

Making Friends with a Friendship Circle

through Connection, Tapping, Smart
Yoga, Mindfulness and Affirmations



Monica Batiste

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Making Friends

Friendships are an important part of life, and making friends can be hard for some children. Friendships often form over common interests and through socializing. When children have difficulty in socializing, or in expressing themselves, they can find it hard to make friends.

Helping children find connection with themselves, and each other, will help children form friendships with people from all walks of life.

Friends help us know *who we are*, by their acceptance of us, and their positive reflection. A friend is someone who believes in your hopes and dreams, someone who likes and loves you, *just as you are*. A friend will listen to your problems without sharing them with others. A friend is someone who makes you feel good about yourself.

Forming friendships within your community is healthy. It supports your spirit, your self-esteem, plus your brain and immune development.

Friends and community give us a sense of belonging.

The Friendship Circle is a short and simple activity to help set the groundwork for connection and self-esteem. Use the Friendship Circle however you like, as often as you like, and add your own magic touches. The Friendship Circle uses connection, yoga, EFT, and affirmations. It will take from 5 – 10 minutes, and you can use the various activities it incorporates sprinkled throughout the day.

Connection

Connection is the bond you have with yourself and with others.

When you feel connected, you love and accept yourself just as you are. This doesn't mean you are not seeking to grow and evolve, it means you love and accept yourself on the journey of life, knowing you are doing your best and deserve the best that life has to offer.

When you connect with yourself, you connect with others.

Connection is grown through love, mindfulness, feeling your feelings, validation, and self-acceptance.

Connections help us have a healthy life, set healthy boundaries, and form strong bonds.

Growing connection in our Friendship Circle occurs through contact, eye contact, body language, and positive reinforcement.

Mindfulness

When you are mindful, you are in the present moment, tuning into life, and using all your senses.

Tuning into your breath.

Tuning into the different sounds.

Noticing the colours and shapes around you.

Noticing the textures on your skin, and the temperature of your breath.

Life isn't always perfect, but it is what it is.

When we can accept this moment, just as it is, tension is released.

Tension builds when we are resistant to life.

When we create a habit of tension, our neural pathways build more neural pathways to tension, and stress can compound.

Mindfulness helps you switch from stress to peace.

Children cannot learn, process information, or access memory, when stressed. When we are stressed, the amygdala (primitive part of our brain) switches on the fight, flight, freeze, please or fawn response.

If a child is experiencing constant tension or stress, it can become an habitual response, and even the smallest trigger can switch it on. This is why it is so important to practise mindfulness and deep breathing, so we can help rewire our brains towards peace, and grow resilience.

It is difficult for children to socialise, relax, play, learn, or access memory, when the stress response has been triggered.

With the regular practise of deep breathing and mindfulness, children can learn to switch off stress and increase their ability to learn, process and enjoy life.

How to be Mindful

Become present

Being present means tuning into what is around you and experiencing the world with all of your five (or six) senses.

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

How to be present

Feel

Ask children to feel their feet connecting them to the earth. Tune into how your clothes feel against their skin. Notice the temperature. Any scents in the room or environment? Tune into your heart and feel it beating.

Feeling Feelings

Invite children to explore their feelings. Happy, sad, anxious, excited. Exploring feelings and accepting all feelings help children stay present.

Taste

(Some groups place a sultana on their tongue for a mindfulness exercise). Describe taste.

Sense

Tune into your emotions. Tune into your self for any tension or pleasant

feelings. Accept everything. Soften tension. Trust yourself. You are okay, and everything is going to be all-right.

Hear

What can you hear? How many sounds are around you? Find a sound that helps you relax.

See

Notice the shapes and colors around you. Soften your gaze. Which shapes and colors help you feel good?

Intuition

Known as the sixth sense, intuition will help you trust yourself and the world around you. Tuning into your intuition takes courage, because you are the only one that can interpret what your intuition is telling you. But a guide to intuition is if it feels good or right, it probably is, if it feels wrong and uneasy, then it probably is. If you can trust yourself to follow the guidance your intuition is telling you, then you will find life working out for you with ease and fun. Trust yourself. You know the next step.

Presence

When you are present, you become aware of what is around you.

Presence allows your brain to relax, release, and lower stress hormones.

Presence raises awareness and improves your ability to absorb information.

Presence improves self-love and self-care because it supports safety and security.

When you help children tune into the present moment, it helps them learn how to self-regulate their emotions.

Smart Yoga

Yoga is a wonderful practice to help you connect mind, body, and spirit.

For this activity we are focusing on a few of the postures that support switching on the brain, and decreasing stress. This will help create positive connections to self and friends.

Smart Yoga postures grow neural connections (neuroplasticity), strengthen and align the body, and help children focus and self-regulate.

The postures I use in the Friendship Circle are *Twirling Tops*, *Cross Crawl*, and *Around the World*.

Twirling Tops

From Mountain posture, swing arms from side to side, flow with the body.



Cross Crawl



From Twirling Tops add Cross Crawl. As you swing from side to side, lift one knee and cross the opposite hand over. Keep going, changing sides.

Around the World



As you do Cross Crawl, turn in a circle, and when you reach the start, turn the other way.

When I go Around the World, I say ‘Let’s go around the world. Pick a destination. Let’s go. I’m going to Paris (or wherever), and now I’m coming back. How was your trip? Was it fun? I had fun.’

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a simple technique to clear stress from the brain and body.

EFT evolved from *Through Field Therapy*, which was created by US psychologist Roger Callahan. Gary Craig, who studied with Callahan, identified certain energy points that when pressed or rubbed, would help to release pent up stress and emotions.

How to Tap

Based on acupressure points, you ‘tap’ on points along the face and body with your right hand, whilst ‘talking about the problem.’ The tapping discharges the negative emotion and relaxes the brain.

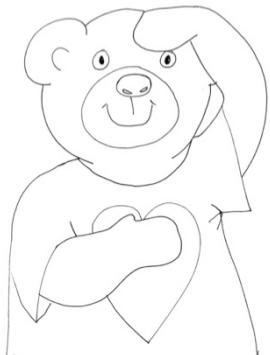
You continue to tap whilst talking about the problem, and at the same time insert a positive message such as ‘I love and accept myself.’

The positive message is inserted into the pathway that previously held a negative pattern or belief, which changes your perception of the problem.

EFT can dissolve the negative association with a problem, and it can remove triggers.

For *The Friendship Circle*, we are going to use the simple EFT technique of tapping on the head with one hand, and tapping on the heart with the other hand, whilst inserting positive feelings and affirmations.

Heart and Head Tapping



Tap fingers on the top of the head with one hand, and tap with fingers on the heart with the other hand. Change hands about half way.
As you tap, repeat affirmations to help reprogram your brain and heart.

Affirmations

Affirmations are statements you repeat to bring yourself to a positive place about who you are, where you want to be, or what you would like to achieve.

Affirmations help you convince yourself that you are the wonderful person you were born to be.

Affirmations help you achieve your goals because they help you believe in yourself.

Affirmations need to be written or spoken in the positive voice. For example; 'I am great' is better than 'I am not bad.' If a child wanted to improve something, let them consider the achievement of the goal as their affirmation; 'I kick winning goals' is better than 'I never miss' and 'I play the piano with confidence' is more appropriate than 'I never forget to practice.'

For the Friendship Circle, I use affirmations that support connection and self-love.

The *Friendship Circle* will take 5-10 minutes. It's loving, and beneficial. Do it at any time connection is needed.

You can watch one of my *Friendship Circles* on my Youtube channel 'Monica Batiste.'

The Friendship Circle



Gather children into a circle so they can see each child.

'Hold hands. Today we are going to do a friendship circle. The friendship circle is an opportunity for you to love and be loved, just as you are. We are going to suspend any and all judgments, and be totally present.

'Look around at each child. Everyone here has the potential to be your friend. We all want the same things, and that is to be kind to each other, and to be accepted just as we are.

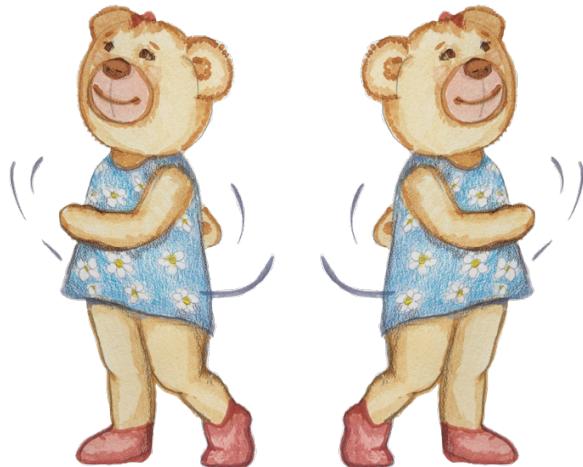
'Look into the eyes of each person. Can you feel the love?

'Take some deep breaths.

'That's good.

'Let's do some movement (release hands).

'Twirling Tops (up to one minute).



'Cross Crawl. Keep looking at your friends with your friendly loving face (up to one minute).



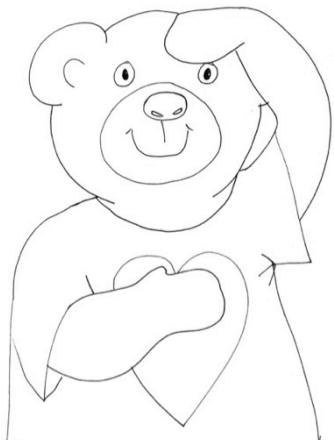
'Shall we go on a trip around the world?' (Keep doing cross crawl as you turn in one full circle).



'When you get back to the front, take another trip in the opposite direction.

'Go somewhere lovely. Have a wonderful time.'

Pause. Face the circle.



'Now we're going to tap. Tap with one hand on your head and the other on your heart.'

(Smile. Tapping).

'Very good.'

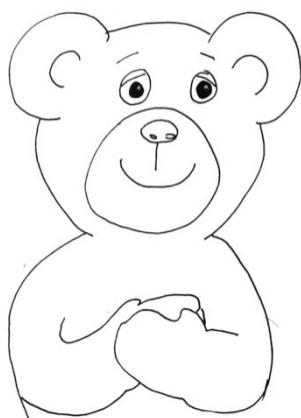
'As you are tapping, look around at your friends and repeat after me.'

*'I am a good person. I see the best in myself.
I see the best in you.'*

'I love myself. I am great. I am smart. I learn easily.'

'I am a good friend, I am kind. I love and accept myself, just as I am, I love and accept you, just as you are. We are in a loving and kind space. I am safe. You are safe. Thank you for being you. Thank you for being here. I value myself. I value you. We value ourselves. Thank you.'

1 – 2 minutes. Pause.



I love me.

'Place both hands on your heart. Take 3 deep breaths and visualize any color. Breathe.'

Pause

'Repeat after me. I deeply and completely, love, honor and approve of myself, just as I am.'

Repeat.

'Open your eyes. Well done children.'

Smile. 'Thank you.'

I always finish with hands together and the word 'Namaste' which means 'I see you.' You can do this, or say the words 'I see you.' Or whatever works for you.

Finish.

Do the Friendship Circle anytime. All of its components are useful in any activity to enhance presence and connection.

Thank you for taking the time to love and accept yourself and the children in your care.

It is because of you that the world is growing and expanding with love and peace.

Thank you

I wish you all the best on your journey.

Namaste

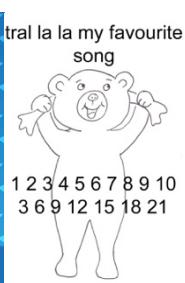
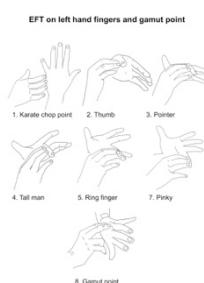
Monica

Resources for the Friendship Circle

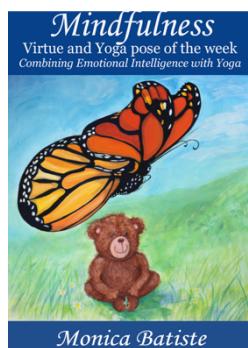
EFT for Kids EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE



Our eBook includes a poster of Moustache Bear to demonstrate the tapping points, plus many fun and informative illustrations. We show how to do EFT on your self, your children, and as a proxy. How to add finger tapping, eye movements, colour, sound, movement and affirmations. This is an awesome, and simple guide for your classroom or family.



MINDFULNESS



Being mindful is about being in the present moment. Solutions and the ability to learn are enhanced with mindfulness.

Our eBook includes:

- How to practise mindfulness
- A meditation for mindfulness
- An activity for divergent thinking based on mindfulness
- Colouring in pages for mindfulness
- A poster on Brain Gym to help decrease stress and open the brain for learning,
- A poster on Your Amazing Brain

Your Amazing Brain

Prefrontal Cortex
Amygdala
Hippocampus

How to have a healthy brain

1. Drink up to 1 litre of filtered water a day.
2. Eat a balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables.
3. Eat or take healthy oil instead of oily fish, or saturated oils.
4. Get enough sleep every night.
5. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day.
6. Listen to music, sing, dance, play an instrument, draw, paint, etc.
7. Read books, magazines, newspapers, etc.
8. Learn new skills, such as a musical instrument, sport, etc.
9. Spend time outdoors in nature.
10. Spend time with friends and family.

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Brain Gym
The 5 minute Brain Tune-up

1. Drink water
Place your hands on your collar bone and massage to stimulate blood flow to the brain. Hold for 10 seconds, then repeat about one minute, changing hands half way.

2. Brain Buttons
Place fingers on the two sensitive spots beneath your collar bone and massage to stimulate blood flow to the brain. Hold for 10 seconds, then repeat about one minute, changing hands half way.

3. Cross crawl
Cross right arm over left knee and climb steadily by crossing the middle with opening arms and legs, going from side to side, as if you are talking to each other. The corpus callosum is exercised, thus opening both ways for whole brain learning.

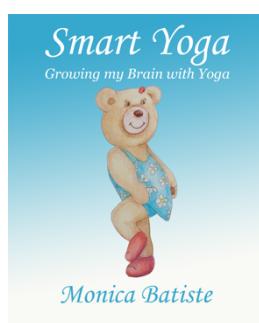
4. Corky Head Up
Put hands behind your head. Step one foot across the other. Stretch arms out in front, inter-twine palms, hold for 10 seconds, then repeat. Breathe deeply and relax. After one minute, release hands.

Your brain is now switched on.

Practice Brain Gym every day

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

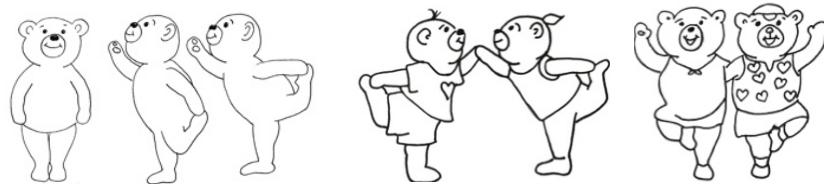
SMART YOGA to be published 2020



Neuroplasticity refers to the plasticity of the brain – meaning the potential of the brain to grow and change as a response to stimuli. The brain can grow and learn at any age; all it needs are the right tools.

Yoga postures help develop various aspects of the brain, and at the same time strengthen, lengthen and balance the body. Yoga won't take more time in the classroom, it will add time, a few minutes of yoga before an activity will help children align and de-stress, which gives them the ability to maintain focus and

mindfulness on the task at hand.



\$3 for individual eBooks

\$5 for bundles of two

\$6 for bundles of three

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About Me



I am a yoga teacher, author and artist. I earn my income through teaching yoga, painting, and creating books. I specialize in supporting children, schools, and families to grow into their best selves.

I would appreciate a review and feedback so that I can continue to grow and improve my work.

My husband and I share four beautiful daughters, and seven awesome grandchildren. We live north of Brisbane, Australia. Our next step is to explore the world, continue to connect with our family, and to serve wherever we can.

You can follow me on Teacherspayteachers, Facebook or Instagram. I hope to meet you on one of my travels. I am happy to do free talks for schools and parent groups.

Love.

Monica.

Photo of Monica with her granddaughter Matilda

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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 prismacolor pencils on cotton paper or oils on canvas.

'The Friendship Circle' Published by: Art & Words Publishing, Margate QLD Australia

Author and Illustrator: Monica Batiste