

## CHARACTER COUNTS! Washington County

### CHARACTER COUNTS! Courier

January 2022

#### Mindfulness

**Always be mindful of the kindness and not the faults of others. --*Buddha***

#### Calendar:

Month Long: National Thank You Month

January 1: New Year's Day

January 6: Three Kings Day

January 9: Clear Off Your Desk Day

January 17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 24: Compliment Day

January 27: Holocaust Remembrance Day

**A person who is mindful of their CHARACTER is:** Trustworthy, Respectful, Responsible, Fair, Caring, and a good Citizen.

**People of CHARACTER:** wear a mask, wash your hands, and keep the distance!

For more resources, please visit [charactercounts.org](http://charactercounts.org) and *Random Acts of Kindness*.

*As we head into the New Year....*

**What is mindfulness?** Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment.

Mindfulness involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there's a "right" or "wrong" way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future. *From the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley*

Mindfulness offers us techniques to remain in the present moment, focusing on one thing at a time. Mindfulness prompts us to slow down, breathe through our pain, and use nonjudgment to carefully observe what is happening in our surroundings, describe what we're feeling and participate more fully in what is occurring.

Mindfulness might look like:

- Taking a five- minute breathing break from a heated conversation.
- Grounding yourself by using your five senses to observe and describe your environment.
- Returning to the present moment in a social situation by actively listening to what the other person is telling you.
- Getting gradually "unstuck" from self-judgmental thoughts to "take in" everything around you.

What's on your list of New Year's resolutions this year? Exercise more? Eat better? Read more?

Instead, why not limit your New Year's resolutions to actions that can have a dramatic impact on your family life? When you put your effort into meaningful goals that will benefit your household, you can have a profound effect on family relationships, organization, and teamwork in the year ahead.

Following are the top three ways you can make a huge difference in your kids' behavior and your family dynamics. You'll see success right away, which means you're more likely to stick with them throughout the year (and beyond).

**New Year's Resolution #1:** Commit to spending one-on-one time each day with each child. If you make just one resolution this year, this is the most important one! Spending just 10 minutes per day of uninterrupted, one-on-one time with each of your children builds emotional connections, reduces negative behaviors, and makes children more cooperative throughout the day.

**New Year's Resolution #2:** Improve routines. Revisit your morning, after-school, and bedtime routines. Are your kids refusing to brush their teeth, or constantly forgetting their lunchboxes or backpacks? It may be time to work as a family to implement some improved methods. The most effective type of routine is a "When-Then" routine, which places a desirable activity (snack time, TV time) at the tail end of a list of undesirables, but necessary, activities.

**New Year's Resolution #3:** Get everyone helping around the house. Resolve that this year will be the year you stop doing all the heavy lifting with the housework! Each of your children should be required to shoulder some age-appropriate, meaningful responsibilities that contribute to the family's daily life. Start by holding a family meeting to make a list of all the jobs that must be done weekly and decide how to divide the workload. Not only will you get some much-needed help, but you'll also teach a valuable lesson: the family is a "team" and without everyone's participation, the team can't function successfully.

--Nationally recognized parenting expert Amy McCreedy is the Founder of Positive Parenting Solutions

**Team activity:** In this exercise, the facilitator provides participants with a few raisins and asks that they pretend they have never seen it before. The facilitator then asks that the group pay attention to: The way the food looks, how it feels, how their skin responds to its manipulation, its smell, and its taste. Focusing on the single object of the food they have is meant to bring the participants' mind to the present to what is right in front of them. --Fleming & Kocovski (2007)

### "Words to Yourself"

#### **Mindfulness Activity: Boost your self-confidence**

1. Sit mindfully, with your spine straight and body relaxed.
2. Are you ever nervous about trying something new because you think you can't do it? Instead of worrying, close your eyes and imagine someone you love encouraging you.
3. Now talk to yourself in the same way. Use positive words. Tell yourself it's okay to try many times when doing something new.
4. Think about the kind words you would say to a friend who needs your help. Use those same words for yourself.
5. Open your eyes and smile at yourself. You are fine just as you are.

*You help yourself when you replace any unkind words in your mind with kind words.*

**CHARACTER COUNTS! Everywhere all the time!!**

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