



Mindfulness is learning how to be fully aware of your body, mind, and feelings in the present moment without bias or judgment.

JUST BE

You can just sit and be. Use a bench or comfortable “no thinking” spot on the ground. Forget “to do” lists or multitasking.

THEN . . .

BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Think or say kind, compassionate words about yourself, your friends and family, or community, or those who need your care of concern. You could also choose to name them in a prayer.

BREATHE DEEPLY

Breathe in through your nose, hold your breath as you count a chosen number of times, then breathe out through your mouth. If you wish, say a word or sound of your choice and REPEAT. Experiment with the length of time you hold your breath. Instead of counting, you could choose to say a given list of persons you wish to remember or pray for.

TRY A WHOLE BODY SCAN

Become aware of different parts of your body, one part at a time. Begin either at your head and move toward your feet or at your toes and move up to your head. Move, exercise, or notice the feeling of each body part.

DO A MINDFULNESS WALK

Walk “aimlessly” to wherever your feet will take you in the area near your station. Pay attention to your feet and legs and the surface under them. What sights, sounds, smells, and feelings do you experience along the way near the station? Some people also choose to do prayer walking.

USE EACH OF YOUR FIVE SENSES, ONE AT A TIME

Look and see – shapes, sizes, colors, light and dark, location. You don't need to name or identify, just notice likenesses and differences.

Hear and listen – Pitch, tone, volume, intensity of sound in the world around you, animals, people, wind, water, rustling or crunching.

Touch and feel – coolness and warmth, roughness and smoothness, hardness and softness.

Sniff and smell – plant fragrances, animal smells, soil, air freshness or pollution, smells of industry, danger.

Taste – but only if you are SURE something is safe to taste.

Special Things to Do or Observe at This Station:

This station features a white oak tree, planted in 2020 by the Taylor County Literacy Council in memory of Loretta Kuse. The white oak produces long, yellowish-green catkins that droop in clusters in the spring and provides great fall color, with the leaves turning showy shades of red or burgundy. You can compare the shapes of its leaves with other oaks or other trees nearby.

Around the base of that tree, there is a circle of sawdust that can be used to design a nature mandala. Mandalas are designs that have been used for meditation by people over the centuries. Hildegard von Binger (b.1098 d. 1179) was a German abbess of the Benedictine Order who was a prolific writer, philosopher, composer, and visionary who used mandalas as a form of describing her visions. Examples may be found on the internet. Mandalas have been used as a form of stress reduction in coloring books designed for children and adults.

To make a nature mandala, collect small items, such as cones, rocks, leaves, flower petals, and other small objects, to create a design around the base of the oak with the trunk as the center.

From Station AA, you can look toward an agricultural space, wooded areas with a variety of trees, traffic on a nearby road, as well as nearby buildings. These can be explored by aimless walking.

Caution: Station AA is a safe place to sit and reflect; however, any deep digging near this station should be done only after Diggers Hotline has been called to flag the underground electrical lines that come in from the road. Also, be aware of and stay away from the large metal box located close to the lilac bush and east of the station. It is an electrical transformer that could transmit dangerous current.

As you observe the lawn and driveway area from early spring through the seasons, you will see a succession of flowers, beginning with snowdrops, still surrounded by snow, to spring beauties, forget me nots, trilliums, and summer perennials and annuals. Notice the daylilies and other groundcover under the pines.

White pines, honey locusts, and white birch have been planted over the years and are in various stages of growth. Avoid peeling bark from live trees. White spruce, whose ancestors came from the Black Hills of the Dakotas, were originally planted on the farm across the road at the turn of the century and have reseeded here.

What kinds of birds, insects, and mammals use the area around this station through the seasons?

Look at the various nearby buildings -- the fieldstone house built of rocks left by the glacier, the woodshed with animal homes excavated beneath it, and the garage museum.

Since this station contains a tree planted by the Taylor County Literacy Council, this would be a good opportunity to record your experiences through various forms of writing.