



The 12 Tools – Deeper Tools for learning, tools for life

1. **Breathing Tool:** *Calming ourselves – checking in.*

When we breathe deliberately with our Breathing Tool, it calms and slows us down, and brings our attention inward. We become more self-aware and reflective about our bodies, minds, emotions, and reactions. We are more likely to have the insight and time to act in our own best interests and in the best interests of others.

I can take a breath. It takes only 3–5 seconds to calm myself.

2. **Quiet/Safe Place Tool:** *Remember your quiet place.*

The Quiet/Safe Place is a place of rest and peace where we can gather ourselves together and feel safe and comforted. It can be an actual place, or a place that exists in our imaginations. In quietness, we can hear the soft, small voice in our hearts and minds, and allow creativity, imagination, and self-expression to emerge naturally.

There is always my quiet/safe place. It is there for me.

3. **Listening Tool:** *We listen with our ears, eyes and heart.*

When we listen with our ears, our eyes, and our hearts, we become deep listeners who can “hear between the lines.” Our ears bring us the words and intonation; our eyes bring us body language, gestures, and facial expressions; and our hearts bring us empathy—allowing us to walk in someone else’s shoes.

When I listen as well as hear, I can really understand.

4. **Empathy Tool:** *Caring for others, caring for ourselves.*

Empathy is the root of understanding, kindness, and forgiveness—both for others and for ourselves. When we empathize, we let go of our own perspective *long enough* to acknowledge the feelings, situation, and motives of others. Through this, we develop compassion, and learn to care.

When I walk in someone else’s shoes, it opens my heart.

5. **Personal Space Tool:** *Where my space ends and yours begins.*

Whether we feel safe or threatened, secure or on our guard depends on how we experience others in relation to our personal boundaries. Every day, we experience the joy of sharing our personal space, as well as hurt or anger when that space is violated by unkind words or hurtful actions. By using our personal space tool, we come to appreciate the importance of respecting each other’s physical, emotional, and social boundaries.

I have a right to my space, and a responsibility to protect yours.

6. **Using Our Words Tool:** *The right words, at the right time, for the right reasons.*

Careful words encourage understanding, connection, and closeness. Careless words divide and offend. Once we understand and can name our and others’ feelings, our words can resolve conflicts and mend relationships. Using the best words, in the best way, at the best time, for the best reasons, requires practice, practice, and more practice.

I ask for what I want and need. I am a problem-solver.

7. **Garbage Can Tool:** *Put it in the garbage can and walk on by.*

By discarding unkind words and actions instead of taking them into our personal spaces, we free ourselves to be actors—not re-actors—in our own lives. We take responsibility for our own well-being and what we do with other people’s words and actions.

I choose to let the little things go.

8. Taking Time Tool: *Time-in and time-away.*

Understanding that we can make choices about how we use time is empowering. Pushing the pause button and taking time-away to breath renews our strength and resolve. Taking time-in to reflect leads to better self-understanding and more empathy for others.

I use my time wisely.

9. Please and Thank You Tool: *Words that Open.*

These “magic words” work to appreciate, invite, and include others. Saying “Please” shows respect, and encourages others to want to be helpful and kind. “Thank you” lets people know we value them and their actions, and reminds us that we need each other.

I treat others with respect, appreciation, and gratitude.

10. Apology and Forgiveness Tool: *Words that transform and repair.*

Apology can restore trust. The act of sincere apology can resolve problems in relationships. This takes self-reflection and emotional strength. Forgiveness takes a willingness to let go of blame or resentment and move forward.

I admit my mis-takes. I accept that others make mistakes, too.

11. Patience Tool: *Quiet waiting.*

With patience, we allow existing conditions to unfold as they will—physically, mentally and emotionally. Patience is the ability to let go of our need to control how and when things happen. This brings us peace, and reminds us that things usually work themselves out in their own time.

I am strong enough to wait.

12. Courage Tool: *to use your Tools when others are not using theirs.*

Courage from the Latin “cor” means heart, inner strength, bravery, and confidence. When we use courage, it empowers us to stand up for what we believe in. Courage is being willing to do the right thing even when it is difficult.

I have the courage to do the “right” thing.

The greatest revolution in our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

~ William James