researcher Rimma Teper and her colleagues at the University of Toronto write that, despite the common
misconception that meditation empties our head of emotions, mindfulness actually helps us become more aware and accepting of emotion regulation, and how executive control fits into the picture. Emily Nauman: In your paper, you
write that mindfulness helps us change our attitude toward an emotion, rather than focusing on changing an emotion itself. What is the difference between changing our relationship to an emotion and changing the emotion itself. What is the difference between changing our relationship to an emotion itself.
experiences are mostly a good thing! We, as humans, evolved to have emotional responses to certain situations that actually help us in our everyday lives. For instance, feeling fear when you see a snake signals that you should stay away. Feeling love for your family and friends promotes behaviors that foster close relationships. Of course, there are
cases where emotional responses may be overblown, or maladaptive and this is where emotion regulation becomes a necessary tool. Mindfulness is just one strategies that people engage in change the nature of the emotion. These strategies may include
reevaluating the situation that elicited the emotion, or suppressing the emotion altogether through distraction or some other means. Mindfulness, on the other hand, encourages people to observe their emotional experiences without trying to change them. I think that one benefit of this approach is that it discards the tendency of labeling ones
emotions as good or bad. It encourages people to simply observe the contents of their mind. In this way, I think that mindfulness allows for greater self-insight. So for instance, if I feel angry, I might try to observe my thoughts without getting caught up in them. I would also pay attention to the bodily sensations that accompany that emotion, like my
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heart beating quickly. By paying attention to way in which the emotion unfolds in your body, step-by-step, mindful people are able delay and dampen the rumination or overblown reaction that often accompanies it. EN: What is executive control, and why did you suspect that executive control plays a role in the link between mindfulness and emotion regulation? RT: Executive control can often be equated with willpower. There are a number of skills that fall under the umbrella of executive control, but the one that is specifically related to mindfulness in prove executive control. In addition, a lot of previous research has also linked mindfulness to improve emotion regulation. But no one really knew exactly how mindfulness improved emotion in wolves the inhibition of automatic or impulsive behaviors. And for most of us, getting carried away with our emotions snowball. We also often ruminate about negative things that have happened to us. So to

us, it made sense that executive control would be involved in curbing these maladaptive patterns. EN: How have people thought about mindfulness and emotion regulation in the past, and what insights does your model bring to our understanding of how mindfulness and emotion regulation are related? RT: The link between mindfulness and improve emotion regulation is certainly not a new one. What our model does is examine the nature of this relationship and helps to understand how mindfulness simply leads to less emotionality, or that mindful people experience less emotion. Our model proposes that this is not the case. Specifically, we suggest that mindfulness leads to improvements in emotion regulation not by eliminating or reducing emotional experience, but rather through a present-moment awareness and acceptance of emotional experience, but rather through a present-moment awareness and acceptance of emotional experience, but rather through a present-moment awareness and acceptance of emotional experience. This sort of attentive and open stance towards ones own emotions and thoughts allows the individual to still experience emotion, but also to detect emotions early on and stop them from spiraling out of control. EN: How can we apply the insights of this model to our daily lives? Whats useful about understanding that mindfulness helps us become aware of and accept emotions, rather than emptying our head of emotions? If you were to think about teaching both mindfulness and gratitude to students, photography might not be the first method that comes to mind. But mindfulness is, at its core, a state of open awareness and attentionand to feel gratitude, we first have to truly notice the good things in life. Looked at that way, its easier to see how photography could be used as a tool in classrooms to promote mindfulness and gratitude and the benefits they both have been shown to bring to young people. As French photojournalist Marc Riboud said, Taking pictures is savoring life intensely, every hundredth of a second. The Center for Healthy Minds (CHM) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has long been studying the teaching of mindfulness in elementary school classrooms. Over the past few yearswith a grant from The John Templeton Foundation in partnership with the Greater Good Science Centerthey developed and tested a five-week mindful photography curriculum. Their project manual explains: One can say photography is a physical manifestation of mindfulness. It is about stopping/pausing, observing, framing, focusing, and capturing/receivingBasically, photography is about a relationship to the present moment. Relating to the present moment with joy and gratitude is a choice we can make. Slowing down, we can access joy by shifting the focus of our awareness to what uplifts us.CHM offered the mindful photography curriculum to fifth-grade teachers who were already involved in the mindfulness-based curricula study, which included both a ten-week training in the fall for them to establish their own mindfulness practice and an eight-week mindfulness curriculum for students in the spring. All six teachers who were given the chance to participate in the mindfulness curriculum for students in the spring. photography training accepted, and five of them were able to continue with the project into a second year with new groups of students. The first week focused on students using the mindfulness concept of pausing to notice what was around them in the present moment, and then appreciating the visual elements of what they noticed, such as colors, lines, shapes, textures, light, and shadows. In the second week, students learned to use their own eyes like cameras. They noticed what caught their attention and practiced nonjudgmental awareness, realizing that different people may see the same thing differently. Then, in the third week, each student received a disposable camera and was specifically instructed to focus on photographing things that they felt grateful for and that brought them joy. In the fifth and final week, students reflected on the experience and shared their images. Each student received a small album to decorate and fill with their photos, thus creating a physical gratitude album that they could keep and look back on to remind them of their awareness and appreciation. Based on participant feedback, teachers and students alike seemed to enjoy the curriculum and find it engaging and meaningful, especially the connections with both mindfulness and positive emotions. This project re-emphasized the importance of slowing down and being present in the moment, said one teacher. Others noted the beneficial effects of seeing beauty all around us and cultivating gratitude. Students expressed similar feelings. Mindfulness is all about knowing your emotions and staying calm, and photography helps you stay calm and happy and helps you notice what you are grateful for. Or, as another put it, We got to take pictures of people and stuff that we cared about. (When CHM looked at the content of the fifth-graders photos, the two categories of subjects that appeared the most were peers and nature). One students response was simple but profound: It shows me that the world is colorful. We often rush through our busy lives without truly noticing or appreciating all the beauty that surrounds us. As CHM found, mindful photography is a creative way to cultivate focus, deep seeing, and gratitude that both students and adults can carry with them into the rest of their lives. In the words of Dorothea Lange, whose iconic photographs put a human face on the Great Depression: The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.

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