

Becoming friends.

This is a conversation activity. It is based on a scientific study on communication for deep friendships.



Find a partner.

Choose someone you don't know very well.

Choose someone you want to know better.

Sit together.

3/2021 revision

① Spend 3 minutes looking at the questions in **Set I**.

Check (✓) the ones that seem most interesting.

Now talk for 10 minutes.

Both of you ask and answer questions. Take turns.

Set I

1. You can have dinner with anyone in the world. Who would you choose?
2. Would you like to be famous? For what?
3. Before making a telephone call, do you ever practice what you are going to say? Why?
4. What would be a "perfect" day for you?
5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
6. Imagine you were could live to the age of 90. You can have the mind of a 30-year-old for the rest of your life. OR you could have the body of a 30-year-old for the rest of your life. Which would you want?
7. How do you think you will die?
8. What are three things you and your partner have in common (things that are the same).
9. For what in your life are you most thankful?
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
11. Take three minutes. Tell your partner your life story. Give as much information as possible.
12. If you could have one new quality or ability, what would it be?

② Go on to **Set II**. These questions are a little deeper. 3 minutes to look at the questions. 10 minutes to talk. The other person goes first.



Set II

13. Imagine you could know anything about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else. What do you want to know?

14. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?

15. What is the greatest thing you've ever done?

16. What do you value most in a friendship?

17. What is your most special good memory?

18. What is your most terrible memory?

19. Imagine you knew you would die one year from now. Would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?

20. What does friendship mean to you?

21. What roles do love and friendship play in your life?

22. What are some positive things about your partner. Take turns. Say three things each.

23. How close and warm is your family?

24. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

③ Go on to **Set III**. These questions are even deeper. 3 minutes to look at the questions. 10 minutes to talk. The other person goes first.

Set III

25. Together, make three true "we" statements each. For instance, "We are both in this room feeling..."

26. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share (分かち合う)..."

27. Imagine you and your partner are becoming good friends. Say something important for them to know about you.

28. Tell your partner what you like about them. Be very honest. Say things that you might not say to someone you just met.

29. Talk about an embarrassing moment in your life.

30. When did you cry in front of another person? By yourself?

31. Tell your partner something that you like about them [already].

32. What, if anything, is too serious to make a joke about?

33. Imagine you die tonight. What would you most regret (後悔する) not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?

34. Your house catches fire. You save your loved ones and pets. You have time to save one more thing. What would it be? Why?

35. Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most difficult? Why?

36. Talk about a personal problem. Ask your partner's advice on what to do.



Based on research by: Arthur Aron, Stony Brook University

Simplified from:

https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/36_questions_for_increasing_closeness#data-tab-how
original research at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0146167297234003>

分かち合う Wakachi au to share
後悔する Kōkai suru regret



Energy breaks are short (5-minutes or less) tasks that introduce physical activity (that is possible in an overcrowded classroom, probably with rows of student desks, often unmoveable). They also include a few slides that give brain science information in a way that students can easily understand. Most involve language though a few are just physical. They all get the blood moving and refresh students.

There are now 15 on this webpage – just enough for one a week for the semester.

<https://helgesenhandouts.weebly.com/energy-breaks1.html>

They are PowerPoints you can download. If it isn't convenient to use PowerPoint in your classroom, you might want to print out the brain science slides as a handout and just direct the students through the activity.

Here are the available Energy Breaks:

Exercise and movement. You can use these in pretty much any order.

- **1-minute exercise routine.** Dr. Wendy Suzuki (Neuroscientist at New York University) leads us through a spirited exercise routine & shares some brain science.
- **Walk and talk.** Just as simple as it sounds. Students, in pairs, stand up and walk around as they talk to each other.
- **Well-balanced students.** In pairs, students stand toe-to-toe. They grasp each other's arms and lean back, balancing off each other. As they do, they talk about an assigned topic (perhaps whatever they have been talking about in class). It introduces the fact that when we sit for 20 minutes, there is a buildup of blood in the feet, lower legs and buttocks. One minute of movement gives a 15% increase of blood and oxygen to the brain.
- **5 right here, right now.** Students identify physical activities they can do in the space of the classroom. Then in pairs, one starts an exercise. The partner mirrors it. When that partner wants to change the exercise, they make a large "X" with their arms. They start a new one. The partner matches. This continues for one minute.
- **Body clocks.** Students imagine their whole bodies are clocks. They pantomime a series of times they do things. Partners guess.
- **Line Up Nonverbally. (#1 & #2).** In small groups, students line up according to the instructions without speaking. They can gesture. Then they speak to check.
- **Positive Peer Neck Massage.** They give each other a standing neck massage in lines or circles. At the same time, they repeat self-selected phrases that good language learners say to themselves, acting as their partner's "innervoice." Note: Make sure you are in an environment where physical contact is appropriate.

Tai Chi. You'll probably want to use these in order, leading up to the last one.

- **TaiChi #1** Introduces Tai Chi and why it is useful. It presents a short (1-minute) routine which students follow. (Thanks to Satsuki MacNeill for this idea).
- **TaiChi #2 and #3.** The Tai Chi routines continue.
- **TaiChi 5-minute routine.** This presents their entire 5-minute routine. You'll probably want to use it after they have done the parts in #1-3.

Songs with actions. (I spread these out throughout the semester.)

- *What a wonderful world.*
- *Don't worry. Be happy.*
- *May you be happy, peaceful, filled with love* (related to "loving kindness" meditation in song form.)

• *The Neuroscience Love Song.* From NPR. Challenging, but great, especially around Valentines Day.

Breaks for Kids. A 3-minute set of energy breaks for kids, from Edutopia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx1AtWIUvEw>

Positive chemicals, the brain & the classroom

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www.ELTandHappiness.com

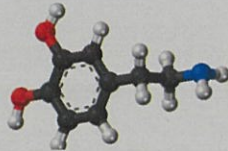
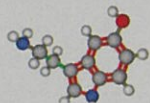

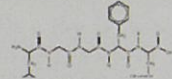
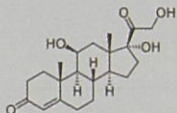

www.HelgesenHandouts.weebly.com

12/2018



Remember: "Everything really influences everything else."

— Tracy Tokuhama-Espinosa

 <p>Dopamine</p>	<p>Connected to • memory • motivation • focus</p> <p>Triggered by • emotion • pleasure • goal completion • exercise • sleep (teens need more sleep than adults, not less! Also, sleep is when working memory (short term memory) becomes long term)</p> <p>Classroom applications: • Clear goals • point out goal completion • celebrate small victories (Wow, look at what you just did!) • cliffhangers build interest • Anything novel or unexpected. • Show emotion: stories (Why did you become a teacher? What were the challenges?) Show your passion. Humor. More at: www.tinyurl.com/passion-teach</p>
 <p>Serotonin</p>	<p>Connected to • well-being & happiness</p> <p>Triggered by • feeling respected (praise) • bright light • exercise • meditation/yoga breathing</p> <p>Classroom applications: • praise effort (not intelligence/ability • savor achievements/success/positive experiences • reflect on positive, successful struggles • yoga breathing for use before tests, presentations, etc. • create a "positive classroom culture"</p>
 <p>Oxytocin the hugging hormone/ the cuddle chemical</p>	<p>Connected to • love • trust • bonding</p> <p>Negative connections can include envy and tribalism. Contrasting views: see TED.com talks by P.Zak and M.Crockett.</p> <p>Triggered by • appropriate physical contact • eye contact</p> <p>Classroom applications: • eye contact (especially in discussions and presentations) • physical contact activities if appropriate.</p>
 <p>Endorphin</p>	<p>Connected to • relief from pain (e.g., runners' high)</p> <p>Triggered by • pain • laughter • heartwarming stories • spicy food</p> <p>Classroom applications: • stories • humor & laughter</p>
 <p>Cortisol</p>	<p>Connected to • stress & fear</p> <p>This is a stress hormone connected to the "fight, flight or freeze" response. You don't want to encourage it. But keep in mind that it exists to help people survive. Positive psychology is NOT about denying negative experiences. Well-being includes the whole range of emotions.</p> <p>Classroom applications: • avoid cortisol by building a positive classroom culture. Cooperative learning tasks, icebreakers, smiling and learning students' names are good ways to start.</p>
 <p>BDNF Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor</p>	<p>Connected to • faster & better learning even with subjects that don't seem connected with physical exercise. (Yes, exercise helps science and math!)</p> <p>Triggered by • exercise and movement</p> <p>Classroom applications: • have students move (even when it isn't gym class) • have students stand and move when finding partners or between tasks. • Don't pass out handouts. Have students come to the front to pick them up. • When we sit for 20 minutes, there is a build up of blood in the feet, lower legs and buttocks. 1 minute of movement gives a 15% increase of blood (and therefore oxygen) to the brain. Also see: www.tinyurl.com/ELTEnergybreaks.</p>

ASCD (Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development) <http://inservice.ascd.org/chemical-reactions-in-the-classroom/>

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Happiness Chemicals and how to hack them



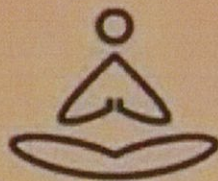
DOPAMINE THE REWARD CHEMICAL

- Completing a task
- Doing self-care activities
- Eating food
- Celebrating little wins



SEROTONIN THE MOOD STABILIZER

- Meditating
- Running
- Sun exposure
- Walk in nature
- Swimming
- Cycling



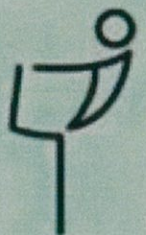
OXYTOCIN THE LOVE HORMONE

- Playing with a dog
- Playing with a baby
- Holding hand
- Hugging your family
- Give compliment



ENDORPHIN THE PAIN KILLER

- Laughter exercise
- Essential oils
- Watch a comedy
- Dark chocolate
- Exercising



3 minutes for positivity



11/2021

Note to teachers: These are short positive psychology fluency exercises. They are designed to build gratitude (**g**), positive emotion (**pe**) and mindfulness (**m**). They are very short and, if you use them as a warm-up, get the lesson off to a good start. Also see the “**Take it deeper**” idea below for the gratitude and positive emotion topics.

- **Who loves you? (g•pe)** Work in pairs. Who loves you? It doesn't have to be romantic love. It could be your best friend. Your parents. Your pet. Anyone. When do feel loved? Take 1 minute *Thinking Time*. Then tell your partner about it. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each.
- **Who do you love? (g•pe)** Work in pairs. Who do you love? It doesn't have to be romantic love. It could be your best friend. Your parents. Your pet. Anyone. How do you show your love? Take 1 minute *Thinking Time*. Then tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each.
- **Something good this week. (pe)** Work in pairs. What is something good that happened or will happen this week? Take 1 minute *Thinking Time* – What will you say? How will you say it? Then tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each.
- **Deep breathing#1. (m)** Students, close your eyes. Breath out though your mouth. Then hold your breath. Then breath in through your nose. Then hold. Teacher: Lead them through this, counting slowly. Out 2-3-4-5-6. Hold 2-3-4-5. In 2-3-4. Hold 2-3-4-5. Continue for about 2 minutes.
- **Favorite food. (pe)** Work in pairs. What is a food you really, really enjoy? Take 1 minute *Thinking Time* – What makes it so good? What is it made of? When and where do you eat it? How will you explain it? Then tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each.
- **Sounds around us/Sound surrounds us. (m)** Work in groups of 2-3. Close your eyes. Sit up straight. Listen. What sounds do you hear? Do this for 1 minute. Then talk about what you heard. Teacher, announce the time after 1 minute.
- **Relax. (pe)** Work in pairs. How do you relax? Take 1 minute *Thinking Time* - When do you do this? Where? How often? Then tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each.
- **A really big smile. (m•pe)** Work in pairs. Close your eyes. Sit up straight. Make a really big smile on your face. Keep doing that for 1 minute. Notice your feelings. After a minute, talk to your partner. What did you feel?

• **I want to say “Thank you.” (g•pe)** Work in pairs. Who helped (or helps) you? Who do you want to say “thank you” to? Why? Take 1 minute *Thinking time*. Then tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each. Will you really say thank you?

• **A place you love to be. (m)** Work in pairs. What is a place you love? Close your eyes. Imagine the place for 1 minute. How will you describe the place? What is special? Then tell your partner. 1 minute each.

• **A good place to be alone. (pe)** Work in pairs. Where is a good place to be alone? Close your eyes. Take 1 minute of *Thinking time* – What does the place look like? When do you go there? Then tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each.

• **Deep breathing #2. (m)** Work alone. Close your eyes. Breath slowly. Out, in, out, in. Notice your breathing. Do this for about 2 minutes.

• **Thank you at school. (g•pe)** Work with a partner. Other than teachers, who helps you at school? Take 1 minute of *Think Time* – How do they help you? When? Do you want to say “Thank you” – Will you? Tell your partner. Partner, ask questions. 1 minute each. (Note – “other than teachers” because you know they care about you. And they know your care about them. But it IS nice to say “thank you” to them, too.

• **Smiling baby animals. (m)** Work in pairs. Take out your smartphone. Go to a search engine (images). Search for “smiling baby animals”. Show the ones you like to your partner. Talk about them.

• **Something nice you do. (pe)** Work in pairs. What is something nice you do for someone? Take 1 minute of *Think Time*. What do you do? For whom? How often. Do you want to do it more? Tell your partner. Partner, ask questions.

• **Laughing babies. (m)** Work in pairs. Take out your smartphone. Go to Youtube.com. Search for “laughing babies.” Watch the video together. Does it make you laugh? (Laughter is good for your body and your brain).

Take it deeper



Before the activity, have students write as many “question words” as they can. Of course, the “WH-words” (*who, what, were, etc.*) are good. They can also write other words like *is/are, do/did, can/could*, etc. When they are speaking, their partner asks as many questions as possible. They check (✓) the words they use. They are practicing “keeping the conversation going.” The questions help the first speaker remember the positive experience more deeply. These become “active constructive” questions.

See *Flourish* by Seligman (2011, p. 49) for more.



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Mindfulness & young children.

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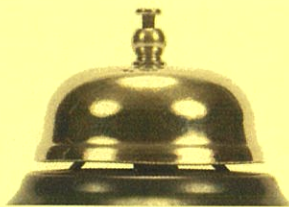
The Center for Healthy Minds has been studying mindfulness in young children. It recently released a “**Kindness curriculum**” which is free at <https://centerhealthyminds.org/>. The Center is at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. It was founded by Dr. Richard Davidson. He is a noted psychology researcher. If you’ve heard about the studies where Tibetan Buddhist monks were put into fMRI machines which recorded their brain function while they meditated, you’ve heard of Davidson’s work.

When I first heard about “mindfulness for young children” I thought, “How is that possible?” Mindfulness usually involves slowing down and observing things. How do you get little ones to do that?”

Along with some of my students (Elementary Education/ Early Childhood Education majors), I’ve been teaching some English classes to 1st-3rd graders at my university’s “*Mori no Kodomo En*” (literally “Park for Children of the Forest”), a preschool and children’s education center.

These are ideas taken directly from or adapted from the Kindness curriculum.

We start by explaining the mindfulness involves noticing things. You can notice things outside the body or inside.



Activity 1: The bell.

We start by noticing something outside the body.

Get a bell (I use a hotel desk bell). Tell the kids to listen closely. When they hear the bell ring, they raise their hand. When the sound stops, they lower their hand. Do this 3 or 4 times.

Variation: They lower their hand slowly as the sound gets weaker.

We use this at the beginning of every mindfulness exercise.

Activity 2: breathing.

We move on to noticing breathing.

Get a pinwheel for each child. (They sell them in the garden sections of 100 yen shops). They hold the pinwheel in one hand. They put the other hand on their stomach (belly). They inhale deeply. They exhale slowly, noticing the pinwheel moving and also how their belly moves.

Variation: Instead of the pinwheel, substitute flowers (artificial work fine). Get ones that will move when they blow on them. We use this just to offer a fresh way to repeat the breathing activity during the next class.

Activity 3: Song: *May you be happy, peaceful and filled with love.*

Video on youtube.com: Search for "Betsy Rose May you be happy".

(You might want to be careful when searching, especially with the kids. There is also a burlesque dancer named Betsy Rose with many YouTube videos.) Teach the words *happy, peaceful, filled with love*. Teach the children the song. Once they know it, we add gestures (*happy*= point to smile, *peaceful* = hands on chest, *filled with love* = hands form heart). Also change pronouns to "May *I* be happy" and "May *we* be happy." Have them point to other children as they sign.

We use this song every week to finish our mindfulness exercise.

The curriculum doesn't mention this but the lyrics are part of a very well-known "Loving-kindness/ compassion" meditation tradition in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism (*Metta* meditation or *maitri* meditation). This version is not a religious meditation.).



Activity 4: Belly buddies.

Give each child an object that is kind of heavy. We use stones that are 3-5 centimeters. 100 yen shops and garden centers sell smooth ones. (Optional): attach googly eyes to make it look like their buddy. After doing

the bell and breathing, we make the belly buddies. Then students lie on the floor on their backs. They put the belly buddy on their belly, holding one finger a centimeter or two above it. They close their eyes and breathe slowly. They notice how their belly moves up and down. The weight of the belly buddy makes it more noticeable.

Activity 5: Mind jar

During the belly buddies activity, we have each child make two. Prepare a glass jar for each kid. We use 450 gram salsa jars (but that's just because I eat a lot of salsa so have many available). Any jar about the size of a coffee mug works. Also prepare glitter (*lame* or *kira-kira* in Japanese.) They sell it with fingernail art accessories in 100 yen shops – Seria has a good selection. One pack for each kid. You'll also need glycerine (グリセリン in Japanese), dishwashing soap, water and superglue.

The class before we are going make the mind jar, we superglue a belly buddy to a small wooden block already glued to the inside of the jar lid.

In class, we discuss and learn the names of a range of emotions: happy, sad, angry, etc.

We make a "mind jar" (which is basically like a snow globe). Cover the table with newspaper – glitter is messy to work with. Put about 5 drops of glycerine in their jars (Be careful. Glycerine burns if you get it in your eyes. With very young learners, the teacher should probably put it in. If anyone gets it in their eyes, wash it out with a lot of water). Also one drop of dishwashing soap, one pack (about 2 teaspoons) of glitter. Carefully fill the jar almost to the top. Put superglue all around the rim of the jar and screw the lid (with the belly buddy attached, upside down). Wait until the superglue dries.

This "mind jar" becomes a metaphor. When we are angry, it is like when we shake the jar. The glitter swirls around. It is like a storm. We can't even see our friend, the belly buddy. It is only when we slow down – calm down, that things are clear. Shake the jar a few times (if theirs are still drying, they can all look at yours). They breathe deeply and notice their own bodies slowing down as the glitter settles.).



I hope these ideas are interesting to you and your students.
May you and your students be happy, peaceful and filled with love.

Illness Many years ago, a boy in Ohio got cancer. He had to stop going to school. He underwent chemotherapy and the cancer stopped growing. So the boy could go back to school. He was really embarrassed though. He had lost all his hair with the therapy. His friends told him to come anyway. He did, but he still felt so embarrassed when he reached the classroom door. Until he went in. Then it was okay. Eight other boys had shaved their heads too, so that he wouldn't feel alone.



That story became famous. Since then, thousands of people have shaved their heads in support of a child with cancer, including a seven year old boy, including a US president.

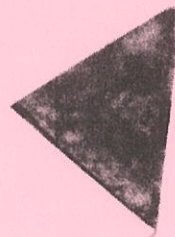


Motherhood It is hard for mothers with babies to do anything and almost impossible for them to go to school. One woman tried anyway, taking her baby son to class with her. She was mortified when the baby started crying and disrupting the class. The

professor stopped, looked at the noisy child, and then the mother. She got ready to leave. Then, the professor walked over, picked the little boy up and calmed him down. He continued his lecture, holding the baby. He didn't want that embarrassed mother to have to miss the lesson.

I learned these stories from Curtis Kelly.

Eating a tortilla chip with mindfulness.



Read this slowly. Give people time to really notice what they are doing with each step. Pause when you see the dots (•).

You are going to eat a taco chip with mindfulness.

First, pick up a chip. Look at it closely. Imagine you have never seen this before. Really look. (•) Notice the red powder. That's probably the spice. I wonder if, when the chips are baked, they all become slightly different, like snowflakes or finger prints. (•)

Now bring it to your nose. Breathe in. Smell the flavor. (•) Can you notice the spice? (•)

Now feel what it feels like to break off a piece. Put the piece in your mouth but don't chew it yet. Just put it on your tongue. (•) Feel what it feels like sitting on your tongue. Notice your mouth getting wet with saliva. Your brain knows, "something good is coming." (•)

Notice the spicy flavor. Notice how you are enjoying the taste. (•)

Now bite off another piece. Notice the sound as you do. (•)

Eat the rest of the chip like this – as slowly as possible. Enjoy.

