

## Mindfulness with Mr. Mehle

Since life has slowed down, now is a good time to practice the habit of mindfulness and strengthen that skill for when things speed back up.

Mindfulness is being aware of the present moment, both externally and internally. This is impossible to do 100% of the time. Successful mindfulness is the practice of bringing your attention back to the present moment (without judgment) over and over again. Without judgment means to not beat yourself up for letting your mind and attention wander, but to notice it has wandered and bring it back. A good mindfulness exercise is a 5 Senses meditation: notice, right now, 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you feel (with any part of your body), 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste. Count them out on your fingers and say them out loud as you go. That is one way of practicing mindfulness.

Another practice is to focus on your thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Again, this is a non-judgmental practice of noticing those things and sitting with the experience of them. This is incredibly difficult, because we often try to suppress, ignore, or remove uncomfortable or negative thoughts, feelings, and sensations, and beat ourselves up simply for having them. An easy way to begin this practice is to focus on your breath. Sit up straight in your chair, feet flat on the floor, hands in your lap. As you slowly count to three, breathe in through your nose, feeling the air rush in and fill up your lungs. Hold your breath for 3 more seconds, feeling the fullness of the air in your lungs. Now blow out through your mouth as you count to 6, completely exhaling all the air. Do that 2 more times: in for 3, hold for 3, out for 6. As you continue to focus on your breath, notice (without judgment) the thoughts, feelings, and sensations you experience. Imagine you are sitting on a porch watching cars drive by. Each one is a thought, feeling, or sensation. Instead of getting in any of those cars and letting them drive you around, simply watch them pass by as you continue to focus on your breath. Breathe in, hold, breathe out, and just be. Be here. Be here now. Be well.

Stay healthy, stay safe. See U back at school.

Calm is an excellent App to help yourself slow down, relax, and practice being more Mindful. It is available for both Android and iPhone and on other platforms as well. See their website for details:

<https://www.calm.com/>