

Further Reading and Resources

Learn More . . .	Good Books . . .
You can train your brain to be fully present and mindfully aware.	The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How It's Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel and Live -- and How You Can Change Them <i>By Richard J. Davidson</i>
Mindful awareness and attunement stimulates emotional circuits in the brain leading to an improved parent-child relationship.	Parenting from the Inside Out <i>By Dan Siegel and Mary Hartzell</i>
Great brain books for kids Ages 4-6	A Quiet Place <i>By Douglas Wood</i> Peaceful Piggy Meditation <i>By Kerry Lee and Kerry MacLean</i>
Great brain books for kids Ages 7-10	Cool Cats, Calm Kids: Relaxation and Stress Management for Young People <i>By Mary Williams</i> Breathe In, Breathe Out: Learning about your Lungs <i>By Pamela Hill Nettleton</i>
Great brain book for teens Ages 11-14	The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal with Stress <i>By Gina Biegel</i>

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 3: Practicing Mindful Listening

What does it mean to awaken to our senses? It means to slow down enough to fully notice the world using our senses: seeing, listening, smelling, tasting and touching. Tuning into our senses, when practiced overtime, helps us to live in a more conscious state of mindful awareness and focused attention. This leads us to feel happier, healthier, less rushed and more engaged. To put it simply, our senses can be a practical short cut to mindful awareness. The MindUP™ mindful sensing activities include several techniques associated with increasing the dopamine levels in the brain. When dopamine levels increase, behaviors that become more prevalent include pleasure, motivation, self-awareness, alert awareness, focused attention, perseverance, memory, and emotional resilience.

Practicing Mindful Listening

For this Mindful Listening activity:

- Break into small table groups and designate one person to read the directions for this activity.
- Read and follow the instructions outlined in the Mindful Listening Directions below.
- Use the “Mystery Sound/Scent” chart (pg. 15) to record your individual experiences.
- Once you complete the activity think of ways you could introduce this activity to your children.
- Can you think of other Mindful Listening activities?

Mindful Listening Directions

1. Shake each container one at a time, and then pass around in a circle to each participant.
2. Try to identify each sound by listening mindfully with your eyes closed.
3. Write the name of what you think each sound is on your “Mystery Sound/Scent” chart (pg. 15).
4. Reveal one at a time the contents of each container to identify each sound.
5. Discuss with your neighbor how this type of listening was different from the way we usually listen. How were you able or not able to stay focused on individual sounds?
6. Which important part of your brain was working and helpful during this activity?

Mindful Listening

Help children understand that they can choose what they listen to and focus on (even when there are many sounds competing for their attention) will help them manage their behavior, mood and social relationships. Practice it anywhere; the benefits will translate into other settings. “Did you hear the wind whistling through the trees?”