

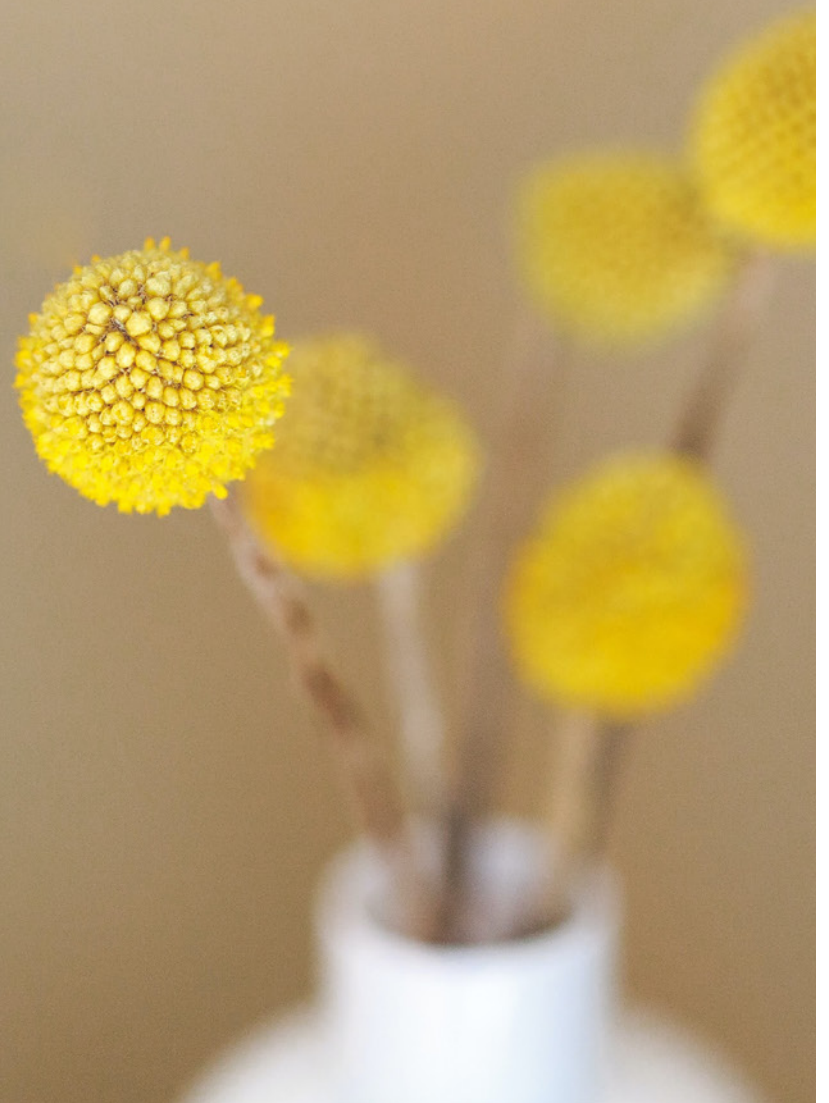


RESOURCE GUIDE

# Creating a Peaceful Classroom

Intro to the Yoga and Meditation  
Video Series for Teachers and Coaches

*THE MOST IMPACTFUL THING  
in the classroom is the state of the nervous  
system of the teacher.*







WELCOME TO THE

## ***YOGA AND MEDITATION*** *Video Series for Your Students*

Let's discuss the relevance of these videos for your classroom.

**Yoga and meditation's effect on social-emotional learning in society and in the classroom is well established.**

We know that in order for ourselves and the children in our lives to be successful, we need to engage the working of our inner lives including our emotions, stress levels and the ability to have awareness of what is going on inside and outside of us, and to be able to influence that.

**This is an invitation to take care of yourself while taking care of others.**

The spirit of this work is to help you be more kind to yourself. In doing this, you will also help the students.

***Mindfulness is not a way to get children to behave more to our liking. It is a way to help them align more meaningfully with their own being. But you'll find that naturally behavior will become more coherent and connected.***



**Mind-body relationship:  
The body has a great bearing on what  
the mind does, and vice versa!**

This video series helps students – and you – use this to their advantage.

Our equipment for life involves a mind and a body. Both are sophisticated and self-contained systems that have everything they need for us to have a good life. But like any other piece of equipment, we need to know its scope and capacity and also how to keep it in working order.

Yoga and mindfulness is like an owner's manual for the human body and mind. In short, breath is the core component of being able to come into a conscious relationship with ourselves and our experience.



Yoga helps us to stretch and move our body in space so that we become stronger and healthier and develop a confident and loving attitude about being who we are.

Yoga helps release tension from the body, which naturally leads to a more relaxed and calm mind.

***Meditation helps us develop a  
balanced mind and the ability to  
open ourselves to what is true.***





**It's not as important that students are doing a pose 'correctly' as it is that they are getting in touch with themselves.**

Sometimes in school yoga classes, teachers feeling concerned that their children are misbehaving during the yoga sessions. The kids may be fidgeting with their yoga mat, doing a different posture than described, or simply sitting there not doing anything.

Sometimes kids are taking things in at a level that is not apparent to us. It is powerful if they see their teaching going within and giving herself a deep calming experience, possibly more so than to have their teacher giving them the eye and asking them to perform.

Try to relax and roll with the grabs for attention that students may be making. Try to create a feeling of acceptance that maintains that feeling that they are being invited into the experience and not forced to do it.

In these practices we are getting in touch with our own "ok-ness" as well as our own "enough-ness." We are also overcoming our tendency to be reactive and we are realizing just how powerful Peacefulness can be.

**This experience takes effect gradually, over time.**

***Don't expect to see results immediately. Over the course of the school year, you should see this take root in the kids, and in yourself.***

*We are not imposing these exercises on them. We are inviting them to experience these techniques in their mind and body.*

### **Use invitational language.**

Always offer alternatives and say things like, “if you feel comfortable, you can try this,” especially before things like closing the eyes. Invitational language will impart sensitivity about our yoga to those who have experienced trauma.

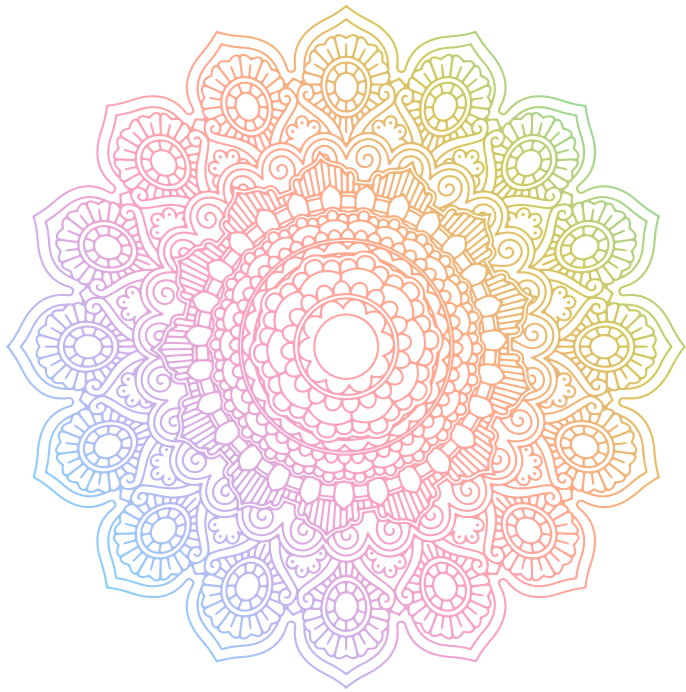


### **Anna’s anecdote about the power of Mindfulness with a Child**

*“When my daughter was three years old, I attended a mindfulness retreat with her and my mother. For two and a half days, we were surrounded by 150 participants going through a daily rhythm of meditation, silent meals, and mindful walks. My mom and I would take turns attending the sessions where it was important to be quiet. We didn’t make her sit through everything because that wouldn’t have been age-appropriate! However, in some of the activities, it was fine for her to be there. On the final day, we took a mindful walk. It was late summer in Alaska, and we walked through grassy paths leading to a homesteader cabin. My daughter walked along, noticing the butterflies and holding my hand.*

*When we arrived at the homesteader cabin, the group paused there for about 20 minutes in total silence. Everyone was holding the space together. We were feeling the sunshine on our faces, smelling the grasses and wildflowers, watching the butterflies, and feeling our bodies in repose on the grass. My daughter was still and silent for the entire time! It was clear that she was being enveloped in the powerful space that all of those adults were holding. Holding still for 20 minutes what not something that she would be found doing any other time.*

*At the end of the retreat, there was an opportunity for sharing. Many people shared how powerful it was to have a child there doing the practice with us. They said it made it much more meaningful.”*



## The Videos' Focus

We are helping students learn to self-regulate by achieving the three following sets of qualities.

### ENERGIZING & STRENGTHENING

### CALMING & CENTERING

### GROUNDING & AWARENESS

How to use these videos to help you instruct students

***The most impactful thing in the classroom is the state of the nervous system of the teacher. If you are not centered and relaxed in your own experience, the children will not be either.***

## JUST PRESS PLAY

These videos are designed so that you can just press 'play' and let yourself and your whole class be guided through the experience.

Allow yourself to model the experience that we're after in each video. Students learn not only from the video, but also from observing you.

## EACH VIDEO HAS A RESOURCE GUIDE

The resource guide to the Yoga Sessions will have some tips for how to create the best experience and how to expand on some of the topics found in each video.

## KEY PHRASES

Each 1-minute exercise comes with a key phrase, which is like an affirmation. Feel free to write these up and post them on the wall around the classroom for reinforcement. They are also things for students to say out loud or silently to themselves during the practice or anytime they need to self-soothe or self-inspire.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Be mindful to incorporate these teachings throughout your curriculum as appropriate. These videos are not just for 'yoga time' or 'meditation moment'. They can be used as needed for a science class break, a centering exercise before a math test, or any number of other opportunities.



## Beginning, Middle and End Create a Daily Mindfulness Rhythm

If you'd like to transform your experiences and your classroom culture to be more calm, centered and mindful, we recommend leading mindfulness exercises in the beginning, middle and end of your day (or session).

Everyone has had a different experience before they enter your class. By starting off your day with long, slow deep breathing and a mindfulness exercise, you will allow all the various members of your class to get on the same page and set a powerful tone of unity for the day ahead.

By coming back to a mindfulness activity in the middle of the day, you can re-center and rebalance, and by ending the day with a mindfulness exercise, you can send kids onto their next event (or back home) in a state that is peaceful and balanced.

Create a rhythm that features yoga and mindfulness at regular and consistent times. They will get used to it, and learn to really look forward to it! Both "Coming Home to Your Breath and Body" and "Open the Space with your senses" would work great as mindfulness videos to do three times per day.





## TYPES OF VIDEOS

### 30-Minute Yoga Sequences

These are full yoga sessions designed to be fun, complete and rejuvenating. Try using them when you have a break/free period to set time aside (Friday afternoons?).

### 1-Minute Exercises

These are short breath-based mindfulness exercises and should be integrated throughout the day. How? You may start the day with a mindfulness exercise. Perhaps another video at lunch or immediately before, and then the end of the day to put a bracket around the day.

These are also useful as a '911' situation. Consider connecting individual children to the exercises in times when they are dealing with challenging emotions. If the whole class is about to take a test, give it to everyone. If an individual student is showing anger or stress, give them the video alone. Paper printouts are also available to give the child, to help clarify the exercise.

### Try a 40-Day Challenge!

Just as reading marathons that have become so common in schools, challenge your class to do a 1-to-3-minute meditation every day for 40 days. These significant segments of time allow us to change old habits and make new ones. They could be learning the habit of a peaceful mind. You can hold a celebration at the end!

### Practice 1-minute and 30-minute videos regularly. Repetition builds familiarity and good habits.

How many of us as adults, encountering the peace-giving power of yoga and mindfulness, find ourselves saying, "I wish I had learned this stuff earlier. I could have avoided a lot of suffering." Well, we are in a very exciting position that we can offer these tools of personal development to children when they are young.

Learning to breathe and feel one's body can be as elementary as learning the ABC's. We recommend doing each class numerous times. This will allow the kids to get used to the exercises and see their improvement. Eventually they can lead each other in some of the exercises. In the words of Dan Siegel, "When we have a new experience or concentrate on something-say, on how we feel or a goal we'd like to achieve-that activates neural firing. In other words, neurons (our brain cells) spring into action. This neural firing leads to the production of proteins that enable new connections to be wired among the activated neurons. Remember, neurons that fire together, wire together. This entire process- from neural activation to neural growth and strengthened connections- is neuroplasticity. Essentially, it means that the brain itself is plastic, or changing, based on what we experience, and what we give our attention to. And these new neural connections, created when we pay attention to something, in turn alter the way we respond to and interact with our world. This is how practice can become a skill and how a state can become a trait, for good or for bad."

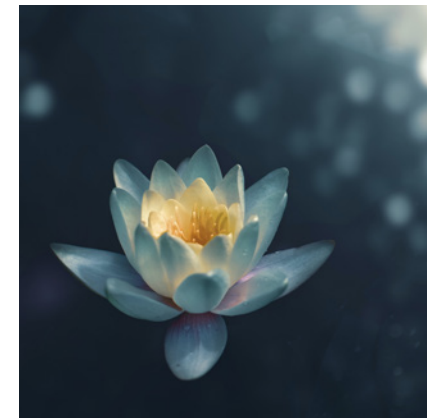
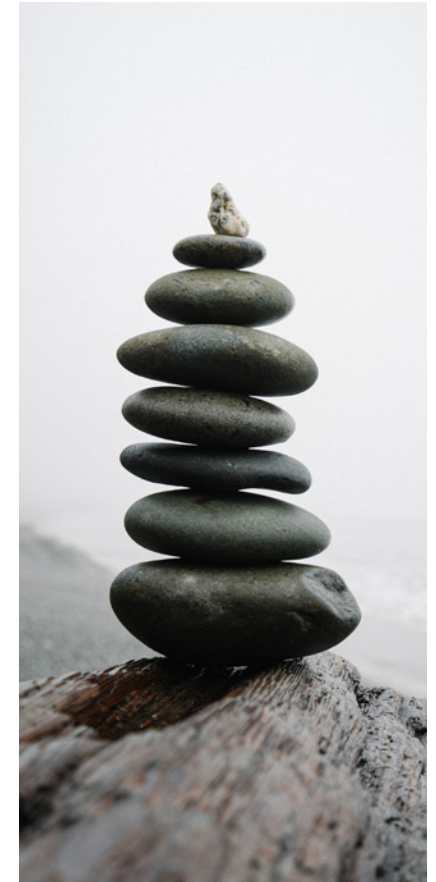
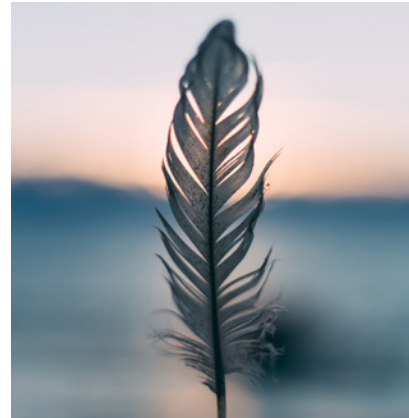
There are other situations in which showing one of the videos may also apply, so feel free to learn to recognize and apply as needed.

## It's ancient, and there's science to it.

Many of the techniques of yoga and mindfulness have been used for thousands of years by millions of humans who have been working to attain states of good physical, mental and spiritual health. For decades, science has been intent on studying the effect of these ancient practices and have found in study after study that these techniques have a scientific basis.

*“When you meditate, your rational thought processes, housed in your cortex, begin a quiet dialogue with your brain’s emotional centers, the hippocampus and amygdala, both of which are in your limbic system. When your cortex and limbic system agree that it is appropriate to relax, they relay the message to the hypothalamus, which connects the brain to the endocrine system. This releases the flood of calming neurotransmitters and hormones, which soothe the entire body. The immune system then secretes its own molecules of information, some of which return to the brain, helping to complete the circuitry of healing. You shift into a relaxed alpha brain wave pattern, and your nervous system is dominated by the inhibitory parasympathetic branch. When the parasympathetic nervous system is favored, you send relatively more nerve signals to your organs and glands of immunity, such as the thymus. As this occurs, you reach the ideal condition for healing- what mystics call the sacred space.”*

Dharma Singh Khalsa, M.D.







**Thank you for your work and efforts in this video series!**

It is much appreciated and should help our students in their classroom experiences and beyond. We hope it also helps you in your classes and in your own life.

If you have questions or comments about these videos, please reach out to Jane Beck: [JBeck@kpbsd.k12.ak.us](mailto:JBeck@kpbsd.k12.ak.us)



K E N A I P E N I N S U L A

Our mission at Project GRAD Kenai Peninsula (PGKP) is to impact generational change by enhancing the educational experience of underserved Alaskan students. With respect for culture, we support students as they become empowered: lifelong learners who graduate from high school, prepared to smoothly transition, and realize their post-secondary goals.

PGKP is committed to equitable education for ALL students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, identity, and beliefs.

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