

Willow Bee the Tree - Do You See Me?

A Nature Story and Meditation Guide for Children

Introduction to Parents and Caregivers

We spend so much time on our phones, computers, television, and tablets nowadays. It's such a busy world, and it seems there is never enough time anymore to just sit, relax, and enjoy a nice book with your child. But these can be the most precious moments we have, the ones we never forget. Take some time for you and your child and create a wonderful memory with this book.

The Willow Bee's Mindful Meditation Series of books teach children the beginning of meditation, and it is meant to be shared with you and your child.

A healthy mind can be just as important as physical health. Mindful meditation is non-spiritual. It raises an individual's awareness of themselves, and is a healthy way of being in the now, or the present. This process is beneficial for children to build their memory, comprehension, and attention-span skills.

Mindful meditation can teach children the ability to manage different emotions. They have just as much in the way of thought patterns as we do, and sometimes this can be very overwhelming for them. Meditation can teach children to calm their minds from what is commonly referred to as "mind chatter." When we allow these thoughts to appear and gently release them, we can more easily move into a more patient and calmer state. We can also get to know ourselves better when we understand what types of thoughts we have.

In this book, attention is focused on nature, counting, and the breath. I introduce a tree as a mechanism for children to relate to nature and to have something meaningful and fun to focus on. By focusing our attention, mindful meditation can be more easily obtained. You will notice that some pages have a method for counting. When the child is asked to close their eyes, it will be up to the parent to continue reading until they open their eyes again as instructed in this book. When counting to your child while their eyes are closed, take your time, count slowly, and speak softly to them to help them achieve their calming state. If they are experiencing mind chatter, just remind them they can always go back to thinking of the tree and focusing on their breath when they are ready.

When breathing, it's best to use the diaphragm as this helps us to relax more. When breathing in, the belly should move outward; and when breathing out, the belly should move back to its normal state. It helps to practice by putting your hand on your stomach so you can feel the movement of your belly when you breathe. Your shoulders should remain in a relaxed state and not move.

It is important not to force meditation. It should be enjoyable and done on a regular basis. It's perfectly okay to have random thoughts in the beginning. Ensure your child knows this, and allow them to grow with meditation at their own pace. We don't want to frustrate them or make them feel they are inadequate. Everyone experiences something different when they meditate, and no experience should be treated as good or bad, it is just an experience and that is all. Having a conversation with your child about what it is like for them can be very healthy in allowing them to express themselves in a beneficial way. You may even wish to keep a journal.

I recommend sitting on the floor with your child, using something comfortable to sit on such as a cushion, or a meditation pillow if you have one. The use of the pillow is softer, of course, and easier for posture when keeping the back straight and legs crossed. Remember the back should be straight but in a comfortable position. Some younger children prefer to lie down. This is fine as well, as long as they do not get too tired.

One of the important aspects of this book is keeping the meditation very short (i.e. no less than one minute to however long they feel they can remain in this state). By keeping the meditation periods short, we don't put pressure on children to do more than they can handle, and we also ensure they don't fall asleep on us (although that can be outcome once they are done ☺).

There are two meditation sessions included in this book. Allow your child to determine how long they can meditate for. It is not the length of meditation that matters, rather the benefits of simply doing it. If they prefer to do only one of the exercises and save the second one for another night, this is perfectly fine too. They will grow to longer sessions naturally, as they continue to meditate regularly.

This book is suitable for children ages three and up.

I recommend parents read this book with their child before bed, when there are minimal distractions and they can concentrate on their breathing and meditation techniques. This can provide both you and your child a meaningful and healthy bonding time together. It can also help children improve their quality of sleep by performing meditation at this time.

"Listen and you will hear nature calling you,
Look and you will see all the colours of the rainbow,
Feel and you will awaken."
Terri Beauchamp, June 1, 2016

Thank you to God and the Angels that guide me.
For without you in my life, this book would never have been written.