



# Teacher CENTS

## Seven Steps Towards a More Mindful Classroom

### 1. Lead By Example:

We know that human beings [learn first through observation and imitation](#). We also know, but sometimes forget that children and adolescents in particular, have internal radar systems, which detect contradiction. Simply set the timer on your phone, sit comfortably, close your eyes, straighten your back, and observe your breath before you greet your class. If you can develop this daily habit, then so can your students. Once you establish this new practice you might find yourself wanting to learn more about mindfulness in your life outside of school.

### 2. Establish a Routine (and take it seriously)

Drop in to meditation with your class at least once before the learning day begins. If the class isn't quiet by the time you hit ten, then re-open the doors and ask the class to "please exit and return in a mindful manner." Set high expectations for your opening routine. Sit for anywhere between sixty and ninety-seconds, with closed eyes and a straight back. Meditate along with the students. It's a very short part of classroom time after all is said and done. If your administrator walks in, remember to invite him or her to join in.

*Modify the routine after it is established. Let a student lead the meditation on occasion, and allow another student to operate the chimes or singing bowl.*

### 3. Mindful Feedback

Simply ask individuals how they're feeling, or what their experience was like while in meditation. There should not be any pressure to share, especially out loud, but offering this opportunity should be a

constant. Allotting time to share out is invaluable; it honors student voice, and transforms the classroom into a social/emotional safe haven.

### 4. Mindful Journaling

In order to create a mindful classroom, continue to leave room for sharing out loud, but also add mindful journaling to the day's routine. A tried and true technique for promoting metacognitive skills or "thinking about your thinking" in a private and less obtrusive manner is journaling. Mindful journaling can develop into a safe, and lifelong practice, which improves metacognition in your students and in you.

### 5. Mindful Sensory Activities

Three great sensory activities are Wide Angle Vision, Fox Walking, and The Blind Drum Stalk. These activities allow us to turn off our constant stream of thinking, planning, and preparing, and to turn on our senses. Nature awakens around us and our senses become surprisingly sharp and attuned when introduced to a few outdoor skills.

### 6. Promote a Mindful Culture

Meditation, and meditative heroes, must become normalized. Encourage your students to utilize mindfulness as a theme, a character trait, and as a personal practice that can be used to break through writer's block and creative stagnation. The Mindful Writer award, The Mindful Scientist, Mindful Mathematician, Historian, as well as the Mindful

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Teacher  
CENTS

Citizen, are all ideas to think about and develop in order to transform your school's culture into one where mindfulness is not only normalized, but is aspired to by students and teachers alike.

## 7. Remove Judgment by Celebrating Differences

Create “non-judgment zones.” One way of removing judgment is to acknowledge strengths by recognizing differences. There are many personality test options out there (a personality test using four colors), and just about any one of them can provide a classroom with material for a discussion about how wonderfully unique and different we all are. Non-judgmental awareness is mindfulness.

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