



ANGEL'S FRIENDLY COACHING

GUIDED MEDITATION:
**MINDFULNESS
FOR TEENS**

ANGELIQUE MERCURIO

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| Guided Meditation: Mindfulness for Teens

Mindfulness meditation is practiced sitting with eyes closed, cross-legged on a cushion with your back straight. Attention is put on the movement of the abdomen when breathing in and out, or on the awareness of the breath as it goes in and out the nostrils. As thoughts come up, return to focusing on breathing. Meditators start with short periods of 10 minutes or so a day. As you practice regularly, it becomes easier to keep attention focused on breathing. Eventually, awareness of breath can be extended into awareness of thoughts, feelings, and actions.

- Gently blow your nose. Gently!
- Sit up tall.
- Place the middle and index fingers of the right hand on the space between the eyebrows so that the thumb is positioned to the side of the right nostril and the ring and pinkie fingers are to the side of the left nostril.
- Use the thumb to press the right nostril shut and inhale through the left nostril to a count of four.
- Use the pinkie and ring finger to press the left nostril shut as you release the right nostril and exhale through the right nostril for a count of four.
- Once the first breath cycle is complete, begin again by inhaling through the right nostril while the left nostril stays shut. Close the right nostril and exhale through the left side.
- Close your eyes and do it again. Three more times.

Giving kids the tools to help them fend off negative thoughts and behaviors, build self-confidence, focus, and treat others and themselves with respect and appreciation is a gift they will have for the rest of their lives. Guided Meditation: The Balloon This guided meditation brings a visual component to a very simple deep breathing exercise. You can do this standing or seated.

Relax your body and begin to take deep inhales and slow exhales through the nose. Start to take a slow, deep breath to fill your belly up with air, as if you're trying to blow up a big balloon. Expand your belly as much as you can. Slowly let the air out of the balloon (through the nose) as you release the breath from the belly. Feel your entire body relax each time you exhale, each time air is slowly being released from the balloon. You can even make a "hissing" noise to slow down the exhale even more,

"Like letting air out of the balloon." Continue for several minutes...

Stand up in a relaxed way and follow these steps:

Think of your favorite color and picture a giant balloon of that color in your mind. Take a slow, deep inhale through the nose, filling up your tummies with air as if trying to blow up a giant [your favorite color] balloon. As an option, you can also stretch your arms open and overhead to represent expansion and the big balloon. When your balloon is totally full, hold your breath at the top, and then you can "pop the balloon" (gesture finger to belly) and fall down as you exhale. This one will likely elicit giggles and awareness of their breath.



| Body Scan Mindfulness Exercise

Guided Meditation: Follow the Leader

This meditation works best for kids who are at least 5 years old. Ask your child to picture their best friend or a sibling—someone they do everything with or someone they look up to. Then ask them which one (your child or their best friend) usually leads. Usually, one friend is the one who decides things—the one who is more of the leader; the other one is the friend who usually follows the leader. Ask them which they are.

If they are the leader, you can tell them to picture themselves as the breath. If they are the follower, you can ask them to picture themselves as the mind. For this example, I'll pretend that they've chosen their big brother as their best bud, and the big brother is the leader.

Say something like, "So you and your big brother do everything together. Let's pretend that your breath and your mind are best friends, too. And that you are just like the mind—the follower and your big brother is just like the breath—the leader." Then follow the steps below to guide them through the meditation.

Sit down comfortably and close your eyes. Bring all of your attention to your breath and slow it down, taking deep inhaleds and slow exhaleds. Let's have the mind follow the breath—no matter what. Picture yourself as your mind, the one that's following your big brother, your breath. Try to focus your mind on the breath and follow as the breath inhales and exhales. Count your breaths at the end of every exhale. Don't let your mind count before the end of the exhale. The mind always wants to jump ahead, but don't let it. Allow it to remain focused on being the follower. Count to 10 slowly, always at the end of each exhale, continuing to let the mind follow the breath.

Sit down or lie down comfortably and close your eyes. You can use pillows or blankets to make yourself as comfortable as you can be. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths as you begin to relax. Bring all of your attention to your right foot, noticing how it feels. Squeeze the right foot, making a fist with your entire right foot and all five toes; tense and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tension for two deep breaths. Then release all tension in the right foot suddenly. Relax it completely and notice the tension release. You may feel a tingling sensation in the foot. Take a deep breath, and then move on... Move your attention to your left foot. Same instructions as for the right foot. Move slowly up and around the body, squeezing one body part at a time to create tension, immediately followed by the contrasting sensation of release and ease. Follow each part with a deep, cleansing breath. Here's a sample progression you can follow: Right foot, left foot Right ankle and calf, left ankle and calf Right knee, left knee Right thigh, left thigh

All feet and legs Hips Butt Belly Entire lower body, from tummy down Chest and heart Right arm, left arm Right hand, left-hand Shoulders Neck Face Whole-body at once (do this one twice) When you're finished guiding your child through the relaxation technique, make sure they spend at least a few minutes in quiet, encouraging them to keep their breathing slow and steady.

Try one or all of these meditations to encourage more awareness, mindfulness, and overall balance for your kids and the whole family.