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a letter to grown-ups

Dear Caregiver,

Thank you for your interest in this mindfulness book for kids.

More and more research supports the profound and positive effects that mindfulness strategies can have on our children. As we would train our bodies for any athletic endeavor, we can also build the muscle in our brains, enabling us to strengthen and develop the decision-making parts of our minds, enhance our memory and recall abilities, and subdue the “fight, flight, or freeze” response that was useful for our ancestors but can get us into trouble around the dinner table or in the parking lot.

In my years of training as a mindfulness instructor, I have worked with children ages 3 to 17 who, through regular practice, demonstrate positive changes in their abilities to pay attention, remember and recall information, self-regulate their behavior, feel more confident, and act with kindness and compassion toward

their peers. I'm delighted to share these exercises and tips with you and those dear to you.

In this book, you'll read stories in which kids find themselves in situations where they need to call on a skillful choice. Alongside those stories, you'll find many techniques that I have found useful in my classroom and in private practice with clients. These techniques are shared through the voices of five children: Jasmine, Willow, Kayli, Colby, and Zeke, who show up repeatedly to share their own mindfulness exercises as strategies to use in a variety of difficult situations. The stories in this book are easy to relate to, and children will find they identify with many of the characters and their multitude of emotions. Enjoy these 15 different stories and their corresponding mindfulness exercises. Read this book aloud or side-by-side with the children in your life. Practice some of these exercises and techniques, bookmark your favorites, and return to them often.

Here's to joining a growing number of families who are searching for ways to gain greater awareness, self-control, resiliency, and compassion!

Fondly,

J. Robin Albertson-Wren

a letter to kids

Dear Young Reader,

Welcome, friend! This book has been created just for you. It's actually a storybook, with many tales about kids and the challenges they face. But it's also full of ideas and activities that you can try at home, at school, and out in the world.

You'll hear from lots of kids who get into tough situations and who need some help handling their emotions. You'll learn what mindfulness is, and how it can help. You'll also meet five kids who really know a lot about mindfulness—and they offer their helpful suggestions! Jasmine, Willow, Kayli, Colby, and Zeke are your mindfulness guides, and they show up in this book over and over to share mindfulness exercises that helped them deal with their own difficult emotions. Their activities will help you practice exploring how you can be the “best you,” even when things seem hard.

We all have fun emotions, like happy, excited, surprised, and proud. We also have some not-so-fun emotions, like angry, sad, frustrated, and upset. Every day, we feel a mixture of many different emotions. The positive ones are fun to hang on to, but the negative feelings sometimes feel like they are holding on to us.

Have you ever felt angry or sad, and you feel like it ruined your whole day? Mindfulness can help us become aware of our feelings and experience them without letting them control us.

Read and enjoy the stories in this book. Pretend you're a part of them. I wonder where you might see yourself in each story. Then, experiment with the exercises and see which ones work best for you. Bookmark your favorites and return to them whenever you want. Now, let's get mindful!



With love and hugs,
J. Robin Albertson-Wren

mindfulness: what's that?

"Mindfulness" is a big word, but it's really easy to understand. It just means paying attention to what's happening **right now**. You can be mindful by using one or all of your senses—sight, sound, taste, smell, and feel.

Mindfulness of **sight** is when you pay attention to what you see using your eyes.

You can be mindful of **sound**, perhaps noticing sounds that are loud or soft, or very far away, or very close to you. Have you ever closed your eyes when you have tasted something delicious? You are being mindful. That's you zooming in on **taste** right then! When you notice a certain aroma and you smile or wrinkle your nose, you are being mindful of **smell**. Even when you're really busy, you can be aware of how things **feel**, noticing textures like scratchy or smooth, soft or hard. You can pay attention to warmth or cold.

Most importantly, you can be mindful of what is going on inside of you, with your **emotions**. This means recognizing when you are growing angry or sad or worried. This is the part of mindfulness we will really explore. As you practice paying attention to your emotions, you can even begin to notice where you feel these emotions in your body!

Okay, now the tricky part. Mindfulness is doing all this noticing **without judging**. When you practice mindfulness, you can treat everything like an experiment. See what you notice. Like, "Ahh, I'm really comfortable and my breath is deep and slow" or "Hey, I'm feeling mad, and my hands are clenched into fists." When you are aware of what your body is doing, you can take steps to fix it and feel better.

When you realize what is going on around you (in your environment) and inside of you (with your emotions), you can feel more in control. You can choose which behavior you want to use. When you make your own decisions, you're likely to feel happier and make better choices. This book will help you become a "Mindful You"—the one who makes the best choices even when things get tough!

Try the exercises in this book to help in difficult or upsetting situations. The more practice you have becoming mindful, the more aware and in control you'll feel. Get ready to welcome the Mindful You!