



As a result of Davis' refusal to prosecute, the case was reassigned, brought to trial, and a jury found the defendants guilty, sentencing them to death.

## MINDFUL LISTENING

In the opening to the Foreword, Gardner writes of Davis:

*He was attuned to nature in a way most modern-day city dwellers can't understand. At times he would put on his old clothes, go down to the river, and sit on the bank for hours, just watching the swirl of the water and listening to the wind in the trees.*

We live at a time when it can be challenging to listen to others, when it can be challenging to hold true to ourselves. One of the reasons for this is the internal narrative that emerges and takes hold when others say and do things of which we disapprove, and when we become fearful of making a decision even though we believe it to be right.

We can learn from Gardner's depiction of Davis sitting by the water and bring this intuitive mindfulness listening practice into our lives. The practice is a simple one: listen to the sounds of nature. Close your eyes and settle deeply into the experience of just listening. When you notice the mind wander, return attention to sounds. This mindfulness practice can help to steady attention, enhance awareness and attenuate the duration of mind wandering, and reduce emotional reactivity.

## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY

There are many interesting parallels between contemporary mindfulness practices and the [practices of indigenous wisdom traditions](#). As our shared sense of understanding and respect for the lives of all Americans has evolved over time, legislation such as Native American Heritage Day offers us an opportunity to pause and reflect on our complex and interdependent relationships with each other and with ourselves.

James Davis was a Native American who served as a California District Attorney from 1935-1938. Years later the convictions he refused to pursue out of a sense of duty and conscience were reconsidered and the defendants released on parole. We can take a cue from Davis the next time we find ourselves outdoors. Take a few moments and listen to the wind in the trees. Doing so can be refreshing, calming,

and it can help us become better listeners. Better listeners to what is true in our lives and in our hearts.  
Better listeners to each other.

*Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks. Listen to your heart, it knows.*

– Native American Proverb



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