Mindfulness for Parents
Use for: Relaxation

Breathing in, I calm my body.
Breathing out, I smile.
Dwelling in the present moment,
I know this is a wonderful moment.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Breathing in, I calm my body. When we breathe in and say these words to calm our bodies, we become aware that we even have a body. As mothers, it's so easy for us to live in our heads or to be so busy that we forget to tune in to what our bodies need. When we breathe in and give our bodies permission to become calm, our shoulders relax and our stress level begins to decrease.

Breathing out, I smile. This is such a simple instruction, yet the result is so effective. This is not about faking happiness or covering up what we're really feeling. It is about finding the smile that exists in the most ordinary of moments. It is discovering that even when things are crazy – the kids are totally out of control, coworkers are completely unmanageable, traffic is backed up for miles – a part of us remembers that we can smile. It is as if a tiny gap appears between what's happening and the part of us that can observe it all – and smile.

Dwelling in the present moment. As we take this second breath, we recognize how much we live life in the past or in the future. It's as if a tape recording continuously replays what happened or anticipates what might happen. When we push the pause button, take a breath, and dwell in the present moment, we become aware that this really is the only moment that exists. All future moments are only present moments.

I know this is a wonderful moment. These words help us appreciate how a moment that seems ordinary is actually full of wonder. Suddenly, we have new appreciation for what is right in front of us: the way the sun is coming through the windows, the laughter of our children, even the dishes in the kitchen sink. Most moments, if we truly connect to ourselves and to those moments, are wonderful. If it feels like too much to say a moment is wonderful, we can say: I know this is the only moment. That is always true.