



# **STRESS RELIEF TRAINING GUIDE**

**BY**

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# HOW THE BODY REGISTERS STRESS

## *The Science Behind Mind Body Medicine*

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



Stress alters our mood states often creating repetitive circumstances to which we respond in a typical repetitive fashion. This builds a continual history of predominant moods that pre-dispose us to managing stress poorly. Many people interpret their mood states as troublesome and often point the blame toward others. How often have we said, "He (or she) made me feel angry, sad, annoyed, etc?" Yet, moods are effective body-centered barometers registering a reaction to a stressful event.

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.

When we block the messages our feelings are bringing to our conscious minds, we induce disharmony within ourselves. This kind of disharmony negatively affects both our minds and bodies, including our cardiovascular and immune systems. Furthermore, while our bodies are reacting to stress, including the stress of experiencing unhelpful moods, our restorative physiological processes are put on hold.

In this Training Guide you will learn how to identify and shift away from unhelpful moods. You will learn how typical combinations of moods can function either as a source of stress or as a barometer indicating the need for a change of action, depending on your perception. You will take an assessment that helps you determine the automatic mood that you predominately fall into and what actions you can take to shift into a more positive mood response.

# STRESS AND THE MINDED BODY

## *How Mind Body Medicine Can Help!*

Our minds and bodies are not separate systems. But we are used to speaking about symptoms as if our minds and bodies are somehow distinctly different entities. Very often our health care professionals are making this distinction as well. That perspective has important implications for the treatment of many stress related illnesses. How many times have you heard the statement, “it’s all in your 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. If you are stressed your body may be expressing this with extreme muscle tension or headaches. We now know that illnesses such as diabetes, 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 “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.

# WHAT IS MIND BODY MEDICINE?

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, meditation, breath training and biofeedback.

Biofeedback has been shown to be very effective in helping people to learn more effective coping skills for managing stress. 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. Sensors record and “feedback” to the user important information about the functioning of their autonomic nervous system by displaying that data on a computer screen or in the form of a game.



For example, a person who is experiencing anxiety may also have tense shoulder muscles, sweaty hands, and their heart rate and blood pressure may be high compared to a more relaxed person. Extensive research in psycho-physiology 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 emotionally calm.

Biofeedback can help people find a pathway into deeper states of relaxation, in which they experience less fear, frustration, or distress. Biofeedback teaches individual coping skills for reducing the effects of stress as well. Good stress management skills involve taking time for exercise, relaxation, nutrition, and developing stress coping styles that help reduce the effects of stress on your health. Useful stress coping skills can be a meditation practice and becoming a better observer of your automatic reactions to events or relationships that trigger feelings of frustration, agitation, or anxiety.

If you are interested in trying biofeedback to help you reach deeper states of relaxation or increase your awareness, use Mindful Technology's *Biofeedback 101 Program* at the **MINDSTREAM** website. When purchasing a skin temperature biofeedback monitor through the Mindstream Store, you will receive a Biofeedback Training Book and Relaxation Tracker with free access to the Private Training Studio at the website. I personally designed this program to help people achieve and maintain the benefits of their mind-body practices.

A therapist trained in health psychology or mind-body medicine can help you develop a response to stress that increases your ability to manage stress while decreasing your risk of developing stress related disorders. If you have high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders or anxiety a therapist trained in biofeedback can provide additional behavioral techniques to help you lower your heart rate, blood pressure, and regulate your heart rhythms, mindfully. Used with traditional medicine, these complementary techniques can help you feel more confident and more in control in the quality of your life.

## **THE SCIENCE BEHIND MIND BODY MEDICINE**

### *Meditation Changes Your Physiology*

In the February 2003 issue of Psychosomatic Medicine, researchers from the University of Wisconsin– Madison reported that meditation may produce beneficial changes in the brain and strengthen ability to resist illness. In a study of forty-five participants conducted by the researchers, levels of resistance to the flu were compared by means of immune function. Twenty-five participants were given flu shots at the end of an eight week meditation training program and sixteen were administered only the flu shot.

Blood tests showed that those who meditated had better immune function and higher level of antibodies against the flu virus than those who had not meditated.

The immune system of people who have chronic illness or stress may already be taxed. The study suggested that adding a daily meditation practice could be helpful in reducing stress and increasing your body's natural defenses against illness.

## **WHAT ARE MOODS AND WHY ARE THEY STRESSFUL?**

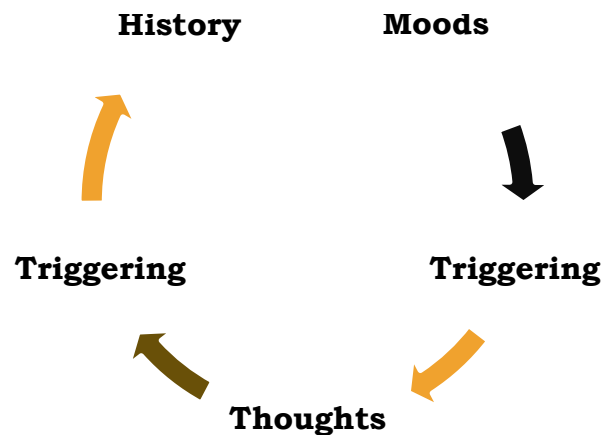
Many people talk about their feelings and mood states as if they were thoughts. That is, they think about their moods. This creates a false understanding about moods. Moods and feelings are not thoughts; they arise as sensations in the body. Moods are dependent on the flow of certain bio-chemicals in your body.

For example, the same provoking event can occur for two different people. One person could react with annoyance and impatience, while the other might react with the mood state of empathy and calmness. What creates the difference is the predominance of certain bio-chemicals, one's familiarity with particular mood states and a person's history of handling provoking experiences. The person who reacted with annoyance actually has more adrenaline flowing in their body most of the time, compared with the other person.

This does not mean such a person is not able to modify their reactions, it means they need to learn how to change their physiology to accommodate a greater familiarity with other moods.

The process of influencing your physiology and shifting your moods is a lot easier than most people think. This Training Guide will teach you several techniques for expanding your repertoire of moods. These techniques are based on the Ways to Wellness Program developed by Matthew Budd, MD and discussed fully in his book [You are What You Say](#), a mind-body medicine approach for managing stress through the power of language.

## THE CYCLE OF TRIGGERING



ADAPTED FROM THE WAYS TO WELLNESS PROGRAM

According to Dr Budd, “moods are where language and biology meet.” Moods are automatic reactions to experiences, including the experience of having thoughts. We often react to the thoughts we are having. Moods can be stressful due to our obsessive thoughts about how we are feeling.

“Moods are automatic.” Generally the feelings and moods that trouble us the most are the ones we are not aware of having. These moods appear to have taken us over and we are in the process of “*being triggered.*” We often use the language, “he (she) made me mad or sad, or annoyed,” when in fact, the interaction with another individual actually “triggers us to feelings we already have.” We have a long history with those particular moods and feelings. Generally, people, places, and events are not creating these moods for the first time.

“Thoughts are powerful experiences, yet they are transient and repetitive.” You can only have one thought at a time. Since you can’t have an opposing thought at the same time, a troublesome thought can repeat itself over and over. For example, “I will never make the deadline in time,” is a powerful thought. It conjures up an entire series of thoughts such as the ramifications and consequences of being late. This sets the scene in your mind for more thoughts of the same nature. While you are having those thoughts, your history of “being late” will be evoked and the moods you are most familiar with will begin to pervade your physiological sensations.

“Moods can be pervasive and longer lasting than thoughts.” Getting stuck in a mood creates a reality. In the example just mentioned, you might begin to focus on achieving the goals that satisfy the requirements you are responsible for submitting on time. Yet,

your underlying mood will affect your efforts and create another layer of stress. You will find thoughts creeping into your concentration that sabotage your efforts.

## WHAT IS THE MIND BODY APPROACH TO STRESSFUL MOODS?

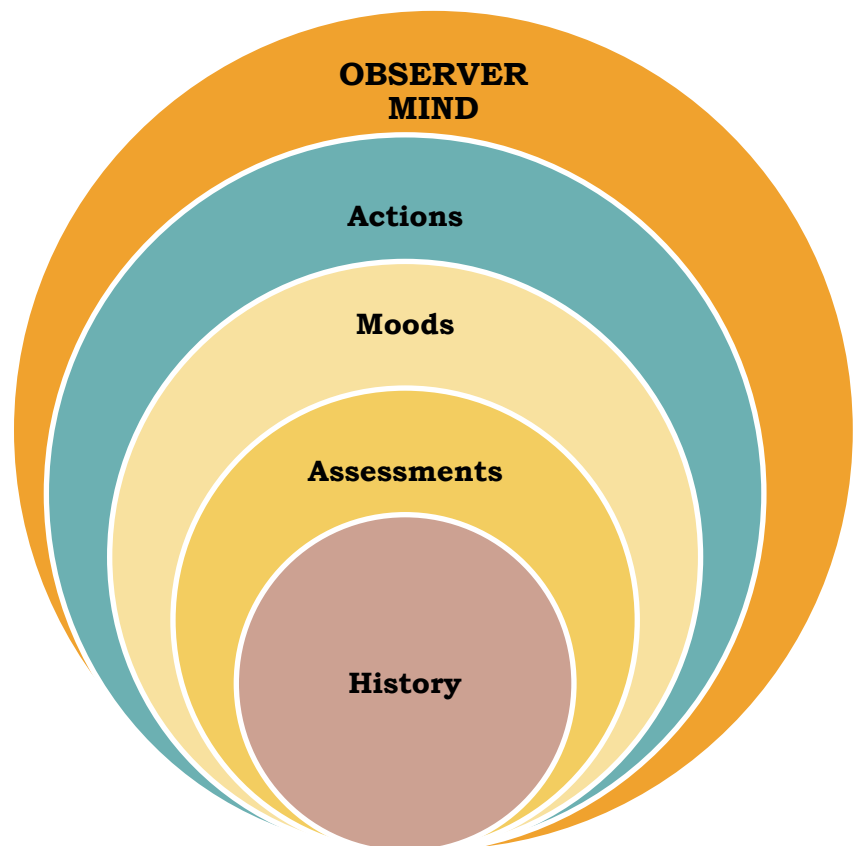
Moods are like barometers signaling the need to make a change. When our moods are able to grab our attention, we can use techniques to change the “*stories our bodies are living in.*” If we learn techniques that halt our “thinking” about our moods, we can make a shift that

changes the pattern of our moods. Mood-shifting breaks the cycle of triggering.

The Mind-body approach focuses on the fact that our minds are inextricably linked to our body, or more explicitly, our physiology. How we get caught in the cycle of triggering is important to know, so we understand why the techniques you are about to learn are effective.

Our history with people, places, and events is specific to us, as individuals. And though we may have a shared history with our family members, friends, cultural groups or co-workers, we experience these events quite differently. For example, we may have had a family model with an emphasis on planning for the future. This focus could have been instilled with a great deal of tension and anxiety, such as the pressure of family expectations or the notion that really bad things can happen if you don’t strategize everything that could possibly go wrong.

### MIND BODY APPROACH



ADAPTED FROM THE WAYS TO WELLNESS PROGRAM

This **history** could be embedded in a person with a sense of dread and potential loss of self esteem if one fails. Let's look at the implications of such a history and familiarity with the narrow range of moods available to deal with the stress of meeting obligations. Our history sets the stage for the type of **assessments** we can make about any experience or event we are having.

In the case of an individual with the strong history of "*always having a viable plan for everything that might happen,*" the types of assessments such a person can make are quite limited.

*"If you want a different result,  
you have to try a different action"*

Holly Burnes, RN  
Former Director of Mind Programs  
Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates

Let's say they have developed the strategy of being a pessimist because they are constantly planning for things that will go wrong. Such a person might believe they are justified in this viewpoint, because, "pessimists are never disappointed!"

This predominant pessimistic assessment leads to a narrow repertoire of **mood** states. For example they might develop a deeply embedded mood of negativity or resignation. This pervasive mood state affects the type of thoughts they can have about expectations and obligations.

The prevailing viewpoint and mood state a person experiences affects the **actions** they will or will not take. Depending on their history with similar situations, they may decide it's not worth the effort to complete their obligations because it "will be late anyway," or not give the assignment the complete attention it deserves, because "I will be blamed for being late, so it doesn't matter how good the work is anyway." There are many variations on the theme of assessments and actions. It is likely you can see many instances where your actions have been based on your history, viewpoints and mood states.

Most people would like to know how to change the outcomes of these repetitive, unpleasant, stressful circumstances.

Developing an **Observer Mind** is the first step in breaking the cycle of triggering. An Observer Mind enables you to watch yourself "being you," without a judgmental outlook. Since we tend to think about ourselves negatively when we are not behaving in the manner we think others expect us to behave, we usually avoid really taking a good look at ourselves.

Mind-body awareness techniques enable you see how you typically react to things while you are reacting to them. No shame, no blame. We can see our history as we repeat it. We can change our assessments and viewpoints with this knowledge. We can learn a greater repertoire of moods to experience our world. We can create the possibility of different actions that change the way the world appears to us. While we cannot change our past history, we can change the history we are in the process of making today.

## THE EFFECT OF PHYSIOLOGY ON MOODS

Most of us are aware of the stress reaction called *fight or flight*. In circumstances of stress our bodies respond by supplying us with an abundance of biochemicals to enable our reaction. Adrenaline and cortisol become the predominant environment in our bodies' physiologies. Along with the predominance of these stressful biochemicals is the prevalence of the following mood states: frustration, anger, resentment, judgement, depression, despair, burnout, boredom, and apathy.

When we are managing stress effectively and have learned the art of mood shifting, our bodies spend more time in the *rest and rejuvenate* response. This can be cultivated with techniques that evoke the Relaxation Response. When we are cultivating this response to managing stress, our bodies respond by supplying us with an abundance of biochemicals that shape the moods of relaxation, health and well-being. DHEA (our longevity hormone), dopamine (happiness and energetic motivation), serotonin (calmness) and endorphins (pain relief) are activated by the Relaxation Response.

These biochemicals give rise to different mood states: exhilaration, joy, happiness, love, kindness, appreciation, tolerance, serenity, and forgiveness, to name a few.

## TAKE THE STRESS EVALUATIONS

On the next page, there are two evaluations that will help you determine the effects of stress in your life. First check all the boxes that apply to you in the Medical Conditions and Life Style check lists. Then check off all the Stress Symptoms that apply to you. Add the totals of each box.

If you have any of the medical conditions listed along with 3 or more of the stress symptoms you would benefit from learning the mind-body techniques in this Training Guide. If you checked any of the items in the Lifestyle Checklist, your behaviors are contributing greatly to your levels of stress or illness. The good news is you can change and feel better.

### Medical Conditions

- TMJ
  - Cardiovascular Disease
  - High Blood Pressure
  - Chronic Pain
  - Irritable Bowel Syndrome
  - Gastric Reflux
  - Migraine or Tension Headache
  - Sleep Disturbance/ Insomnia
  - Cancer
  - Respiratory Illness/Asthma
  - Allergies
  - Concentration Problems
  - Chronic Fatigue
  - Muscle Ache/Pinched Nerves
  - Back Aches
  - Diabetes
  - Circulation Problems
  - Fibromyalgia
  - Osteoporosis
  - Anxiety and/or Depression
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Agoraphobia
  - TOTAL # OF ILLNESSES CHECKED**
- 

### **Life Style Checklist**

- I consume caffeine daily/ coffee or colas
- I consume alcohol
- I smoke cigarettes daily

### STRESS SYMPTOMS

**Check all symptoms that you have experienced  
in the past three weeks**

1.  Trouble getting my breath
2.  Experience abdominal or stomach distress
3.  Teeth grinding
4.  Numbness or tingling in parts of your body
5.  Often feel lonely
6.  Often irritable or touchy
7.  Impatient or intolerant
8.  Have palpitations
9.  Often have pessimistic or cynical outlook
10.  Sometimes have urges to break or smash things
11.  Get into frequent arguments
12.  Experience excessive sweating
13.  Often frustrated or irritated
14.  Have headaches
15.  Temper outbursts that you cannot control
16.  Feel blue or sad much of the time
17.  Have no interest in things I used to enjoy
18.  Feel suddenly scared for no reason
19.  Experience backaches
20.  Worry a lot of the time
21.  Have spells of terror or panic
22.  Feel nervous, tense or keyed up
23.  Find most people annoying
24.  Don't seem to have the energy to get things done

ADAPTED FROM THE WAYS TO WELLNESS PROGRAM

# LIFE STRESS LIST

How carefully have you looked at the sources of stress in your life? We may focus more readily on the external sources of stress, but there are internal ones that can be equally significant. Here is a list of some common causes of anxiety and tension, both external and internal. Rate them using a scale of 0-10 (*0= not stressful and 10 = severely stressed*).

Add any other important sources of stress that do not appear on the list.

<b>External Stressors</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Internal Stressors</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Relationships		Worry	
Stress At Work		Low Self Esteem	
Commuting		Perfectionism	
Childrearing		Depression	
Financial Problems		Anxiety	
Vacations		Indecision	
Career Development		Judging Self/Others	
Trying to lose Weight		Guilt	
Trying to Gain Weight		Fear	
		Managing Illness	
		Regrets	
		Resentments	
		Hostility/Frustration	
		Taking Care of others	

# EMPTY BUCKETS

## *Stress, Negativity and Burn Out*

It's hard to tell the difference between feeling fatigue and feeling depressed. In fact both share common physiological components. Low serotonin or other "feel good" neurotransmitters can be the culprits. Let's call it the *Empty Bucket Syndrome*.

When we feel low, we recognize our energy is depleted and our outlook on life is often bleak. We may not even be able to summon enough energy to be motivated. We may self-medicate with carbohydrates or sugar laden comfort foods that give us a little lift. The problem is that this rarely solves our problem and we feel empty again.

The Mind Body Medicine perspective allows us to look at depression as a mood that some people seem to typically "fall into" more frequently than others. This mood of resignation prevents you from seeing your future in terms of possibilities to change a current situation. People who experience pervasive and frequent feelings of despair, helplessness, skepticism, or cynicism assume there is nothing they can do or learn that would change things for them.

There are many reasons for depression. Situational conditions many be very unfavorable- such as chronic illness, poverty or abuse. No one would suggest such a person should "accept their situation" or "learn to live with it." Medication can often help lift a negative mood but without therapy in the equation as well, a depressed person will merely continue to tolerate their circumstances. Now that is truly depressing!

Losses or set-backs in one's personal life can be overwhelming. When your energy reserves are depleted, it's difficult to strategize or see any potential benefits in the current circumstances. Resignation may dominate your outlook and sabotage any attempts to make changes in your life.

Mind Body Medicine techniques (with or without medication) help a person acknowledge their situation, shift the moods associated with these conditions and become more resourceful and hopeful that the future can be different. Pain was meant to irritate enough to empower a person to make changes. Depression occurs when a person doesn't believe they can make a change or that change would help. When a depressed person learns to shift moods, they are empowered with choice. They are able to see the world differently regardless of the current situation or their past history.



When a person is in the mood of resignation or depression they feel they cannot summon the energy to make changes, their thoughts and outlooks are negative. They see the world through a lens that is colored darkly. Shifting to a more positive mood state by using breath training or meditation creates energy for different actions. More importantly a person is then able to view the world through a brighter lens.

There are many ways to renew the personal energy nature has provided for us. Regardless of whether or not you suffer with depression, try shifting a mood today. Begin by learning to meditate. Dance, hum, sing, take a walk in the forest, sit at the beach!

Focus on changing poor eating habits. Begin to choose foods rich in tryptophan, such as meat, dairy, or soy and foods rich in tyrosine, such as peanuts, almonds, avocados or sesame tahini humus. These foods provide the building blocks that help your body make serotonin and dopamine: your “feel good” neurotransmitters. Your body-mind will thank you.

## CONSTANT CONCERN

### *Stress, Worry, and Anxiety*

Some people tend to focus their attention on concerns about the future. In fact they may be so preoccupied with these worries and concerns that they lose sight of how smoothly things are running in the present moment. These concerns seem to take over their thoughts and they spend a great deal of time trying predicting just how unfavorable things are going to be. They often feel as though their lives are a bucket full of worry. So let's call this the *Constant Concern Dilemma*.

The inability to take stock of the present moment and acknowledge the current conditions as “uneventful” takes a toll on the body's physical and emotional health. While a person is focusing their attention on the possibility that things will be going wrong, their physiology will behave as if those events are happening – right now! For example, their heart rate may accelerate, their respiration rate may become elevated and their immune response will begin to mobilize itself as if the person was facing a real danger.

Continually living in the mood of anxiety and constant concern elevates the stress reaction to the levels of unremitting alert. This may soon expose a person to



serious health conditions. Anxiety is also extremely uncomfortable because a person can become so “caught up” in it they no longer notice that most of their thoughts are about things that are not happening.

There are many ways to lower your constant state of worry and concern and bring those unbridled, runaway thoughts under control. Biofeedback can be a very helpful treatment for anxiety conditions, including phobias and panic attacks. Developing a mindfulness meditation practice can be transformative for someone whose thoughts tend to shine a spotlight on “bad things” that might happen.

## EMBODIED STRESS

### *Stress, Pain, and Over- Sensitivity*

Stress can manifest in the structure of the body itself. This can be felt as muscle tension, headaches, chronic illness, and pain. We can experience this physical over-sensitization as the constant annoyance of repetitive motion injuries, numbness or tingling in the arms and legs, backaches and the emotional sense of being “touchy.” Let’s call this the *Embodied Stress Condition*.

This body centered stress deserves our attention before difficult pain syndromes can develop. Pay attention to your work space. Is it ergonomically healthy? Are you confined to your desk and chair for hours on end? If so, you need to take action: get up, stretch and move around periodically.

Join a yoga class in the evening, at least for an hour each week. This will allow your body to stretch out, hold tension on purpose then release that tension so it becomes harder for it to mount up during the day. Consider massage therapy to help relax tense shoulder and neck muscles or obtain muscle relaxation biofeedback from a mind-body therapist. Visit a chiropractor regularly so your skeletal structure and nervous system can function optimally. Human beings were not meant to be sedentary creatures.

Stress that takes up residence in the body can be enigmatic. We know we are bothered by the aches and pains of life but we are not taking these “whispers” of discontent as seriously as we should. When our bodies have absorbed as much stress as they can bear, they alert us with “screams” of pain and spasms which we must then acknowledge. This just makes recovery and the journey back to well-being more difficult.



Illnesses such as fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome and gastric reflex respond well to biofeedback and Mind-body techniques. Letting the body reveal the “story it is living in,” is a way to respond to the conditions that are surreptitiously supporting these illnesses. Implementing these techniques can reduce your chances of developing these conditions or augment medical treatment if your body is already living in the story of pain and distress. Pay attention now and your body will reward you with the sensations of wellness: energy, joyfulness, laughter and relaxation.

## PETTY AND NOT SO PETTY ANNOYANCES

### *Stress, High Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Disease*

If you encounter an event that triggers you to a mood of frustration and you are still feeling annoyed several hours after the event, you need to find a more effective way of handling stress. Frustration, anger, and hostility are associated with a higher heart rate, increased blood pressure, and increased respiration rate. These physiological conditions increase the stress response, elevating cortisol and nor-epinephrine in the blood stream. These bio-chemicals keep the Flight or Fight response active longer than necessary. This can be very harmful to those who already have cardiovascular diseases and predispose others to developing cardiovascular disease or high blood pressure. Let’s call this the *Petty and Not So Petty Annoyance Pattern*.



Many people are surprised when they are diagnosed with high blood pressure. It’s not a diagnosis that usually has recognizable symptoms to the patient. This is why it is referred to as a “silent killer.” High blood pressure can cause damage to the heart itself or the blood vessels. It can lead not only to stroke or heart attack, but other forms of cardiovascular diseases. Fortunately high blood pressure can be treated with medication. High blood pressure is also very responsive to biofeedback and mind-body techniques.

The first line of treatment, according to The American Heart Association, should be lifestyle changes. These lifestyle changes, if implemented, can prevent the necessity of blood pressure medication in all but the most severe of cases. Your physician can determine the degree of your cardiovascular health or risk for heart disease from blood tests that involve the ratios of “good” to “bad” cholesterol, and levels of triglycerides. Another important test your physician may order is the C-Reactive protein test which can determine the presence of inflammation. Inflammation is a risk for cardiovascular disease. Therefore it is important for adults to have yearly physicals and periodic blood

pressure monitoring. Purchasing your own blood pressure monitoring device can help you use “home biofeedback” to determine if your Mind-body practice is having a beneficial effect.

However, whether or not you have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease or high blood pressure, it is important to evaluate your lifestyle, how you manage stress, and your stress coping style. As you have learned having a predominant mood state of frustration, resentment, anger or irritability can predispose your body to maintaining a biochemical environment which may lead to cardiovascular disease or high blood pressure.

## DISCOVER YOUR STRESS COPING STYLE

You have learned that knowing how you manage stress is as important as taking actions to reduce stress in your life. You have learned that moods are more pervasive and longer lasting than thoughts. The mood you are in shapes the biochemical environment that can produce some thoughts and not others. It is much more difficult to think about positive collaboration with co-workers when you are experiencing the pervasive mood of resentment.

While you have probably experienced a myriad of moods which you find it quite easy to identify, it is the moods we are least aware of that are directing the Mind-body connection. In the beginning of this Training Guide, you took Stress Symptom and Lifestyle Evaluations. Now we will examine the results of the Stress Symptom Evaluation to determine one of the underlying moods that affects your health and well-being in a negative way. Your score determines your Stress Coping Style: the predominate mood you experience when you are stressed. Learning the mood you use to deal with stress is valuable. It is your Mind Body Barometer for what you need to change. Use the mood-shifting practices listed in this Training Guide and the Mind-body Awareness tools at the **MINDSTREAM** website to begin to change how you manage stress.

# STEP ONE: YOUR STRESS EVALUATION SCORE

(From Your Stress Symptom Checklist on Page 10)

**CATEGORY N TOTAL:** Give yourself 1 point each for checking each of the following symptoms:

SYMPTOM 5, 6, 9, 16, 17, 24



**CATEGORY A TOTAL:** Give yourself 1 point each for checking each of the following symptoms:

SYMPTOM 1, 4, 18, 20, 21, 22



**CATEGORY S TOTAL:** Give yourself 1 point each for checking each of the following symptoms:

SYMPTOM 2, 3, 8, 12, 14, 19



**CATEGORY R TOTAL:** Give yourself 1 point each for checking each of the following symptoms:

SYMPTOM 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 23



## STEP TWO: YOUR STRESS STYLE RESULTS

**IF YOU HAVE RECORDED THE MOST NUMBER OF SYMPTOMS IN CATEGORY N, YOU TEND TO EXPRESS STRESS WITH NEGATIVITY TYPE SYMPTOMS.**

***NEGATIVITY focused Stress:***

Negativity is the predominant thought pattern that is associated with this form of stress coping style. Perpetual inability to believe anything will turn out well keeps you focused in a pessimistic pattern. You also may tend to give up right before you could have succeeded or don't even bother attempting anything at all.

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**IF YOU HAVE RECORDED THE MOST NUMBER OF SYMPTOMS IN CATEGORY A, YOU TEND TO EXPRESS STRESS WITH ANXIOUS TYPE SYMPTOMS.**

***ANXIETY Focused Stress:***

You are often uncomfortably nervous and focus on trying to predict what can go wrong. You are so pre-occupied thinking about things that can go wrong that your body is living as if it all is actually happening right now. This only perpetuates your feelings of constant anxiety and worry.

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**IF YOU HAVE RECORDED THE MOST NUMBER OF SYMPTOMS IN CATEGORY S, YOU TEND TO EXPRESS STRESS WITH SOMATIC TYPE SYMPTOMS.**

***SOMATICALLY Focused Stress:***

Your body is constantly letting you know you are uncomfortable but you may not be paying attention. Notice ways in which you are "enduring" discomforting sensations and look for ways to alleviate the situation in the moment. You tend to "take things in" and perhaps even take responsibility for things that you have no control over.

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**IF YOU HAVE RECORDED THE MOST NUMBER OF SYMPTOMS IN CATEGORY R, YOU TEND TO EXPRESS STRESS WITH RESENTFUL TYPE SYMPTOMS.**

***RESENTMENT focused Stress:***

You may frequently feel resentful and be on the lookout for "someone else to blame." Things seem to go wrong a lot and you want someone to take responsibility for it. This distorted view robs you of important energy and the ability to inspire family members, friends and co-workers.

# THE POWER OF MEDITATION TO HEAL



Meditation has been called the art of “not-doing.” By practicing the focus of all of one’s attention on a single thing such as one’s breath, a repetitive word, image, or a sensory feeling in the body, one gains experience in expanding the domain of conscious awareness.

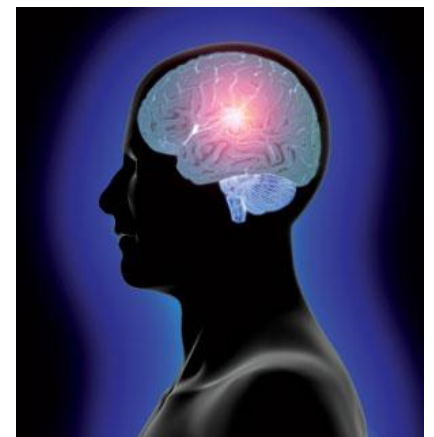
Meditation is not only sitting in a lotus position and chanting Om, though that might be quite insightful. For many practitioners of mindfulness meditation, the experience of breathing and watching the breath is extremely beneficial. By focusing your complete attention on your breath, for even five minutes, you can become more deeply aware of the quality of coolness at your nostrils when you breathe in and warmth when you breathe out. It is quite relaxing and peaceful.

You can become more deeply aware of your own natural rhythm of breathing, whether you are moving your chest or your abdomen. When thoughts arise, you can practice letting go of them on the exhaled breath and returning again to your single point focus.

A mindfulness practice teaches us how to let go of troubling thoughts and feelings, while experiencing a calm and peaceful mind and body. Meditation has been shown to lower blood pressure, lower heart rate, and muscle tension. Mindfulness is also good for an aching head!

Meditation produces a variety of beneficial changes which help people cope with the stresses of life. According to Sara Lazar Ph.D., the brains of long term meditators do not atrophy with age at the same rate as do those of non-meditators. Long term meditation appears to thicken the brains of meditators by increasing synaptic branching, the number of brain cell receptor sites and amount of neurotransmitters available to carry chemical messages. Areas affected by this thickening include memory, conscious decision making and insightfulness.

This "thickening" effect can begin to take place at anytime during your lifespan. It’s never too late to begin a meditation practice and receive the benefits of strengthening your immune system and brain functions while developing a more peaceful response to life's challenges.



Our history affects how we see the world. But when we cultivate awareness in meditation, we learn that our history is changing in the moment. We are able to feel

freedom, peacefulness, calmness, or serenity in the moment. We are able to effect change by shifting our mood states. Our "feel good" bio-chemicals flow more easily and naturally; we have more access to positive moods and thoughts.

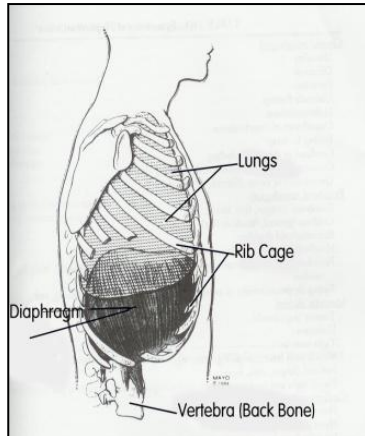
Moods are not set in stone. We all have the capacity to shift our moods, even briefly, to more positive states of mind and body. Mind Body Medicine techniques teach us to bring our awareness to bear on negative mood states. Meditation using positive imagery and abdominal breathing patterns shift our physiology and cause "feel good" neuro-transmitters and hormones to flow more easily.

People who use Mind Body Medicine techniques are often are intrigued by the fact they are feeling better and more hopeful. They are more curious about life and the possibilities they can bring to their experiences. Many people who begin a meditation practice often report it is difficult to achieve at first. They believe "I should be able to empty my mind of all these thoughts," or "this meditation stuff doesn't work for me, I am more agitated afterward that I was before I began!" These negative experiences with meditation often occur because the person was not instructed how to breathe when practicing meditation.

While we believe breathing should come natural to us, it is anxiety breathing with which we are most familiar. Generally, we are not familiar with the form of breathing generally used in meditation: slow, diaphragmatic breathing. When you practice slow, diaphragmatic breathing you will lower the wear and tear on your cardiovascular system and allow your body to heal itself more effectively. This is a very effective way to reduce stress, anxiety or tension. It is the ideal way to breathe in meditation.

# FIRST.... LEARN HOW TO BREATHE

## *The Power of the Diaphragmatic Breath*



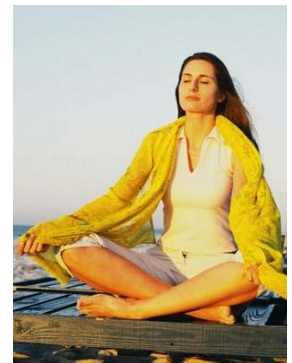
Our lungs are designed to breathe in distinct ways. One way is chest expansion. If your chest expands and contracts as you inhale and exhale, the muscles in the chest are sending a chemical message to the heart to increase the heart rate as well as a message to the lungs to increase inhalations in order to activate the flight or fight reaction. Unfortunately many of us breathe this way on a daily basis. This means we are always on the alert for confrontation, frustration or defense. This is also called “*anxiety breathing.*”

Another way is abdominal breathing in which the abdominal (belly) muscles expand and contract as we inhale and exhale. The abdominal muscles influence the motion of the diaphragm, a sheath of muscle that is located at the bottom of the lungs. As the abdominal muscles expand, the diaphragm pulls the lungs down, elongating them. When the abdominal muscles contract, the diaphragm releases the lungs which then move upwards and expel air.

When we use our abdominal muscles to breathe, the muscles send a chemical message to the heart and brain to slow down and relax. This type of breathing allows us to feel refreshed, calm, and peaceful. We feel more in control of our responses to others while experiencing more creativity and greater clarity of thought.

# TRY THIS PRACTICE FOR FIVE MINUTES DAILY

1. Sit comfortably, upright in a chair, making sure your back is well supported.
2. Place your hand over your abdominal area, about 1 inch above your navel.
3. Begin by simply noticing how you are breathing this moment. Is your chest rising and falling? Are your shoulders moving?
4. With your next breath, mouth open, exhale deeply, noticing that your center of energy just naturally moves downward.
4. Inhale gently, expanding your belly (feel it expand).
5. Exhale softly, contracting your belly (feel it contract).
6. Now inhale slowly to the count of 5 (5 seconds) as your belly expands
7. Exhale slowly to the count of 5 (5 seconds) as your belly contracts
8. Repeat this breathing pattern: IN for 1.2.3.4.5 .....OUT for 1.2.3.4.5.
9. Do this for about 5 minutes, then go about your daily activities.
10. Take time during your day (perhaps once in the morning, once at noon, and once in the evening) to practice this slow abdominal breathing technique.
11. Begin to notice the changes in your mood, work performance, and relationships.



Use your passcode word listed in the front of this Training Guide at the **MINDSTREAM WEBSITE** to learn this breathing technique. If you practice diaphragmatic breathing for just five minutes, at least one time per day, you can change your physiology!

This breathing technique stops the stress reaction and begins the benefits of the relaxation response. You will notice the difference the very first time you use it.

Go to [www.mindstreaming.net](http://www.mindstreaming.net). Entering the Mindstream brings you to the Training website. On the top bar, under the TRAINING dropdown menu, highlight the PRIVATE TRAINING STUDIO and click on STRESS RELIEF TECHNIQUES. Use your passcode word to gain access to these techniques.

Practice  
Diaphragmatic Breath Training  
at  
the Private Training Studio  
  
Stress Relief Techniques  
  
**The PassCode is**  
**“moodshift”**

# CULTIVATE THE MOOD YOU WANT

How often do we actually consider cultivating a mood? Normally we just wish we felt better, were happier or had more energy. Rarely do we actually begin our day with the intention that we will be joyful, calm and enthusiastic. Or, if we do, we let our disappointing interactions with others interfere with our positive mood.



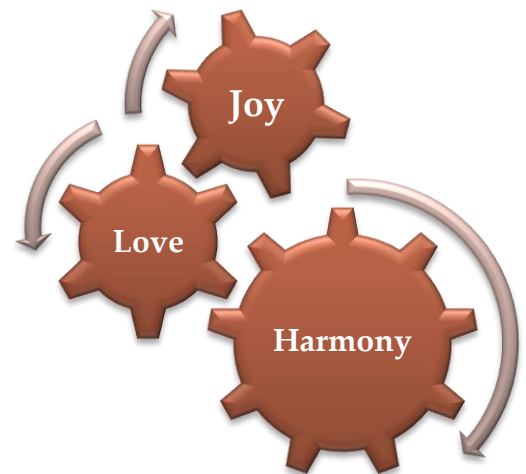
There are several techniques you can use to begin shaping the mood you want and keeping it longer throughout the day. Begin your day with a short practice of diaphragmatic breathing for at least five minutes. Then notice how you feel after you complete your practice. Call it your “*mind-body check-in.*” About mid-day take a few minutes to breathe and “check-in” again. If you have a experience in which you are triggered to one of the stress symptoms on your list (from the evaluations), take a few minutes to practice diaphragmatic breathing and see if you can shift out of that symptom or mood state.

The more you practice these “*mood shifting*” techniques the better you become at managing moods. As you experience these shifts, you will also become more aware that the pattern of your thoughts is changing as well. When our predominant mood is negative, negatively based thoughts can take a firmer foothold in our minds.

When our predominant mood is beneficial, negative thoughts can surface but seem to move on without distracting or distorting our focus. Many people who practice the technique of mood shifting report they have disturbing thoughts from time to time, but they “just don’t seem to be bothered by them anymore.” Quite often people state they no longer have disturbing thoughts at all. Thoughts arise randomly in our minds but we “do not need to participate with them.”

This ability to cultivate the mood you want or shift out of a negative mood state more effectively is the first step toward living a more inspired life. Repetitive negative thoughts, agitation, fearfulness, or resignation create unhappiness and prevent us from living the life we were meant to live. They are needless obstructions on the path to inner peace and tranquility. Practicing diaphragmatic breathing daily and adding a “remedy” mind-body mood-shift to your new repertoire of techniques enables you to cultivate the mood you want.

## CULTIVATING A MOOD



# GO TO THE PRIVATE TRAINING STUDIO AT [WWW.MINDSTREAMING.NET](http://WWW.MINDSTREAMING.NET)

<b>Stressful Mood Type</b>	<b>Negativity</b> <i>"Empty Buckets"</i>	<b>Anxiety</b> <i>"Constant Concern"</i>	<b>Somatic</b> <i>"Embodied Stress"</i>	<b>Resentment</b> <i>"Petty Annoyances"</i>
<b>Moodshift Techniques</b>	Mirror Lake Reflections	Five Minute Focus	Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Heart to Heart Synergy
	<i>Diaphragmatic Breathing</i>	<i>Diaphragmatic Breathing</i>	<i>Diaphragmatic Breathing</i>	<i>Diaphragmatic Breathing</i>
<b>Practice Directions</b>	Meditation, once per day	Meditation, three times per day	Meditation, once per day	Meditation, once per day
	<i>Breathing 3 times per day for 5 minutes</i>	<i>Breathing Once per day for ten minutes</i>	<i>Breathing 3 times per day for 5 minutes</i>	<i>Breathing 3 times per day for 10 minutes</i>

**Mirror Lake Reflections** is guided imagery designed with the use of biofeedback and mind-body awareness to generate a more positive viewpoint. These practices help relieve the *"Empty Bucket Syndrome"* of feeling stressed, overly negative, or burnt out. It's difficult to be forward minded or hopeful when you are stuck in fatigue or depression. Learn to deepen your mind-body focus by using your breath. Allow this focus to shift your mood.

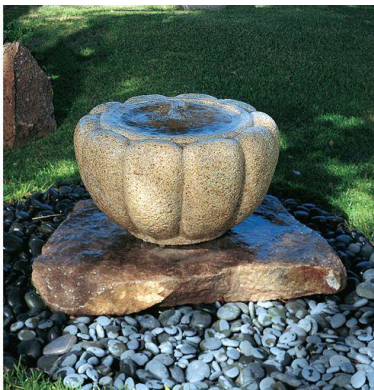
**The Five Minute Focus** is a short technique that helps you listen to your body's messages more clearly. This technique is the antidote to *"Constant Concern Dilemma"*, stress, worry and anxiety. This simple practice helps you focus your breathing, reduce stress and open you to inner peace and self-acceptance. Use this technique when you find yourself plagued by excessive worry and anxiety.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation** is guided imagery to help you to relax by focusing on one muscle group at a time. From head to toe, experience the gentle relaxing of tense muscles using the power of your mind-body connection. You can practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation at home, at work, or while stuck in a traffic jam. Use this technique

when you find yourself immersed in the “*Embodied Stress Condition*” of stress, chronic pain, and over-sensitivity.

**Heart to Heart Synergy** helps you listen to the wisdom of your heart. Use this technique if you find yourself continually triggered by the “*Petty and Not So Petty Annoyances Pattern*.” This powerful imagery exercise trains you to center focused awareness in your heart. Too often our wounded hearts beat too quickly as if to shield us from remembered hurts that are in our past. Our hearts are capable of generating many different rhythms and resonate quickly to a slower, nurturing beat when imagining a loved one.

## COMPASSION: A JEWEL ALONG THE WAY



Most people will say “I’m very compassionate - I do everything for everybody!” or “I care a lot about other people.” But ask yourself this, do you feel guilty when you do something for yourself? For example: many people claim they are so busy, they can’t possibly take even ten minutes for a meditation break.

Self-compassion is extremely important for your emotional, physical and spiritual health. Practicing acts of compassion for yourself will open new doors of extending deep compassion to others.

A study of patients with high blood pressure, headaches and other chronic pain, showed that when they practiced a meditation designed to evoke compassion, salivary immunoglobulin A (first line defense against respiratory pathogens) increased significantly. Practicing compassion is good for the immune system!

How can you really give away to others what you have not given to yourself? Compassion is a way of being in the world that is as life-affirming as water. If you give away all of your compassion by being everything to everyone, you will soon be empty of energy. When we are giving too much away to others and giving nothing to ourselves, we may feel resentful, annoyed, or frustrated.

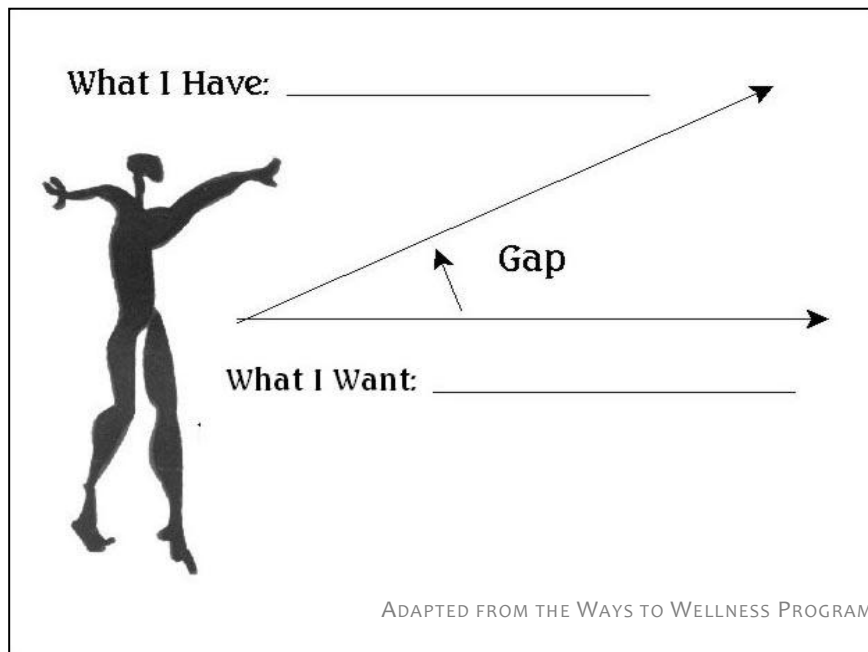
If you find it difficult to give to yourself because you imagine that such an action is selfish, you may be experiencing misplaced guilt. Think of it like this – when you extend kindness to yourself, you will soon feel full of compassion. This ever full fountain of compassion will just naturally overflow to everyone.

Compassion means not turning away from the suffering of others. Being able to be fully present is a pre-requisite for extending true compassion. When we are not

attending our own health and well-being or when we are sacrificing our own vital needs, how can we truly know what another person needs to sustain their health and well-being? Compassion emerges from empathy – the ability to connect to the suffering of another. But what of your own suffering? Is it possible to turn away from your own suffering?

When we connect to our own suffering we acknowledge we may be feeling powerless, overwhelmed, or confused. We recognize there is a distinct gap between what we have in our lives (perhaps illness) and what we most want (perhaps health). This gap can feel immense and it can be very isolating.

## ARE YOU LIVING IN THE GAP?



*Fill in the blanks in the above graph:*

**What do want to have in your life?** *Perhaps a successful career, more supportive relationships, or health will come to mind.*

---

**What mood surfaces when you focus on what you want?**

---

**What do you have in your life?** *Perhaps lack of financial abundance, partnership or close friends, illness or unhappiness will be your answer.*

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**What mood surfaces when you focus on what you actually have?**

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**What mood surfaces when you notice you are living in the GAP?**

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When we acknowledge our suffering we are turning toward it. We are not indulging ourselves; we are not to blame for it and we are not avoiding it. We are sitting with it. When you acknowledge this gap, you may feel distressed, sad, angry or any number of feelings. These feelings are messages from your body communing with your mind about the emotional state of your suffering.

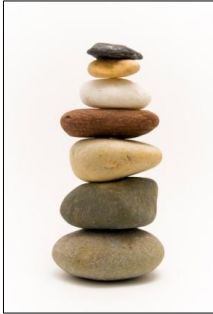
When you attend these feelings (whichever ones surface for you) you can then bring your mindfulness skills to bear on the situation. Go deeper into the feeling that surfaced for you, using your slow, diaphragmatic breathing. Go further into this perfectly still place between your inhaled and your exhaled breath. When you are completely present in your breathing, extend compassion to yourself.

Registered Nurse and Reiki Master Teacher Carla Priest, author of *Rejoice Regardless: Healing Ourselves in Troublesome Times*, teaches a very compassionate way to work with upsetting emotions. Her effective Mind-body technique quickly evokes the spirit of compassion. When we are experiencing a difficult emotion such as anger, frustration, fear or grief, she tells us, go into that emotion strongly. In your mind's eye, see yourself sitting beside an empty chair. Patting the empty seat in your imagination, invite this emotion to surface more deeply by saying *"Hello fear [sadness, anger, etc] my old friend, come and sit with me awhile. We have a lot to talk about, you and I."*

Not only does this evoke compassion for yourself and the history that created this familiar triggered mood, but it gives your "body mind" an opportunity to experience the mood as something different than you, yourself. It is one mood among many that you can experience. While you can only have one thought at a time, you can experience the blending of many moods simultaneously. So the mood of compassion can "sit" with a stressful mood such as fear and disarm it.

Compassion is a jewel, a bright healing feeling that can ease your suffering in profound and meaningful ways. When you extend it toward yourself, you are opening yourself to healing on the deepest levels. Let the fountain of your compassion flow over – sustainment for all.

# REFUGE FROM STRESS: YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTH



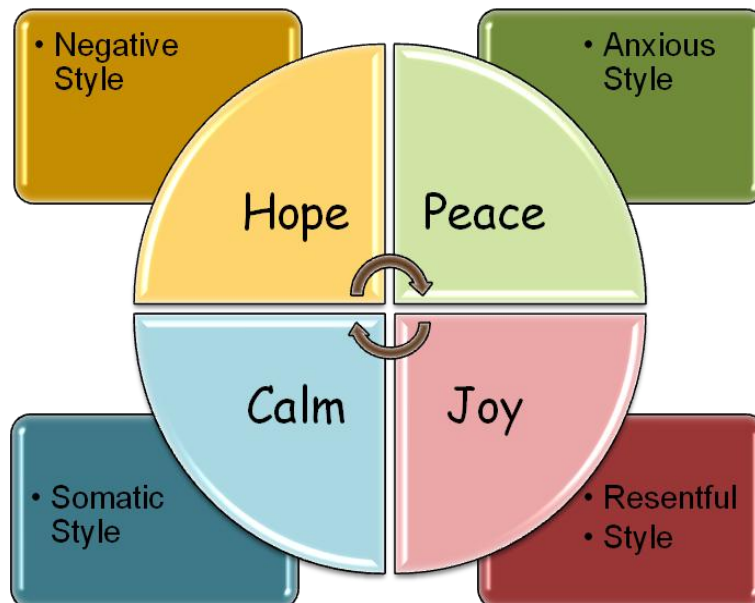
Now that you know your Stress Coping Style you may be starting to realize how this mood may be affecting your health, viewpoint, health and well-being. When you use Mind-body techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, biofeedback, meditation, and diaphragmatic breath practice you will begin to transform how you respond to stress. You have learned in this Training Guide how you can change your automatic emotional reactions and your viewpoint of the world.

Let's take this valuable information one step further. Each of the stress styles you just learned about has a transformative component. That is to say, how we respond negatively to stress describes something about our personal natures. Those natures have both negative and positive aspects. Knowing your stress coping style indicates the potential of positive attributes you have not yet learned to tap.

## STEP THREE: FIND YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTH

Use the Personal Strength Chart to see where this transformation is taking you! For example if you typically handle stress with a negatively focused style, your personal strength is HOPE.

### PERSONAL STRENGTH CHART



This Personal Strength is something you can develop using the techniques described in this Stress Relief Training Guide. Begin by practicing the On-line Awareness Techniques in the Training Guide by going to the MINDSTREAMING WEBSITE, [www.mindstreaming.net](http://www.mindstreaming.net).

Begin cultivating deeper, more resilient parts of yourself. Learn to tap into your inner wisdom and change what you believe is possible for yourself. Start to live a peaceful, happier life even when circumstances are uncertain or chaotic. The capacity of your personal strength is directing you to listen to your body mind and shift stressful moods as often as possible. As you learn to use life's experiences as a signal to practice mood shifting, you will be cultivating this personal strength.

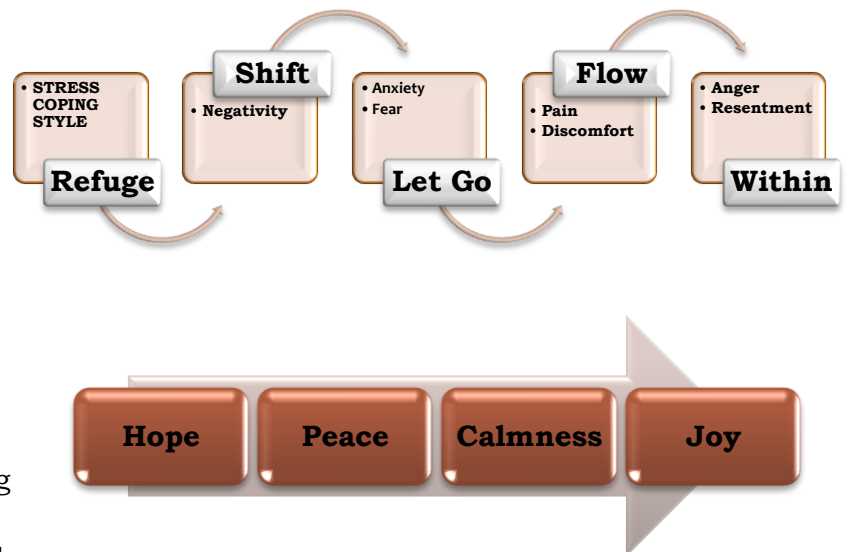
**Negativity** is pointing the way to accomplish *hope*, a strength that can bring a more powerful influence on what you believe is possible to achieve. By listening to the body mind's signals that things are disappointing and you have no more energy to continue on as before, you are receiving a strong message that something has to SHIFT. Rather than giving up, you can take refuge in hope, as a mood which in itself is part of the change.

**Anxiety and fear** are pointing the way to achieve the strength of *peace*. When the body mind's signals are alerting you that things are out of control and it's impossible for you to strategize and direct the outcomes, you are receiving the strong message to *LET GO*. Taking refuge in the mood of peace lets you experience the realization that everything is alright right now, and if it's not going well, that's alright too.

**Muscle tension, pain, physical discomfort** are pointing the way to attain the strength of *calmness*. When the body mind's signals are alerting you to the sensation of physical pain and suffering and it's difficult to feel comfortable, you are receiving a strong message to *GO WITH THE FLOW*. Taking refuge in the mood of calmness is the ability to ride the waves of discomfort and develop the capacity to actually notice the pockets of stillness that occur between the waves.

**Anger, resentment and impatience** are leading the way to attain the strength of joy. When the body mind's signals are alerting you that things are going wrong and you find yourself looking for someone to pin it on, you are receiving the strong

## THE REFUGE OF INNER STRENGTH

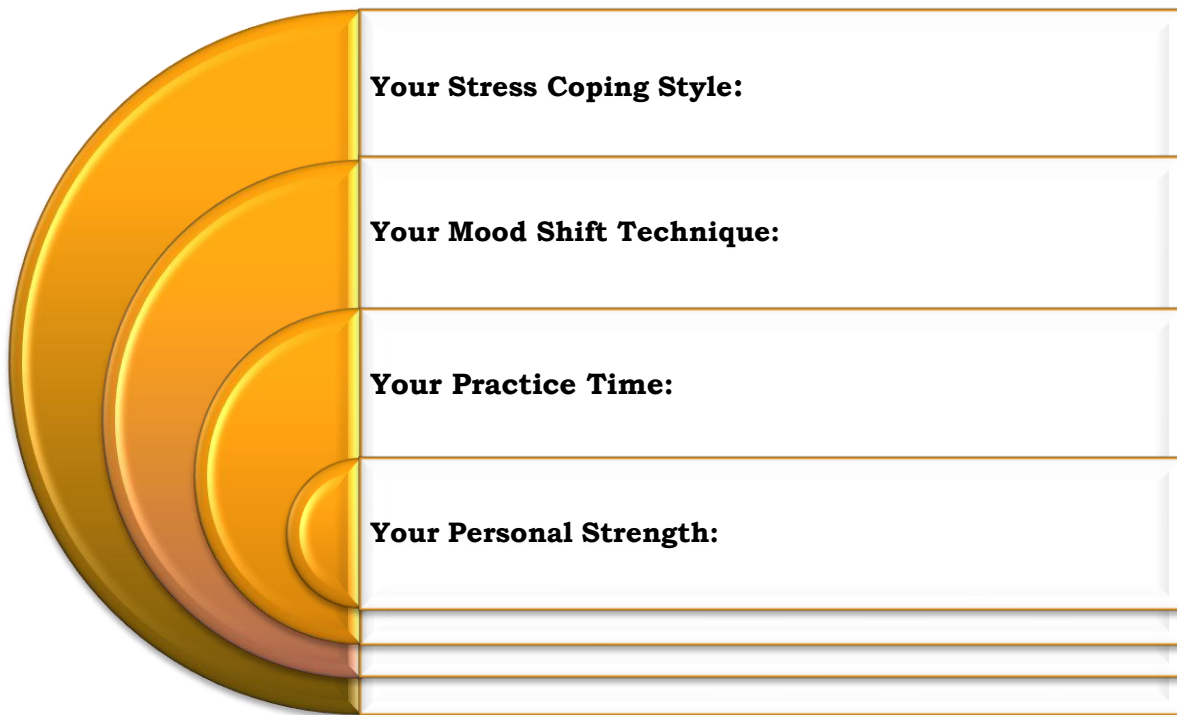


message to *LOOK WITHIN*. Taking refuge in the mood of joy allows you to exchange the energy of inner turbulence for ecstatic power of release.

How do you know when you have arrived? These beacons of inner strength become one of the moods you can now experience. You have developed a different reaction to stress, one that leads you away from illness, isolation, and emotional pain. These new mood states expand your repertoire to include other moods. This is just the beginning. As you learn to shift mood states you will experience a range of different responses to life's events.

Before you begin to use the Mind-body Awareness techniques, complete your Mood Barometer. Clip this section out, if you like, and tape it to a noticeable area to remind you to use it. Some people tape it to their bathroom mirrors, their refrigerators or desk top area. Why not photocopy it and put it in all three places?

## YOUR MOOD BAROMETER



<b>Your Stress Coping Style:</b>
<b>Your Mood Shift Technique:</b>
<b>Your Practice Time:</b>
<b>Your Personal Strength:</b>



# STEP FOUR: PRACTICE MINDFUL AWARENESS TECHNIQUES ON-LINE

Use your PassCode from the title page of this guide to access the Private Training Studio at [www.mindstreaming.net](http://www.mindstreaming.net). It allows you to practice these techniques and download them for your own use.



### **Breathwaves**

Allow waves of calmness to flow over your body as you breathe gently and naturally. *Runtime 15 minutes*

**CHECK-IN:**

*What does it feel like to relax using your breath?*

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### **Breathing Stillness**

This gentle breath training helps expand the still-point between your breaths. The visualization is accompanied by music and the sound of a mountain stream. Learn to enter a peaceful space in which thoughts and sensations are suspended. *Runtime 8 minutes*

**CHECK-IN:**

*What does it feel like to be aware of the space between your breaths?*

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### **Peaceful Body**

Send a powerful message to your body using autogenic visualization or self hypnosis. This meditation deepens your mind-body awareness by heightening sensations of being “warm and heavy” ... or ... “calm and relaxed.” Your body truly understands the language of the mind. *Runtime 10 minutes*

**CHECK-IN:**

*Did you feel your body become warm, heavy and relaxed? \_\_\_\_\_ What do you think about your body’s ability to connect with the mind’s intention?*

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Here is a list of stress reduction and stress resiliency building techniques you can practice. Rate them using a scale of 0-10 (0= *not helpful* and 10 = *most helpful*). As you develop your action plan for managing stress, go back to your Life Stress Evaluation and re-rate the severity of stressors from time to time. Notice any drops in levels of stress!

*Add other techniques that are not included on the list.*

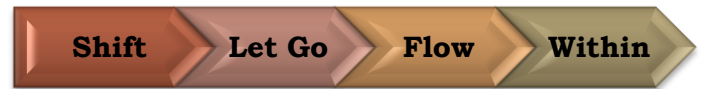
<b>Stress Reduction Techniques to Try</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Diaphragmatic Breathing: 3 times per day for 10 minutes each practice session	
Personal Meditation (sitting, walking, moving, chanting)	
Visualization (imagery, relaxation)	
Autogenic Training (self – hypnosis)	
Massage or other body work (at least 2 time s per month)	
Aerobic Exercise 3 times per week	
Sports (tennis, racquetball, golf)	
Swimming	
Dancing	
Pilates, Cycle Spinning	
Healing Energy (Reiki, Acupuncture)	
Meditation Group	
Yoga	

# WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

There are many places to go “from here.” After you have completed the exercises in the Stress Relief Training Guide and put these Mind-body techniques to use, you may wish to move on to another level of living an optimal and inspired life. Generally speaking, life presents many opportunities to expand these techniques and shape a new way of being in the world. When we are able to use mood shifting techniques, we open a vast door to even greater possibilities.

Notice that your Stress Coping Style scores pointed to one style that most likely predominated over the others, yet most of us are a little mixture of each of these styles. The REFUGE OF INNER STRENGTH graphic, on page 31, shows us to take refuge from stress by allowing ourselves to *shift~let go~flow~within*. That in itself is quite a powerful message. Let this be your new mantra of well-being.

## THE MESSAGE STRESS IS TELLING YOU



Remember, it's true you can't change your past history, but there is no reason why you should be living in the past anyway. Just because rejection and criticism, for example, led you to view life from a particular viewpoint, doesn't mean it is an accurate one. Being true to yourself means uncovering these old, automatic reactions from your past history and changing the way you respond to NOW. Then you are changing your history from this point forward.

Mood shifting techniques are ways we can develop mindfulness, the ability to actually be present in this very moment and experience our lives and relationships as they really are. What the world looks like to someone who has developed the mood of peace as a response to not being in control of everything that happens is infinitely different than to someone who is living in the past mood of fear and dread. A person who feels at peace with the outcomes can take different actions than someone who is still trying to manage things that are out of their control.

Learn to expand your personal strengths and develop a more resilient, inspired life. Return to the **MINDSTREAM WEBSITE** often, where I will be offering the *Transform Your Stress Workshop*. This on-line workshop includes a downloadable PowerPoint training, Training Guide and access to on-line evaluations, techniques and practices. Look for webinars, podcasts, and free tools to support your new direction.

At **THE MINDSTREAM**, I offer unique methods to infuse your life with passionate intention, compassion, and inspirational living. Read my blog, sign up for a free Inspire Note, download a free meditation timer, and listen to inspired audio, instrumental and video meditations.

*May these words be beneficial for you!*

*May all beings everywhere experience peace, joy, tranquility and freedom from suffering.*

## **Recommended Resources:**

**Matthew Budd, MD.** (2000) *You Are What You Say: A Harvard Doctor's Six-Step Proven Program for Transforming Stress Through the Power of Language.* Three Rivers Press.

**Sara W. Lazar, Catherine E. Kerr, Rachel H. Wasserman,** et al. *Meditation experience is associated with increased cortical thickness.* NeuroReport, Vol 16 No17 28 November 2005. Pg 1893.

**Candace Pert.** (1997) *Molecules Of Emotion: The Science Behind Mind-Body Medicine.* Touchstone Books.

**Carla Priest, RN.** [www.carlapriest.com](http://www.carlapriest.com)