

# Using Your Breath to Keep Calm and Present

## Mindfulness Breath Observation Practice Lesson 1 with the book

### Beach Day Blues for Wally being present with uncomfortable feelings

By Cindy Olejar



I am thankful and grateful for how this book and lesson plan has come into your hands and for taking the time to read, practice and share it with others.

-Cindy Olejar

**May this book and mindfulness lesson  
and with whomever  
you read and practice it with,  
deepen your presence and connections.**

**This book and mindfulness breathing practice can teach children and adults a life long skill that can cultivate resilience, gratitude, compassion, contentment, peace and love.**

**There is a carry over effect when this practice is done consistently over time. So doing it a little each day has a greater impact than doing it longer once or twice a week.**

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**Lesson 1 - Mindfulness Breath Observation Practice with Eyes Closed with the book “Beach Day Blues for Wally: being present with uncomfortable feelings by Cindy Olejar**

**Ages: 4 +**

**About 30 to 45 minutes**

**Objective of this lesson:** in this lesson you can learn how to keep calm and present with whatever is happening using the mindfulness practice of watching your breath.

**Outcome objective of this lesson:** by learning to be calm and present with whatever is happening, this lesson can teach you a lifelong skill that can support your wellbeing by learning to be relaxed, strengthening resilience, experiencing contentment, peace and more!

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This lesson is written for teachers in the classroom and can be adapted for parents or other settings. Also, please adapt the language in the lesson that is best for you to use for younger and older kids.

**Before reading the book:**

**Say the following to the kids or in your own words:**

Sometimes we don't like what's happening in our life and we may experience negative thoughts and big feelings.

By quietly raising your hand, how many of you have experienced negative or stressful thoughts and big or unpleasant feelings that were hard to handle? OK, thank you, you can quietly put your hands down.

Did you know that when we know how to be present and accept these distressing thoughts and feelings, they don't have to overwhelm us or control us?!

By quietly raising your hand, how many of you have used your breath to help you become calm and relaxed? Great, you can quietly put your hands down now.

Did you know that when you are calm and relaxed your thinking becomes more clear? This means more ideas and creativity can come to you! And you can do this by just watching your breath. How cool is this!

Let's follow Wally now in this book as he learns how to focus on his breath and become present with his distressing thoughts and uncomfortable feelings. After reading the book we will get to practice this too!

Read the book, "Beach Day Blues for Wally: being present with uncomfortable feelings"

### **After reading the book:**

Raise your hand if you can tell me how Wally learned to become more relaxed and calm while he was experiencing uncomfortable feelings and negative thinking? (After the kids share some ideas you can summarize. Yes, he learned that by just watching his breath he could become more relaxed.)

And what happened with Wally's thinking and being when he was more relaxed?

- He was able to see more what was available to him in the present moment.

- He shifted from negative thinking to neutral and positive thinking.

- He could shift his attention, his focus, from what he could not have and what he could not control, to what choices he did have in that moment and see what he did have control over.

-Wally's choice to play outside brought value to not just him but to his friend too and even indirectly benefitted his mom, dad, brother and sister.

Now let's practice what Wally learned by watching our own breath.

To watch your breath you can focus on one part of the breath, such as the sensation of your breath going in and out of your nose.

I am going to demonstrate this for you first and then we will practice it together. First I am going to take a longer, deeper breath in through my nose and as I breathe out through my nose I am going to breathe a little slower and softer and relax my eyes, face and body. Now I am going to close my eyes and pay attention to my breath as it goes in and out of my nose.

OK, let's practice this now together. First take a longer breath in through your nose and as you breathe out through your nose, relax your face, shoulders and body. Now with your eyes closed, just pay attention to (or sense or focus on) your breath going in and out of your nose. (Do this for about 5 to 10 seconds)

And stop. You can open your eyes.

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(Depending on the level of attention you can also introduce these other methods: you can also watch / sense your breath going in and out of your lungs / chest area, or you can watch the path of your breath going in your nose and reaching to the bottom of your stomach and back up and out through your nose. Watch your breath going in your nose, down your throat, into your lungs and into the base of your stomach and now as you breathe out watch your breath go back up rising from your stomach to your lungs, throat and out your nose.)

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OK, let's try watching and focusing on the breath again a little longer.

With your eyes closed just pay attention to your breath going in and out of your nose. If at any time you lose focus, just go back to watching your breath going in and out of your nose. (Wait for about 10 to 15 seconds)

And stop. You can open your eyes.

While you keep your hands in your lap, use your quiet inside thinking voice when I ask the following questions, you can even close your eyes if you want: How do you feel now? What did you notice about your breath before and after the practice? Did the breath slow down? Did it get softer and lighter? What else did you notice? There are no right or wrong answers here. Everyone is different in what will happen for them. When you just notice your breath, interestingly, the breath can adjust for what your needs are at that time.

OK, let's do this one more time for even a little longer. With your eyes closed see how long you can stay focused on watching your breath going in and out of your nose. OK, go. (Wait for about 15 to 30 seconds) And stop. You can open your eyes. (Have some silent time here before asking the following questions. Model being silent and being relaxed in silence.)

If you would like to share anything you noticed with this breath watching practice, you can raise your hand. (Share if you noticed kids raising their hands slower and calmer).

With practice you can get really good at keeping focused on your breath and this can help you lessen the experiences of getting overwhelmed with negative thinking and uncomfortable feelings because you will prevent them from getting too overwhelming by noticing them sooner. When you become aware sooner you now can make a different choice than you used to make.

You can do this breathing practice when you have a challenge or uncomfortable feeling or whenever you just want to.

Practicing watching your breath every day can create a lifelong healthy habit. You can practice watching your breath every morning when you wake up and right before you go to bed. Just like brushing your teeth keeps your teeth healthy over time, practicing observing your breath can keep your mind and body healthy over time.

When are other times you could do this breath awareness practice?

You can also do this before each meal and before you start a task, test or activity, or before talking or listening to someone.

I invite you to create and do a daily practice with this and I look forward to our next session and to hear how it is going for you.

\*\*A word of caution, don't watch your breath with your eyes closed when you are driving, skateboarding, biking, or doing any activity or task that needs your attention to keep safe, etc.

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**For teachers and parents: You can set up a daily mindfulness breath practice in your classroom/home. Some suggestions are to do it for about 1 minute or whatever time works for you (30 seconds to 2 minutes) every morning before the day starts, when transitioning between subjects or tasks, or before a test and at the end of the day before going home or going to bed.**

**If you have any questions or feedback you can contact me, Cindy Olejar, at [presentforpeace@gmail.com](mailto:presentforpeace@gmail.com).**

