



The Way of Mindful Education: Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students

Daniel Rechtschaffen

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“If you are a teacher, or an educator, or involved in school administration and curriculum development, the book you hold in your hands has the potential to transform your life, the lives of your students, and the life of the school itself, as well as education in America.”—Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, from the Foreword

With attention spans waning and stress on the rise, many teachers are looking for new ways to help students concentrate, learn, and thrive. *The Way of Mindful Education* is a practical guide for cultivating attention, compassion, and well-being not only in these students, but also in teachers themselves. Packed with lesson plans, exercises, and considerations for specific age groups and students with special needs, this working manual demonstrates the real world application of mindfulness practices in K-12 classrooms.

Part I, Why Mindful Education Matters, explains what mindfulness is, the science behind its benefits for students and educators, and the inspiring work that is already underway in the Mindful Education movement.

In Part II, Begin with Yourself, we are reminded that in order to teach mindfully, we need to be mindful. Here teachers will learn the when, where, and how of mindfulness so they can effectively embody its practices with their students. Mindfulness practices offer teachers self-care and attention skills that prepare them to teach with greater energy and mastery. Discover how simple exercises can help manage stress, focus attention, develop compassion, and savor positive experiences in everyday life.

Part III, Cultivating a Mindful Classroom, explores the qualities of a mindful teacher, the ingredients of a mindful learning environment, and helpful skills for appropriate, supportive work with cultural diversity, student stress and trauma, and varying age groups and developmental stages.

Finally, in Part IV, Mindful Education Curriculum, we learn eighteen ready-to-use mindfulness lessons for use in schools. These practical exercises, designed to foster skills like embodiment, attention, heartfulness, and interconnectedness, can be readily adapted for any age group and population, and the author draws from his extensive personal experience to offer a wealth of tips for introducing them to students in real-time.

Decades of research indicate the impressive benefits of mindfulness in social, emotional, and cognitive development, and as an antidote to emotional dysregulation, attention deficits, and social difficulties. This book invites teachers, administrators, and anyone else involved in education to take advantage of this vital tool and become purveyors of a mindful, compassionate, ethical, and effective way of teaching.

The Way of Mindful Education: Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students Details

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Kathy says

This book is clear, concise, and particularly useful if you are just starting out introducing mindful education in schools. Rechtschaffen makes suggestions for different activities to do with different-aged children, mentions potential pitfalls and how to avoid them, and has a great sense of humor throughout. The activities work with students.

Mrs. Kristen says

I'm inspired. :)

Laura says

The brain research to support mindfulness and mindfulness in education is strong and this book makes a great case to support using it in the classroom. Can't wait to enhance my own classroom practice with my students this year with some new treasures found in this book!

Aaron says

An excellent read for any educator (in any category of education, really) who seeks a new approach to their craft. The author does a wonderful job of presenting mindfulness techniques as not being some lofty, abstract set of concepts and practices, but rather accessible and practical methods which may be adapted to nearly any setting. The focus is threefold: The teacher, the students, and the atmosphere. By taking this approach, the practice becomes holistic and permeates every aspect of the life of the practitioner.

Outside of offering sound advice and personal techniques, there is a section at the back which focuses on easily adaptable, practical methods which can be suited to any class, age level, or setting. I plan on adopting many of these as simple bell ringer and reflection activities to be used at the beginning and end of each class to enrich the learning environment and sharpen the focus of my students and myself.

Highly recommended for any educator!

Skylar Primm says

I loved reading this book. My opinion is no doubt colored by having read it in an online book study group, which included a webinar with the author and copious forum discussions. That said, who could possibly

argue with the premise of the subtitle, “Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students”? And that's really what it's all about.

Regular mindfulness practice has transformed my personal life over the past few years, and now I am excited to bring it into my professional life. We teachers have enormous power to impact students' lives for better or for ill, and one of the greatest gifts we can give them is a healthy sense of empathy, compassion, and connectedness.

This book provides simple exercises to practice, quotes to ponder, and ideas to process as the reader begins to investigate mindfulness in the classroom. I'll certainly be returning to it again and again for advice and tips as I work to build a more attentive, compassionate learning community within both my school and my own headspace.

Dean Kephart says

I really enjoyed the book. This is a book that is to be done not read. You have to commit to doing the work to fully take advantage of the content.

Simon says

A terrific book! One of the many good things about it is that it does not try to sell mindfulness as some modern-day form of cure-all elixir. Instead we learn about mindfulness from a qualified practitioner who gives sage advice about dealing with children of all ages and descriptions. The author has taken care to address the often neglected areas (in mindfulness texts) of diversity and trauma. Highly recommended!

Katrina Dreamer says

I enjoyed the author's musings about mindfulness and his experience teaching it in schools. The curriculum is a great complement to my training from Mindful Schools. I especially appreciate how he talks about how to level the exercises based on grade level. I also like his discussion on trauma and how important it is to have an awareness and understanding of trauma when teaching mindfulness.

Eric Durant says

I enjoyed the earlier parts of this book, which have many ramifications for teachers in being aware of our students and responsive to them. The later parts became repetitive, but would be of use for someone wanting to try a variety of exercises in a classroom. Our faculty/staff book is discussing this next month; I think it will stimulate good conversation.

Kim says

Appreciate the plethora of sequenced lesson ideas. Also appreciate the emphasis on teacher journey through mindfulness as foundation to then be able to guide students.

Tanya says

I have been cultivating an interest in and appreciation for mindfulness in the past few years. This book was an exciting and timely piece to read, and I think there are some very adaptable things here. I was hoping for more thoughts on how to integrate mindfulness practice into my specific classroom of history studies, but even without that, there's much value here.

Melissa says

This is a great introductory experience of the various modes of mindfulness in an education setting: for teachers as self-care and as delivery to students. Information is succinctly summarized yet feels complete.
