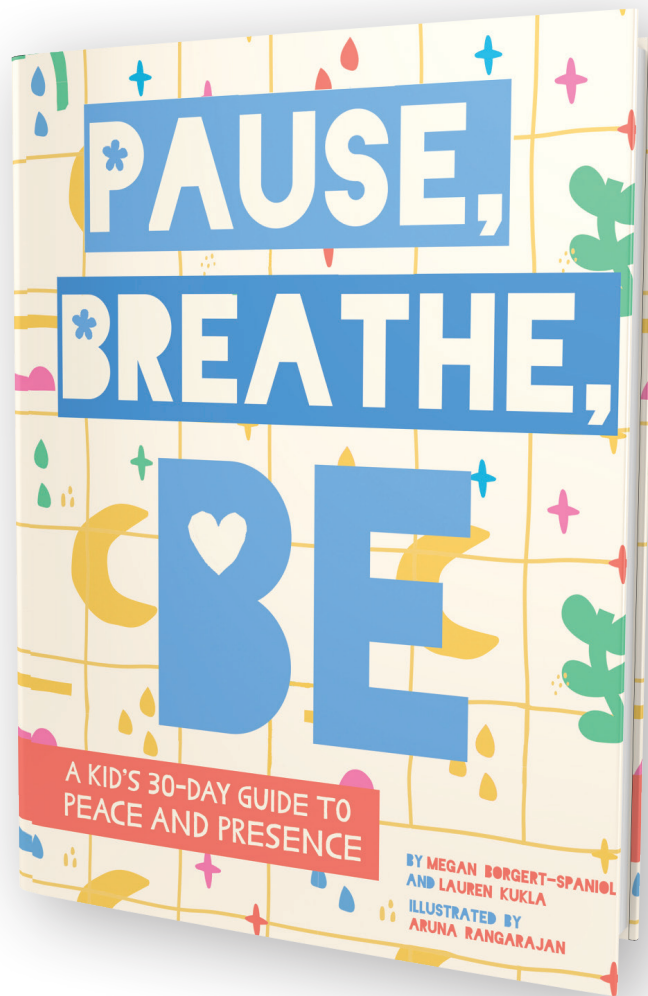


7-DAY MINDFULNESS CHALLENGE FOR KIDS



FROM *PAUSE, BREATHE, BE*
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INTRODUCTION

Within this packet are seven challenges, one for each day of the week, divided into three sections.

PAUSE

The first section, Pause, focuses on finding peace and presence within yourself.

BREATHE

The Breathe section centers on cultivating these things in your surroundings.

BE

And the final section, Be, explores creating peace and presence in your relationships with other people.

Finding peace and presence is a lifelong journey taken one day at a time.

+ EACH CHALLENGE IN THIS PACKET WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH
+ **ONE DAY** OF THIS JOURNEY.

You can work through the challenges in the order they're presented, or you can skip around based on what you need most on any given day. Maybe life has you feeling overwhelmed, so you start with a Breathe challenge. Maybe the next day your best friend is upset with you, so you flip to the Be challenges.

The way you move through this packet is up to you, but we recommend aiming to complete every challenge at least once—even those that may not resonate with you right away. And give each challenge your all. Each one will aid you in learning to **Pause, Breathe, and Be.**

PAUSE.

Reconnect with yourself.

BREATHE.

Practice fully experiencing the here and now.

BE.

Reflect on and grow in the way you relate to others.



PAUSE CHALLENGES

1-3

In today's world, we take part in so many activities. We juggle school, friends, family, sports practice, homework, and clubs. All the while, we manage a constant stream of news updates, social media feeds, shared videos, and text threads.

These activities can be fun, challenging, and entertaining. But we can sometimes lose ourselves in too many distractions. They often take time and focus away from getting to know our true selves, learning to enjoy time alone, and feeling a sense of peace.

The first three challenges of this packet invite you to pause and reconnect with yourself. This could mean gazing out a window and letting your buried thoughts surface. It might mean acknowledging emotions you've been trying to ignore. Or it might mean embracing the person you are right now, flaws and all.

When you pause, you can reflect on who you are. Knowing yourself will make you a more dynamic person. You'll be more able to roll with life's ups and downs, and you'll be more confident in your activities and interactions. Knowing yourself requires intention, but minimal time. As you work through the challenges ahead, you'll find that

EVERY DAY HOLDS
SPARE MOMENTS TO
PAUSE.

DAY 1

GAZE

TODAY, LOOK OUT THE WINDOW.

Doing nothing sounds easy. But many of us feel pressure to always keep busy, so we don't often allow ourselves the luxury of doing nothing.

Find a comfortable spot where you can sit in front of a window with a good view. Set a timer for at least ten minutes.

**THEN,
SIMPLY
LOOK
OUT THE
WINDOW.**



DO:

- Watch cars or people pass by.
- Study buildings, trees, or the sky.
- Hear the wind pick up and die down.

DON'T:

- Have a conversation with someone.
- Send a text, take a photo, or look at a screen.
- Fall asleep.

This time is for sitting with the wandering contents of your mind and nothing else. Soon, you will get back to the demands of life. But during this set time, press pause. **Allow your quieter, deeper thoughts to rise. Breathe and sit with them.**

DAY 2

LET GO

TODAY, LET GO OF SOMETHING
THAT'S BEEN WORRYING YOU.

Worries are a natural part of life. Some are minor: "Am I wearing matching socks?" Others are more serious: "Will I pass today's science test?"

If possible, do this activity while sitting next to a peaceful creek or other stream of water. Otherwise, close your eyes and imagine yourself there.

Picture the sunlight filtering through the trees and speckling the ground below. Hear the sound of leaves rustling, insects humming, and the creek babbling over small rocks. Smell the fresh air and feel its light touch on your skin.

As you watch the water, picture leaves floating atop it and moving along with the current. Imagine each leaf is a troublesome thought related to a worry you've had. As new thoughts bubble up, acknowledge them, then watch them float away.

DO:

- Allow thoughts to flow through your mind naturally.
- It's okay if your mind drifts away from your worrying thoughts.

DON'T:

- Pass any judgment on the thoughts you are experiencing. Regard them the same way you would a leaf floating down a creek.

DAY 3

PRACTICE FAILING

TODAY, TRY DOING SOMETHING YOU'VE TOLD YOURSELF YOU ARE BAD AT.

We naturally gravitate toward activities we are good at. But by doing only what we know we're good at, we miss the chance to learn new skills and to practice being bold and flexible.

Choose an everyday activity, such as cooking, singing, playing a sport, or trying to solve a challenging math problem. This should be something you've never thought yourself capable of doing. Take part in this activity

WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

DO:

- Focus on the physical and mental tasks of the activity.
- Seek joy in each individual action of the activity.
- Find a way to make the activity your own.

DON'T:

- Worry about the end results.
- Allow your mind to slip into negative self-talk, such as, "I'm bad at this," "I knew I couldn't do it," or "I'll never get it!"

When you're finished, reflect on what you just did. What did you enjoy most about the activity? What surprised you? What was most challenging? What did you notice about the challenging parts? What would you do differently next time? **Allow these thoughts to pass through your mind without judgment.**

BREATHE CHALLENGES 4-5

Life can be overwhelming, whether things are good or bad, chaotic or dull. We have expectations for how we should feel and act, how events should unfold, and what we should accomplish. It's no wonder we often find ourselves feeling stressed, anxious, or rushed.

As our bodies go through the motions of the task at hand, our minds often wander between the past and future. *Why did I say that? Next time I have to do better. If only that hadn't happened. What if I don't get what I want?*

The next two challenges in this packet encourage you to practice presence. This is the skill of fully experiencing the here and now. One way to focus on the moment is through mindful breathing. Setting screens aside helps too. You might even find presence by giving yourself over to the unpredictable flow of life.

When you practice presence, you ground yourself in what is real and true right now. You learn to put your energy into what you can control while accepting the things you can't. This will leave you better equipped to find peace in your surroundings, starting with simply taking a

MOMENT TO
BREATHE.

DAY 4

FACT CHECK

TODAY, TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO SEPARATE FACT FROM FICTION.

In just one hour, your brain can have thousands of thoughts. Some are neutral, some are positive, and some are negative. But are these thoughts **true** or **false**?

Write down a list of every negative thought you are conscious of today.

They could be worries, concerns, or just thoughts bringing you down. Some parts of these thoughts may be objective facts. Others are assumptions—you can't verify they are true. For example:

THOUGHT: I am a bad writer. I got a D on my English paper.

THOUGHT: My friends don't like me. They hung out on Friday night without me.

Review your list of thoughts. Think about whether each one is a known fact or an assumption. Maybe part of the thought is a fact and part is an assumption. Circle anything that is an assumption and reflect on it. Assumptions are not always true! Does acknowledging this change the importance you give them?

Go back to your list of thoughts. This time, underline any facts. Now, write down one positive assumption or one positive fact related to each one.

Thought: I am a bad writer. I got a D on my English paper.

POSITIVE FACT: I am a good student. I just didn't study the paper's topic enough.

Thought: My friends don't like me. They hung out on Friday night without me.

POSITIVE ASSUMPTION: There could be many reasons they didn't invite me. Maybe they went to the skate park, which they know I don't enjoy.

DAY 5

SOOTHE

TODAY, DESIGN A CALMING RETREAT.

Our environments have lots of influence over our states of mind. What could you do to make your current environment **more soothing**?

Think of the area of your home where you spend the most time, like your bedroom or a reading nook.

How could you transform this space to be more calming or to bring you peace?

You can start by reducing clutter. Then, try adding soft lights, houseplants, or your favorite scents. Consider a few soothing, natural colors for the walls and decor.

(Be sure to get an adult's permission before painting walls, hanging art, or making other big changes!)

DO:

- Keep items that bring you peace, joy, and happiness.
- Keep items that serve a practical purpose.
- Look for creative ways to organize your space.

DON'T:

- Add more clutter to your space. For any item you add, remove another item.
- Feel pressure to keep items you associate with negative thoughts or memories, or items you have no use for anymore—even if those items were gifts.
- Let this project overwhelm you. If redecorating feels daunting, focus on one thing you can do today to make your space more peaceful. It may be as simple as making your bed or putting away clean laundry!

BE CHALLENGES 6-7

So much in life comes down to you: how *you* feel, how *you* cope, how *you* respond to a situation. It's easy to feel like the way your life unfolds falls squarely on your shoulders. But you are not an island! You share this world and this life with others through all kinds of relationships.

These relationships include people who love you, support you, and laugh with you. You also have people in your life who coach you, teach you, and wave to you as they deliver your mail. Some relationships you form may last a lifetime. Others will be short interactions, maybe lasting only minutes. And even people you never meet may, in some indirect way, affect or be affected by you. All these people make life more interesting, colorful, and rich. And *you* provide these things to others! Others need you, and you need them too.

The final two challenges of this packet ask you to reflect on and grow in the way you relate to others. These challenges will push you to be honest, to be sorry, and to be trusting. You'll practice being there for others, being compassionate, and being a force of good in the world.

YOU'LL
PRACTICE
BEING.

DAY 6

LISTEN

TODAY, REALLY LISTEN TO WHAT THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE TELL YOU ABOUT HOW THEY ARE FEELING.

When a friend shares a problem with us, our automatic response might be to try to find the bright side. But often what a person in pain needs is for someone else to simply **acknowledge** and **understand** what they are feeling.

Begin by asking a friend a specific question about something you know is going on in their life. ("How are you?" doesn't count!)

REALLY LISTEN TO THE ANSWER.

Observe your friend's body language to see if that gives you clues to how they are feeling. Then ask follow-up questions. Put yourself in their shoes and try to imagine how you would feel if you were in a similar circumstance. Understand that everybody reacts to situations differently.

DO:

- Focus on the person and acknowledge what they are feeling.
- Let them know you understand why they feel the way they do, and that it is OK for them to feel that way.
- Follow their lead. Don't push them to express emotions or share details if they aren't comfortable doing so.
- Reassure them you are there for them no matter what. They aren't alone.

DON'T:

- Judge their feelings or second-guess whether those feelings are valid.
- Try to change the subject out of discomfort.
- Respond with, "At least . . ."
- Offer advice (unless they specifically ask for it).

Know you may not be able to help beyond listening and understanding. Remember, this is not about you. **You are giving the gift of empathy to someone in need.**

DAY 7

BE GRATEFUL

TODAY, USE YOUR ENVY AS A TOOL TO DISCOVER THE THINGS YOU ARE TRULY GRATEFUL FOR.

Envy can strain relationships. But we all have that friend—the one who seems to have it all. We can't help but think, "My life would be better if it were more like theirs."

Think about a person you know and have envied.

Write down all the things they have that you'd like to have. This could be their good looks, musical talent, or athletic ability. Maybe it's their boyfriend or girlfriend, their swimming pool, or their drum set.

Now, make a list of all the things *you* have and feel lucky for. Include things big and small, and both physical and intangible, such as things related to your passions, talents, interests, and relationships.

The point of these lists isn't to compare and decide who is most fortunate.

IT IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE IS **LUCKY** IN SOME WAYS AND **LACKING** IN OTHERS.

After you've listed everything you feel lucky to have, revisit the list you made for the person you envy. As you reread the list, allow yourself to feel happy for that person instead. You will likely find that rather than feeling envious and negative, you will feel **grateful** and **positive!**

CONCLUSION

REFLECT, ACCEPT, AND GROW

Japanese culture honors the ancient practice of *kintsugi*. This is the art of repairing broken pottery using liquid gold or silver. The resulting metallic veins highlight the journey of the object, cracks and all. The philosophy behind *kintsugi* applies to more than just pottery. It celebrates the imperfections that make an individual not only more beautiful, but entirely unique.

Consider this philosophy as you reflect on your seven-day journey to peace and presence. What have you learned about yourself? What has changed about the way you engage with your emotions and the world around you?

Try to accept and even celebrate all the parts of you that are imperfect or in progress. Embrace the scars you carry. Let them enhance the beautiful and unique person you are and will continue to become.

Allow the challenges in this packet to continue to push, encourage, and support you. Revisit the mantras that resonated with you and let them guide more growth.

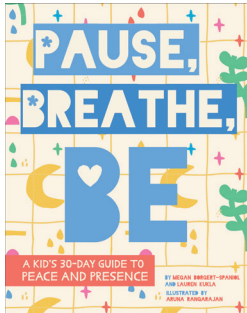
With whatever life throws your way, always remember to

**PAUSE, BREATHE,
AND BE.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

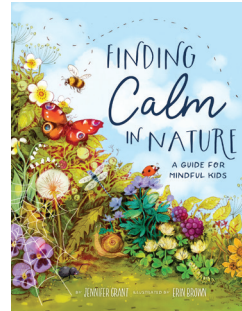
Mindfulness is a journey. And it will take you to surprising places. There will be days you feel at peace with who you are and your place in the world. Other days, you may feel completely overwhelmed. This is part of being human.

Let the techniques you learned through these challenges help you during life's highs and lows. If you are searching for additional materials on mindfulness, below are several books for kids of all ages.



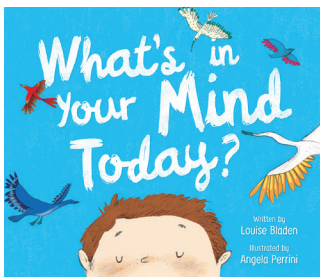
Pause, Breathe, Be: A Kid's 30-Day Guide to Peace and Presence

An invitation for middle-grade readers to incorporate mindfulness into their daily lives. Ages 9-13



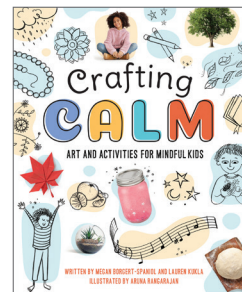
Finding Calm in Nature: A Guide for Mindful Kids

A gentle, practical guide to help kids discover the ways nature can help them navigate their feelings. Ages 9-13



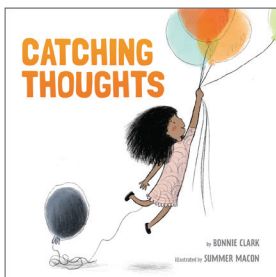
What's in Your Mind Today?

An illustrated guided meditation to help kids breathe, understand their thoughts, and find peace. Ages 3-5



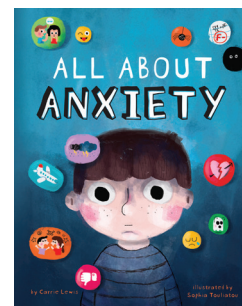
Crafting Calm

A collection of creative activities and practices to help kids use mindfulness in their everyday lives. Ages 5-13



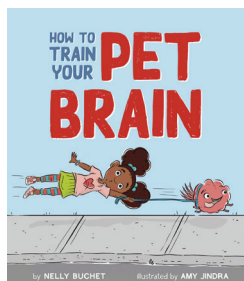
Catching Thoughts

Teaches kids how to practice mindfulness, focusing on thoughts that bring beauty, peace, and joy. Ages 3-8



All About Anxiety

Explores what's happening in the brain when people feel anxious, and equips kids with the tools they need to thrive. Ages 9-13



How to Train Your Pet Brain

An unexpectedly funny take on the tricky topic of mental health follows two kids learning to train their pet brains. Ages 3-8