



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:

Station ZZ has a space where growing milkweed plants is preserved to serve as host plants for monarch butterfly larva and numerous other kinds of insects. Viewed from this location are the century-old barn built of hemlock lumber; fields for agriculture; the trail leading to the woods; and the mound and septic system, where foxes need to be prevented from digging in the sand and young children enjoy treating it as a hill to roll down.

- Note the QR code near the metal and wooden benches under the birch and lichen growing on the old bench. QR codes can be used as a reference to gain access to photographs on the website of the trees and wildflowers.
- A mulberry tree has edible fruit in season and a juneberry provides small, edible fruit. A planting of elderberries provides edible blossoms and fruits. Black walnut trees inhibit the growth of some kinds of vegetation. The seasonal growth of very poisonous mushrooms near Bench ZZ needs to be avoided.

- What fragrances can you experience from the leaves and blossoms growing there?
- Harmless redbellied and garter snakes sometimes hibernate in locations near the former old garden.
- A variety of birdhouses attract tree swallows, bluebirds, wrens, and, in some cases, wood ducks and other water birds.
- The pond and other sites viewed from Bench ZZ can be seen on the website.
<http://www.kusemuseum-naturepreserve.org/Benches/BenchZZ.htm>