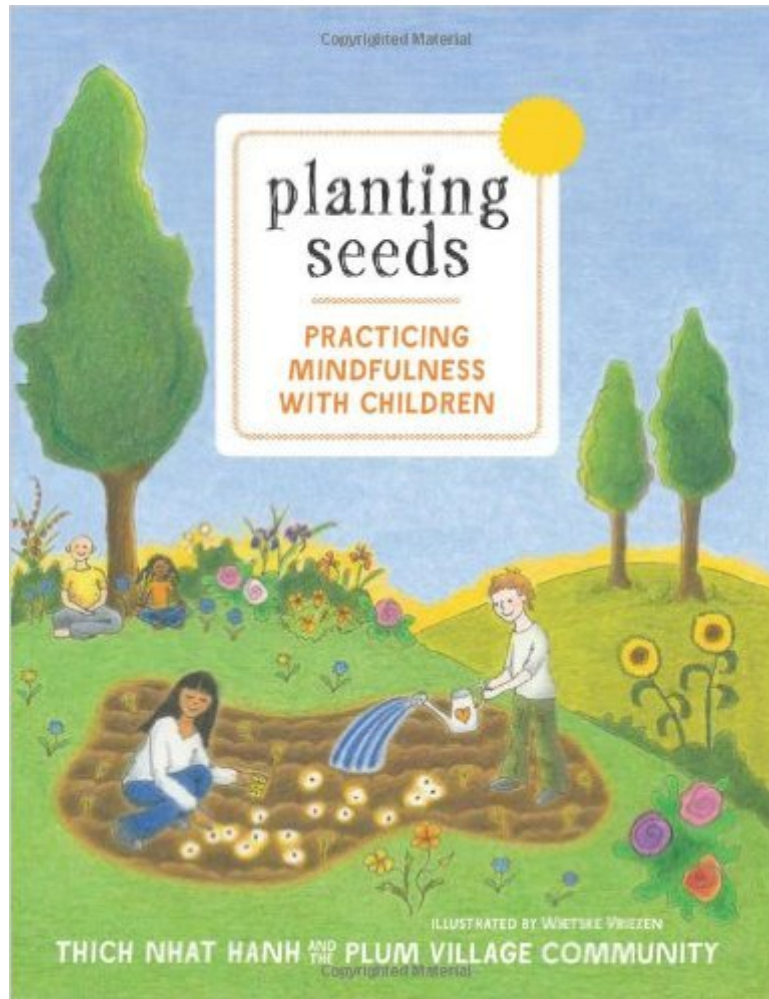


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# Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness With Children



## Synopsis

Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children is the fruit of decades of development and innovation in the Plum Village community's collective practice with children. Based on Thich Nhat Hanh's thirty years of teaching mindfulness and compassion to parents, teachers, and children, the book and enclosed CD cover a wide range of contemplative and fun activities parents and educators can do with their children or students. The activities are designed to help relieve stress, increase concentration, nourish gratitude and confidence, deal with difficult emotions, touch our interconnection with nature, and improve communication.Â Planting Seeds offers insight, concrete activities, and curricula that parents and educators can apply in school settings, in their local communities or at home, in a way that is meaningful and inviting to children. The key practices presented include mindful breathing and walking, inviting the bell, pebble meditation, the Two Promises or ethical guidelines for children, children's versions of Touching the Earth and Deep Relaxation, eating meditation and dealing with conflict and strong emotions. Also included, are the lyrics to the songs on the enclosed CD that summarize and highlight the key teachings, as well as a chapter on dealing effectively with conflict in the classroom or difficult group dynamics, based on a conference with Thich Nhat Hanh, teachers and students. The accompanying CD has inspiring recordings of all the songs in the book as well as a guided pebble meditation, total relaxation, and children's touching the earth. Beautiful, color illustrations by Wietske Vriezen Illustrator of Mindful Movements (ISBN-13: 978-1-888375-79-4) accompany the various practices.Â Any adult wishing to plant seeds of peace, relaxation, and awareness in children will find this book and CD helpful. It is full of wisdom on how to simply be with children and nourish their compassion for themselves and others. Illustrated by Wietske Vriezen Illustrator of Mindful Movements (Mindful Movements â “ Ten Exercise for Well Being, ISBN-13: 978-1-888375-79-4). Includes 1 audio CD.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a beautiful, practical, and extremely helpful book that anyone interested in introducing children to mindfulness and related practices will greatly appreciate. It was written by the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Zen monk and teacher, and author of many well-known books, including *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. The book evolved out of his work with children at Plum Village Community, a Buddhist center in Southern France that he co-founded. The book encompasses the work of himself and many of his colleagues at Plum Village, including nuns and monks in-residence, as well as educators and parents that have attended retreats at the center focused on children. Written for both parents and educators, each chapter of *Planting Seeds* begins with an overview of a topic, including mindful breathing, meditation, compassion, nature, suffering, healing, age, and death. After the overview, each chapter includes stories, sample activities, and guided meditations that adults can use to explore these themes with children. Many chapters include personal stories from educators and parents that work at Plum Village, or that attended retreats there and then strove to integrate what they learned in their work. They describe their personal experiences - including challenges - introducing children to these activities, in both home and school environments. Although the themes are all grounded in Buddhism, they are introduced in a way that is non-religious, and so could be used to introduce children of any background to mindfulness. In fact, most of the educators that offer testimonials describe integrating these themes into secular environments, or even religious ones of other persuasions. The book includes a CD with some of the guided meditations and songs tied to the exercises in the book, including "I Follow My Breath", "Pebble Meditation" and "Deep Relaxation for Young People." Lyrics are included for those songs that have them in the back of book, as well as written overviews of the guided meditations. Four meditation cards corresponding to the four meditations included in the 'Breathing in, Breathing Out' meditation are also in the Appendix. For example, in the first meditation, the focus is on feeling as fresh and pure as a flower, so the card says: "Breathing in, I see myself as a flower, a human flower...Breathing out, I am beautiful just as I am, and I feel very fresh." Subsequent cards are focused on being solid as a mountain, calm as still water, and free as open space. Many chapters also include excerpts from Q&A sessions Thich Nhat Hanh did with children involved in these activities. One of my favorites was from a discussion on

age and death (Thich Nhat Hanh is referred to as Thay here): Child's Questions: How old are you? Thay: Well, how old are you first? Child: I am six, almost seven. Thay: Listen, I am going to give you a good answer. I am the continuation of the Buddha, so I am 2,600 years old. Child: Oh! Thay: I am also the continuation of my father, so I am 110 years young. I know that you are my continuation and I feel that I am in you, so at the time I am six years old also. That is true, because I have been reborn in that child. He will carry me into the future. So I am quite young. I am six years old. If you look around, you see me a little bit everywhere. I have different ages. Okay? Overall, this is a beautiful and practical book that any parent or educator (Buddhist or no) will treasure as a guide to introducing children to mindfulness, compassion, and related themes.

I work in pediatric psychiatry and have found this book to be very helpful. As an author, Thich Nhat Hanh is engaging, knowledgeable and easy to follow. This book was no exception. I think this is a wonderful book for anyone who wants tips on teaching mindfulness to children. I think it is important to note, however, that some of the exercises are quite Easternized. For Example, there is one snack activity where the children bow to each other. I don't know that I would utilize that part of the activity, but could easily adapt it for my patients. There is also discussion about not killing mosquitos, so certainly one must be willing to take what they want from the book and make modifications as necessary. Overall, this is an excellent book. Thich Naht Hanh, once again, has done a terrific job with what could be a complicated subject.

In this book I found constructive discussions and activities that I can share with my 5 year old and 3 year old about spirituality. This is written by a Zen Buddhist, and there are Buddhist references, but so much of the activities are non-denominational. Like, holding your finger under your nose to learn to describe what an in and an out breath feel like (awareness). Or a "prayer" for dinner time talking about appreciation of the source of food, to take only what you can eat. Or an activity to sew a little bag (my 3 year old could do this, and I made myself a bag), and collect pebbles for the pebble meditation. There's also a CD where I've pulled a couple songs onto our "kid play list" and sing along on a regular basis. I challenged myself to be my children's spiritual teacher, while kindergarden will be his achademic teachers, and this book has been an excellent reference!

Love this book -- it has so many great ideas of how to teach mindfulness to children (and for adults too). I am using it for my toddler and preschooler and they love the special time we spend learning from it.

As a father of 2 kids (age 5 and 6), and a practical student of meditation in the Zen tradition, I've been wondering quite some time about what could be done to lead children in the path of mindfulness and compassion without boring or even harming them in the process. It's a delicate matter. I am immensely glad to see that this matter has already been addressed - by Thich Nhat Hanh and his community - and after beginning to read the book I feel inspired and grateful. I feel this book is the closest possible thing to being in a retreat and learning with actual people. It is well written, it feels lively, it's inspiring, and it's even beautiful to look at - many nice illustrations. I have tried the very first of the suggested mindfulness practices, with 6 kids at one time. We all enjoyed it very much. My daughter's comment to our very first try: "I loved this! I wish it would never end!"

I have one child. He has a mood disorder and I want to help him with mindfulness to ease his anger and depression. But, while I found this book helpful, I think it's better suited at a classroom or group. That's actually what it's written for. Definitely well-written and lots of great techniques. It will be helpful, just not what I was hoping for, personally.

I am not a Buddhist, but struggle with how to raise happy, self-motivated children in this weirdo world. This is a wonderful book offering specific examples of how to do just that! I love the simple instructions by Thay, and his peaceful nature really shines through in the book. A lot of the book pertains to teachers, and we plan on giving it as a gift to all our teachers this year. My kids love the CD, and we play it in the car on the way to school. I hear them humming the songs and it makes me smile! An overall great value in itself, not to mention the benefit of the future happiness of my boys! HIGHLY recommended for everyone with children.

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