# Meditation 101: Simple Practices for Maintaining Wellbeing and Fostering Resilience



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# Overview

- Mind Wandering, Negative Thoughts and Stress
- Meditation and its Benefits
- Forms of Meditation
- The Importance of Physician Wellbeing





# **Objectives**

Recognize that modest evidence-based research exists for the utility of mindfulness and understand why it is theorized to be beneficial

Identify everyday practices that can be incorporated into other activities

Compare several example practices

 Specify at least one mindfulness practice experiment with in daily life



## Thought Management

- Recent research study estimates that the average person has 6200 thoughts per day. (Tseng and Poppenek, 2020)
- Many of our thoughts are not new (repetitive thoughts)
- If most of our repetitive thoughts are negative ones, what could that do to our frame of mind?
- Our thoughts can create toxic stress if we let them!
- The greatest weapon against stress is to choose 1 thought over another. William James







# Mind Wandering

"A human mind is a wandering mind, and a wandering mind is an unhappy mind."

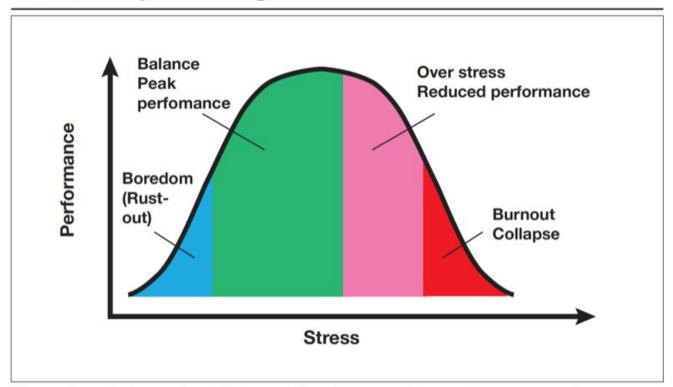
"The ability to think about what is not happening is a cognitive achievement that comes at an emotional cost."

Harvard Happiness Study - Killingsworth & Gilbert 2011



#### Stress: Friend or Foe?

#### FIGURE 1 Optimizing stress

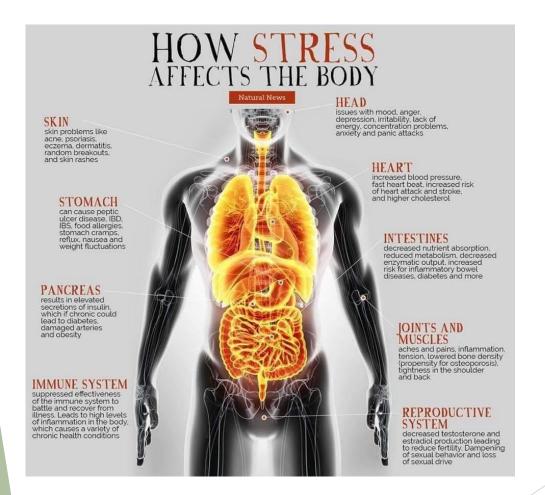


Stress is not always bad. When optimal, it can drive us to even greater performance.



#### The Physiological Effect of Toxic Stress

Allosteric Overload - when the normal stress response becomes dysfunctional and leads to disease.



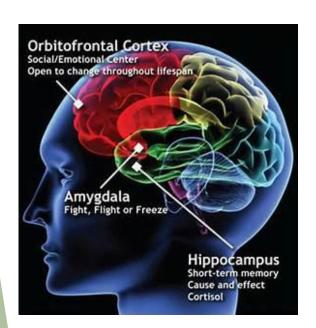
"70% of all illness
physical or mental,
is linked to stress
of some kind."

US Dept. Health & Human Services Healthy People 2000



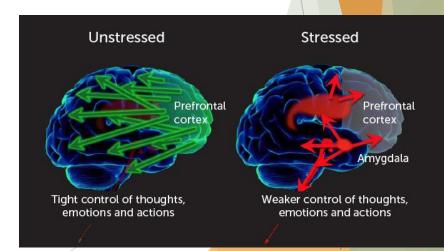
#### Crash Course: Your Brain on

<u>Prefrontal Cortex</u> - executive/high order functioning - planning, problem solving, concentration/focus, regulation of thoughts, emotions and behaviors. The more stress the smaller the volume of the PFC.

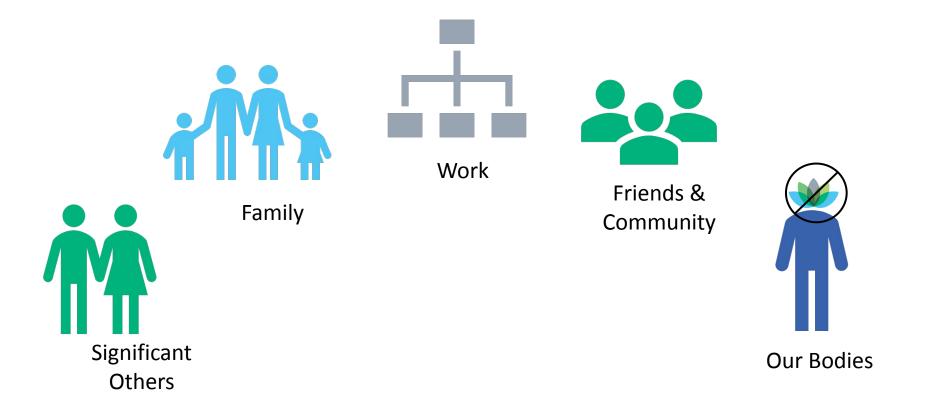


Amygdala controls emotional responses"fight or flight". Associated with fear,
anxiety, aggression, learned fear response,
addiction. Important in forming and storing
memories of emotional events. The more
stress the larger it gets.

<u>Hippocampus</u> plays a role in formation of memories including spatial and navigation memories. The more stress the smaller it gets.



## We Tend to Care for Everything but Our Minds

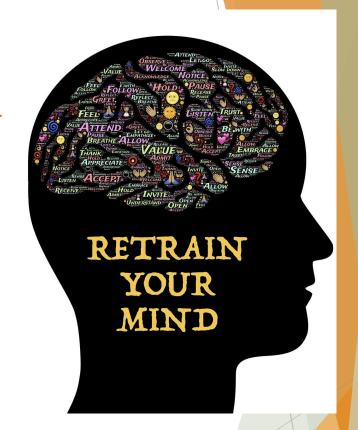


#### Why Meditate?

- Unless we train our minds with mental exercise in the way that we train our bodies with physical exercise, there can be unhealthy outcomes that impact the quality of our lives.
- The inability to manage stress can lead to negative mental and/or physical consequences that affect patient care.
- More Incentive? Many CEOs from Fortune 500 Companies Meditate Daily!

https://hbr.org/2015/12/how-meditation-benefits-ceos.

https://www.billgeorge.org/articles/wall-street
-bosses-tiger-woods-meditate-to-focus-stay-cal
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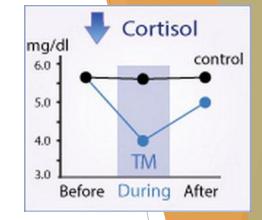
#### **Benefits of Meditation**

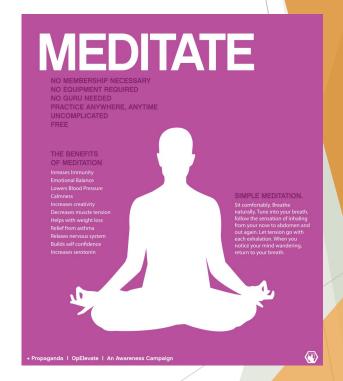
#### Physical Health Benefits

- Decreases levels of cortisol
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces cardiovascular disease
- Improves immune functioning

#### **Mental Health Benefits**

- Improves working memory capacity
  - Increases empathy
  - Increases ability to focus attention
  - Induces higher levels of satisfaction
  - Improves sleep quality
  - Increases brain plasticity
  - Induces greater productivity/efficiency

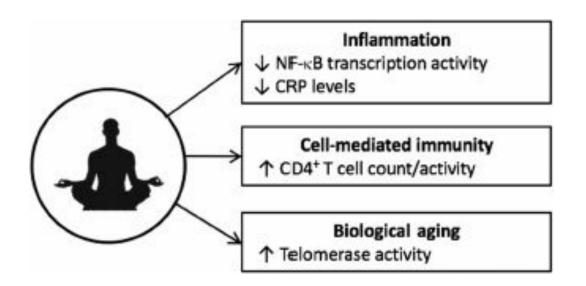






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#### Meditation Effects on the Immune System



Mindfulness meditation and immune system biomarkers: A systematic review of 20 randomized controlled trials, comprising more than 1600 participants, revealed replicated, yet tentative, evidence that mindfulness meditation is associated with changes in select immune system processes involved in inflammation, immunity, and biological aging. (Black and Slavich, 2016)

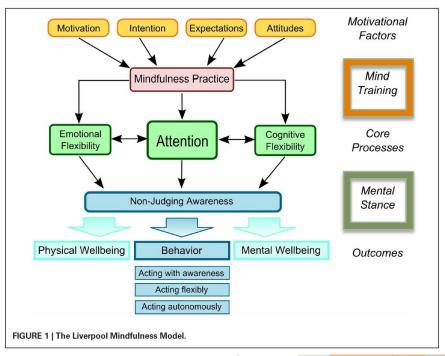


#### Your Brain on Meditation

<u>Frontal Cortex</u> - becomes larger with a greater volume of gray matter, self-regulation improves and brain plasticity increases

Amygdala - smaller and less reactive/sensitive

Meditation is used for chronic pain management, stress management, as part of a treatment regimen for addiction, anxiety and depression, and as a performance-enhancement tool.





#### So..... What is Meditation?

A mental discipline in which the practitioner attempts to move beyond reflexive thinking into a deeper state of awareness (or relaxation) by intentional focus.

While there are many types of meditation, they all share several of the same characteristics:

- Focused attention/awareness
- Paced breathing
- Comfortable posture



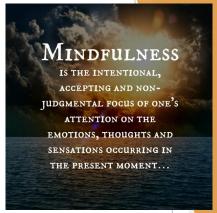
# Misperceptions

- Meditation is clearing the mind
- Meditation is relaxing
- Meditation is good for everyone (mindfulness is though)
- Meditation is a replacement for other self-care behaviors



# Meditation Can Take Many Forms

- Mindfulness (focus attention on breath, sensations, candle)
- Body Scan
- Guided (Visualization/Virtual Reality)
- Mantra Meditation (including Transcendental)
- Walking/Movement (focus on movements of walking)
- Journaling/gratitude
  - Prayer (Contemplative or Meditative)







### Mindfulness is...

Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.

-Jon Kabat-Zinn



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#### **Cultural Roots of Mindfulness**

- 5,000 year history with roots in India, Buddhism
- Diverse human usage across time, geography, and religion
- Historical/religious vs. Western/secular
- Gained popularity in US
  - Arrival of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in the 1980s
  - Received attention in medicine with Ronald Epstein's 1999 article Mindful Practice in JAMA
- My limitations



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# Key Concepts: Mindfulness

- Here and now focus
- Beginner's mind
- Attempting non-judgment
- NOT: relaxation or clearing the mind

#### Continuum of Awareness (Niemiec, 2013)

Mindfulness ----- Mindlessness

wandering/autopilot

Here, now Then, later

Skillful responding Habitual reacting

Aware, present Distracted (monkey mind)

Mode of being Mode of doing

Allowing/letting be Fighting (the experience)

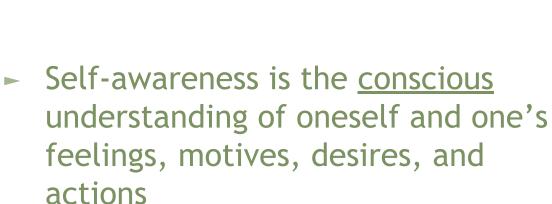
Accepting/Facing reality Avoiding

Niemac, RM. Mindfulness & Character Strengths: A practical guide to flourishing. Boston: Hogrefe, 2014.



# Self-consciousness vs. Self-awareness

- Self-consciousness is the <u>undue</u> awareness of oneself, one's appearance or one's actions
  - Judgmental and unpleasant



Non-judgmental and neutral or pleasant





#### Features of Mindfulness

- "Clear"
- Nonconceptual, nondiscriminatory
- Flexible
- Empirical
- Stable



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### We Can be Mindful of:

- Sensory input (information coming in through sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch)
- Body (breath, movements, pain, pleasure)
- Mind (thoughts, attitudes, beliefs)
- Emotions (actually just a combination of body + mind!)



# Breath Meditation (Possible Activity)





## Mindfulness in 0 Seconds (for busy people):

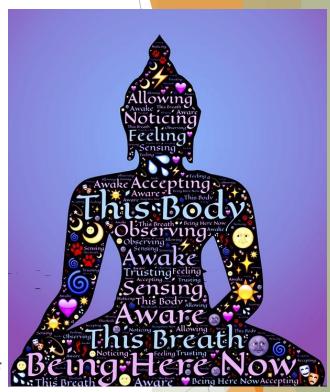
# 12 Practices that can be paired with other activities

- Mindful eating (sensory experience, origin of food -can extend into cooking)
- Mindful walking (especially while outside en route to school etc.)
- Shifting up one's pace with activities (slow/fast approaches)
- Mindful emailing/texting (with gratitude/"loving-kindness")
- Anchoring mindfulness pauses with everyday events (red lights, brushing teeth)
- Looking around when you have to wait (bank, appointments, checkout lines)
- Imagine taking a picture (or take it) of something ordinary & something extraordinary
- Feeling gratitude (when it naturally arises) evokes mindfulness
- Bringing curiosity to an object (consider the care/intelligence that went into designing it)
- Picking a color: notice it throughout the day—imagine describing it to someone
- Noticing your inbreath and outbreath as you're falling asleep
- Creating a mindfulness practice no one has ever thought of—don't tell anyone



# **Body Scan Meditation**

- Can be performed while sitting or lying down
- Involves the focus on the sensations of each part of the body (either top to bottom or bottom to top) followed by a relaxation of that body part.
- As the practitioner progresses from 1 part of the body to the next, the goal is to maintain the relaxation of the previous sections of the body (progressive relaxation).
- The practice trains you to become aware of all sensations whether pleasant or unpleasant that are present in the body.
- Often requires 15-30 minutes to complete, although guided meditations are available for 5-10 minutes of practice
  - (https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/body\_scan\_med itation).



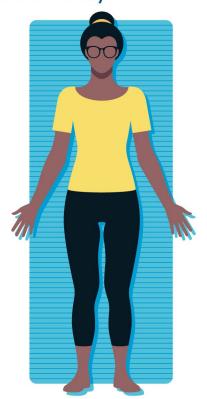


# Simple Body Scan Meditation

### FEEL CALM ALL OVER

This Monday, try a mindfulness body scan to ease tense muscles and let stress drift away.

- 1. Sit quietly or lie down.
- 2. Start at one end of your body and focus on each body part.
- 3. Notice any areas of tension then soften and relax.
- 4. Continue until your whole body feels completely relaxed.







DeStressMonday.org

https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/destress-monday/beat-stress-this-monday-with-a-mindful-body-scan



#### Mantra Meditation

- Just a word, phrase, or prayer with a long history of use that is considered "sacred/holy" by the tradition/culture from which it originated.
- The mantra can be spoken, chanted or repeated silently in the mind continuously for some period of time, and often used in conjunction with the breath.
  - Choose 1 mantra that resonates for you and it can be used to immediately connect to your center - be that God/Spirit/Beloved



Mantra	Source	Translation
Maranatha	Aramaic	Lord of the heart
Om Mani Padme Hum	Buddhism	Behold! The jewel in the lotus within!
My God and My All	Christianity	Source: Prayer words of Saint Francis of Assis
Kyrie Eleison	Christianity	Lord have mercy
Jesus	Christianity	Son of God
Hail Mary/Ave Maria	Christianity	From the Rosary
O Maria Madre Maria	Christianity	Oh Mary my mother; Source: Prayer words of Pope John Paul II
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on Me	Christianity	Prayer name: The Jesus Prayer
Be Still and Know That I Am God	Christianity	From the Bible
Rama (Rah-mah)	Hinduism	Translation: Blissful, pleasing; Source: Mantra of Mahatma Gandhi
Hare Rama Hare Krishna	Hinduism	O Lord take away all my sorrows, pain, and short-comings; give me bliss and joy
Om Nama Shivaya (Aum Naum-ha Shi-why)	Hinduism	I bow to Shiva—the name of your true identity; self
Om Shanti	Hinduism	Lasting peace
So Hum	Hinduism	I am that Self within
Om Prema	Hinduism	A call for universal love
Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai (Aum Shree Ram, Jay Ram, Jay Jay Ram)	Hinduism	May the Lord as light and virtue that dwells in my heart be victorious over all; Source: Mantra of Swami Ramdas
Allah	Islam	God
Allahu Akhbar ( <i>Ah-lah-oo Ah-bahr</i> )	Islam	God is greatest
Bismallah Ir-rahman Ir- rahim (Beese-mah-lah Ir-rah-mun Ir-rah-heem)	Islam	In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficial and the Most Merciful
Barukh Hashem (Bah- rookh ha shem)	Judaism	Blessed is the name
Ribono Shel Olam	Judaism	Lord of the universe
Shalom	Judaism	Lasting peace
Elohim (e'-lohim)	Judaism	Hebrew name for God
Sheheena	Judaism	Feminine aspect of God
Wakan Tanka	Native American Tradition	Great Spirit



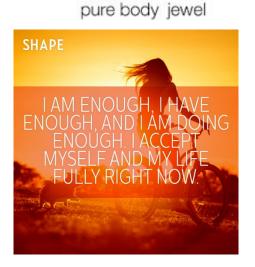
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# Sample Mantras



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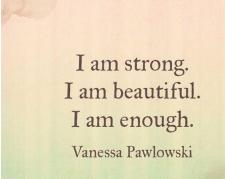


I am grounded, centered and present.



unity









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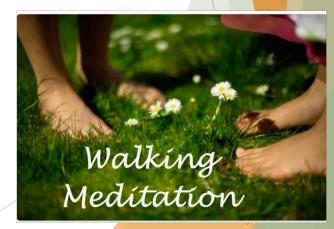


# Walking Meditation

- Is NOT the type of brisk walking that you do for exercise.
- It is intentional walking paying attention to your feet stepping, your arms swinging and how your body feels as you move in silence.
- Can be a good place to start because it presents less of a challenge than sitting still.







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Let's Play a Game.. (Optional Activity)

How good is your awareness and perception....?





#### Recall test...

How good is your awareness and perception....?



### **Gratitude/Journaling**

- Centers on remembering the positive things that happen to us daily, rather than the negative.
- At the end of each day, you will need to write down at least 3 good things that happened that day.
- After a short time, we begin to NOTICE the moments in our day that we are grateful for as they happen.
- This leads to a mental stance of gratitude throughout the day.
- Journaling can also help us to "mind dump" negative feelings or traumatic events at the end of each day so that we can release them.

# Gratitude Journal Prompts

- 1. What was the best thing that happened today?
- 2. Who makes you feel loved and why?
- 3. Name something that makes you happy.
- 4. What is your favorite outdoor activity?
- 5. Name someone that helps you.
- 6. Name someone that is nice to you.
- 7. What is your favorite thing to do on the weekend?
- 8. Name something that you are grateful to have.
- 9. What do you like to do with your family and why?
- 10. Where is your favorite place to go?
- 11. Name someone that makes you smile.
- 12. Who is your best friend and why?
- 13. What do you like most about your school or job?
- 14. What do you like most about your favorite subject?
- 15. Who was the last person to give you something?
- 16. What is the best gift that you have ever received?
- 17. Name the best thing that has ever happened to you.
- 18. What is your favorite game or sport and why?
- 19. Where is your favorite place to play or relax?
- 20. What do you like most about your family?
- 21. Name an animal that you feel thankful for.
- 22. What is your favorite thing to do at home?
- 23. Name a person that you love and why?
- 24. What is your favorite hobby and why?
- 25. Who do you like to spend time with?
- 26. Name someone that your feel grateful for.

rhythmsofplay.com

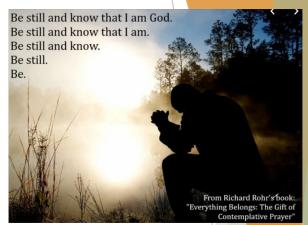


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# Prayer

- Communing with your higher power as you know him/her/them.
- Contemplative prayer is the opening of the mind and heart to God/Beloved/Universe beyond emotions, thoughts and words just being in His/Her/Their presence.
- Meditative prayer involves silently meditating on sacred texts, devotionals, sunrises/sunsets etc in order to experience their deeper meaning.









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#### **Sleepiness**

An energy imbalance (not enough alertness)

#### Restlessness

An energy imbalance (not enough peace)

#### Doubt

Includes comparisons and excuses

#### **Boredom**

Signals a lack of attention

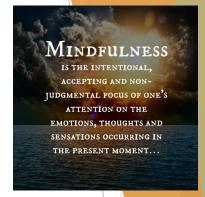
#### **Irritation**

Resistance to what is

## Recap: Types of Meditation Discussed

- Mindfulness (focus attention on breath, sensations, candle)
- Body Scan
- Mantra Meditation
- Walking/Movement (focus on movements)
- Journaling/gratitude
- Prayer (Contemplative or Meditative)









# Specific Benefits for Medical Students, Residents, Physicians

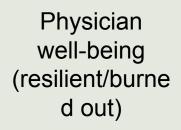
- Higher resilience in residents (Romcevich 2018)
- Less burnout in physicians 3 months after (Schroeder 2016)
- Less exhaustion and more self-compassion for physicians and nurses in the ICU (Gozalo 2018)
- Higher distress tolerance in med students (Kraemer 2016)
- More skill in delivering bad news in ENT residents (Mengin 2017)

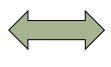


# Physician Well-being and Resilience

A patient care issue







Quality of care (safety/erro rs)



Quality of caring (empathy/deta chment)

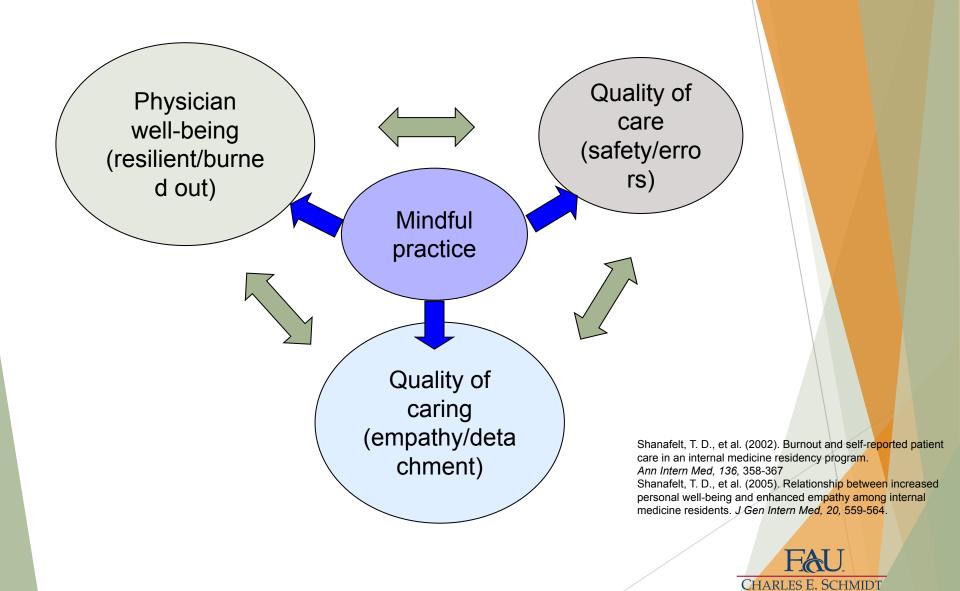


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Ann Intern Med, 136, 358-367

Shanafelt, T. D., et al. (2005). Relationship between increased personal well-being and enhanced empathy among internal medicine residents. *J Gen Intern Med*, 20, 559-564.





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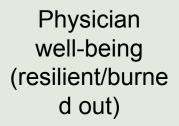
# Psychological strengths of physicians

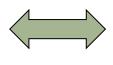
- Thoroughness
- Commitment
- Perfectionism
- Healthy skepticism
- Altruism, stoicism, hard work
- Caring
- Rationality

# Psychological vulnerabilities of physicians

- Over-compulsiveness
- Over-commitment
- Inability to admit mistakes
- Need for certainty
- Neglecting self-care and family
- Compassion fatigue
- Emotional distance
- Self-deprecation







Quality of care (safety/erro rs)



Quality of caring (empathy/deta chment)

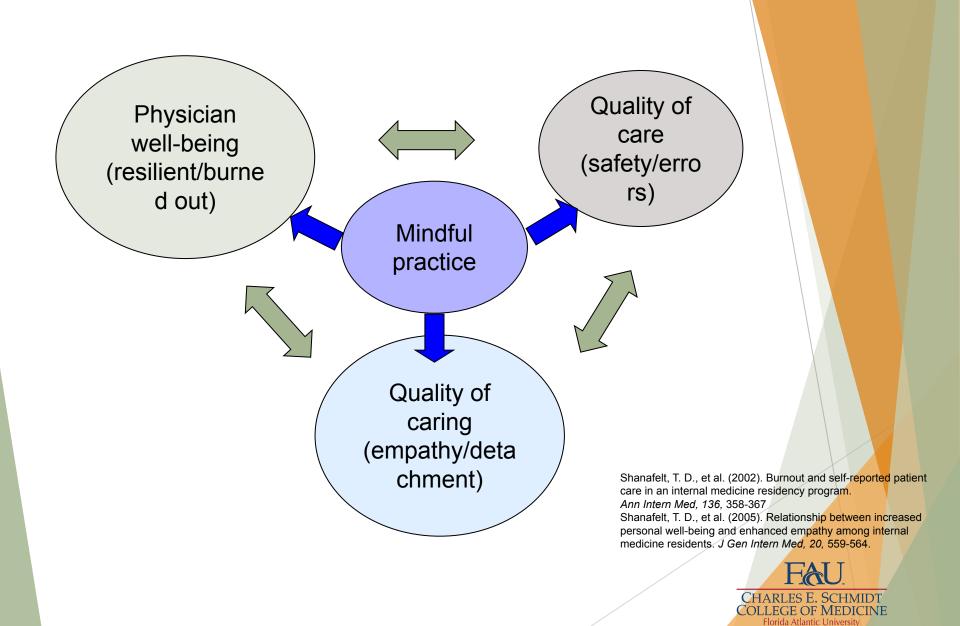


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# How We Typically Cope



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## Mindful coping: Pain vs. Suffering

- Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional
- Pain x Resistance = Suffering
- Reduce suffering by accepting and relaxing in response to pain

# Acceptance



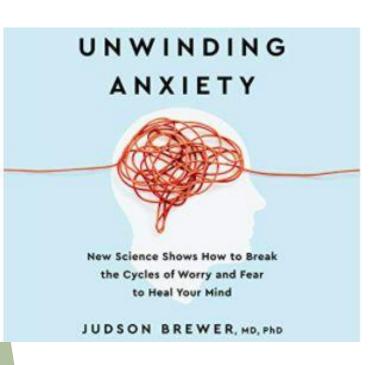
## **Thinking**

We regard our thoughts as <u>important!!!</u>

- We believe they define who we are
- We think they have authority and are true
- We get hooked into the content of our thoughts
- "Don't believe everything you think"



# **Anxiety**



- A kind of addiction
- Worry is a "mental behavior" to cope with uncertainty
- Mindfulness helps us just be with uncertainty

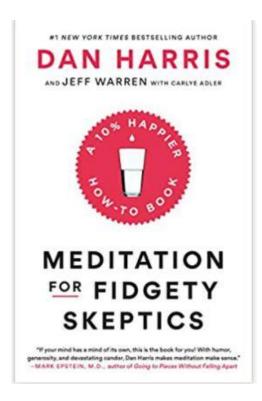


## Mindful Communication

- Helps us migrate from habitual ways of interacting to more skillful ways based on mutuality and authenticity
- Allows us to gather crucial information we might have otherwise missed
- Key skills
  - Not being in a rush
  - Relax
  - Open to the other
  - Trust emergence
  - Listen deeply



## What is a practice?

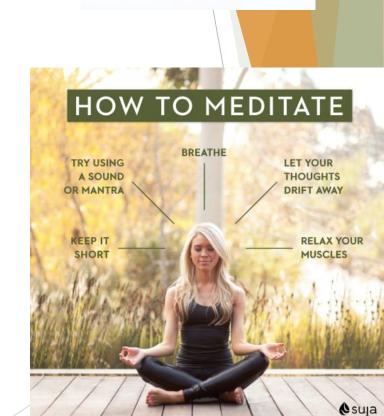


- A habit is an action (physical or mental) that you choose and repeat
- Mindfulness is like going to the "existence gym"
- We cannot fail at mindfulness, we can only fail to practice.
- Don't take it too seriously!



## Choose Your Practice and Make a Routine

- There is no right or wrong way to meditate and it doesn't have to take any prescribed amount of time.
- Like any medication that you take every day, the important thing is to be consistent. Just do it- don't judge it - like brushing your teeth.
- Start with 2-5 minutes, work up to 10 minutes. Do it 1<sup>st</sup> thing in the morning and then briefly before bed.
- Pick a mantra. Use a meditation app, guided meditations are available for download.
- Do something every single day for your own pleasure schedule it like any other priority and focus on just doing that 1 thing during that time (uni-task).
  - Keep a gratitude journal write 3 things at the end of the day for which you are grateful



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- Consider if you want to practice with others or alone
  - Take a class
  - Maybe an app? (HeadSpace, Calm)
  - Create a contemplative space
- Take one mindful breath whenever you...
  - Stop at a red light
  - Enter a room
  - Hear a phone notification
- Or can you do "20 Breaths"?
- Pick one task or activity a week to bring your mindfulness to. Shower Brush Teeth Walk Dog Eat Wash Hands Laundry Open Doors Prepare Meals Stretch Your Body ...



## Taking Action!

- What is 1 thing that was presented that you can commit to doing every day for the next week that will help decrease your stress/anxiety?
- Write down 3 things that are gifts/talents that you think you have been given and how you will work to develop them or share them with others?
- Journal of gratitude what 3 things happened to you today for which you are grateful?
  - Write someone else a note letting them know how grateful you are for something that they did can be something small. Not only will you make their day, but some studies suggest it will boost your morale also.

## A farewell meditation



### Resources for Mindfulness

- Headspace app, 10 Percent Happier app, etc <a href="http://peacefulmindpeacefullife.org/">http://peacefulmindpeacefullife.org/</a> free series
- "The Practice" by Barb Schmidt
- www.calm.com
- Greater Good In Action Website all kinds of free meditations: <a href="https://ggia.berkeley.edu/">https://ggia.berkeley.edu/</a>
- http://www.mindful.org/practice-grows-st ronger/
- Assorted free meditations on YouTube
  - "Freedom From Anxious Thoughts and Feelings: A Two-Step Mindfulness Approach for Moving Beyond Fear and Worry" by Scott Symington, PhD

    Dr.





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## Resources - continued

#### What you practice grows stronger

- Practice Practice Practice
- 2-5 minutes per day: log your progress
- Do it for 30 days and notice what positive changes you see. Document them to keep you on track!

30-DAY MEDITATION CHALLENGE  On a scale from 1 to 5 rate your sensations and emotions (1 = not present, 5 = present)						
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## Resources-continued

#### **Breath Meditation Checklist**

Find a quiet place in your home to practice your meditation. Put your phone on silent and leave any

other distractions out of sight.
Set a timer for how long you plan to meditate (1-5 minutes to start).
Close your eyes or lower your gaze.
<b>Gather your attention on your breath</b> . Allow yourself to breathe naturally without trying to control your breathing. Tune into where you feel the breath in your body (belly, chest, or nose). Notice the sensation of each inhalation, exhalation, and the pause between the two.
When you catch yourself thinking about something other than your breath, notice the thought.
Gently redirect your attention back to your breath. Repeat this step each time your mind wanders.
When the time goes off, take a moment to pause, notice how you feel in your body, and name one thing that you are grateful for in this moment.

## Resources- continued

## **Body Scan Meditation**

- Set aside a time and place in your day where you can sit comfortably and you won't be distracted or disturbed.
- **2** Find a comfortable but attentive seated position, close your eyes, and bring your attention to your toes.
- Working up from your toes, bring awareness to each body part in turn: your feet, ankles, calves, knees, etc. up to your head.



#### Health Benefits:

- Reduced stress
- Decreased muscle tension
- Increased pain tolerance

#### Why it works to reduce stress:

Body scan meditations encourage self-awareness of sensations we might otherwise be ignoring. CHARLES E. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF MEDICINE Florida Atlantic University

Dr. Michelle Lizotte-Waniewski

#### EXPERIENTIAL BREAK OUT SESSIONS

At WMU Homer Stryker School of Medicine, we have found the inclusion of experiential breakout sessions to be helpful in motivating students to want to adopt or increase their mindfulness practice. Details regarding how we structured these peer-led sessions and assessed our teaching event can be found in APPENDIX A in the "Notes" Section of this Slide

## Aspects of the Teaching Session that Motivated Students to Want to Adopt or Increase Their Mindfulness Practice

Session	Frequency— rating	Percentage—rating component
Component	component as moderately	as moderately or very
	or very motivational	motivational
Having their own choice of	33	87%
breakout sessions		
The inclusion of	23	61%
experiential breakout		
sessions		
Having the sessions be	21	55%
student-led		
Zero-second mindfulness	14	37%
part of presentation		
Research overview part of	7	19%
presentation		

