

Self-Care & Stress Management for Leaders

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Self-Care & Stress Management

- ❑ Why self care?
 - ❑ What is the stress response?
 - ❑ How does chronic stress impact the body, mind, work performance & relationships?
 - ❑ What is the relaxation response?
 - ❑ What are some practices that reduce stress and increase resilience?
- 

Key Understandings

- Our stress is about surviving and how we perceive our experiences.
- Temporary stress is good for you – it promotes health and resiliency.
- Our mental state is contagious. We are models for others.
- Chronic or acute stress can impact our bodies, minds, and performance.
- Stress can be prevented and managed with healthy coping strategies that can become a habit.

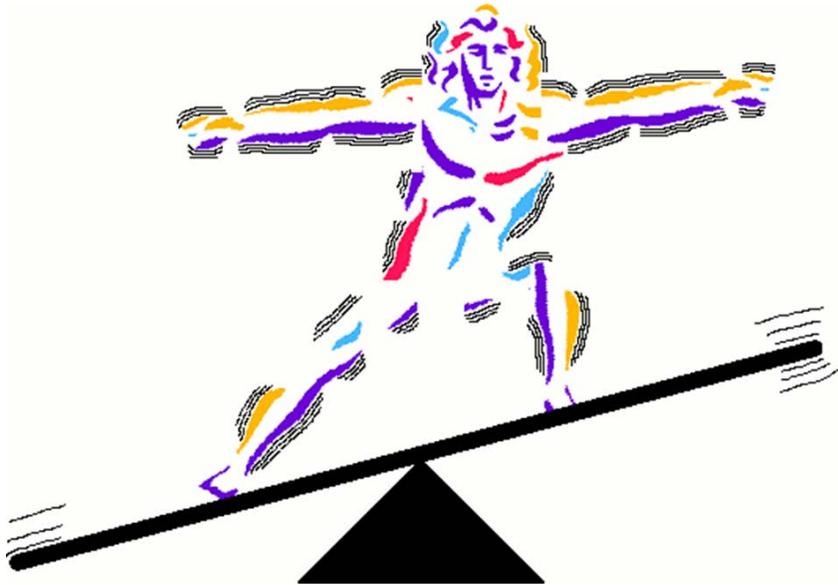


Self-Care is a
priority and necessity
- not a luxury -
in the work that we do.



**Put on your own
oxygen mask
before helping
those around you.**

The Well-Balanced Professional



The effective professional develops a balance between giving **of** self and giving **to** self.



**Stress has always been with us.
It can keep us safe and alert to danger.**

FIGHT

-or-

FLIGHT

FREEZE



... mmm ... mmm ... mmm ... mmm ... mmm ... mmm ...
Swordlow ...



Stress

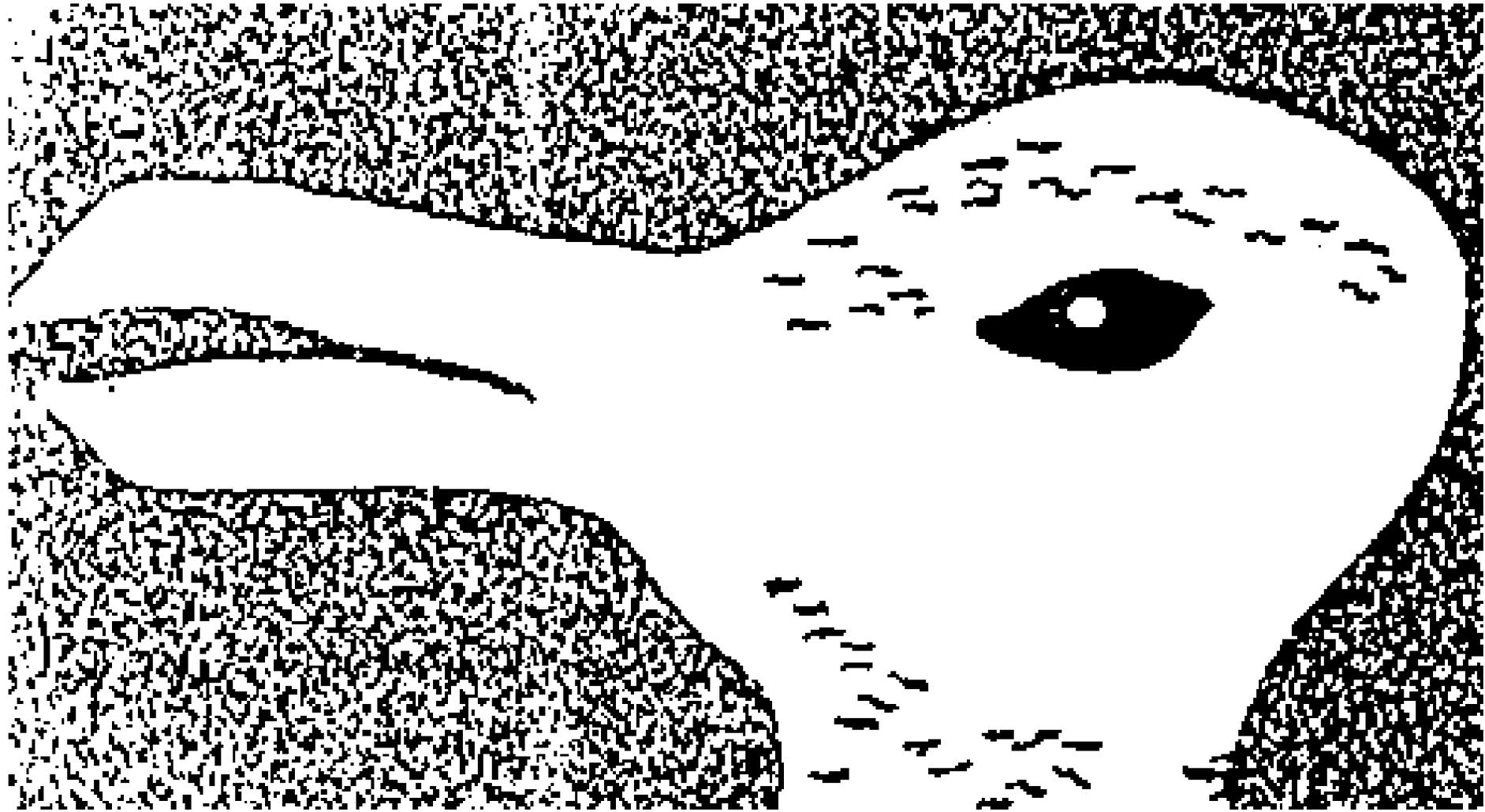
Internal or external influences that disrupt an individual's normal state of well-being.

These influences can effect health by causing emotional distress and lead to a variety of physiological changes including increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and dramatic rise in hormone levels.

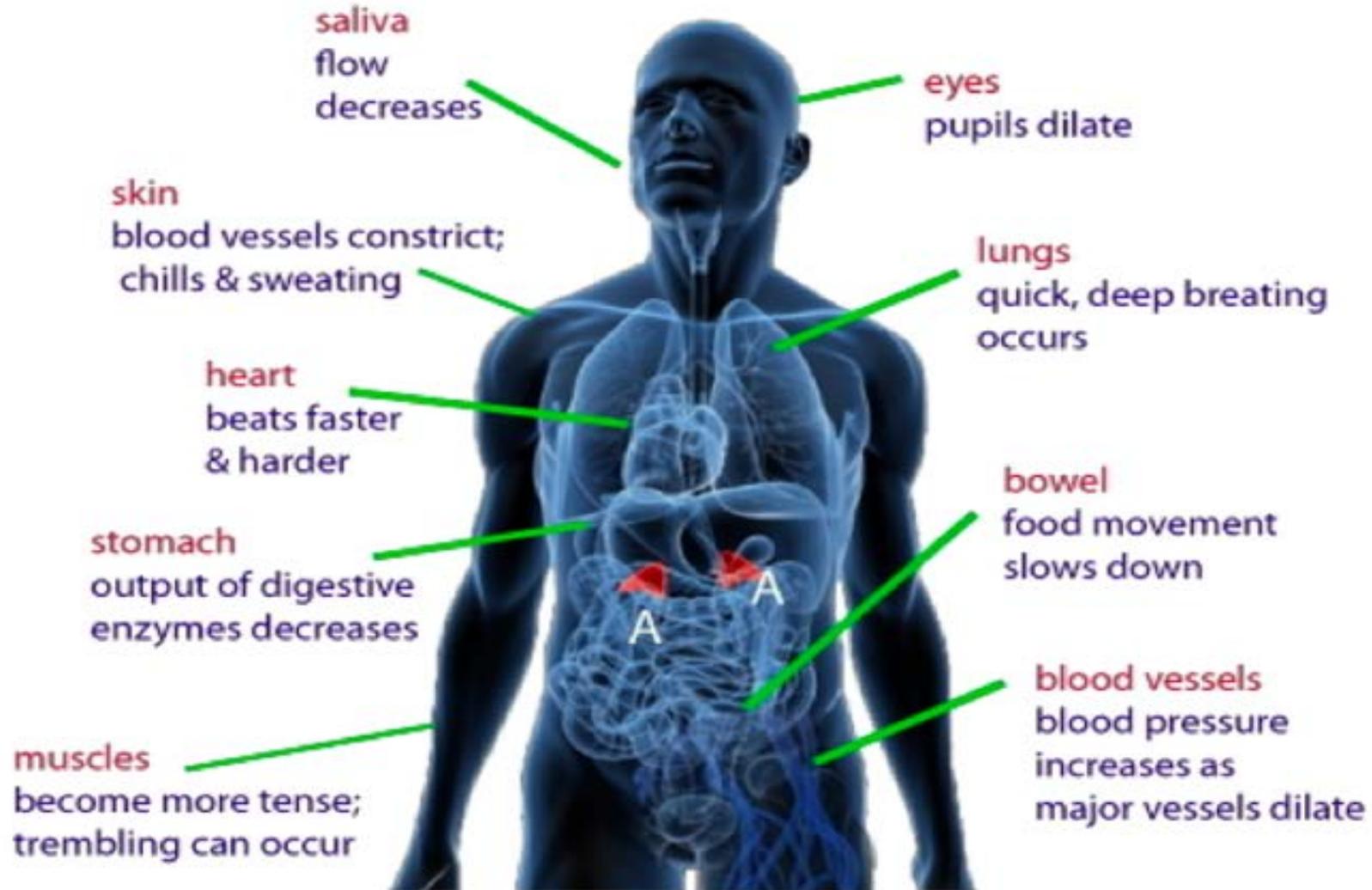


**Stress is between
our ears. It is
something we
create through
our reaction to
what happens.**

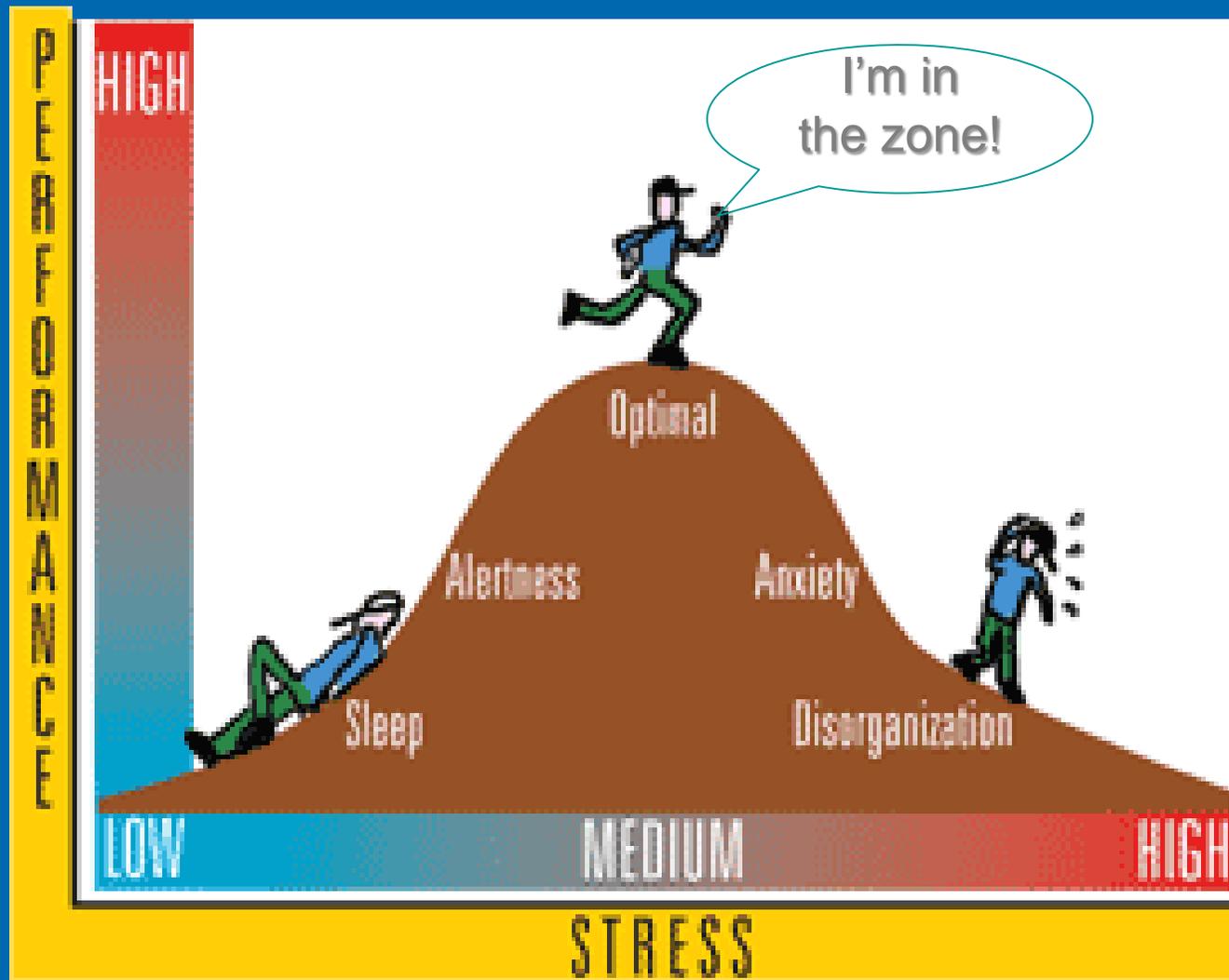




Body changes during stress



Stress Performance Connection

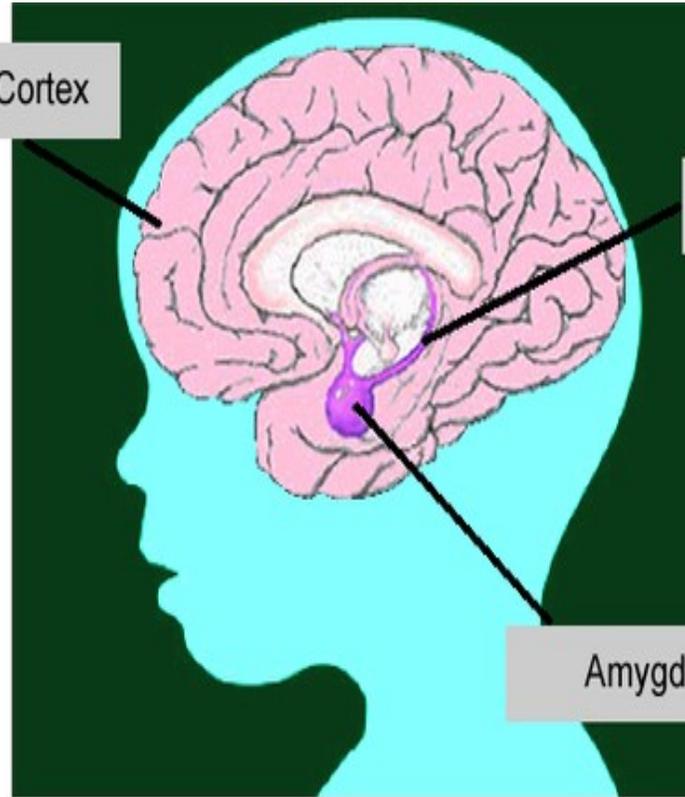


**60-90% of all
doctor's visits in the
U.S. are for stress-
related disorders.**



Stress and the Brain

- Make decisions
- Pay attention
- Control emotions
- Be calm and focused
- Short- and long-term memory
- Think critically
- Controls impulsivity



Hippocampus

- Critical for new learning
- Forming explicit memories of facts, details & important life events
- Stress & memory highly correlated

Amygdala

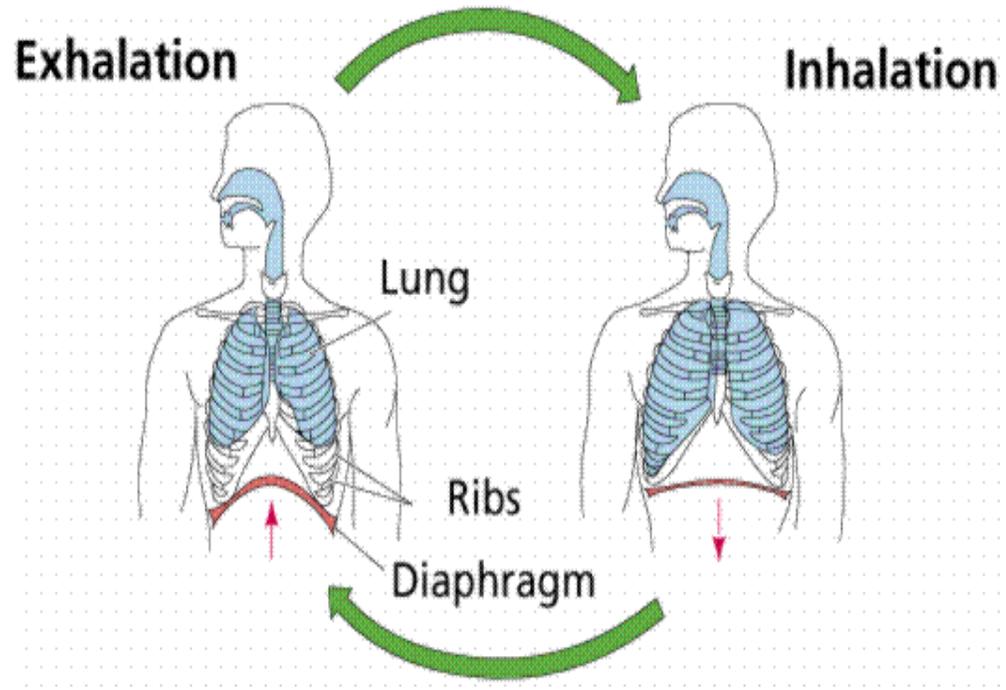
- Brain's alarm that processes fear & anger
- Can "hijack" the brain and prevent PFC functioning
- Act before we think

Impacts of Chronic Stress on Performance

- Attention
 - Memory
 - Decision making
 - Team work
 - Relationships
 - Social skills
 - Learning and professional growth
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Stressful or Relaxing Breath?

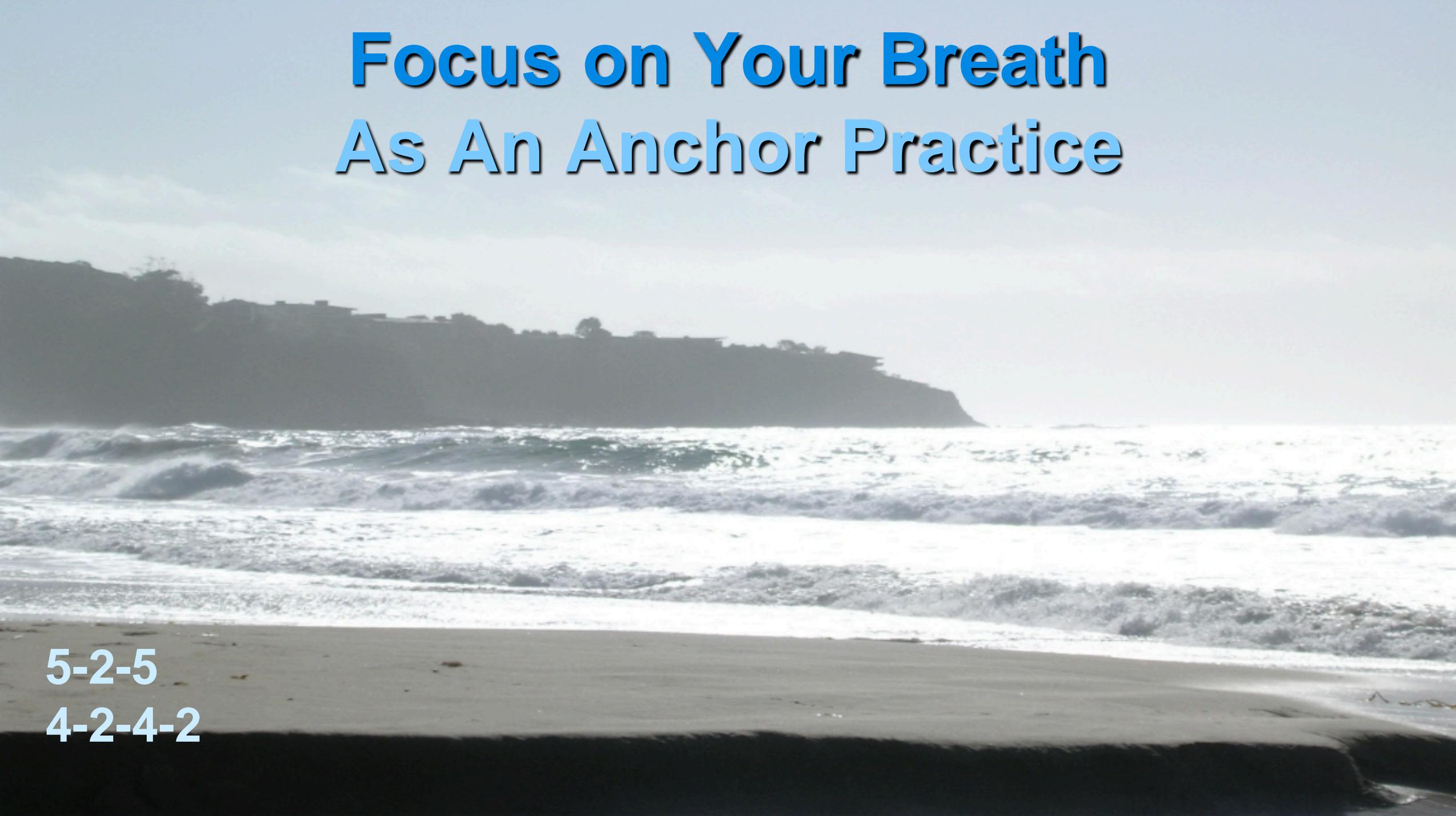
- How you breathe can affect stress levels
- Shallow chest breathing linked to stress
- Deep diaphragmatic breathing linked to relaxation better health, and pain control
- Focusing on breath can trigger relaxation and release body toxins



Focus on Your Breath As An Anchor Practice

5-2-5

4-2-4-2





Powerful!

The Relaxing Breath

4-7-8

- Touch tongue tip to ridge of tissue above front teeth.
- Begin with exhale through your mouth noisily around your tongue, pursing your lips outward.
- Inhale through nose quietly to count of 4.
- Hold breath to count of 7.
- Exhale slowly to count of 8. Repeat.

Important: exhale 2x longer than inhale.

Stressors

External Stressors

- Financial Issues
- Health
- Family Problems
- Deadlines
- Work Issues

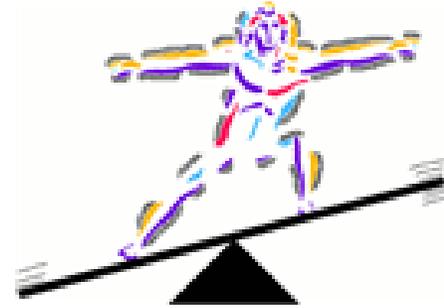
Internal Stressors

- Thoughts and beliefs
- Emotions
- Worry

**What triggers stress
in your life?**



My Resilience Plan



1 My stress triggers are...

2 How I think & feel when I am stressed...

3 How I will healthfully cope with stress...

Physical Stress Warning Signs

Headaches

Insomnia

Sleep disturbances

Low back pain

Fatigue

Sexual problems

Cold hands and feet

Neck and shoulder pain

Indigestion

Cardiovascular Disease

Irritable bowel syndrome

Menstrual distress

Nausea

Loss of appetite or overeating

Heart palpitations

Hypertension

Asthma attacks

Frequent colds and flu

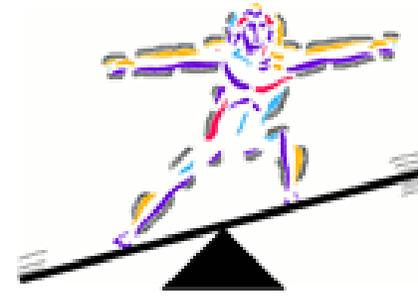
Frequent low grade

Infections

Cognitive and Emotional Signs of Stress

- ❑ Memory problems
- ❑ Inability to concentrate
- ❑ Poor judgment
- ❑ Seeing only the negative
- ❑ Anxious or racing thoughts
- ❑ Constant worrying
- ❑ Moodiness
- ❑ Irritability or short temper
- ❑ Agitation, inability to relax
- ❑ Feeling overwhelmed
- ❑ Sense of loneliness and isolation
- ❑ Depression or general unhappiness

My Resilience Plan



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New Science of Stress

“The harmful effects of stress on your health are not inevitable. How you think and how you act can transform your experience of stress. When you choose to view your stress response as helpful you create the biology of courage. And when you choose to connect with others under stress you can create resilience.”

Kelly McGonigal, Ph.D. Health Psychologist



Stress Makes You Social



Oxytocin, the “cuddle” hormone, is released when stressed. It primes you to do things that strengthen close relationships. It motivates you to seek support, tell someone how you feel and not bottle it up. You also become healthier by reaching out to others and helping someone. **We have a built-in mechanism for stress resilience — human connection.**

Hand on the Heart Practice



1. With hand on the heart, breathe gently and deeply.
2. Think about a safe place and feeling safe.
3. Then think about someone who loves and cares about you.
4. Feel that in your body.

Activates the relaxation response & oxytocin in the brain, the calming hormone and neurotransmitter.

The good news is that you have choices about how you respond to the many stresses of modern life.

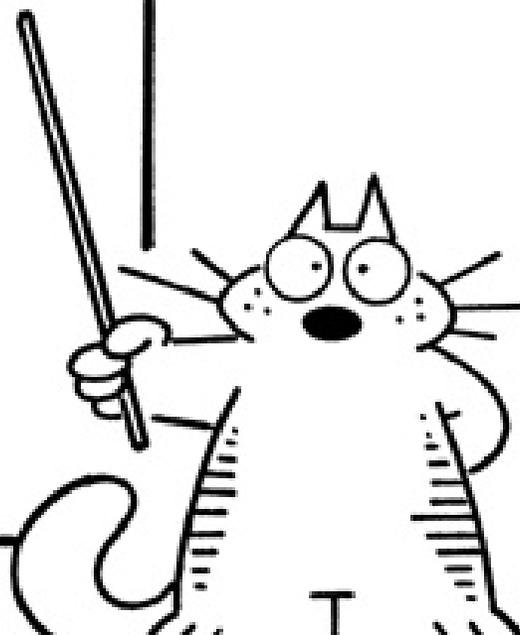


**How do you cope
with stress?**



TOP 10
STRESS
MANAGEMENT
TECHNIQUES

1. EAT
2. SLEEP
3. EAT
4. SLEEP
5. EAT
6. SLEEP
7. EAT
8. SLEEP
9. EAT
10. SLEEP



The Relaxation Response- Calm Alertness

A state of focused awareness coupled with an attitude of interest. This mental attitude bypasses the “inner dialogue” of ordinary thought, thereby decreasing arousal of the stress response.

The Basics of How to Relax

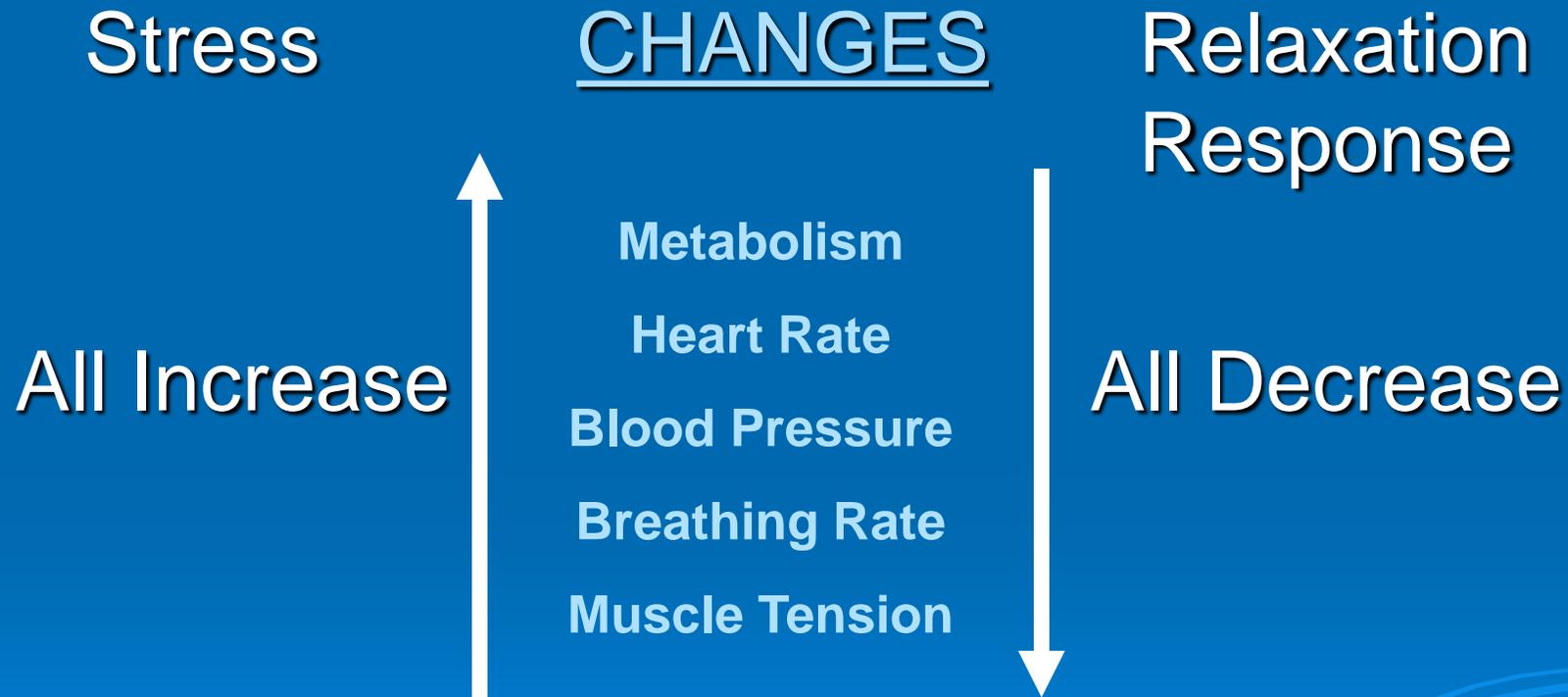


- Mental attitude is passive, non-judging, and neutral
- Repeat a simple mental or physical stimulus such as breathing, a word, phrase, image, or movement
- Optional: a comfortable position and quiet environment

Figure Eight of
— The Relaxation Response —



The Relaxation Response is the Opposite of the Stress Response

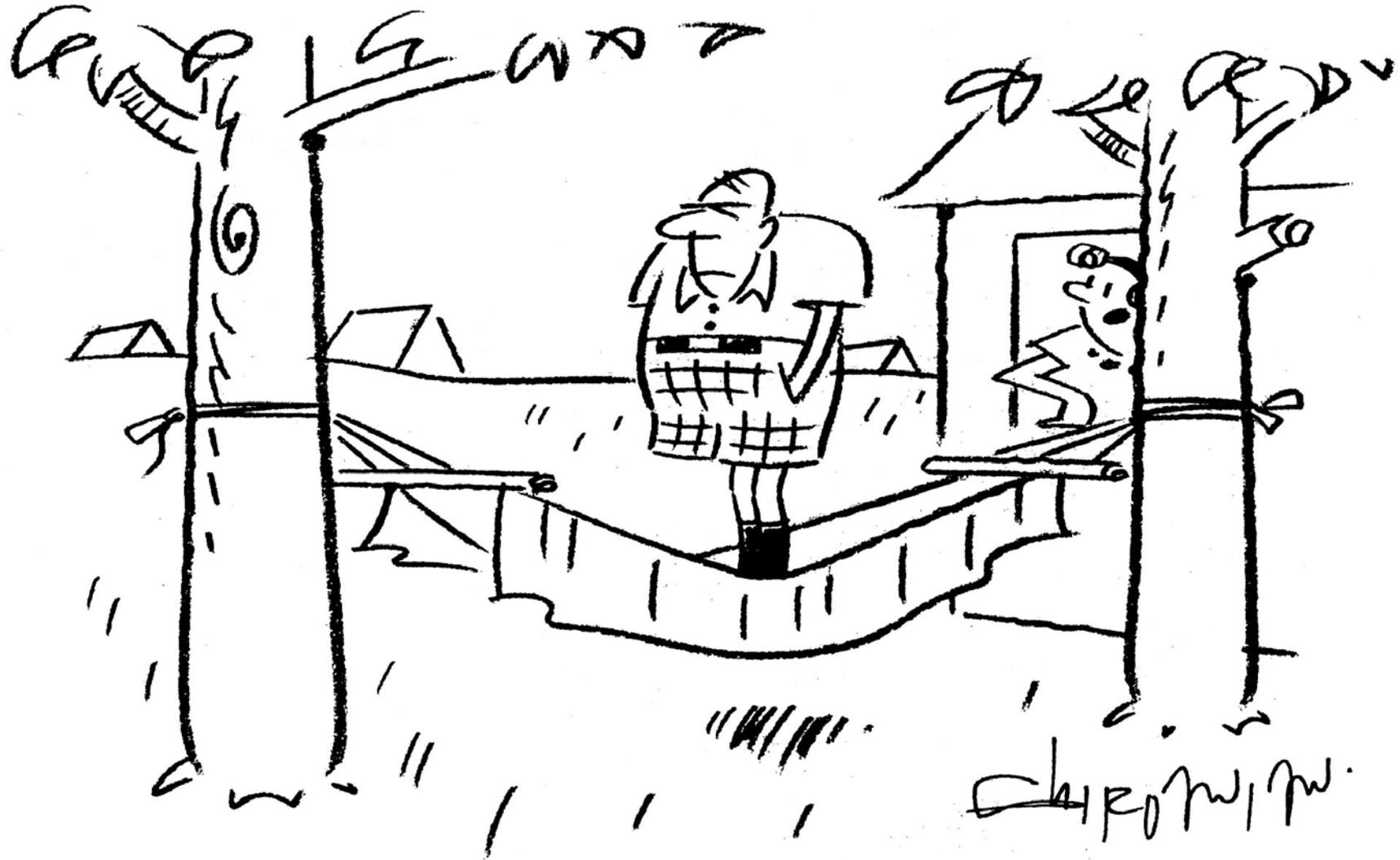


Benefits of the Relaxation Response

- Decreases stress and anxiety
- Reduces muscle tension
- Quiets the mind
- Improves sleep
- Increases ability to focus
- Gets us out of our conditioned responses
- Promotes creative problem-solving



Source: Benson Henry Institute for
Mind Body Medicine, Boston, MA



"When are you going to
learn to relax?"



Stress Busters



Listen to Calming Music

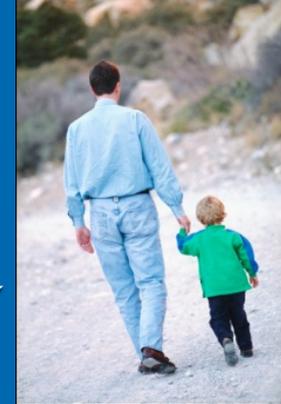
Become Mindful & Fully Present



Play sports or exercise

Read a good book

Take a walk



Practice kindness

Laugh



Yawn and Stretch

Breathe



Make music

Be grateful



Crafting & Hobbies

Sit quietly



Picture yourself in a beautiful place

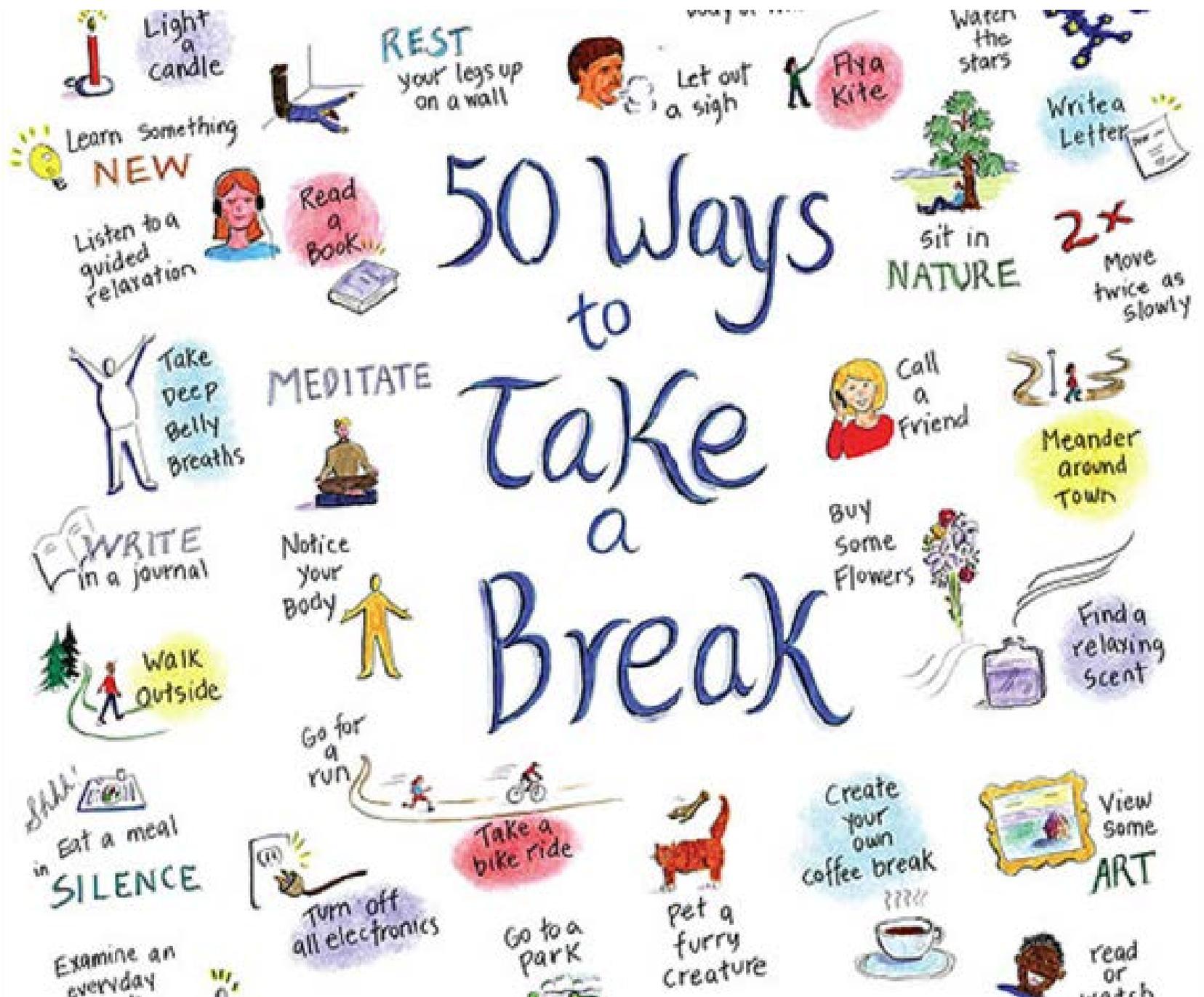
Talk with a friend 

Relax in a comfortable spot

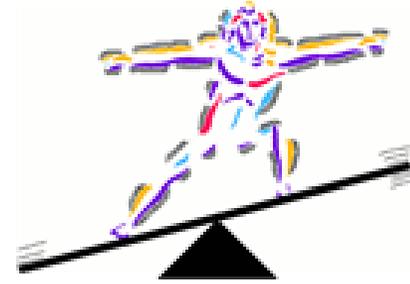
Draw



Play with your pet



My Resilience Plan



1 My stress triggers are...

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Mindfulness

Mindfulness practice is the intent to remain present in moment-to-moment experiences in a nonjudgmental way (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Such practice includes reflective activities or simply walking, eating, and listening with intent.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWaK2mI_rZw&list=PL1OhtT3ga6wEzfkWvnSy-iMgX32HaLwE



Mindfulness Research on Adults

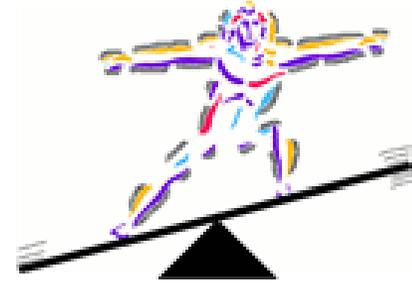
- Improved stress regulation by a faster reduction in the stress hormone, cortisol
- Enhanced relationships, social connectedness and acceptance of one another
- Thicker cortical regions in the brain that helps with attention and sensory processing
- Heightened empathy
- Improved positive affect and immune response, more specifically antibody production

(Hutcherson et al., 2008; Lazar et al. 2005; Lutz et al., 2008; Davidson et al., 2003; Tang et al., 2007; Carson et al., 2004)



**In what situations do you want to remember to use stress-reduction practices?
What would you do?**

My Resilience Plan



1 My stress triggers are...

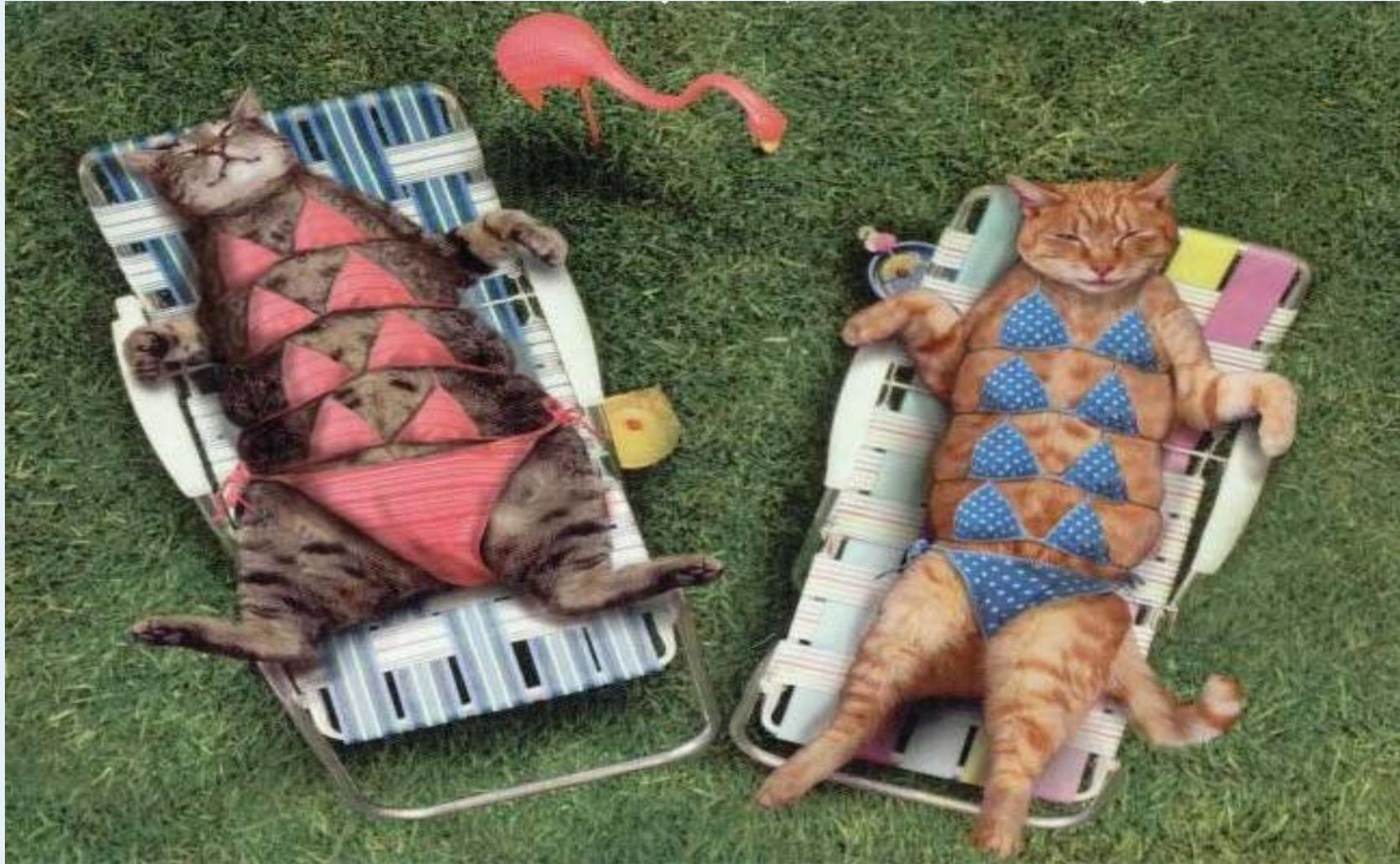
2 How I think & feel when I am stressed...

3 How I will healthfully cope with stress...

Remember



The stress response is usually automatic, but the relaxation response is voluntary and requires practice.



**I can not, and should not, be cured of my stress,
but merely taught to enjoy it.**

Hans Selye, 1950