



BrainWise and Mindfulness

"To experience peace does not mean that your life is always blissful. It means that you are capable of tapping into a blissful state of mind amidst the normal chaos of a hectic life." -Jill Bolte Taylor, M.D., Brain Scientist and TED Talk celebrity.



BrainWise skills make it possible to achieve a blissful state of mind and a number of teachers of mindfulness are using the 10 Wise Ways to help students learn contemplation and relaxation. In this month's newsletter I would like to talk about this application.

The link between stress and chronic disease continues to be documented, and the serious outcomes of these findings spurred pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris, M.D., to evaluate children's levels of stress as part of their medical history. Her pediatric clinic in a low-income neighborhood in San Francisco offers not only medical care, but also courses on mindfulness and other relaxation techniques. Her efforts were recognized as groundbreaking in a [recent article](#) published in the Washington Post.

Dr. Burke Harris, a graduate of the University of California at Davis who did her residency at Stanford, said she had never heard about research **linking childhood trauma to an increased risk of contracting seven of the ten leading causes of death in the United States.** "When I did, I wanted to shout about it from the rooftops."

BrainWise instructors know this feeling. They also work with children and families who face stress as an obstacle to their health and well-being, and it is often a challenge to "shout about it" and get programs like BrainWise into their classrooms and clinics. A number of instructors who teach mindfulness have integrated BrainWise into their programs, and praise how the 10 Wise Ways make it easier for students to understand contemplation and how learning BrainWise enhances their outcomes.

Dell Brooks, a Colorado high school teacher who teaches contemplative thought, said that BrainWise concepts and language help his students understand abstract concepts of mindfulness.



Mr. Brooks with BrainWise and Contemplation Students at Graduation
Dr. Marguerite Theophil has introduced BrainWise into the Mindfulness Practice workshops she conducts for teachers in India. She is pleased with how it has been received, and says that program graduates are emailing her with descriptions of how the 10 Wise Ways have helped their students gain control of their emotions. One instructor said that the "completion of this task makes the studies part follow easily."

His students come from difficult situations, and giving them tools to address adversity has helped them graduate and succeed in their lives. He and other instructors say that when they run into students, even years later, they hear stories about how BrainWise has helped the students and how they continue to use its thinking skills.



Dr. Marguerite Theophil and BrainWise and Mindfulness Instructors in India

Oprah Winfrey is a longtime advocate for mindfulness, and her network (OWN) has aired a number of programs on the subject. Her interviews with John Kabat-Zinn led to links to two videos that are great resource for teaching ways to *Exit Your Emotions Elevator*. The videos are produced by Wavecrest Films. The first, [Just Breathe](#), is a three-minute video that features elementary school children. The second video, [Release](#), shows middle school students talking about anxiety and how mindful meditation and breathing can help ease their mind from stress and anger.

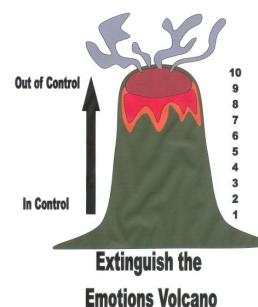
The difficulties our students and clients face are stressful, and as Dr. Burke Harris shared, the result can be life-threatening. It is exciting to know that you are teaching ways that help lift this weight. As always, thank you for your work and please continue to share your BrainWise stories!



Dr. Pat

P.S. Elevators: An Unfamiliar Metaphor for Some Students

How do BrainWise instructors teach Wise Way #4, Exit your Emotions Elevator, to students in rural areas who are not familiar with elevators? Dr. Theophil uses a "Ladder of Emotions" to depict emotional build-up with students in India, and Xiaoliang Li, M.D., a longtime BrainWise educator who has worked with students in rural areas outside Kunming, China, uses "Extinguishing the Emotions Volcano" as her metaphor.



If you would like a copy of the BrainWise Emotions Volcano Lesson Plan, [click here](#).



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