

# **Be Present Archives**

## **A One-Minute Meditation to Focus Your Mind**

In [mindfulness](#) practice, you'll often hear the term "natural awareness." By "natural awareness" we mean the awareness that just comes with being a human being. It's free from judging and characterizing—it's just noticing and sensing the world. It's done when you open your eyes, you see something, you hear something, or you touch something. So, the simplest awareness that just comes as part of the equipment of being alive, without a lot of filters around it or judgments. You can trust that it's always there. To read the entire article click here, [go here](#).

The guided meditation by Barry Boyce is meant to be done in the middle of the day, wherever you may be. It is a short practice done with eyes open!

## **All the Evils... Christian Petersen and the Art of War**

Iowa State University was the first American college to hire an artist-in-residence. From 1935 through 1955, that artist was Christian Petersen, the namesake of the [Christian Petersen Art Museum](#) inside Morrill Hall. Petersen saw first-hand the toll war had on his students, and these effects were an inspiration to many of his works of art. While the wars of his time were World War I and II, Petersen's sculptures and drawings are still relevant with the conflict occurring in our world today. Stop by Reiman Gallery in the Christian Petersen Art Museum, lower level of Morrill Hall. You can find out more about the Art of War exhibit [here](#) and view the University Museums' Christian Petersen Art Collection online.

## **Smithsonian Institution: The Bias Inside Us Online Exhibit**

The Smithsonian Institution has explored the question of what it means to be an American. That means not only celebrating our accomplishments and achievements, but also confronting the entirety of our past as a nation and helping us remember the forgotten. As Americans, we share firm beliefs in equity, inclusion, and fairness. The Smithsonian is sharing share this project – The Bias Inside Us – which confronts the issue of bias directly. The project helps people to recognize their capacity for bias, to understand it as a scientific process, to learn ways to "check your bias," and to counter its negative influences. Check out the online exhibit [here](#).

## **Cyclone tips to temper the winter blahs**

The staff of Inside Iowa State put together a great list of things to do this time of year! The article started with... "Groundhog Day week brings joy to some; others need to hit March 1 to believe winter will release its grip. For employees in either camp, the Inside staff put together some no-cost to low-cost campus suggestions for solutions to the winter doldrums." Check out the article, and great ideas, [here](#)

## **Resolve to Stimulate Your Mind**

Resolve to Stimulate Your Mind Iowa State University Museums had many new opportunities which started January 18th along with the Spring semester! Amber Cowan uses found objects and repurposes glass to create intricate glass sculptures. Spend time immersing yourself in these glass dioramas and sculptures, taking in the stories they tell at the exhibition Mythical Bounty. Come to the Brunnier Art Museum. To find out more details about this exhibit, visit the ISU Museums website.

## **Gratitude for Small Things**

When we practice gratitude, we're acknowledging the many factors, large and small, that contribute to this moment. Might it be possible to follow the words of the poet Mark Nepo, when he said, "One key to knowing joy is being easily pleased"? What would it be like to let go of needing anything to be any different in this moment, and to open to what's actually here that may bring joy?

We can engage this joy with a practice from the Mindful Self-Compassion Program, developed by Chris Germer and Kristin Neff. It has five steps...

1. **First, take some time to make a list of what you are grateful for.**
2. **Let yourself savor each item on your list.**
3. **Consider the infinite sources of those little things you feel grateful for.**
4. **Ask yourself: How do you feel? What do you notice is present for you right now?**
5. **Notice if anything unpleasant arises.**

Could you acknowledge your intentions to simply open up to things in your environment that you're grateful for? Let go of needing to have a certain feeling. To read the article and try the recorded meditation, [click here](#)

## **Strolls for Well-being at ISU: Press Pause & Take a Break...**

If you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or simply need to step away from your workspace, the *Strolls for Well-being at ISU* were created to offer you various opportunities on central campus or wherever you are. Whether you have 30 minutes or 5 minutes, these materials have been designed to be flexible and fit into your schedule. So, pick a pause, a stroll, or step away from your space and 'pause where you are' – it's up to you. Make the time to take a few deep breaths, notice the natural beauty around you and simply 'be' for a few moments. You can find out more, and download materials, at the WellBeing website [here](#).

## **ISU Library presents - Indigenous Heritage Month 2021 – an online exhibit**

This ISU Library online exhibit presents a wide selection of recent and historical topics to celebrate Indigenous Heritage Month. Selected books, resources, and even TikToks are included for your reading and viewing pleasure. Indigenous Heritage Month is celebrated during the month of November. This commemorative month aims to provide a platform for Native people in the United States of America to share their culture, traditions, music, crafts, dance, and ways and concepts of life. President George H. W. Bush first declared November as National American Indian Heritage Month, thereafter, commonly referred to as Indigenous Heritage Month, on August 3, 1990, and it was considered a landmark bill that honored indigenous tribal populations. Go to their website [here](#).

## **Enjoy a good book and conversation...**

Barnes and Noble offers many virtual events, in-depth discussions with authors, as well as our virtual B&N Book Club *and* B&N Young Adult Book Club. Many are free and a great way to engage with others around a good book! So, pick what speaks to you and enjoy a good book and conversation! Find more information [here](#).

## **Mission: JOY screening – Watch *free though December 31***

Deeply moving and laugh-out-loud funny, is a documentary about the unlikely friendship of two international icons who transcend religion: His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. We trace the epic life stories of these Nobel Peace Prize winners as they faced oppression, exile, death threats, cancer, and more - unbowed and still laughing. It includes cutting edge scientific research and reminds us that joy is an inside job, joy and pain are inseparable, and that deep connection is one of the secrets to joy. [Click here to register](#) and access the film.

## **Keep your meditation practice going!**

One of the keys to a mindfulness practice is - *to practice!* Daily is best for 15-30 minutes. AND we all realize that it is not always possible, or the time of live events simply do not fit into your schedule. When you need a little support or resource ideas, go to the [Mid-Morning Mindfulness](#) page on the WellBeing website. There is a link to some of the [Mid-Morning Mindfulness recordings](#), plus other suggestions of other live events and several good apps to try.

## **What Nature Teaches Us About Well-Being**

The natural world and its processes have much to teach us about the flexibility, creativity, and resilience that is already within us, just waiting to unfurl. Everything from the design of the lodgepole pinecone and its ability to survive fires and droughts; to the gecko's remarkable adhesive capabilities of its feet and how this has changed over time. The gecko not only embraces change, its flexibly adapts to the demands of its ever-evolving environment. It is a

theme that plays throughout nature, across ecosystems, and among the species who live within them.

We also need to adapt to changing conditions. Our tendency to bristle against change is as reflexive as an eye blink. And we have devised plenty of structures and systems to keep change at bay—particularly in industrialized countries where everything from air conditioning to Door Dash seeks to supersede nature’s inconveniences in the service of unending human comfort.

While we have learned to handle small, predictable change—taking shelter under umbrellas when it rains, flicking on lights when it is dark—large, unpredictable events, such as global pandemics, upend us, revealing our reactive inflexibility and exposing our vulnerabilities.

To read the entire article at Mindful.org, [go here](#).

## **How Does Nature Impact Our Wellbeing?**

At the University of Minnesota’s Earl E. Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing they have been researching the impact on nature on people’s well-being. From their website they share; “Being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally, but it also contributes to your physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones. Research done in hospitals, offices and schools has found that even a simple plant in a room can have a significant impact on stress and anxiety.” They have many ideas, suggestions, resources, and their research findings. To learn more, [click here](#).

## **Eat a banana! Get off Twitter! How to be more productive at work**

Getting stuff done is hard. Getting stuff done while there is a pandemic rumbling on is almost impossible. Even for work-from-home lifers who haven’t had to make an adjustment to their professional environment, it can be a struggle to summon the energy to get through a list of tasks. Perhaps change is still within our grasp. If you struggle to get through your to-do list—check out these strategies:

- Embrace the Eisenhower matrix
- Don’t be a prisoner to email
- Nix social media
- Give yourself a cave day
- Trust your colleagues
- Discover micro-practices

- Get a mentor
- Ask lots of questions

For more details, [click here](#) for the entire article.

## **A 10-Minute Gratitude Practice to Notice, Shift, and Rewire Your Brain by Nate Klemp**

When we find ourselves in a rut, it becomes easier to focus on what's wrong and minimize what's right. This gratitude practice is designed to change that; its aim is to amplify the experience of optimism. Hundreds of studies show that this simple shift leads to enhanced mood, better relationships, and even enhanced physical health. To experience this guided meditation, go to the article and recording [here](#).

## **Keeping Childhood Alive During COVID-19**

A great article from CBS Sunday Morning on [keeping the magic of childhood alive](#) during the pandemic which reminds us that in keeping magic alive for our children, we're also keeping it alive for ourselves.

## **COVID Recovery Iowa-Free resources and information to all Iowans**

COVID Recovery Iowa is a response to the Pandemic and offers to connections to all Iowans. You can call COVID Recovery Iowa at: 1-844-775-WARM | Iowa Concern: 1-800-447-1985. Besides the online resources and in-person connections that they can help with, they also offer a weekly newsletter. It a concise one-page sheet of information about all things COVID. You can sign up to receive the weekly newsletter [here](#)

## **PBS American Portrait: "I Dream"**

With so much going on in our country, take a break and remember what it means to be an American and the dreams that some people have to help them keep going. This are self-shot stories explore the meaning and state of the American dream. From the desire for homeownership to ambitions for higher ed or career success, they show the hard work, opportunities and barriers that come with pursuing this ideal today. For more information about this series and to view sessions, [go here](#).

## **Staying engAGED with Older Friends & Family**

Technology is a convenient way to stay in touch and combat feelings of loneliness, but those who aren't tech-savvy have experienced challenges in maintaining these vital human

connections. Social distancing requirements, coupled with difficulties adapting to new technology, have disproportionately affected elderly populations who are especially vulnerable to depression and isolation. This website has some great ideas of ways to stay connected and resources to use. They offer many ways to help older friends and family members stay connected during times of social distancing. [Check it out here.](#)

## Why Loving-Kindness Takes Time

"It's only after we've practiced many times that we'll begin to notice a habit developing—namely, letting ourselves off the hook once in a while". If you have tried mindfulness, meditation, mindfulness meditation, you know that sometimes you experience an 'ah-ha' moment. Other times, nothing, crickets or your mind is racing with all the thoughts of all the things that you need to do. So, you may ask yourself, was that a successful practice? **YES**, every time you intentionally sit in silence, walk in nature, or listen to guided session, all are successful practices. The key is the intention that you are spending the time to be mindful, to slow down and give your mind, body and spirit a rest.

To learn more about Loving-Kindness - read this article by Sharon Salzberg who is one of the leaders in Loving-Kindness experiences. Here are a couple highlights of what she has to share.

**The Path to Loving-Kindness: Choose Your Phrases** - Loving-kindness is meant to be done in the easiest way possible so that the experience springs forth most gently, most naturally. To do it in the easiest way possible means first to use phrases that are personally meaningful.

**Loving-Kindness Takes Time** - Our job, so to speak, is just to say those phrases, to say them knowing what they mean but without trying to fabricate a feeling. So: Not to struggle, to try to make something happen. Let it happen. It will happen.

*"Let your mind rest in the phrases. You can be aware of the phrases either with the breath or just in themselves—the focus of the attention is the phrases. Let your mind rest within them. The feelings will come and go."*

You will find the entire article [here](#) along with an audio of a guided meditation by Sharon

## 7 Classic Children's Books That Teach Kids Mindfulness

We all know that mindfulness can help during the times of stress and anxiety. Now, let's consider our children and how we can support them during these times, in often we will benefit too! And remember, if you have no children in your home, reach out to neighbor, friend, colleague - do a zoom reading time. We are all in this together.

Along with newer children's books about mindfulness, many beloved picture books also offer mindful messages about kindness, friendship, and contemplating the world around us. Some of the most insightful lessons, come from books that are not actually trying to teach mindfulness! Just as mindfulness has been around for a long time, so too have picture books that convey

mindful messages. In many cases, we just never noticed these lessons before. As parents, and children's book authors ourselves, we have discovered that many of the best books about mindfulness are often just the best kids' books. Here are a few.

- The Snowy Day By Ezra Jack Keats, Puffin Books
- The Missing Piece By Shel Silverstein, HarperCollins
- The Important Book By Margaret Wise Brown and Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard, HarperCollins
- The Lion and the Little Red Bird By Elisa Kleven, Puffin Books
- The Story of Ferdinand By Munro Leaf and Illustrated by Robert Lawson, Puffin Books

To read the whole article from Mindful.org, [go here](#).

## **Five Guided Meditations to Investigate Panic and Anxiety**

Unprecedented, uncertain—these are terms we've heard used in excess over the past few months of living through a global pandemic. But no matter how tiring uncertainty may be, one thing remains true: We've all had to adapt to changing circumstances the best we can and as fast as we can.

Now, we're facing yet another shift. Coronavirus restrictions are slowly easing and new stresses about going back to work, socializing while socially distanced, and what this all means are on the rise. If you're finding yourself overwhelmed about reconnecting with the outside world, here are five guided meditations worth following to ease anxiety and calm panic.

The five meditations include:

- A Meditation for Investigating Panic Attacks
- A Meditation to Create Space Between You and Your Anxiety
- A Meditation for Working with Anxiety
- A Meditation to Sit With Difficult Emotions
- A Meditation to Explore Anxious Feelings

The entire article and access to these five recorded meditations can be found at [Mindful.org here](#).

## **Anonymous Acts of Kindness**

Peace is contagious. Kindness is contagious. Hope is contagious. Maybe it's time to spread them! One way to do that is by performing **Anonymous Acts of Kindness**.

**When you show care and compassion towards others you can change the way you see the world, and the way others see it, too.** How do you behave when no one is watching? Are you



kind? Thoughtful? Peaceful? When was the last time you offered kindness to someone who wasn't related to you, or someone you didn't know? Have you ever sent flowers anonymously to someone you knew could use some cheering up? Or helped someone who is struggling, or left a thoughtful note under the windshield wiper of someone's car? While we are all bracing ourselves against another bit of bad news, you can be the one who makes this world a magical, supportive experience.

Today, you can **go out of your way** to be kind to someone genuinely in need of a little compassion. Don't do it so that you can be noticed or appreciated. Do it for them. Imagine the ripple effect of kindness. Not only will they enjoy a moment of surprise and support, you can feel good too. Whether you offer a helping hand, a donation, a card, a letter, a prayer, or a gift, do it anonymously, without being noticed or taking credit for it. See what happens!

This is an excerpt from a Sarah McLean Newsletter. Sarah is a meditation leader and trainer, you can find out more about her and resources online [here](#).

## **Guided Meditation: A 6-minute Practice to Softly Focus Our Awareness**

This brief guided meditation lets us focus our attention on the sounds around us, finding bright moments of awareness even when we get distracted. Often, we use the sensation of the breath as an anchor in meditation. However, focusing on the sounds around you can also be a comforting way to ground yourself. Try this guided practice to gently focus awareness when in need of a moment of calm. Find the meditation [here on the Mindful.org website](#).

## **5 Lessons to Remember When Lockdown is Lifted**

If we remember the importance of resilience, gratitude, and doing with less, we can move forward with a new sense of purpose. A lot of people I know have been starting to wonder about life after the shelter-in-place orders have been lifted. What will it be like? What will the new normal be? Here are some lessons I want to hold on to once sheltering in place is lifted.

**1. Being with others is key to happiness** - Many of us have been relying on social media and Zoom meetings to stay in touch with people during the pandemic. But, while I'm grateful that I can keep up with friends on Facebook or visit with folks via videoconferencing, these aren't really the same as seeing people in-person.

**2. Reducing stress is good for everyone** - There have been a lot of things to stress out about during this pandemic, for sure. The risk of losing our jobs, becoming sick, or inadvertently infecting a beloved relative is frightening. Being in a constant state of high alert is not good for our minds or bodies—or for those around us, either.

**3. Showing gratitude matters** - It's pretty obvious that we should be grateful to the “essential workers” during this time of shelter in place. Food suppliers, health care workers, delivery people, and first responders have taken on risks to themselves for the benefit of everyone



else. How can we possibly repay them? By showing a little gratitude and paying the kindness forward.

**4. We need less stuff than we think** - Before the current shelter in place took hold, I never would have guessed how easy it is to do without so many modern conveniences. Now that shopping at the mall, getting my hair done, or popping into the grocery store for a single ingredient has become impossible, I've realized that I'm surviving just fine.

**5. We are stronger when we act together** - As communities around the world manage the pandemic, one thing we've all learned is that cooperation matters. Only through group effort can we do something to make a difference in the trajectory of a worldwide threat.

*Working together for the common good has helped us fight the pandemic and could bode well for solving other worldwide problems requiring cooperation—like poverty, ethnic violence, and climate-based disaster.*

That's why I hope we will hold on to that lesson after we leave our homes. There is power in keeping in mind our common humanity and our sense of interconnection. If we also remember the importance of our relationships, resilience, gratitude, and doing with less, we can move forward into our un-sheltered lives again with a renewed sense of purpose and tackle some of our most difficult problems. It could be that collective, compassionate action will be the key to creating a better future for us all. Read the full story at [5 Lessons to Remember When Lockdown is Lifted](#).

## Video - *What If* by Reba McEntire

Country star Reba McEntire remakes a hit from years ago to celebrate those working the front line in the pandemic. Check out the new release of [What If here](#).

## Connecting with Nature - Robert Bateman wildlife artist and naturalist

Connect in nature. Inspire our world - is the vision of the Bateman Foundation. Robert Bateman is amazing artist who offers FREE education videos, lessons plans and sketch guides to engage with the natural world. Resources to utilize for you, your family and other kids. Check out this short video from the founder [Robert Bateman](#). Then go to the website [Bateman Foundation](#) to check out all the resources available.

## Quiz: Frazzled to Balanced - Where are you?

As part of an article by Elizabeth Markle on [4 Ingredients for Human Well-Being](#) she lists Move, Connect, Nourish and Be as these critical ingredients. To take learning about these key ingredients to the next level - grab a pen and paper try rating each aspect. Rate each aspect on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being "I'm nowhere near meeting my goals for this," and 10 being "I'm

feeling great about this, and my behavior is totally aligned with my values.” Remember, the aim of this quiz isn’t to judge yourself—it’s simply to be honest about where you are, so you can make informed choices.

Also, as you do this personal wellbeing assessment for yourself, what do you notice? Which of these four practices do you incorporate effortlessly, as a part of your daily routine? Which ones might need a bit more attention, more practice, more cultivation?

**1. Where are you with your movement goals?** (1 on your scale might be “Um... What movement goals?” while 10 might be “I’m rocking my daily movement practice and feel great about it!”)

**2. How are you eating lately?** (1 being “Oh dear. Strictly gummy bears and soda for the past 2 weeks,” and 10 being “This is the healthiest I’ve ever eaten!”)

**3. How are you doing with connecting** and finding strength in a sense of community? (1 being, perhaps, “I’ve completely lost touch with the people who are important to me,” while 10 could be “I feel connected, nourished, supported, and uplifted in my connections.”)

**4. How well are you tuning in to your inner peace** and caring for your well-being? (1 being “Pause? No way, I don’t have time for that,” and 10 being “I am checking in with myself regularly and using the practices or habits that give me space just to be here for *me*.”)

**Now, look at your results - Where are you today, and where would you like to be?**

**If your scores fall between 1 and 5:** I would invite you to start first with compassion. This is a crazy time, and it makes so much sense that wellness practices are not the top of your list! Bring as much kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, and even humor as you can to this moment. Then, see where you can get curious. What would a small next step towards well-being be?

**If your scores fall between 5 and 10:** I invite you to take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate what you’ve been doing—in a pandemic, no less! Take a deep breath, give yourself a smile, and when you’re ready, get curious! What small step would take your well-being from good to great?

This time is an opportunity to get intentional. To choose, rather than to drift. As a bonus, try sharing your wellness assessment with a family member or friend. Share what’s true for you, ask about them, and see how you might provide some mutual support and accountability for your next steps.

## **The Power of Purpose Reflection**

Dr. Sheila Patel of the Chopra Center for Wellbeing offers insight in using this time to reflect on your purpose. She writes: “More important than anything else is connecting with that inner drive that keeps me moving forward, despite fatigue or the threat of illness — and that is *purpose*. Purpose is an integral pillar to wellbeing, during times of strife or calm...”

In our current state of social distancing, it's the perfect time to reflect on *your* life's purpose by asking yourself three questions:

- What natural talents do I have?
- What brings me joy?
- And how can I use these talents to bring joy to others at this moment in time?

A good place to start is meditation. A regular meditation practice can help you discover your unique talents, whether it's fixing things, making people laugh, cooking, or creating community, and using your talents to then help others will naturally help you find meaning and purpose in these challenging times."

**Take Action:** Spend a few minutes to write your thoughts on these three questions. As you are comfortable, invite a friend or colleague to do it as well and then share your thoughts together.

To read entire story by Dr. Patel - follow this link [The Power of Purpose in a Time of Struggle](#)

## Tips for Balancing Work Time and Personal Time

So many of our ISU Community is working at home during this time. One of the challenges is how to balance the work-personal times in your daily routine. Here are some tips that can help. But keep in mind, especially now, that plans change, things happen and be kind and compassionate with yourself and those in your world.

**Have a starting work routine.** Mr. Rogers knew how to do transitions right. You don't need to sing when you start work (unless you really want to), and you don't need to switch sweaters. But you can have certain things that you do in the same way each morning — even if you work from home.

**Plan.** Have a plan for the day that includes meeting times, projects, even when you answer email. Include home needs into your plan and time to simply relax. Choose the time of day that's best for you to make your daily plan and then put a recurring reminder in your calendar to prompt you to build the habit.

**Prioritize your communication.** It's understandable that you may need to have some personal communication during work hours and some professional communication after hours. But try to keep work during work hours and personal for personal hours. This will keep your time invested in the right places but will also keep you mentally present in both your professional life and personal life.

**Set a wrap-up routine.** To help be off-the-clock, have a wrap-up routine that you start at least 30 minutes before you need to end work. Check emails and your task list to know that you have completed what's essential. If you realize you will need to work later at night, decide on exactly what you will complete and when - set a time and time limit. You can mentally disconnect until later when the objective and the time frame are clear.

Elizabeth Grace Saunders wrote this article for the Harvard Business Review. These are highlights - you can read the entire [How to Transition Between Work Time and Personal Time here](#).

## The Power of Empathy by Dr. Brene' Brown - VIDEO

Many of us are feeling disconnected and overwhelmed as we continue to transition into new ways of work and life. This short Brene' Brown animated video (less than 3 minutes), is a powerful reminder of the impact empathy can have on us and those around us. Check out [The Power of Empathy video](#) here. If you want to learn more about Brene' Brown and her work on empathy, leadership and other topics, check out [Brene' Brown website here](#).

## Reflection

One way to *Be Present* is to pause and reflect on how things are going for you in this changing environment. Take a few minutes and reflect on these questions that will help you take stock of what is going on right now and what you want to do about it.

What decisions do I have control of at this moment?

What is the best use of my time right now?

What can I accomplish in the next 15 minutes?

## Find the Silver Linings

How often do you find yourself thinking of all the times that things do not go the way that YOU THINK they should have gone? In this activity - [Finding Silver Linings](#) you have an opportunity to think differently about those perceived mistakes and disappointments. This activity will help you to take time to reflect on a difficult situation and then identify those positive things that are a result of the 'bright side' of what happened. The complete details can be found at the [Greater Good Science Center of UC Berkley](#).

## A Mindful Walk

One simple way to *Be Present* in our current social distancing culture is to simply go outside and be with nature.

**Take 10-15 minutes - turn off your phone and walk or find a place to sit.** Be intentional and quiet and explore this time through your senses: hear the songs of birds; see squirrels or other animals running about; feel the sun and breeze on your face; touch the buds that are starting to pop out on trees and bushes.

**Close your eyes and see what sounds you can hear that you didn't before.** Is there a train rattling through in the distance? Do you hear kids playing on the next street? Or is there an airplane flying over? Be still and take it all in.

**Take a picture.** If something grabs your attention – a specific bird or colorful flower – take a picture. Make it the background on your phone or computer as a reminder to *Be Present*.