



MINDFUL

To be conscious or aware of something, especially focusing awareness on the present moment.

“You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment. Fools stand on their island of opportunities and look toward another land. There is no other land; there is no other life but this.”

— Henry David Thoreau

What happens when you feel overwhelmed and stressed? Are you able to breathe into the moment and know that your wisdom and awareness will help you get through the discomfort? Does your mind escape you and bring you to the past or the future and skip right over the present moment? Having the ability to stay focused on the present moment takes practice. It is knowing that each moment whether it brings something hard or beautiful, it is important, and each moment is an opportunity to learn.

Conversation Starters

- Are there things we, as a classroom community can do to help everyone stay present?
 - For example, taking a mindfulness minute together to stretch, breathe, or listen to music.
- When you start to feel stressed or anxious, focusing on the present moment helps to alleviate the uneasiness. Creating practices to help slow things down, be aware of everything around you, and focusing on the present moment is helpful.
 - For example, saying a mantra to yourself, focusing on your breath, or tapping on your forearm.
- Many of the characters the students read about have experienced a tremendous amount of adversity which has caused them to be stressed and/ or anxious. They overcame their adversity, learned from it and got better. The goal is to create a classroom culture that supports this idea of growing from adversity.

The Learning

Have your students answer these questions for themselves and a character they have been introduced to through their reading. It is important for them to know that everyone struggles at some point in their lives and maintaining focus on the present moment helps to overcome the obstacles in front of them.

1. What is your/ the character's understanding of mindfulness?

2. What mindfulness practices have you/ they tried?

**3. What do you think is the connection between mindfulness and accomplishing your goals?
Do you see a connection in the story?**

**4. What needs to happen for you to feel present and ready to learn/ work?
Was the character able to stay present to learn/ work?**

“To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before and which shall never be seen again.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature

“In a single, silent moment, his rage, his fear, his humiliation and helplessness, had fallen away. That morning, he believed, he was a new creation. Softly, he wept.”

– Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken:
A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*

Mindful Assignment

Have your students write a 5 step process for staying in the present moment. A set of instructions for keeping themselves focused when necessary.

Everyone has their own individual process for maintaining their focus, so the steps will match the individual student’s needs and hopefully keep them present, focused and stress free.

The assignment is to get students thinking about taking care of their needs, how to self-manage and self-regulate during challenging times.

