

Mindfulness Story

The Hole in the Road



Instructions:

This is a mindfulness story that is written to be read aloud to your class during a brain break, a mindfulness session, or just to refocus the mind and body on a busy day. As you read aloud, children will be using their imagination to explore mindfulness techniques and skills woven into a short story.

The Hole in the Road

We humans get ourselves into habits and routines. We get up, we get dressed, have breakfast, brush our teeth, and go to school; it's the same routine every day. We probably go the same way to school and then when we're at school, our days are usually the same as well: roll, notices, writing, maths, reading. Our brains get used to the pattern. We stop noticing things around us. Our brains work the same way - the more we think a certain thing, the more it gets used to thinking the same thoughts, and the stronger the habit gets.

Another way to think of it is like this: close your eyes and imagine you are walking down a road you know very well. You know it so well that you don't even have to notice where the cracks in the pavement are, where the road turns or what colour the parked cars are. Imagine you walk down this road every day and never stop to notice what is around you. Then one day, there is a hole in the road. You walk along as usual, distracted by your own thoughts until you fall into the hole and get stuck at the bottom.

You are at the bottom of the hole and wonder how you got there.

You walked the same path as always, around the same bends and over the same cracks, but you didn't notice the giant hole in front of you. You realise you were too distracted by your own thoughts to be present and notice what was happening around you. Perhaps you were too busy thinking about the latest superhero movie or that amazing book you read last night. Either way, you weren't paying attention and now you're at the bottom of the hole.

It won't happen again though, because now you know there is a hole in the road to watch out for.

Until the next day, when you're so busy thinking about the fun you're going to have at lunchtime and you fall down the same hole again. It can be frustrating, but you're so used to walking down that street without a hole in it that you forgot to look out for the hole and fall down again.

The next day, you're walking along the street, looking around you and taking in all the colours and shapes. When you get to the hole - you stop. You take a step to the side and you walk around it. You didn't fall in today!

Our brains work the same way. So if we are kind or unkind to ourselves, or if we are quick to get angry when things go wrong, our brains get used to that way of thinking and we end up falling down an imaginary hole. We get so used to thinking the same way that we don't notice if we're falling down a hole until we get to the bottom.

So next time you notice that you aren't thinking the kindest thoughts, or you feel yourself getting frustrated, notice that imaginary hole in the road before you fall into it. Stop and take a breath, then take a step around the hole instead.