

AUDIENCE

This book in the first instance is geared towards children with the support of their parents/ carers/teachers. The intention of this book is to improve the health and well-being of people of all ages, by equipping them with the well-being tools to live a healthier and happier life.

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernie Leonard lives in West Yorkshire, England with her two amazing children Beth and Ben, and her soulmate Simon. She is a psychology graduate and a qualified teacher of Mindfulness. After teaching Psychology successfully over two decades, she re-trained as a Mindfulness teacher and now runs her own well-being business, Mindful Me Health & Well-Being Ltd. www.mindfulme-hw.co.uk

A NOTE ABOUT MINDFULNESS

It can be easy to rush through life without fully appreciating what it has to offer. Many of us are not living our best life, because we are preoccupied with the past and the future. We can live our lives on autopilot, in an almost mechanical state, functioning without really thinking. When we live in the past it can be depressing, when we are fixated on the future it can sometimes cause anxiety. The present is the only time we can live in and that is sacred, so why miss it?

I would define mindfulness as stepping off life's merry-go-round and taking the time to notice, noticing what's happening right now, both internally and externally, without judgement. When we practise mindfulness, we begin to amplify our senses and learn how to direct our attention to the present moment. It's almost like seeing things through the eyes of a child, stopping to smell the roses and making time to listen to the birds sing.

If we spend all our waking hours glued to our phones, social media and devices we may miss the beauty right in front of us.

Mindfulness helps develop our understanding of how our brain works, increases our concentration, our sense of calm and our compassion for ourselves and others. As a result, developing our practice makes us happier, healthier, and more skilful at responding to difficult emotions; overall, it increases our focus and enhances our performance.

WE FEEL CONNECTED!

The practice is over two and a half thousand years old and originated from Buddhist philosophy and tradition. That said, you don't need to be of any religious denomination to practise mindfulness. The ability to develop mindfulness skills can be cultivated by anyone.

In the following pages, we will share with you seven mindfulness techniques that, with daily practice, will have a profound positive effect on your well-being and the young people in your care. The guidance is to practise each one of the techniques for a week over a period of six weeks and record what you notice (the investigation bit!). Follow the advice on the contents page, which gives you a suggested order in which to practise the different strategies. You will also find a weekly template for investigation at the back of this book, which you can duplicate and adapt to record what you notice after each practice for that week.

To maximise the benefits, at the end of the six weeks, make a plan of how you are going to integrate all the practices into your daily life, using the example at the back of the book as your guide.

MEET SKY AND MOBAN

Meet Sky, she's so stressed, has lost all her confidence, and she can no longer do her job – nothing's working as it should be.

Sky can't eat, she can't sleep, she feels dreadful and she is in a constant state of anxiety and fear. Her beautiful protective fur is even starting to fall out.

She can no longer eat honeybees, because now that her fur has thinned out, she's not protected from their stings.

Sky has also lost her powerful all protecting pong and feels she can longer keep safe from predators!

MOBAN THE MINDFUL MONKEY



SKY THE SKUNK

Meet Moban, the Mindful monkey. He's living the life; happy, healthy and carefree.

Sky meets Moban...

Moban asks how he can help her. Sky tells him her story and how she can no longer release her pong.

"How can you help?"

"I want to be happy, healthy and carefree like you. I just know my powerful defensive weapon will return then, and I'll be equipped to do my job properly once again."

"You're on, Sky! I'm more than happy to help you develop your superpowers."

LET'S FIND OUT HOW MOBAN CAN HELP SKY STOP WORRYING, BOOST HER CONFIDENCE, FEEL STRONG AND FULL OF ENERGY AGAIN. AND MAYBE THEN, SHE'LL FIND HER PONG.

MINDFUL EATING: TECHNIQUE 1

 **GET READY TO DO MINDFUL EATING WITH SKY,
YOU COULD USE A RAISIN.**

"Let's start with something easy, try looking at these berries like you've never seen them before."

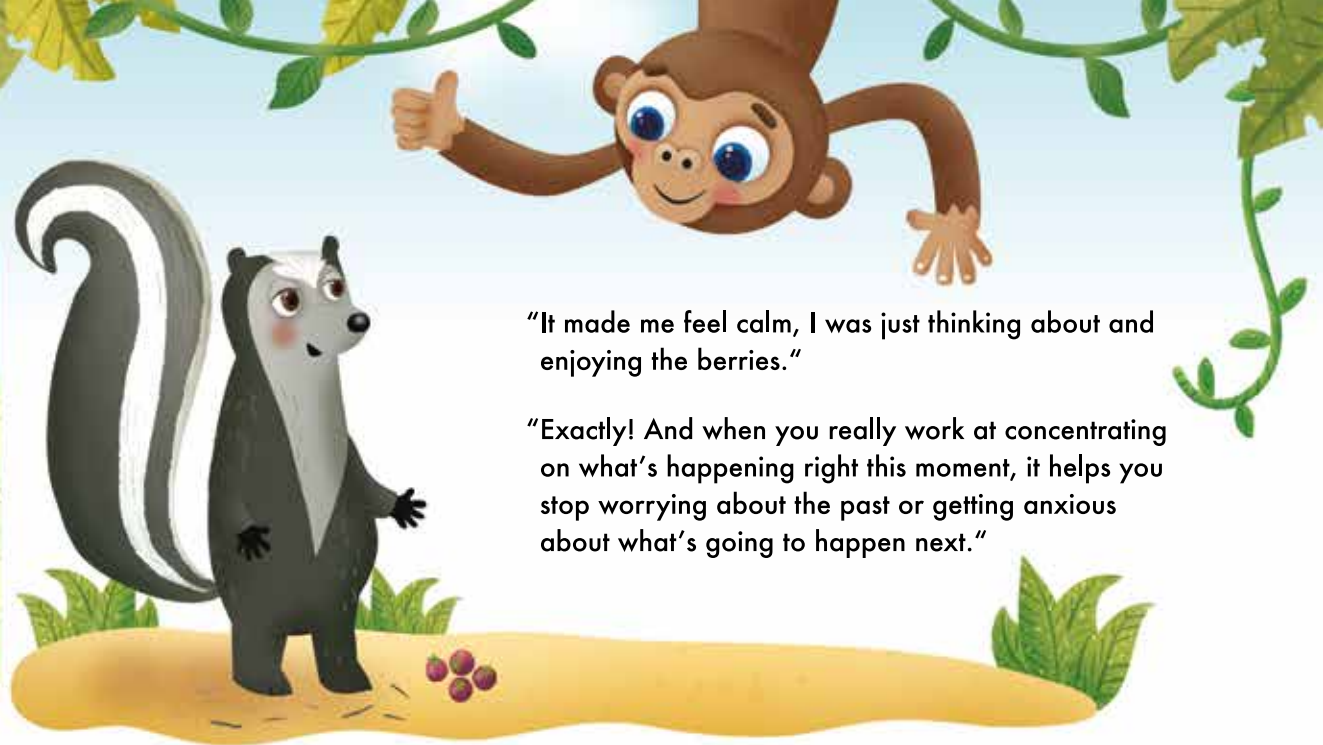
"Don't be silly, they're just berries."

"You'll need to trust me, just go with it..."

1. Hold them in the palm of your hand, examine them closely. What do they look like?
2. Which colours can you see, are they all the same colour?
3. Hold them up to the light, do they change colour?
4. Are they slimy, smooth or soft, what do they feel like?
5. Lift the berries up to your nose, what do they smell like?
6. Try putting one on your tongue, now move it around your mouth, what does it feel like?
7. And now take a bite, how does it taste?
8. Ask yourself, what did I notice?

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"You can do this with just about any activity, it's just a great way of getting you to focus on what's happening right now. How did it make you feel?"



"It made me feel calm, I was just thinking about and enjoying the berries."

"Exactly! And when you really work at concentrating on what's happening right this moment, it helps you stop worrying about the past or getting anxious about what's going to happen next."

"Now try doing this, we call it mindful eating, for three mouthfuls of one meal each day and investigate what you notice. Taking the time to investigate what you notice Sky is so so important!"

"What do you mean by investigation?"

"Just do exactly what we did with the berries, notice the aromas, tastes and textures - get practising!"

Now Sky's started to notice what she's eating, she's actually eating less and enjoying it more, noticing all the wonderful aromas and tastes. It's almost like her excellent sense of smell has been awakened, a power she'd almost forgotten she had amid all the stress, she wasn't even noticing what she was putting in her mouth, nor whether she was hungry or full.



"Note to self - must keep practising Sky!!"

AND WHY DON'T YOU TRY MINDFUL EATING FOR ONE MEAL A DAY FOR THE NEXT WEEK? JUST FOLLOW STEPS 1- 8, FOR 3 MOUTHFULS OF YOUR CHOSEN MEAL - GO ON, GIVE IT A GO AND DON'T FORGET TO RECORD HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL!

