

Mindfulness for Children

Meditation- the gateway to the soul, the escape of the chattering mind, and the awakening of inner path. When we engage in meditation it brings us to a level of calmness, clarity, and serenity, and it offers us insights into our inner worlds and the world around us. Many readers out there are probably most likely already engaged in regular meditation, so this article is not about the benefits of meditation, so to speak. What we would like to talk about in this article, is the ways that we can share these blessings that we discover with those who are not so used to it, or do not have the patience for it.

Let's face it, sitting still and quiet is not absolutely possible for some. With the chattering distractions that come from TV, iPods, and computer and video games these days, there may not be much interest in engaging in silence and stillness as that's not as entertaining right? For parents and teachers of children, young and old, and in between, we already know how important and influential self-care and self-nurturing of the Body, Mind and Spirit are, so what can we do about this?

For one thing, let's have a think about the attention span of a child. I do not believe that there is a golden number of magical formulas for how long a child can sit still for, as we are all stimulated by different things. One thing that I do know for sure though, is that whilst sitting still in quietness, the 'traditional' or most commonly thought about form of meditation may not be possible, it is however, through other forms of meditation that a child can develop more meaningful and mindful connections with themselves. This is achievable from an age as young as three or four years old.

Find out what your child is interested in and turn it into their inner journey and his or her meditation.

Perhaps there needs to be a change in perspective about what you consider a meditation. Whatever you engage in that focuses your mind, your breathing, and your awareness can be considered a meditation. As you explore further into this, you can engage further with the senses. Do something with your child, like go dance, draw, drum, exercise, paint, play or listen to music, sing, tell stories, or walk in nature, and ask them questions about their world.

In this article, we will use exercise and storytelling as our examples:

Exercising is a great way to develop calm clear minds, and present mindfulness in children. Some parents and children may prefer to stay clear of overly competitive activities, as they have the opposite effect. It is worth considering the range of varying interests, personalities and talents that are within your child and the children around them. For the children that are not competitive, remember that there are other things like bike riding, skateboarding, swimming, and yoga.

If one is not mindful or present, how can they balance or hold that Yoga pose? Or how can they catch the ball that you throw to them? Engaging in physical

exercise increases one's awareness and presence, as it requires a strong sense of focus to participate.

The telling of stories is another way to connect with your child and develop mindfulness. Read regularly to your child, tell them stories, and get them to make up their own. As well as developing their creativity, stories empower children to begin to understand and work with different archetypes and symbols. You could reflect on different concepts presented in stories, and the characters; their experiences, feelings, and motives, as to teach your children how to associate with different aspects of stories and draw inspiration from them. Through storytelling, you can assist your child in developing the skills to understand the guidance that the Universe sends them through symbols commonly seen in their wake and sleep state.

Building inward from these experiences, you could then find out what your child saw, what they heard, and what they thought as they were engaged and experiencing their chosen activity. You'll be surprised and intrigued at some of the things that children have to tell you, even from a very young age.

You can work with them afterwards to help them express their feelings and thoughts. Maybe you and your child can create a shared journal that has space for both of your reflections from your experiences. Sharing this time and this sacred space together can be very influential and special to the bond that you develop with your child.

Through developing the expression of feelings, you are empowering your child to become more aware and conscious of how they talk about themselves and the world they live in. You could follow up on this by doing things like giving affirmation massages to each other- where you take turns to say nice and loving things to each and massage the neck and shoulders. Alternatively, you could do this with a crystal. Affirmation massage is a wonderful way to connect you and your child with their bodies, minds, and spirits and to strengthen the bond between parents and children.

My Angels and Guides have informed me that Spirit exists in everything. If that is the case, then connecting with Spirit can be achieved in many different and dynamic ways. We are all continually growing and expanding, and we are discovering new ways to connect with ourselves and explore the world. When we are thinking in the here and now, we gift ourselves with the moment of the present.

If we can pass this wisdom on to the children in our lives, we set them up to make use of all of their gifts, skills, and talents, and they'll come to appreciate, enjoy, and love every part about the lives that they are living.

The world is here to enjoy and share and this is achieved through engaging with it through every cell of our being.