

Being Awake, Aware and Alive

Quotes from the readings

Thoreau quotes:

From Walden Economy A:

Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each others eyes for an instant?
We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages.

From Walden economy E

The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another let's wait till that other is ready, and it may be a long time before they get off.

From "Where I lived and what I lived for"

"Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again."

"To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?"

"We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor"

"I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life,"

From "Sounds"

"I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a reverie, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time"

From "solitude"

"THIS IS A delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore."

From "visitors"

"Men who did not know when their visit had terminated, though I went about my business again, answering them from greater and greater remoteness."

From "the Village"

"for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost — do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. "

"Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations."

From "the pond-b"

"A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature."

"Nature has no human inhabitant who appreciates her. "

From "the pond in winter"

"Heaven is under our feet is well as over our heads."

"Why is it that a bucket of water soon becomes putrid, but frozen remains sweet forever? It is commonly said that this is the difference between the affections and the intellect."

From " Spring"

"Who would have suspected so large and cold and thick-skinned a thing to be so sensitive? "

"I am on the alert for the first signs of spring, to hear the chance note of some arriving bird, or the striped squirrel's chirp, for his stores must be now nearly exhausted, or see the woodchuck venture out of his winter quarters."

" I observed a very slight and graceful hawk, like a nighthawk, alternately soaring like a ripple and tumbling a rod or two over and over, showing the under side of its wings, which gleamed like a satin ribbon in the sun, or like the pearly inside of a shell."

From "Civil Disobedience"

"was like travelling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town-clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, "

"and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene — the town, and State, and country — greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices"

From "Life Without Principle 1"

"The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get "a good job," but to perform well a certain work; and, even in a pecuniary sense, it would be economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, or even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it."

From "Walking"

"in Wildness is the preservation of the world."

"Life consists with Wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. "

"Live free, Child of the Mist — and with respect to knowledge we are all children of the mist. The man who takes the liberty to live is superior to all the laws both of heaven and earth,"

"Above all, we cannot afford not to live in the present."

"So we saunter toward the Holy Land; till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, so warm and serene and golden as on a bank-side in Autumn."

Pictures

Picture of purple plant in water on Walden Pond





Curriculum Unit on Thoreau by Kelly Matthews, elementary K-5

This is not really just a few lessons, this is going to be implemented throughout the year

Title: Learning How to be Present in a World of Stimulation

Objectives:

Students will be able to

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Essential questions:

- What does it mean to be present?
- What is mindfulness?
- How can we calm down in times of stress?
- Who was Henry David Thoreau?
- Why was Thoreau important?

Materials needed:

Suggested Books: (not all of these books need to be used)

- What Does It Mean to Be Present? By Rama DiOrio
- Henry David's House by Henry David Thoreau

- If You Spent a Day with Thoreau at Walden Pond by Robert Burleigh
- Henry David Thoreau for Kids: His Life and Ideas, with 21 Activities by Corinne Hosfeld Smith
- Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer
- Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and their Parents) by Elaine Snel
- The Lemonade Hurricane: A Story of Mindfulness and Meditation by Alicia Morelli
- Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress by Laurie Grossman
- Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with children by Thich Nhat Hanh
- Meditation is an Open Sky: Mindfulness for Kids
- A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles by Thich Nhat Hanh
- A CD player if you choose to use the cds accompanying Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and their Parents) and Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with children

Procedures:

Lesson 1

- Ask students- what does the word present mean? Discuss possible definitions.
- Ask students what they think it means when you are “present in the moment”.
- Have students discuss answers with a partner.
- Read the book *What Does it Mean to be Present* By Rama DiOrio
- Have students partner again and discuss the same question post reading.
- Ask for groups to share how their thoughts have changed.
- Have students get into groups of 4 and create a poster of how they can be present at school and at home.
- Each group will share their posters with the class

Lesson 2 - different day

- Review what being present means and ask if they made a conscious effort to try being present at home, with their friends or at school?
- Introduce Henry David Thoreau. Show a picture of him (from the internet).
- Inquiry -- who was he? Take possible answers from students just based on his appearance. When did he live? Why do you think he may be important?
- Read the book *Henry David's House* by Henry David Thoreau
- Partner discuss how did the book make them feel?
- What was their favorite scene in the book? Why?

Lesson 3

- Review a bit about HDT.
- Read aloud *If You Spent a Day with Thoreau at Walden Pond* by Robert Burleigh
- As you read ask students how if they would like to do each activity the boy and HDT did together?

- Gather as a group and go outside to the nearest park like area. Have students sit quietly alone without a partner. Without talking they are to just observe the world around them. Very little directions should be given this first time. Give it five minutes only
- Gather together and ask students what did they observe?
- Have them find a new place outside. Start the timer and have them spend 5 more minutes with their eyes closed.
- Ask them if they noticed anything new?
- Debrief the activity as a group and go back inside.

Lessons 4-?

- Each lesson will build on the previous one as they learn what Mindfulness is. Exercises will be done to help create Mindfulness using the books *Sitting Still Like a Frog* by Elaine Snel
- Further exercises from *Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress* by Laurie Grossman.
- This will be a theme that will take place throughout the school year.

Assessment:

Kids share what "being present" is about in their own words and journal how they plan to be more present and mindful in their lives. Mindfulness will be observed informally by the teacher throughout the year.