

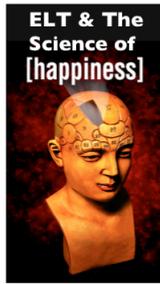
# Notice life's joys (mindfulness): Experiencing a blueberry



Happy people notice good things **as they happen**. However, many people are so busy worrying about tomorrow or yesterday, they don't take time to experience the present.

There is an expression in English that says, "Take time to smell the roses." That is the point of this lesson. This is a listening/ doing task. It helps students (and teachers!) slow down and experience – and enjoy – eating a piece of fruit.

1. Before class, prepare dried blueberries (or some similar fruit – it should be a fruit that most people like). Each student only needs one.  
Text written in this font is the teacher's script. Read it in a slow, relaxed way. When you see a dot (\*), pause to give the student time to think about what you said and do what you suggested.
2. Teacher: Today, we are going to do something unusual.
  - You are going to *really experience* eating a blueberry.
  - Maybe you've eaten many blueberries in your life • but did you take the time to "experience" it? • Many times we are "Eating and watching TV" • or "Eating and reading the newspaper" • "Eating and talking to friends. "
    - Today, we are going to eat a blueberry very slowly. • You will really experience it.
3. Give each person one blueberry. Don't let them eat it yet.
4. Teacher: You are going to eat this (blueberry) and as you do, really notice it. You'll get to know this piece of fruit better than any fruit you've eaten before.
  - Hold it in your hand. Look at it.
  - Notice the color. Notice the wrinkles. I wonder if they are like fingerprints. I wonder if each one is different than other ones.
  - And smell it. You can notice that slight, sweet flavor.
  - And put it in your mouth but don't eat it just yet.
  - Notice how your tongue knows just where to put it.
  - And notice how your mouth is wet with saliva. Your body automatically knows you are going to eat something good.
  - And now, very slowly start to chew it.
  - As you chew, you taste and smell the flavor.
  - Take your time. It is good and you want it to last as long as possible.
  
  - Think about how wonderful it tasted, because you took the time to notice.
5. If you have time and enough fruit, have each person eat another one. This time, don't talk. Tell them to do the same things as before. They should eat it as slowly as possible.



Notes: This activity is actually an eating meditation, designed to help people learn to do things with mindfulness. It is modeled after a “raisin meditation” taught by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., founder of the famed Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in “Healing from within.” part of the class Bill Moyers video series, “Healing and the mind” (available from [www.ambrosevideo.com](http://www.ambrosevideo.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)). Kabat-Zinn uses raisins. I changed it to blueberries after I discovered that many

of my students don’t like raisins.

Notice that the exercise is structured to involve more of the senses than taste. They look at it, smell it, feel it sitting on their tongue, as they are listening to your speak. So all five senses are involved.

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