



PEBBLE MEDITATION PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN & THEIR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Adapted from Thich Nhat Hanh ¹

Purpose:

This activity introduces children and adults to the practice of meditation. The practice connects children, and their parents or caregivers, with their breath, bodies and the natural world around them. It's a deep breathing practice that combines physically holding an object with visualization. Once learned, this simple meditation practice can be done anywhere or any time. Children, ages 5 and older, can do this with family, with other children and adults, or on their own. The practice can help us feel more grounded, secure and calm. When used regularly, it can contribute to a greater sense of well-being. This meditation practice was developed during a children's retreat held in the U.S. by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk, teacher, author, poet and peace activist, who was born in Vietnam.

Materials:

Four pebbles or stones, and a purchased or homemade pouch that pulls closed, to store the stones.

Meditation Activity:

Select 4 pebbles or stones. Each one represents an element of nature: a flower, a mountain, calm water, and space. Alternatively, children and adults may want each stone to represent a quality, such as love, compassion, joy and inclusiveness, or loved ones and important people in our lives (e.g. parent, grandparent, sibling or close friend).

Note: the book provides alternate ways of using this practice, including drawing the objects represented by the pebbles; making cards; and lyrics & notes for singing this practice.

¹ Hanh, Thich Nhat (2012). *A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.

The Practice

As you select each pebble, place it in the palm of your hand. Three breaths are taken with each pebble. After you finish with each pebble, place it back down and choose the next.

The following words are written by Thich Nhat Hanh:

Flower

Breathing in, I see myself as a flower.

Breathing out, I feel fresh.

Flower, Fresh*

Mountain

Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain.

Breathing out, I feel solid.

Mountain, Solid

Water

Breathing in, I see myself as still water.

Breathing out, I reflect things as they truly are.

Water, Reflecting

Space

Breathing in, I see myself as space.

Breathing out, I feel free.

Space, Free.

*Breathe in and out three times, reciting to yourself, the final phrase for each of the stones.

