

The Inner Curriculum

How to help pupils to be more self-regulated

Learning to PAUSE to be

Dr Neil & Jane Hawkes

Note to teachers:

From Neil's experience teaching your pupils to PAUSE, a specific form of reflection, will enable them to become naturally self-regulated, more resilient and be able to maintain their own wellbeing. PAUSE invites the pupils to be more aware of their internal world of thoughts and feelings and to take control of them.

These notes will help you teach the pupils to PAUSE. Please adapt them for the age and stage of your pupils. We suggest you have some visuals to help explain the parts of PAUSE. We have also written teachers notes to support you in your understanding. These will be best understood if you have received training in The Inner Curriculum and/or read our book with that title.

We suggest that you have regular sessions to PAUSE so that the process becomes a habit. Invite the pupils to practise PAUSE at other appropriate times in the day. Link this teaching with giving the pupils an understanding of the parts and functions of their brains.

Explaining PAUSE to your pupils

The pupils are sitting silently, with straight backs, hands in their laps...

You say:

Do you ever think thoughts like these?

"Why did I do that?" "I wish I hadn't said that." "I feel rubbish and I can't help losing it." "I often feel very angry and then hurt someone." "I wish I could always feel happy."

Most people have had similar thoughts and feelings and wonder how they can be happier. People often think that they will be happier by distracting themselves by keeping busy, trying fresh activities or meeting new people. Sadly this often doesn't help us to feel any happier and we continue our search to feel good inside.

But! There is a way to help you keep your inner smile, that happy feeling that makes you like being you and helps you to get on with other people. You may find the idea a bit weird or strange at first because it may be new to you. However, be patient because so many people have found that what I am going to tell you about has had wonderful effects on their lives. Would you like to find out more?

I think that the best way for you to understand what this is all about is to share an activity that I'm going to invite you to practise at least once a day. I think it will help you remember the

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activity if I ask you to remember and think about a word: the word is **PAUSE**. Do you know what this word means? It means to stop doing something for a short time. I am using capital letters for **PAUSE** because each letter stands for something different that I am going to ask you to think about. When I have finished explaining what **PAUSE** means, I will then invite you to **PAUSE** and to share a few special moments with me.

Here goes: the word **PAUSE** will remind you to make time in your busy day to stop, be still, close your eyes and check out what you are thinking about and how you are feeling. This is called taking a **PAUSE break**. Taking daily **PAUSE breaks** gives you the chance to think about what you are thinking and feeling. By doing this you will be able to decide if they are helping you to enjoy your day or not.

Next you can decide which thoughts you would like to think about. If you chose happy thoughts you will be amazed how good you will feel. Sometimes you may find this is difficult to do. If you do find it difficult to have happy thoughts then be kind to yourself and perhaps have a chat with someone, whom you feel safe with, about how you are feeling. The more you practice **PAUSE** the more you will find it to be a very special tool to help you to be happy.

You see, each letter in the word **PAUSE** reminds us of five life-enhancing, energy-giving powers that build your resilience, which is your ability to bounce back when you feel something has gone wrong. **PAUSE** will also help you to have a feeling of wellbeing, which is when you feel good about your life.

Let's look together at the letters of PAUSE and what energy powers they represent:

P stands for Peace. I expect you know that when you feel peaceful you experience a deep feeling of being calm and safe. Now, when you need a top-up to feel peaceful, stop what you are doing and **PAUSE**. This means being still, closing your eyes and breathing deeply for at least ten slow breaths. You will find that by breathing deeply you will slow down busy thoughts; you will gradually feel calm and peaceful, able to control your thinking and behaviour. This activity is called giving you a **PAUSE break**.

A stands for Attention. You will know that people are sometimes asked to stand to attention, so that they can be still. Your teacher may say, "Please give me your attention" so that she knows you are listening. You can also think of attention as you being more aware about how you are thinking and feeling. By giving attention, you will know how your thoughts, feelings and emotions (strong feelings) are affecting your happiness. You may be feeling sad, angry, joyful, disgusted or fearful. Being aware of the emotions that you feel is the first step to helping you to be in control of them. During a **PAUSE break** you can check out what you are feeling and if necessary calm yourself down. Remember always to accept how you're feeling and in whatever way you can let the emotion know you are curious about it; that you want to know what has happened for this emotion to be present. If you can, send the feeling your love.

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U stands for understanding, being able to say, "Yes, I've got it! I understand." The more you learn about yourself and the world around you, the more your understanding of yourself and others will increase. Think that what you learn in school is a very special gift, as it gives you the knowledge and skills that will help you throughout your life. Grow your understanding a little bit every day, which will help you to make wise choices. In a **PAUSE break** use the wisdom method of making wise decisions, allowing your inner wisdom to support your thinking: stop, breathe, think and then take some action. This power helps you to make wise decisions and deepen your understanding of others.

S stands for Self-leadership. You are unique: there is no one who is exactly like you in the world. Each of us may look and behave differently but we all share something in common: we are all human beings, with our shared loving, healing, creative, curious, courageous, real self. This is the you, which wants and enjoys getting to know others. It isn't those parts of you who when they act up make your life difficult. When you take a **PAUSE**, you will get to know your real self: the wonderful YOU and gain the power of self-leadership. Self-leadership means that YOU are able to make good choices about how you live your life; based on the knowledge you have about the real you.

E stands for Energy, the gentle, yet powerful, helping energy that you feel when you PAUSE and allow your calm, compassionate and curious self to guide your thoughts. This positive healing power creates in us a feeling of wellbeing and happiness. During a **PAUSE** you will become aware of this energy power, which helps you to be in charge of your thoughts and feelings for the good of you and others.

You will discover that the more you practise **PAUSE**, the more you will understand that it is your own personal energy power tool that will support your wellbeing each day of your life.

Activity (Example):

Let's now take a **PAUSE: what I call PAUSE to be...**

Pausing to be uses the powers of Peace and Attention, the first and second powers of **PAUSE**. Pausing to be helps us have access to the other three powers contained in the letters U, S and E: standing for Understanding, Self and Energy.

In a moment of silence let us sit very still, close our eyes and feel relaxed. We can practise feeling peaceful by sitting comfortably, with straight backs, hands in our laps and with our eyes closed.

Now be aware of your breathing and silently concentrate on taking deeper breaths. As you breathe in slowly count to five and do the same as you breathe out. With each breath let your body become more and more relaxed. With each out breath, breathe out any worry...with each in breath feel yourself breathing in quietness and calm...

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Now take your attention let's use the power of our second letter, which is A. A, you remember, stands for attention, giving our attention to how we are feeling inside. In the next few moments as you are sitting calmly, give your attention to the thoughts you are having and how you are feeling today, without judging them or letting them overwhelm you.

Next let us use our imagination to help us to feel calm and full of peace. We are going on a walk to a special place in a beautiful wood.

Keeping your eyes closed use your imagination to see yourself on a walk in a beautiful field. You have permission to be on this short walk, as you have been brought to it by some of your family. You are allowed to explore the field. You walk across it see a shallow pond with ducks swimming on it. Beautiful butterflies are in the air. The sun is shining and there are a few white clouds floating in the sky. As you walk across the field you see a friend of yours coming towards you with a big grin. Your friend is carrying a small box and says to you that in it is an amazing coloured rock, which is a special gift for you. On it is written the name of the value that is your own special value. You are excited and when the box is opened you take your gift and read the name of the value written on it. "Yes! Thank you", you say to your friend. "This IS my favourite value." You then say cheerio to your friend and hurry back to your family to show them the gift you have been given.

Now slowly and in your own time return your attention to me...

Share with a partner what the value was that you were given. How did it make you feel etc.

Teacher brings the PAUSE session to a conclusion with general discussion.

Please contact us if you require any support. We would also appreciate your feedback, especially knowing what effects PAUSE has on both the behaviour of the pupils and their work in the classroom.

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