

Mindful Me: Mindfulness and Meditation for Kids

Whitney Stewart

Stacy Peterson, Illustrator

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Mindful Me by Whitney Stewart is a children's guide to a relaxed, happy, self-aware life. The book provides life-changing skills of the sort that even adults seldom have.

Childhood is full of overwhelming emotional challenges—navigating school, making friends, getting along with parents, and learning to love who you are. This book empowers youngsters to utilize the practices of mindfulness and meditation to meet those challenges head-on in a way that is healthy, balanced, and compassionate.

The guide helps kids understand their thoughts and emotions, and respond to them in a positive, self-honoring way. This approach encompasses daily habits and key events, eventually turning attention outward to caring for and understanding others. The advice is as simple as it is powerful, and the practices have clear, easy-to-follow instructions and journal prompts for digging deeper.

Some may be skeptical as to whether kids are capable of grasping and practicing mindfulness, but children may be more adept and able to learn this than adults. The book embraces the can-do spirit and malleability of the young; the approach is accessible, clear, and hits just the right level of higher-thinking skills. Abstract and overwhelming concepts are made easy to grasp using visual language and comparisons. Far from condescending to children or watering down the practices, the book shows empathy and respect for children, giving them a full set of meditation skills rather than dismissing their emotions and concerns. This judgment-free tone fosters openness and curiosity about the self and the world.

The illustrations by Stacy Peterson are beautiful and inviting. They have a feminine feel and most of the kids pictured are girls, but the characters are racially diverse and also include a child in a wheelchair, emphasizing the message that mindfulness is a gift for everyone.

Mindful Me can change the trajectory of tweens' lives, helping them weather middle school, high school, and young adulthood.

MELISSA WUSKE (March/April 2018)

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