



The Mentors Plus Match

Resources for Mentors & Those Who Support Youth

February, 2023

Sharable with Mentees Version

Volume 11, No. 2

Quote of the Month



As we move into this new year with its continuing challenges, we need to remember that changes and choices are always being made. Even during some of the most difficult situations, we may discover we have more abilities than we ever thought we did. Don't be afraid to look at things from a variety of perspectives and try new ways to do them. You may be very happy you did. Julie

Why Know about Depression?

Depression and anxiety effect huge numbers of people, many of whom are teens. Not nearly enough people seek help in trying to move forward in a positive way. Watch this Ted Talk by a teen to learn more: **Kevin Breel, Confessions of a Depressed Comic.**

Fun Things to Do

- *REMINDER FOR THOSE WHO SIGNED UP! Cranbrook Institute of Science: Join **Mentors Plus** in a free visit at 6:00 on February 3rd. We be eating pizza from 6:00-7:00, Then exploring the Institute.
- * Offer to a chore for someone who showed you kindness in the past – a family member, friend or neighbor. Caring is contagious!
- * Show Valentine's gratitude or appreciation: E-mail call, text, or give cards to special people.
- * Talk to or say something kind to someone new to you at school.



February Announcements

Please submit Monthly Reports by Thursday, 2/10/23.

★ *As you know, I am retiring on March 1st and Mentors Plus may be indefinitely suspended.*

Just remember that I will be able to continue to support matches. We may be rolling into another mentor program. We will let you know if any new paperwork will be necessary, when things get settled. Please watch for it.

Julie, (248)420-1638

Julie's Corner – Piston Game Fun!



Teen Ted Talk Recommendation: **Three A's of Awesome, By Neil Pasriehn.** Excellent ideas to consider as you move ahead in life. Do you want to develop confidence and be comfortable with who you are. Have you got habits in your thinking that make choosing options work well. Check it out! Julie

Ted Talk for Mentors, Parent(s)/Guardian(s): How to Build Resiliency in Children, By Theresa Levy.

All teens experience a variety of challenges. Help them strengthen the skills they have to deal with their up's and down's as they transition into having more control of their own and face a wide variety of choices.

18 Interesting Valentine's Day Traditions Around The World In 2021!

(Contributed by future Mentor Barb)

Check out the interesting **Valentine's day traditions around the world**. Different countries celebrate it in their own way: **Argentina** – For A Week Of Sweetness, **France** – Epicentre Of Romance, **South Korea** – For A Unique Set Of Experience, **Philippines** – A Gala Event, **Ghana** – National Chocolate Day, **Bulgaria** – Day Of Winemakers, **Wales** – Day Of San Dwywnwen, **Spain** – Feast Of Saint Dionysus, **South West China** – Sisters' Meal Festival, **Denmark** – A Celebration Of Love, **Romania** – An Unusual Celebration, **Estonia** – A Festival For Everyone, **Japan** – Exchange Of Unique Gifts, **Czech Republic** – Celebrate Romance, **Brazil** – Lovers Day, **England** – Festival Of Romantic Love, **Italy** – Popular Day For Couples, **Slovenia** – Show Your Affection

Valentine's Day Facts - HISTORY ((Contributed by Barb, A Future Mentor in Mentors Plus)

<https://www.history.com/topics/valentines-day/valentines-day-facts>

Valentine's Day is celebrated every February 14 as couples across the globe honor their spouses, partners and sweethearts. Hundreds of years of traditions and customs have made it into the holiday that we observe today. Here are nine interesting facts about the holiday dedicated to love.

U.S. Presidents Tour

<https://www.encirclephotos.com/gallery/u-s-presidents-tour>

Come visit the homes, libraries and museums of U.S. presidents for an entertaining history lesson while gaining insights into their personal lives.

MI Dept. of Natural Resources: Virtual Field Trips, Online Tours And Other Videos

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135_98480_98828---,00.html

- **Project Learning Tree nature activity videos****Socially Distant Science and Adventure video series** from Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
- **Nature walks at Woldumar Nature Center**
- **Virtual nature field trips**
- **FS NatureLIVE distance learning adventures**
- **U.S. Forest Service scientist videos**
- **Lake sturgeon tank web camera from the Grand Rapids Public Museum**
- **Drummond Island Ferry web camera**
- **Wildlife web cameras**
- **Virtual farm tours**
- **Clarkston Family Farm at Home** (videos that promote thinking, learning and growing outdoors)
- **Mini-videos about how forests make our lives better**
- **Arkansas virtual nature center**
- **National park virtual tours**
- **Virtual tours of famous museums**
- **Out-of-this-world images, videos and audio files from NASA**
- **Cincinnati Zoo home safari**
- **Interactive virtual tours through Georgia's forests**

Thanks to all the Mentors who are now seeing their Mentees on a regular basis!
We appreciate your patience as we transition to new leadership and maybe a different sponsor of Mentoring and hope each match will stick with us as we get things up and running again, but in a slightly different way.



Mentor Kristin and Mentee Mia having fun bowling!

Mentor Paula and

Mentors Plus Mentor Meeting

When: 6:00 p.m., Thursday, February 23rd

Where: Executive Office Building

Conference Center, Bld. #41

2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford, MI

Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. -

Please RSVP to Julie at: (248)672-0730 or

stittj@oakgov.com

Please put “Mentor Meeting” on the
“Subject” line.

Topic: RESILIENCE

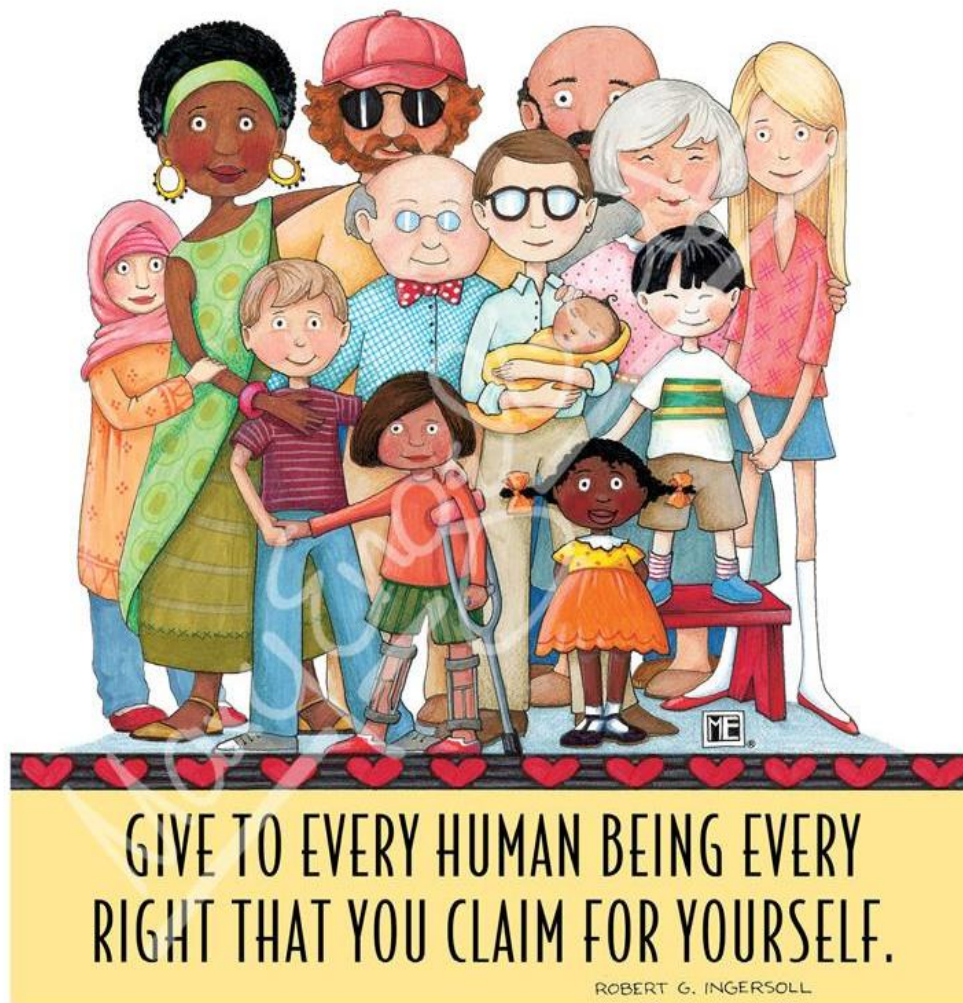
Even though the world is in chaos
right now, I am grateful that I have
a house, food, water, warmth,
and love.

May I never take those
things for granted.

History at Bedtime for Everyone, 8:00 p.m., On-going

The Detroit History Club is offering short, nightly history sessions presented as bedtime videos. Sessions are posted on its Facebook page, and focus on a wide variety of subjects. The new ones this year are on “The Pets of Presidents”. Very interesting, short, and a wonderful way to calm yourself down before sleep. Appropriate and fun for all ages! Search:

Bedtimestories@Detroithistory-tours.com, then click on Bedtime videos. Learn something new!



Don't Recreate Romeo and Juliet

Try to be supportive of your Mentee's romantic choices unless you truly need to speak out. Remember that teens can be extremely emotional and defensive — especially in response to adult criticism. You don't want to drive them away from you (and further into the relationship you're questioning) by being too judgmental. A great tool for having a discussion with a teen is the following Ted Talk: ***The Difference between Healthy and Unhealthy Love***, by Katie Hood. It is useful for all teens to see, as well as Mentors, Parent(s) and Guardian(s).



Parenting Teens? Useful Goals to Consider...

12 Tips:

- Remember you're a parent, AND a friend. ...
- Establish dependable together time. ...
- Parent actively and appropriately. ...
- Try to be there after school. ...
- Keep your standards high. ...
- Ask yourself if what you're doing is encouraging better self-discipline. ...
- Make it a high priority to eat meals together. ...
- Keep the lines of communication humming. ...
- Remember that body language and tone of voice are 93% of your message. ...
- Encourage good self-care. ...
- Take time to have fun together.

Celebrate Black History

Free with Museum admission.

Celebrate at the Museum:

(Request Tickets from Julie one Week in Advance)

Join us at Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation (or from home) during Black History Month to reflect on the past, the present and the promise of a better future. Freedom marches, brave risks and painful endurance have always occurred alongside brilliant ideas and important contributions to our shared American history.

African American history is more than a monthlong celebration at The Henry Ford. From the civil rights era to today, explore stories that are both familiar and new to you — all sources of inspiration for the next generation in our community and beyond.

[Featured Exhibit | With Liberty and Justice for All](#)

Explore the proud and often painful evolution of American freedom, from the Revolutionary War through the struggle for civil rights, in this groundbreaking exhibit. Visit the Rosa Parks Bus 67 years after Mrs. Parks' courageous act sparked the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

During Black History Month: Go to *Ted Talks* and pick out a subject about black history to view. There are lots of terrific ones with information that isn't generally well known. Check out ones from other cultures, too!



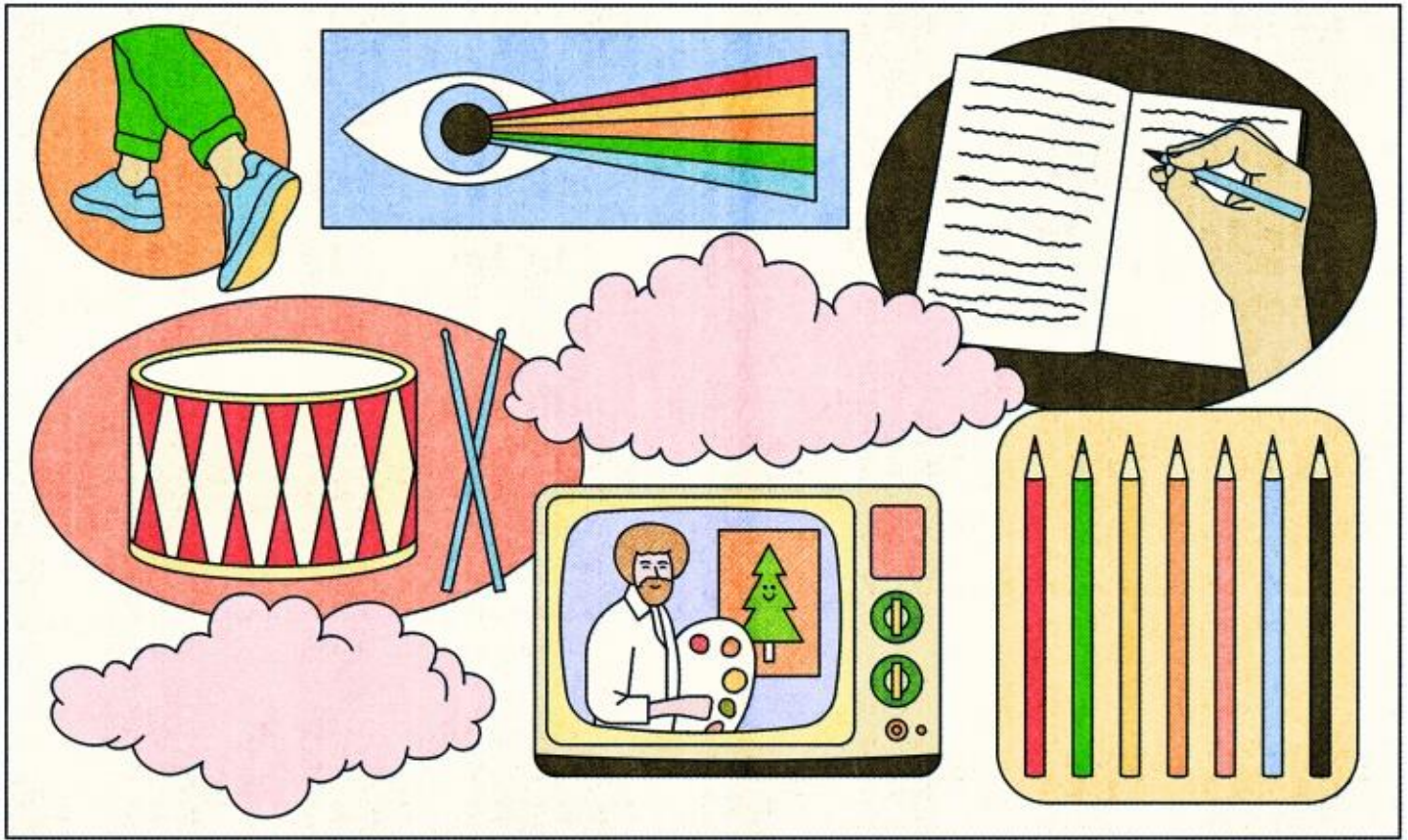
Youth Focus: [WE HUMANS](#)

Can't seem to meditate? 7 joyful activities for you to try instead

Jan 11, 2022 / Ingrid Fetell Lee

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE:

SHARE THIS IDEA



Allie Sullberg

(From Julie: A number of studies have shown that students who meditate in some way perform better in school. It's a thought worth considering.)

This post is part of TED's "How to Be a Better Human" series, each of which contains a piece of helpful advice from people in the TED community; browse through [all the posts here](#).

I don't meditate.

It's a simple fact that often feels like a confession. After all, meditation is hailed as an almost magical cure in self-help circles, and the list of benefits it offers is undeniably impressive. Meditation promotes calm and compassion, decreases stress, and improves attention and concentration. Avid meditators won't hesitate to point out, breathlessly, that it can *actually change your brain*. It is one of the most studied non-pharmacologic mental health interventions in the world, and most of the data is overwhelmingly positive.

So why don't I do it?

At its best, meditation felt like I was floating in the ocean. But I noticed this only seemed to happen when I was *already* calm. When I was anxious, meditation actually increased my agitation.

It's not that I've never tried. I used the apps and the timers. I tried body scan meditations and mindfulness meditations. I tried sitting, which made me uncomfortable, and then lying down, which made me fall asleep. I focused on my breath (until I began to hyperventilate), and I also imagined my thoughts floating away in little clouds (there were a lot of clouds).

And to be fair, I went through a period of a couple of months when I had some success with it. At its best, it felt like I was floating in the ocean, bobbing on waves of pure consciousness. But I noticed this only seemed to happen when I was *already* calm.

When I was anxious, meditation actually increased my agitation. I felt a profound sense of dissonance, my mind bubbling like it was coming to a boil, trapped inside a body that was desperately trying to hold still. At the end of each effort, I felt drained from the failure and worn out by the attempt. Despite the assurances of meditation evangelists that I just needed to stick with it and that feeling like I was failing was part of the process, I suspected that maybe meditation wasn't for me.

I gained a new perspective when one day I shared with my therapist that meditation has been such a struggle for me.

“Oh, I definitely wouldn't recommend meditation for someone with your profile,” she said matter-of-factly.

In fact, a 2017 study found that a significant proportion of meditators have experienced fear, pain, dizziness, paranoia, dysphoria and other “challenging” effects.

I was surprised, and strangely relieved. I'd become so used to people extolling the virtues of meditation that I had assumed it was universally beneficial. It never occurred to me that a therapist might not recommend it, or even advise against it. When I asked why, she explained that for some people with histories of unprocessed trauma and physical dissociation, meditation can do exactly what I'd experienced — increase anxiety, prompt flashbacks or trigger other physical symptoms.

In fact, a [2017 study of meditation experiences](#) found that a significant proportion of meditators have experienced fear, pain, dizziness, paranoia, dysphoria and other “challenging” effects. Researchers believe these effects are often under-reported, because studies aiming to understand the benefits of meditation don't ask about adverse effects. As a non-pharmacologic intervention, meditation is assumed to be harmless.

The moral of this story isn't “don't meditate” but rather, that meditation is like many things — great for some people, but not necessarily for everyone.

If it works for you, wonderful! No need to read any further.

But if like me you've struggled with traditional forms of meditation, yet still crave a way to settle your mind and ease your anxiety, happily, there are other approaches that can create a similar kind of mental expansiveness to that offered by meditation. These techniques don't have nearly the same fervor or body of research backing them, but they are valuable alternatives, especially for those of us who find meditation unbearable rather than unburdening.

Rather than feeling like I need to sit with uncomfortable feelings or ideas, visualization allows me to transform them creatively and work with them in a generative, dynamic way.

Here they are:

1. Visualization

I'd always thought of visualization as a kind of new age-y cousin to manifesting, but it was actually in therapy where I began to use this technique. During our early sessions, my therapist sometimes asked me to envision a place where I felt safe and calm, describing it out loud as I envisioned it in my mind.

I began to create a garden in my mind, a place I could go when I felt overwhelmed or stressed, or when I struggled to sleep. When anxious, I often come back to this place, adding detail in one corner or another. Some elements are constant, while others change. I always enter the same way, for example, but once inside, I might see different flowers or trees, or I might look around a corner and “find” a new area previously unexplored.

Another time, I was struggling with the noise of constant construction in my building. I was working on [my book *Joyful*](#) at home, and I never knew when the grinding noise would start up, spiking my anxiety and making it impossible to focus.

My therapist asked me to envision something noisy yet innocuous, and for some reason, elephants came to mind. I imagined a crew of elephants in yellow hard hats bumbling around with tools and jackhammers. Whenever the noise fired up and I felt that pit in my stomach, I pictured the elephants and my tension eased. Of course, it didn't erase the noise, but it helped me find calm amid a situation where I couldn't gain control.

I find that visualization gives me the same kind of distance and space that many people find in meditation, but it also engages my imagination in the process. Rather than feeling like I need to sit with uncomfortable feelings or ideas, it allows me to transform them creatively — not to avoid them but to work with them in a generative, dynamic way. I haven't found great research on the use of visualization as a meditation alternative, but there are [anecdotal accounts](#) of nurses using visualization with patients, particularly children, as a method of relieving pain.

2. Coloring

Adult coloring books had a real heyday in the mid-to-late 2010s, as people sought a creative yet low pressure form of stress relief.

As it turns out, certain types of coloring may help reduce anxiety. In particular, [research shows](#) that coloring a complex abstract design such as a mandala or a plaid pattern can reduce anxiety in a meaningful way. Structured patterns like this have strong symmetry that taps into the harmony aesthetic, which promotes calm through symmetry and balance, quieting the visual noise of our surroundings so we can focus more deeply on what we care about. Tied to this, [subsequent studies](#) have shown that coloring not only decreases anxiety, but also increases mindfulness and may also improve attention and creativity.

The physicality of coloring may also be helpful to those of us who tend to dissociate from our bodies. The engagement of the hands and the senses can keep us from feeling like we're swimming in our thoughts.

In one study, a group drumming initiative resulted in significant reductions in anxiety and depression, along with an increase in overall mental well-being.

3. Drumming

OK, parents of a child who recently acquired a drum set might not see this activity as calming, but research shows that the rhythmic quality of drumming can be a powerful aid for mental health. In [one study](#), a group drumming initiative resulted in significant reductions in anxiety and depression, along with an

increase in overall mental well-being. Drumming also correlated with a decrease in inflammatory markers in the bodies of the participants.

Why does drumming promote calm?

One reason may be the repetition of the sounds and movements (again, a manifestation of the harmony aesthetic). Percussion is considered one of the oldest forms of music-making (perhaps after singing) and may have originated as a way to promote coordination of work among groups of early humans.

Drumming is a grounding activity that lets us blow off steam in a safe and non-aggressive way. Notably, drumming is one activity that has typically been studied as a group intervention rather than an individual practice. It's possible that solo drumming also has benefits, but [current research](#) on drumming tends to focus on the physical experience of rhythm, synchrony and belonging as the key drivers of mental well-being.

4. Cloud gazing

For those who benefit from having something outside of themselves to focus on, [cloud gazing](#) can be an appealing alternative to meditation. Cloud gazing draws us outside, which has documented mental health benefits, while amorphous, softly shifting clouds give the attention something calming to focus on.

Looking upward may also help, as this increases the amount of light that enters the eye, which itself has distinct benefits for mental well-being.

Little research has been done on cloud gazing (sadly!), however [one study](#) points to the benefits of sky views as restorative, and accessible. While green nature views have been widely shown to help reduce stress, sky views are beneficial because they can be accessed even in dense urban areas.

5. Morning pages

[Morning pages](#) are a creative tool devised by the writer Julia Cameron in her celebrated book *[The Artist's Way](#).* To do them, you simply write three long-hand pages first thing in the morning, writing without stopping and allowing whatever thoughts arise to go onto the page.

For writers, morning pages are a way of breaking through the pressure of the blank page and opening a line of dialogue with your creative brain. No one has to read them. In fact, you can place them directly into the trash when you're done if you choose.

Though morning pages are billed as a creativity tool, for me they function as a mental health tool. I discovered the technique while working on the later chapters of my book and found it far more effective than meditation at calming my anxiety around my work. Knowing I had the open space of morning pages as a buffer before sitting down to work on my book alleviated so much pressure that I began sleeping better and enjoying my free time more. I regularly return to the practice if not every day, then several times a week at least.

6. Walking

Walking meditation is [a form of meditation](#) in its own right, but even if you don't have a formal walking meditation practice, some form of mindful movement can be calming. Walking is easy and accessible to most people, and for those who feel stuck when attempting a seated meditation, it can help by engaging the body as well as the mind in the act of quiet reflection.

Benefits of mindful walking include stress reduction and improved cognition among older adults, in addition to the many mental health benefits of increased physical activity that it provides.

7. Watching Bob Ross painting videos

And if you're still struggling to find a way to calm your mind, maybe it's time to turn to a soothing voice and his "happy little trees.

While it might sound far-fetched, a whole community of internet users have found peace and joy in vintage videos of Bob Ross's *The Joy of Painting*.

Have Fun!

