Professor Wise's Tools: Practical Strategies for Home & Classroom

These strategies help children and adults **calm their bodies, focus their minds, and shift attention** to productive or positive activities. Understanding *why* each tool works makes it easier to integrate them into home or classroom routines.

Deep Breathing

Purpose: Slows the body and helps calm emotions by sending signals to the nervous system that it's safe to relax.
Examples:

- **Smell the Flower & Blow the Candle:** Inhale slowly like smelling a flower, exhale like blowing out a candle.
- **Box Breathing:** Inhale for 4 seconds → hold 4 → exhale 4 → hold 4.
- **Belly Breathing:** Place a hand on your belly; inhale deeply letting the belly rise, exhale letting it fall.

Why it works: Deep, slow breathing reduces stress hormones, lowers heart rate, and helps children and adults feel more in control of their emotions.

Tips for Real Life:

- Use during transitions, before tests, or after conflict.
- Model the breathing first, then practice together.
- Encourage noticing how the body feels before and after breathing.

Mindfulness & Grounding Techniques

Purpose: Helps individuals **focus on the present moment**, notice their feelings without judgment, and **reconnect with the here and now** when feeling anxious, upset, or distracted.

Examples:

- **Five Senses Check-In:** Name 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.
- **Slow Motion Walk:** Walk very slowly, noticing each movement and how your feet feel on the floor.
- **Mindful Observation:** Look around and describe what you notice—colors, shapes, sounds, textures.

Why it works: Paying attention to the present moment helps the brain shift out of stress or worry and **builds awareness of thoughts, feelings, and sensations**, improving self-regulation.

Tips for Real Life:

- Use during emotional moments, after sensory overload, or when focus is needed.
- Encourage children to describe what they notice.
- Can be integrated into morning routines, quiet time, or before starting tasks.

Redirecting

Purpose: Moves attention from overwhelming feelings or distractions to a **calming or productive activity**, helping children regain focus and composure.

Examples:

- Offer choices: drawing, stretching, or organizing.
- Movement breaks: jumping jacks, dancing, or stretching.
- Quick physical reset: touch your toes, wiggle your fingers, shake out arms.

Why it works: Redirecting helps **break cycles of frustration, boredom, or overstimulation**, giving the brain a brief reset while reinforcing positive behaviors.

Tips for Real Life:

- Use after conflict, before challenging tasks, or when attention fades.
- Let children choose the activity for engagement.
- Keep activities short (1–3 minutes) so they feel like a reset, not a distraction.

Key Tip: Modeling these strategies and practicing them together helps children and adults **build skills for emotional regulation, focus, and self-awareness**, making it easier to integrate into daily routines at home and in the classroom.