

# PRACTICING THE PAUSE: RESTORATIVE MINDFUL MOMENTS

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“The mindful pause interrupts reactions based on patterned judgments or assumptions and, instead, cultivates compassionate curiosity, from which a more empathetic and restorative response may arise.”

- *The Little Book of Restorative Teaching Tools*, p. 44

## OBJECTIVE

Help people of all ages develop the skill and habit of accessing their own “Restorative Mindful Moment.”

## MATERIALS

No materials required unless you would like to incorporate writing or art supplies, or physical supports like mats, cushions, or hammocks for lying down. Supplemental materials are listed below under Additional Resources.

## INSTRUCTIONS

This activity begins with common ways to “pause” a busy body and/or a busy mind, listed below under the “Engage” header. For some participants, you may want to start by simply trying one of the Engage options daily, without introducing a “Value.”

Once you’ve established a daily routine using the Engage methods, introduce one value. The idea is to ask everyone to reflect on that value, notice how it feels and the sensations it creates in their bodies when they are only focusing on that one value. For example, “Today during our Restorative Mindful Moment, while breathing, please reflect on *patience*. Feel patience fill your body while you breathe.” Or, “Today during our Restorative Mindful Moment, while drawing, please silently reflect on *gratitude*. Please use colors and draw shapes that help you express what gratitude feels like in your body and in your life. It doesn’t need to look like anything, it is just an expression from your body.”

Routine is everything. Introducing this activity consistently— the same time every day—will exponentially strengthen your mindfulness “muscles.” Your mindful pause will become natural and automatic when practiced daily. Consider starting a restorative mindful moment practice for 30-60 seconds per day, and build gradually until you reach 10 minutes (or longer)!

We highly recommend that you, as the guide, also participate! Doing this with the young people (or people of any age) in your life, and not to them, will build connection and increase the benefits for all.

Choose your own adventure and keep adding your own engagement methods and values to embody!

**Start Here:**

**Engage**

Breathing: 3-10 full deep breaths, focusing only on the sound and sensation of each breath
Body Scan: in stillness and silence, use your “internal vision” to slowly go from toes to crown of head, simply noticing sensations along the way
Quiet Rest: Lie or sit in silence. Optional: dim the lights, light a candle, play soft instrumental music
Freestyle Art: express sensations or images through drawing and colors. Keep it formless, abstract.
Journaling: private stream of consciousness. Writing whatever comes through, it doesn’t need to make sense to anyone.
(Add Your Own!)

**Then Introduce:**

**Values**

Friendship
Patience
Respect
Curiosity
Compassion
Kindness
Love
Calmness
Joy
Cooperation
Contentment
Gentleness
Gratitude
Trust / Faith
(Add Your Own!)

### **Additional Resources:**

*Jubari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall

Jubari takes a deep breath and does a body scan when he is processing fear and deciding whether to jump. A helpful prompt in story format!

“The Three R’s: Reaching the Learning Brain”

Neuroscientist Dr. Bruce Perry illustrates the important sequence of Regulating and Relating before Reasoning prior to asking a vulnerable child to focus on learning.

Pdf available through Beacon House Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team:

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf>

“Emotion Sensation Feeling Wheel”

Lindsay Braman’s adaptation of the “feelings wheel” expands the visual to include how those feelings often express in our bodies. This beautiful handout and corresponding instructions are available for purchase from Lindsay Braman at <https://lindsaybraman.com/emotion-sensation-feeling-wheel/>.

\*Available in Spanish!\*

## **DEBRIEF**

A debrief is not necessary every single time you practice. In fact, over-processing the Restorative Mindful Moment could become a deterrent. However, it will be helpful to check in occasionally with the people you are pausing with, to see how the mindful routine and its timing is working for everyone. Inquire if there are additional engagement methods or values that others want to bring to the practice. Celebrate milestones such as, “We’ve shared restorative mindful moments for 30 days in a row,” or “We have committed to our restorative mindful practice for the whole semester!” Remember to be kind and compassionate with yourself when you miss a day or two.

## LESSON

As humans, our nervous systems are naturally wired to become overwhelmed at times. Many of us live in cultures and societies that emphasize busy-ness, rushing, and a scarcity of time that limits relationship building and connection. We can counter these pressures in our lives and the lives of the young people around us by introducing small efforts to pause. Intentionally adding in a restorative value helps live with the presence of those values in our lives. These small efforts will incrementally build capacity for resilience and help us engage more restoratively with ourselves and others.

Special thanks to Lindsey's mother, Lauri Pointer, who encouraged her children to take deep breaths together every morning before school throughout Lindsey's childhood!