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Join me at the mindstream



- Learn techniques for Stress Relief
- **Each newsletter contains useful information for living an optimal life**
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- **Learn the habit of mindfulness**
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In this sample newsletter, learn

- **About stress and the minded body**
- **How the body registers stress**
- **About Mind Body Medicine & Biofeedback**
- **The Physiology of Peace**
- **The Pursuit of Peace & Tranquility**
- **Meditation and visualization techniques that reduce stress**

MOVING BEYOND STRESS REDUCTION

I am a psychotherapist who has specialized in mind body medicine and biofeedback for over fifteen years. I often work with people who are experiencing high degrees of stress, some of whom have developed medical conditions as well.

Most of us know that stress impairs the quality of our lives. Yet, we are not always confident we know how to lower stress. Some stress is situational and it often doesn't appear there are ways to effectively reduce its impact.

Learning stress resilience rather than trying to manage stress is a better strategy. Stress is a huge distraction that prevents us from experiencing inner peace. We are so focused on stressful daily events that we miss ways to feel more connected and resourceful.

Here at the mindstream, we move beyond stress reduction and teach people how to cultivate inner peace and tranquility.

Some of the techniques are ancient; others are from the cutting edge of biofeedback and mind body medicine.

Signup to receive my quarterly newsletters and learn more!

Stress and the Minded Body

The mind and body are not separate systems. But we are used to speaking about symptoms as if our minds and bodies are somehow separated. This has important implications for the treatment of many stress related illnesses. How many times have you heard the statement, “it’s all in his head...”? It’s impossible to experience life only in the brain - without the heart, belly, and other organ systems responding as well.

For example, take a few moments to think back on the loss of a loved one. What do you notice? A simple thought evokes memories, a “clutch in the heart,” sadness arises, tears well up, your breath slows. You may even feel this loss as a dull ache in your stomach. If the mind was truly separate from the body, no sensory experience would occur. You could think without feeling. In truth, there is no boundary between the body and the mind.

These facts have enormous implications for your health and well-being. For example, if you are stressed your body may be expressing this with extreme muscle tension or headaches. We now know that illnesses such as gastric reflux, irritable bowel, hypertension, are made worse by stress.

IMAGINE THIS

You are sitting in a meeting when a co-worker or manager blames you for something you did not do. Your jaw hurts, your fists clench, and your hands feel cold and clammy.

Your response is initiated by your muscles reflexively tensing, glands in your fingers releasing sweat, and blood flowing toward your heart reactively.

You may feel angry or resentful that you are being singled out inappropriately. At the moment, these responses are normal defenses. However, if you still experience anger and muscle tension two to three hours after the incident, you may be developing a chronic stress reaction that could impact negatively your physical and emotional health.

It’s not the mood that’s the problem, its being in “stuck” in it that could affect your health. Symptoms of anxiety, depression, frustration, or resentment respond well to mind~body therapies such as biofeedback, breath-work, and mindfulness training.

How Our Bodies Register Stress

The Science behind Mind Body Medicine

Stress affects our immune systems in specific ways. More specifically, it’s the manner in which we respond to stress that makes the difference. It turns out that a highly specialized communication system exists between the central nervous system and our immune system.

Brain chemicals called ‘neuro-peptides’ act as messengers between the mind and the immune system. Dr. Candace Pert, former Director of the National Institute for Health discovered that neuro-peptides flowing in the bloodstream alter the behavior of immune cells when they “bond with their receptor site on the surface of white blood cells.”

What do all these biological explanations mean? When our coping strategies falter, and we are flooded with feelings of distress, our immune systems are also flooded with too little, or too much, or the wrong kind of messenger molecules.

When our minds cannot effectively defend us from the ravages of stress, our immune systems cannot effectively defend us from the onslaught of microbial invaders.

It is important to learn stress resilient coping strategies in order to maintain our health and well-being.

The Physiology of Peace



Many people are so familiar with using their chest muscles to breathe that they feel awkward or uncomfortable when using their abdominal muscles and diaphragm. The physiology of the body interprets these two styles of breathing quite differently. When you are chest breathing, certain bio-chemicals begin to flow that “alert” your body to be “vigilant,” or “on-guard.” If your rate of breathing is 15-25 (or more) breaths per minute, these bio-chemicals increase and “FLOW INTO ACTION” causing your blood vessels to constrict, heart rate to increase, blood pressure to increase. You may feel varying degrees of “anxiety, panic, or fear.” Even if there is no real threat to you, your body may begin to operate on an “Elevated Terror Alert” mode much of the time.

Eventually you may suffer from fatigue, high blood pressure, chronic anxiety, cardiac arrhythmias, palpitations, frustration, or impaired immune functions. It is important to learn when you are “panic breathing” and how to de-activate it. Conscious use of an abdominal breathing pattern may help to re-set your “Terror Alert” to low activation and reduce symptoms associated with anxiety and panic.

Your body associates slow abdominal breathing with the impulse to lower the “vigilant” bio-chemicals and increase the “calm” biochemicals. With practice, you can actually increase the amount and the flow of these powerful chemical messengers so you will feel more confident and peaceful, yet also very alert. When you practice abdominal breathing and lower your breath rate to 10 breaths per minute or less, your body will begin to send “calming” chemical messengers throughout your entire body. Instead of receiving the message to “FLOW INTO ACTION” your body will begin to “FLOW INTO BEING.”

With practice this may result in more peacefulness, trust, and serenity. You may begin to experience yourself differently because your physiology will allow you to view the world differently.

Mind Body Medicine and Biofeedback

Mind Body Medicine includes treatments that focus on empowering people to become an integral part of their healing process as they learn techniques that help improve the quality of their lives. Some of the treatments used in Mind Body Medicine include clinical hypnosis, guided visualization, breathwork training and biofeedback.

Biofeedback has been shown to be very effective in helping people to learn effective stress coping skills. Biofeedback is a treatment that involves the use of physiological monitoring equipment that measures such biological interactions as heart rate, peripheral finger temperature, blood pressure, respiration rate, muscle tension, skin resistance and brain waves.

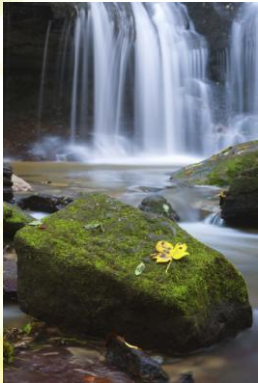
These sensors record and “feedback” important information about the functioning of their autonomic nervous system to the user. For example, a person who is experiencing anxiety may also have tense shoulder muscles, sweaty hands, and their heart rate may be high compared to a more relaxed person.

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Extensive research in psychophysiology has shown that when a person has lowered muscle tension and slow, steady breath rate, low skin conductance, and lowered heart rate they are more relaxed and calm emotionally.

Biofeedback helps people find a “pathway” into deep states of relaxation, in which they experience less fear, frustration, or distress. Biofeedback teaches individual coping skills for reducing the effects of stress.

Meditations to Help with Stress



Forest Refuge

Take a walk in a virtual forest ... down a path that leads to a river. There is a healing pool in the forest which will help you release obstacles to achieving happiness. Take refuge in this healing pool.

We offer guided imagery meditations that can be accessed at the [Meditation Sanctuary](#) through the mindstream's website. We also offer training in traditional mindfulness and tranquility meditations. Listen to streaming audio selections and choose to download those you find especially helpful.

Streaming Audio Meditations are a just a few of the Free Tools you can access at www.mindstreaming.net

Notes from Janet

I recorded the sounds of nature that are included on these meditations while camping in the woods of New Hampshire. It was challenging to rig up a microphone in the middle of a river to record the sounds of a waterfall. Once I fell in the river and had to erase that part of the recording. I made quite a splash!

In other recordings I sat under a tree in the woods and recorded bird songs and wind. I hope you enjoy the blending of voice and natural world!

In Pursuit of Peace & Tranquility

I find peace each morning as I sit in quiet stillness by my living room window. In spring, summer and fall, the window is always open. The wind blows through and I feel peacefulness flow across my face. The smell of azaleas blooming or the scent of my dogwood tree brings peace to my heart.

I practice a Zen meditation technique. With eyes open, I gaze with soft focus at the flowers and leaves on the azalea bush outside my window. I inhale for the count of 5 seconds, exhale for the count of 5 seconds and sit in the silence between my breaths for 5 seconds.

The peaceful stillness between my breaths gives me respite from thoughts and opens me to the essence of "this moment" - a Great Now, that is the flow of many moments, strung together like pearls on a necklace.

A bird sings, a car rumbles past, the wind rustles the branches on the dogwood tree... all strung together in one fluid moment called "now."

Events happen during the day and it is inevitable that my peaceful moment is shaken up, distracted, or momentarily abandoned in the nature of my work. But when I sit in therapy with others for whom peace is elusive, my inner self is called back to that moment of peaceful connection and my body re-members it COMPLETELY.



I then extend it to those I am working with – a gift of peacefulness for both of us.

Guided Imagery for Healing

Many people have used guided imagery to help prepare or recover from surgery and illness or to use scenes from their memories of nature to relax and renew themselves. My meditations are specially designed to be physiologically relevant combinations of mind body techniques that have been tested with sensitive medical instrumentation and used successfully in clinical settings. My meditations have been tested with medical instrumentation and shown effective in helping people gain deep insight awareness and meaningful positive psychological experiences.

I include natural sound and original music soundtracks to my guided visualizations. When we acknowledge our connection to nature by surrounding ourselves with images, sounds and scents, or involving ourselves experientially with the natural world, we are inevitably strengthening our ability to be resilient to life.

Our “bodyminds” have an intricate memory for the natural world.

It is this secret sense that I tap with my specially designed guided visualizations!

mindful technology

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Thank you for your interest in our newsletters. We seek to keep you informed about techniques that help transform stress and cultivate inner peace and tranquility.

We hope you will find our website is a resource to which you will return often.

Join us at the mindstream !



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