

Mindfulness

Virtue and Yoga pose of the week
Combining Emotional Intelligence with Yoga



Monica Batiste

MINDFULNESS

Virtue and Yoga pose of the week

Combining Yoga with Emotional Intelligence



By Monica Batiste

Written and Illustrated by Monica Batiste:

1. *Yoga for Little Bears* (2014)
2. *Simply Yoga* (2011)
3. *Your Perfect Body* (2011)
4. *Yoga and Emotional Intelligence* (2015)
5. *EFT for children* (2015)
6. *Reducing bullying through Yoga and emotional intelligence* (2015)

Virtue and Yoga pose of the week

Acceptance	Discipline	Imagination	Reliability
Agility	Divergent-thinking	Integrity	Reparation
Ambition	Empathy	Initiative	Resilience
Assertiveness	Energy	Idealism	Respect
Attention	Enthusiasm	Innocence	Responsibility
Awareness	Ethics	Intuition	Reverence
Balance	Eloquence	Joyful	Self-Awareness
Benevolence	Excellence	Justice	Self-Care
Bravery	Expand comfort-	Jovial	Self-Confidence
Caring	zone	Kindness	Self-Discipline
Charity	Faith	Leadership	Self-Esteem
Clarity	Flexibility	Letting-go	Self-love
Cleanliness	Focus	Logical	Self-Reliance
Commitment	Forgiveness	Love	Self-Respect
Compassion	Friendliness a	Loyalty	Self-Regulation
Communication	Friendship	Manners	Service
Confidence	Fun	Meditation	Social-Skills
Concentration	Generosity	Mercy	Spiritual
Considerate	Gentleness	Mindfulness	Steadfastness
Consistent	Grace	Moderation	Strength
Co-operation	Gratitude	Modesty	Sincerity
Courage	Grounded	Motivation	Tact
Courtesy	Happiness	Negotiation	Tenderness
Creativity	Harmony	Open-Heart	Thankfulness
Curiosity	Health	Optimism	Tolerance
Dependability	Heroic	Orderliness	Trust
Detachment	Holistic	Patience	Truthfulness
Determination	Helpfulness	Peacefulness	Unity
Dedication	Honesty	Perseverance	Understanding
Decisiveness	Honor	Playful	Visionary
Desire	Hope	Positive	Wisdom
Discernment	Humility	Prayerfulness	Zealous
Discretion	Humor	Purposefulness	

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For educators and children: educational; fitness; motivation; personal development. For ages 3 - 12

Illustrations created by Monica Batiste using gouache and prisma color pencils on cotton paper or oils on canvas.

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Virtue and Yoga pose of the week

Virtue and Yoga pose of the week is an opportunity to grow self-esteem through yoga in a joyful and positive way.

Each week a yoga pose and a virtue will be selected for you to bring into your home or classroom. Soon your children will be able to acknowledge all of the virtues he or she sees in themselves, and in others. This will grow self-esteem and empathy.

All yoga postures have benefits, and your children will soon begin to practise them spontaneously. Of course it's always great to do this with adults too. Adults are just big kids, really, and they love to be seen too.

Virtue activities and yoga postures fit into the Australian National Curriculum under PDHPE. And into Character Development and Physical Education for the USA.

This week's activities for mindfulness are meditation, divergent thinking activity, restorative yoga postures, and colouring pages.

Printable activities, postures, cards and rewards are included in each week's feature.

Table of Contents

Virtue and Yoga pose of the week	4
Virtue of the week MINDFULNESS	5
<i>Being Mindful</i>	5
<i>How do we grow Mindfulness?</i>	6
<i>Being Mindful</i>	6
<i>Benefits of mindfulness</i>	7
<i>Switching off stress</i>	7
Yoga pose of the week	8
<i>Meditation and Visualization</i>	8
<i>Meditation</i>	8
<i>Mindful meditation</i>	9
<i>A meditation for Mindfulness</i>	9
<i>What about when you are busy?</i>	10
<i>Visualization</i>	10
<i>Benefits of Visualization</i>	10
<i>Virtues Developed</i>	10
<i>How to Visualize Your Goals</i>	10
Print outs for Mindfulness	11
<i>Divergent (creative) thinking based on mindfulness</i>	13
<i>Coloring in pages</i>	20
About Monica Batiste	25
References	25

Virtue of the week MINDFULNESS

Being Mindful

Being mindful is about being in the present moment with acceptance for life as it is. We may not like some things, but we can accept that things ‘are as they are.’ Sometimes we experience tension in our mind-body because we are resistant to life. If we are not happy and don’t approve of what is going on, we can wire ourselves to tension and stress.

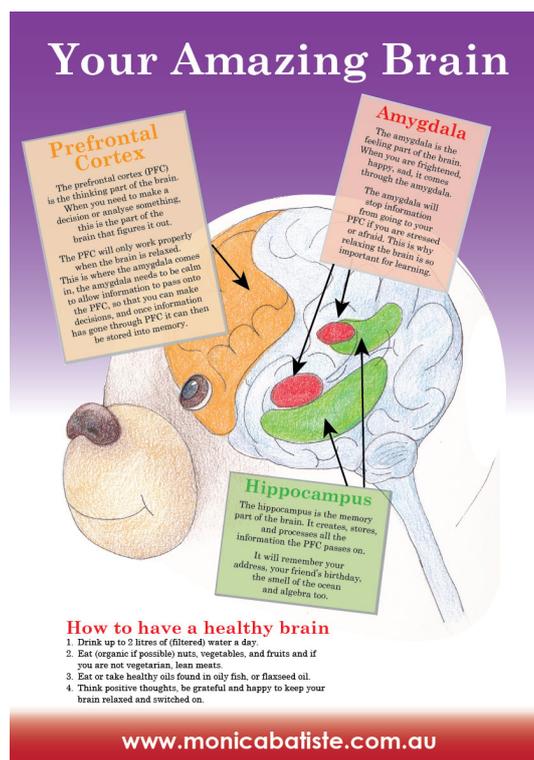
Solutions and learning are not found during stress, but during peace. Being mindful and accepting things *are as they are*, supports us in letting go of what we cannot change, allowing solutions to come to us, and appreciating the moment for all the good it can offer.

When we appreciate the moment as it is, we naturally release tension, which allows our breath to deepen, and switches our mind towards peace, and away from stress.

Our brains cannot learn and process information, or access memory when stressed. When we are stressed, the amygdala (primitive part of our brain) switches on the **fight, flight** or **freeze** response. Even the smallest of things can trigger stress, as the brain will remember that ‘this’ is the trigger to switch on fight, flight or freeze.

This means that children are unable to socialise, relax, play, learn, or remember during stress.

Stress has many levels, but with the regular practise of deep breathing and mindfulness, children are able to switch off stress and increase their ability to learn, process and enjoy life.



Practising mindfulness takes only a few minutes a day, but has a lifetime affect.

How do we grow Mindfulness?

When we practise mindfulness, we change our brain from stress to peace. Rewiring the brain takes consistent practise, but it only takes a few minutes to begin the process and make positive change. Bringing children into a mindful and peaceful state a few times a day will alter the course of their brain and learning to higher and more positive results.

Here are some simple techniques to use throughout the day.

Being Mindful

1 – 3 minutes

Present feel touch smell taste hear see

Awareness of the present moment

Bring yourself into the present moment.

Feel

Become aware of your breath and how it moves in and out of your body. Notice where your breath goes. Imagine all the cells your breath is bringing oxygen to. How does your breath feel? What temperature is your breath?

Become aware of your clothes on your skin.

What is the texture like?

Can you feel your heart beating?

Is your body still? Or moving?

Touch

Notice how your body touches the earth or floor beneath you. What parts of you are touching?

Sense

How do you feel?

Smell

What can you smell?

Taste

What can you taste? What does air taste like?

Hear

What can you hear? Listen for all the different sounds around you. Which sound pleases you?

Which sound doesn't? Tune into your favourite sound.

Does sound give you an emotion? Which sound? Which emotion?

See

What can you see?

What do you see that feels good?

What colours do you see?



When practising mindfulness, begin wherever you are, and what ever is around you. Presence allows the brain to relax and release or lower stress hormones. Presence raises awareness and improves the ability to absorb information.

Expand the experience of mindfulness through a divergent or creative thinking exercise in the activities section of this pack.

Divergence helps to open the mind and build pathways. Divergence uses creative and logic thought. Right and left brain. Divergent thinking helps children expand their ability to find creative solutions to problems. In divergent activities – all answers are correct; for the experience is the answer.

Benefits of mindfulness

Presence improves self-love and self-care because it supports safety and security. When children are afraid –they move out of the moment and into a fearful space. Bringing children back to the present moment helps them learn how to self-regulate their emotions and gives them a tool to move out of anxiety and into security. Mindfulness grows friendliness because friendliness is an extension of self-love. When children care for themselves, they care for another. When children feel cared for, they naturally extend this care to others. When children care for another, they develop empathy and intuition.

Virtues Developed

Peacefulness, mindfulness, focus, compassion, self-regulation, creativity.



Switching off stress

Movement helps to lower stress. Brain gym was created by Paul and Gail Dennison to switch on the brain to improve learning. The Brain Gym tune up is a sequence of five actions that help lower cortisol and relax the brain. You can use brain gym before any learning activity, or to help children calm after a busy or hyper activity.

Brain Gym was created by Paul and Gail Dennison to support children to learn more easily, and has many other benefits.

Brain Gym

The 5 minute Brain Tune-up

Brain Gym

- increases the ability to learn
- clears stress
- helps overcome learning difficulties



1. Drink water

2. Brain Buttons
Place fingers or thumbs on the two sensitive spots beneath your collar bone and massage to stimulate blood flow to the brain. Massage brain buttons for about one minute, changing hands half-way.

3. Cross crawl
Cross right arm to left knee and change repeatedly. By crossing the midline with opposing arms and legs, your right-brain and left-brain start talking to each other. The corpus callosum is activated, thus opening path-ways for whole brain learning.

4. Cooks Hook Up
This movement relaxes the brain. Step one foot across the other. Stretch arms out in front, inter-twine palms, clasp, turn hands under and up. Breathe deeply and relax. After one minute, release hands.

5. Breathe
Put thumbs and fingertips together and place over solar plexus. With feet apart, breathe deeply for one minute.

Your brain is now switched on.

love honour and accept yourself, just as you are

Practice Brain Gym every day

art and children's books by monicabatiste.com.au

Yoga pose of the week

Meditation and Visualization



Meditation

Meditation or deep relaxation is a valuable tool for a happy and productive life. Breathing deeply and relaxing the body helps calm the mind and allows inner peace. The benefits of meditation include slower breathing, slower heart rate, lower blood pressure, and an increase in oxygen and lung strength. Relaxation releases the happy hormones.

Meditation can be practised in *Peaceful Pose*, but it can also be useful in *Child's Pose* for a minute or two. Five to ten minutes of meditation every morning will go a long way in setting a more peaceful attitude for the day.

Mindful meditation

Mindfulness is another form of meditation. It's the act of being in the moment; of being present; and being here and now. Once the mind has bought itself to this very moment, it naturally releases resistance and is open for positive benefits.

When supporting children on being mindful, it's of benefit to go for a walk through nature and observe the surroundings. Mindfulness is about tuning in to our 6 senses. What can you hear? See? Feel? Taste? Touch? Intuit?

You can also practise mindfulness whilst eating a piece of fruit.

Mindfulness helps children grow caring, compassion, love and kindness towards themselves, and others because mindfulness builds self-awareness. Mindfulness is about being present, right here, right now. Being present switches off stress, and increases calming hormones.

Being present means tuning into what is around you and experiencing the world with all senses.

Being present allows you to let go of stress and breathe in peace.

When you or the children are feeling agitated, this is the perfect opportunity to become present.

A meditation for Mindfulness

1 – 10 minutes

Play soft and slow music. Lie or sit in a comfortable position.

You can read the following meditation with a slow and calm voice. Pause often, and make adjustments where needed. Take several deep breaths, relax and release tension. Focus on your breath and become aware of how it moves in and out of your body. As thoughts enter your mind, let them go and return to your breath. Take deep breaths, and with each exhale, release and relax every muscle.

As you feel your breath becoming quiet and slow, focus on your toes and consciously relax each one. Relax each muscle from the toes to the feet, to the ankles, breathing deeply; release your calves, shins, thighs and hamstrings. Let your body go, bring your awareness back to your breath. Focus on your breath as you breathe in and out. Relax your hips, abdomen and chest.

Let yourself become soft. Let go of your shoulders, arms and hands. Soften your upper back, middle back, lower back and gluteus. Feel your breath. Relax your scalp, jaw, eyes and eyebrows. Stay focused on your breath, let go. Let thoughts go, let tension go, let expectations go. You are now calm and relaxed.

Bring your awareness to your heart. Imagine your heart is glowing with a beautiful and brilliant white light. This light is filled with love and peace. Feel this love. Feel this love for yourself and wrap yourself in a warm blanket of love. Breathe in (5 or 6 counts)... breathe out...(5 or 6 counts)

Visualize this brilliant white loving light glowing so brightly that it expands out of your body and into the room, sending love to all people around you, (breathing in... breathing out...) let this loving light grow until it fill the school the community, and soon the whole world (breathing in.... breathing out....). Imagine the whole world being healed by this beautiful, brilliant, loving white light that begins in your own heart.

(Breathing in.... breathing out...) Can you feel it?

Can you feel the peace that you are?

Can you feel the peace that you are creating?

(Breathing in... breathing out...)

With your next breath, gently move your fingers and toes. Gently move your body. Raise arms above head and stretch whole body. With a big sigh, release breath and body. Roll onto your right side and slowly sit up in a comfortable cross-legged position.

Continue to breathe for another minute. As you feel your love and friendliness for others grow within you, know that you can take this love with you as you go about your daily life. Breathe love into your life, softly open your eyes, and intend to have a wonderful day.

What about when you are busy?

Meditation is a perfect platform for practising mindfulness, for it offers the space for slowing down and tuning in. But what about when time is rushed, when there are things to do and places to go? Can we practise mindfulness in this space? Yes we can; the goal is to experience the moment, and this can be experienced anytime, anywhere.

Taking the time to experience the moment can be done in all situations. It's about slowing down and appreciating the small things like how our feet move, where we are in space, the texture against our skin and the timing of our breath. Even during conversations with others, you may tune into the future or past. Being mindful during regular moments is about bringing yourself into the conversation, noticing the action around you without judgement or being in another moment in your mind. Keep bringing yourself back to the present, by tuning in with your 5 (or 6) senses.

Visualization

One of the many benefits of deep breathing is that the brain switches off stress and switches on peace. During peace is the perfect moment to use affirmations and to visualise yourself in the life you prefer.



Benefits of Visualization

Imagination and visualization help develop the ability to set goals to improve all areas of life. Studies have shown that if you can create a picture in your mind of what you want, you are more likely to achieve it. This is because your mind is a powerful magnet and will remind you to notice the opportunities and situations that are in the direction of what you want.

Have you ever noticed that when you buy something, you notice it everywhere? This is because your brain has been programmed to notice it. It's the same with goals and intentions. By programming your mind to what you wish to achieve, you will attract it. You will notice opportunities that you didn't notice before, people that can support you will suddenly appear, and you will become more motivated to take action towards it. Motivation is increased with self-belief.

Virtues Developed

Imagination, faith, focus, trust in self, mindfulness.

How to Visualize Your Goals

1-3 minutes

Quiet your mind and take deep breaths. You can either sit in a comfortable position or lie down. Relax your mind and body. Breathe in and out, let go of thoughts and focus on your breath. After a minute or so, bring to your mind a picture or movie of what you want, or want to experience. At first it may not have much detail, but don't worry, that will improve as you start moving towards it. It is important to feel good as you are doing this, as this means your mind is accepting the vision. If you start to feel anxious, then you might be 'thinking' about how this could never happen or seeing obstacles. Take a deep breath, let go of the details and go back to the desire of what you want. The more you see yourself having what you want and living your ideal life, the more likely you are to achieve it. The mind is a powerful tool. You can change your life one thought at a time, one day at a time, and visualization will help you get there.

Print outs for Mindfulness

Print out the **MINDFULNESS card** and paste it on your wall to show everyone that enters your room that friendliness is the virtue of the week. Posters and activities included in this pack.

Virtue of the week

Mindfulness

Divergent (creative) thinking based on mindfulness

10 – 45 minutes

Name _____

Write or draw about an experience you had.

How did you feel?

What did you see? -----

What did you hear?

What colours did you see?

What sounds did you hear?

What colour is a lion's roar? Can you draw it?

What sound does the colour blue make? Can you describe it?

What colour is a whales happiness? Can you draw it?

If taste had a colour, what colour is the taste of an apple?

If colours had a sound, what would yellow sound like?

If Orange were a person, what would their name be?

If you could hear the sunset, what the sunset sound like?

If you could see music, what colour would it be? Can you draw or paint it?

If you could taste happiness, what would it taste like?

What song does the fruit sing when it's on the branch?

What song does fruit sing, when it falls to the earth?

What does red say?

What is blue's favourite sport?

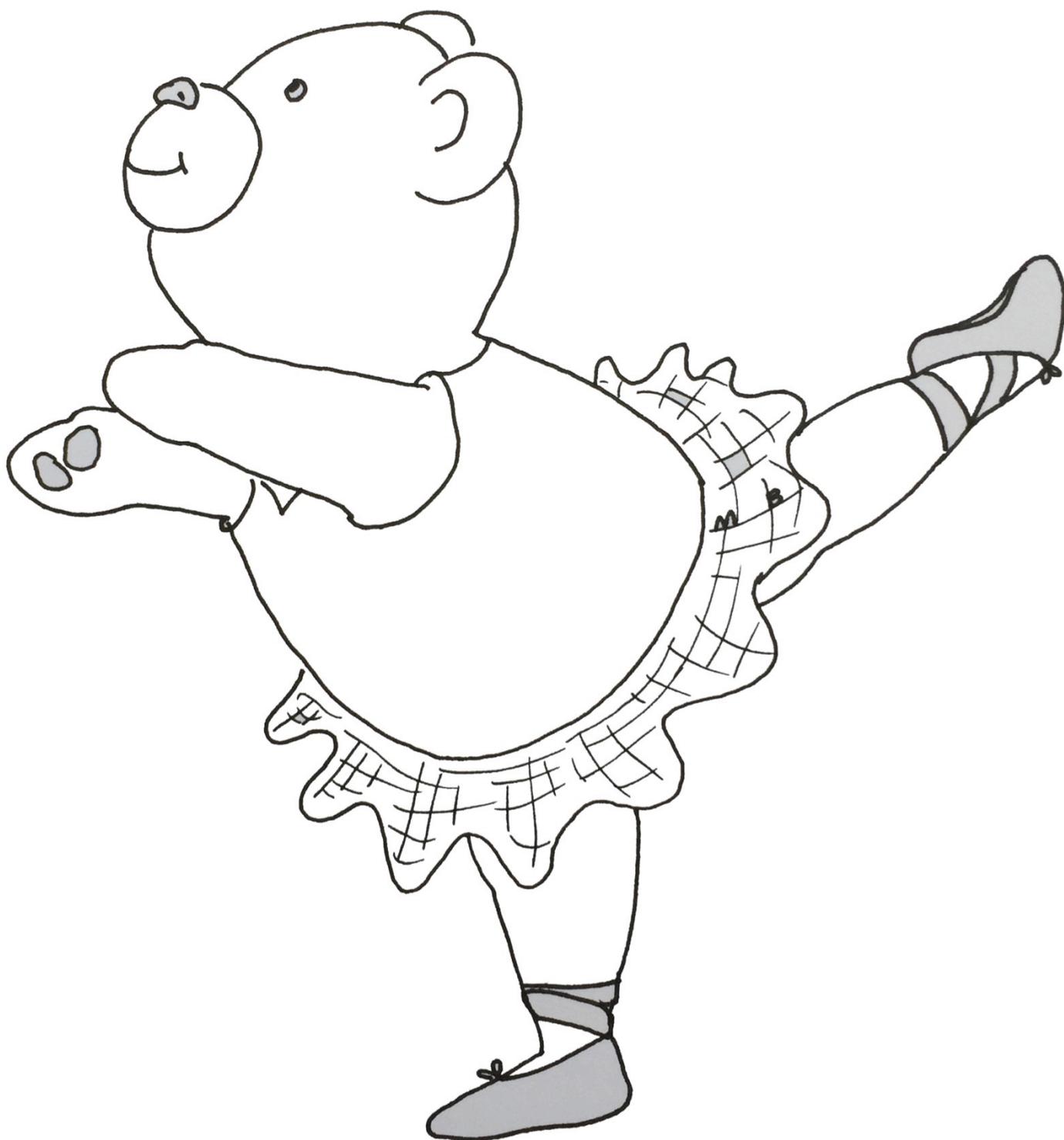
Can black feel happy as well as sad?

Where does white go for a holiday?

Coloring in pages

10 – 45 minutes

Use mindfulness to colour in and help you tune into the present moment.







Thank you for your presence



Your actions create a ripple across the universe and make the world a better place.

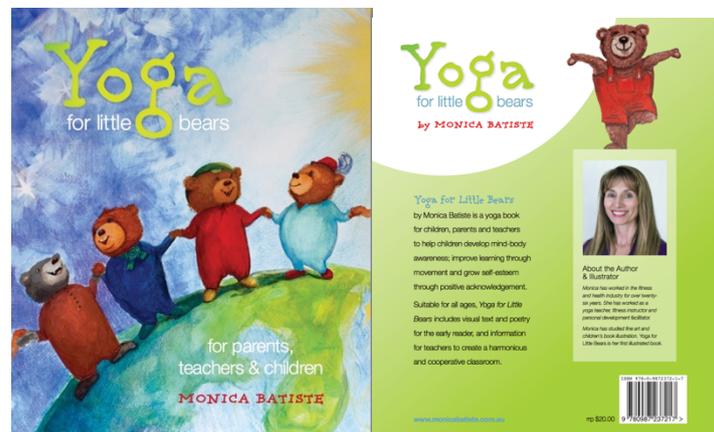
About Monica Batiste



Monica Batiste is the author and illustrator of *Yoga for Little Bears* (2014) *Simply Yoga* (2011) and *Your Perfect Body* (2011). *Yoga for Little Bears* was shortlisted for the Moreton Bay Innovation awards for its unique combination of Yoga and Emotional Intelligence. Monica has worked in the health industry for over 30 years and teaches yoga with a focus on self-esteem and personal development. Her books have received positive reviews by teachers, parents and health care providers from around the world.

Monica studied health and fitness in Sydney with ACHPER, and Brisbane with FitLink and Yoga Rhythms. Creative Writing at Sunshine Coast University, Fine Art with Atelier in Brisbane, and Children's book illustration and design at Balmoral Art College.

She lives in North Brisbane with her lovely husband Andreas, and between them they have four beautiful daughters, and seven awesome grandchildren.



Yoga for Little Bears is a fun and easy way for children to develop their brain, body and confidence. The yoga postures designed for children's development include balance postures for focus and neuroplasticity; peaceful postures for reducing stress and increasing calm; friendship postures to reduce bullying and increase empathy. The beautiful illustrations of *Yoga Bears* in the Australian climate inspire a multi-dimensional learning opportunity to grow naturalistic intelligences. Children from around the world have enjoyed *Yoga Bear* with testimonials from parents, teachers and psychologists on how *Yoga Bear* has supported their child's emotional and physical development.

Yoga for Little Bears can be purchased from TpT, the authors website www.monicabatiste.com.au or from Amazon.com

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