



MY FIRST BOOK OF MINDFULNESS

Enhance your child's social emotional health
through mindfulness, art and home experiments

by **Sunita Rai, PsyD**
with Foreword by **Christopher Willard, PsyD**

For Viewing Only

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Foreword

In times of challenge and change, parents and child professionals can feel helpless about finding ways to support their children's development. And yet, no times in history were without such challenges, and still parents found ways to help their children thrive through curiosity, creativity and more.

In our time, Sunita Rai has come up with a wonderful book and approach to help guide our kids through growing up with arts, mindfulness, positive psychology and more, all contained in this wonderful book you are holding in your hands. While the world around may be swirling with chaos, in the pages of this book children can discover and reconnect with stillness and strength within themselves and bring that to difficulties they encounter. From compassion and self-compassion, to mindfulness and awareness, acceptance and joy, kids and adults alike can explore so many concepts that most of us never learned until adulthood, if we ever learned them at all. What's more, the books introduces these through creative writing, arts and reflection.

I've always believed that the best books for young people speak to both adults and children. While this book has dozens of simple and sweet activities and reflections for kids, when practiced with a parent or trusted adult, the benefit doubles and conversations can begin to flow more naturally on topics like peace, good deeds, self-awareness, mindfulness and more, bringing adults and children together more closely as they connect through art, conversation and mindfulness.

In this book you'll find many complex social and emotional concepts

and lessons, adapted for younger ages, but without losing depth or impact. And yet, as they grow with this book, and the world changes around them, this book will help kids develop so many of emotional intelligence skills they'll need for whatever changes the world brings by the time they reach adulthood.

Enjoy!

Dr. Christopher Willard

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Introduction

Hello. Ni Hao. Selamat pagi. Vanakkam. Bonjour. Konnichiwa. Hola. Marhaba. Sawasdee Khrap. Namaste. Jambo. Ciao. Anyoung haseyo. Xin Chao. Hallo.

Parents and teachers have spent years developing their children to be agile, resilient and successful. The definition of success differs from parent to parent and teacher to teacher. However, we all agree that we want our children to flourish, to be happy and a positive contributor to the world. There is no argument about that.

Today, we are faced yet with another challenge of helping children navigate through the new world of possibilities and complexities. Parents and teachers are the guide through which children learn their role in life, values, academic skills, life skills and social emotional skills amongst others. This learning is all part of their wellbeing. Mindfulness practices also contributes towards and enhances children's wellbeing and also that of their parents and educators. A mindful child is like a sponge, always willing to learn and absorb more and knows what to let go off so that new experiences and skills can be taken in. My aim is to help develop mindful children, together with you, the parents and the educators.

So what is mindfulness? Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn, the father of secular and modern mindfulness, shared that "Mindfulness means paying

attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” It’s really about being in the moment with the moment-to-moment experience. Kathirasan K., in his book, *Mindfulness in 8 Days*, further elaborated that there are three components to mindfulness: self-awareness, paying attention and practicing acceptance.

How should you use this book?

I would encourage to use it as a weekly activity book over 30 or 60 weeks. For each of the 30 theme, there are activities, reflections, experiments and mindful colouring. There are no hard and fast rules about how to use the book. Do what works best for your child and you. There are many possibilities of how you use this book. The book is organised such that it starts with something to experiment with or reflect on for the week followed by an image for the child to colour. You could ask your child to colour the artwork first and have a conversation about the value/word etc. Or you could start with the activity and do the colouring at the end of the week as a closure or keep it for the following week. You could also just take a word and talk about it casually using life examples before starting any of the activities. For example, for Peace. You could ask your child why is peace a daily commitment. How does it show in our actions? You would also notice that I have started slow and I go deeper into each topic over the weeks. The idea is to start slow and engage mindfully with your child. Focus on going deeper with your child rather than trying to finish the book. You can in fact spread it over 60 weeks or longer if that works.

How to colour? Encourage your child to engage as many of her senses as possible in the moment, “sense-by-sense”. So one way we could start is with the eyes where you encourage your child to look at the crayons, colour pencils and paints and tell her to make a choice

on which she would like to use today and how come she prefers that for today. Maybe she has a reason and maybe not and that’s ok.

What are the words written on the packaging or the colour pencil/crayon/paint? What is the packaging like? Using the sense of touch, ask her to feel the packaging and the pencils/crayons. Are they smooth or rough? What else does she notice? Then tell her to perhaps pick five colours that she would like to use for that creative image. Once she has picked them, you can remove the rest of the colours so as to reduce distraction. You could ask her the reasons for choosing the colours if you want. Let her explore if there is any smell on the crayon or colour pencil. And when she starts colouring, ask her if she can focus her attention on the sound that is made while she is colouring. After which, you can ask her to focus on each section as she colours. You could incorporate mindfulness practices between each section if you wish. For example, after she colours for five mins, you pause with her and focus on your breath for 1 min before continuing to colour.

I am excited to explore this journey together. Let’s begin our tour with a message to your child.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS... WITH A CLEAR INTENTION

Welcome my friend. I will be your Mindfulness Friend for this book. Yes, you have me with you for the next few months working hand-in-hand to be a Mindful Child.

We work together just like how it takes two hands to clap. Join me!

I have been travelling with mindfulness for many years and I want to invite you to join me. My friend, let's tour together in the next few pages and explore the world of mindfulness within you.

You will be on an adventure with mindfulness using this book as a guide to help you through every week. Why? So that you can get to know your awesome self much better, reduce your stress levels, and become happier and happier and happier. Does this sound exciting for you? Yes!

Before we begin, I have a wish for you. Here it goes:

May you BE kind to yourself and others.

May you BE compassionate to yourself and others.

May you BE loving to yourself and otherd.

May you BE strong.

May you BE a positive influence to everyone you meet.

And what is your positive wish for yourself? Fill in your request:

May I BE

May I BE

May I BE

May I BE

May I BE

Let the journey begin my friend. Hold on to your pencils, colour pencils, crayons, paints and put on your creative hat and let's GO travelling. We shall start with Peace!

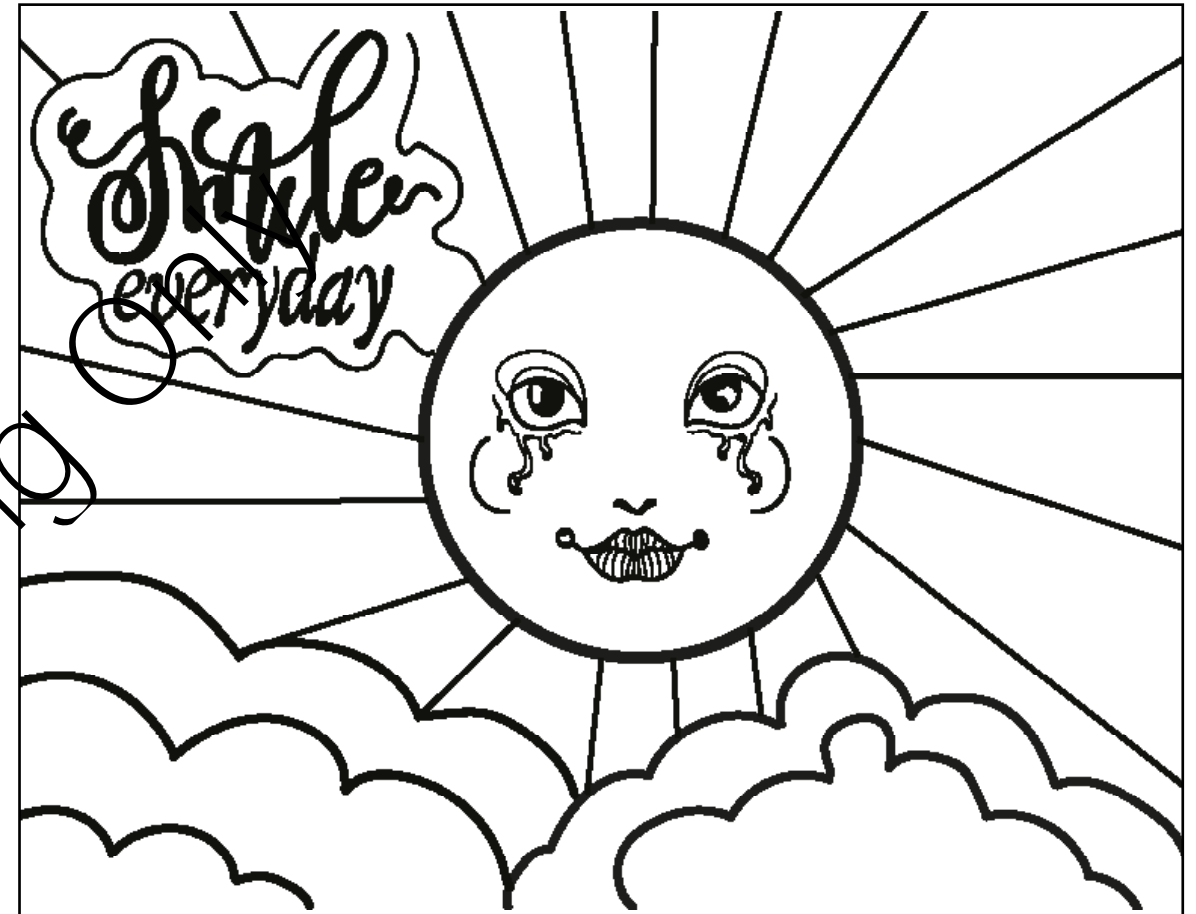
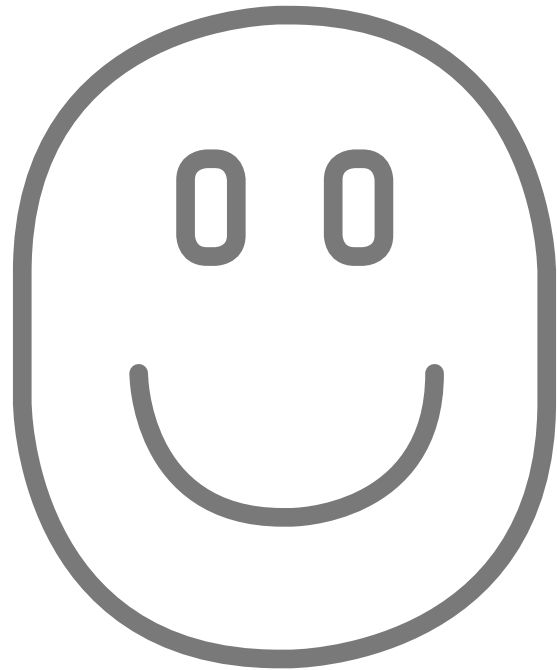
SMILE EVERYDAY

Smiling makes you look beautiful.

How much does a smile cost? \$1, \$50 or is it free? Yes, it is free and when you smile at others, they smile back. You make the world a “smiling world” rather than a sad and angry world. Wouldn’t you love to contribute to the “smiling world”?

Did you know that smiling uses less facial muscles than being angry? And did you know that smiling connects you to others? People feel good and happy when you smile at them and you feel happier too. Smiling stimulates the brain towards positivity. And people start liking you, feeling connected to you and thus you have more friends.

So, *WHEN* and to *WHOM* can we smile to on a daily basis? Write it on the smiley face and be creative on how you do it.



For Viewing

HUG YOURSELF

Hug yourself to love yourself.

Hugging makes you happier, more cheerful and a lot more loving to yourself and others. And you know, it releases positive chemicals in your brain and reduces stress. Hug yourself daily, perhaps every morning and night.

Let's learn how to give ourselves a tight hug.

- Open your arms wide and stretch out in front of you. Take a deep breath.
- Slowly bring your arms towards your chest and then up towards your shoulders. Continue breathing.
- Press both of your arms into your body as if you are hugging your teddy bear or your pet.
- Hold yourself here for a while, close your eyes and smile. You can also rock back and forth slowly if you want. Hold on for 10 seconds.
- Now stretch out your arms wide in front of you and repeat again for two more rounds.

How does it feel? Besides the above, what other methods are there for hugging yourself?

1.

2.



BE POSITIVE

Positivity brings the best out in You.

Friends and family love being with people who are positive. They uplift each other's moods.

Now look at your inner voice. Does it say positive things about you? If not, it is time to change the channel and reduce the volume of the negative messages in your mind and increase the volume of the positive messages. You don't need to be perfect, you only need to love yourself as you are.

Change your lens towards a positive lens. Write down the positive and negative voices in your mind in the lens below.



On a daily basis, journal at least 3 positive emotions for every negative emotion you experience. Remember, the positivity ratio is 3:1. And if you can, also write 3 positive thoughts for every 1 negative thought that comes into your mind. Start today.

