

Caring for the Caregiver

Creating Personal Resiliency

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Caregiving statistics.....

- An estimated **43.5 million** unpaid caregivers in the United States.
 - **30%** of the population.
- The majority of caregivers are female (**60%**).
- **Eight in 10** are taking care of one person .
- Average age of caregiver is **49 years**.
- Nearly **1 in 10** caregivers is **75 years** of age or older .

Caregiving statistics.....

- A large majority of caregivers provide care for a relative **(85%)**
 - **49 %** caring for a parent or parent-in-law.
 - **10%** provides care for a spouse.
- **Three in five** care recipients have a long-term physical condition.
 - **35%** have short-term physical condition.
 - **26%** have a memory problem.
 - **37%** of care recipients have more than one ongoing problem or illness.

Caregiving statistics.....

- On average, caregivers spend **24.4 hours a week** providing care to their loved one.
 - **23%** provide 41 or more hours of care a week.
 - those caring for a spouse/partner spend significantly more time (**44.6 hours a week**).
- When asked if they had a choice in taking on the responsibility to provide care for their loved one, **50%** of caregivers reported they had no choice in taking on their caregiving responsibilities.

Caregiving statistics.....

- Caregiver assignments are often affected by:
 - Birth order/sibling relationships.
 - Cultural considerations.
 - Gender role.
 - Family dynamics.
- Assignment of and decisions by caregivers are often highly emotionally charged.
 - Can stir old anxieties.
 - Can create new anxieties.
 - Can lead to discord within the family group.

Stress statistics.....

Stress levels increased overall :

- 65%** people feel more stressed after assuming caregiving responsibilities.
- 1 of 5** people experienced extreme stress in past month.
- 3/4** doctor visits for caregivers are stress related.



Caregiver stress statistics.....

- **49%** reported difficulty sleeping
- **43%** reported increased financial concerns
- **37%** reported depression or hopelessness
- **26%** reported new or worsening health concerns

















Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 Busy	2 Busy	3 Busy	4 Busy	5 Busy
6 Busy	7 Busy	8 Busy	9 Busy	10 Busy
11 Busy	12 Busy	13 Busy	14 Busy	15 Busy
16 Busy	17 Busy	18 Busy	19 Busy	20 Busy
21 Busy	22 Busy	23 Busy	24 Busy	25 Busy
26 Busy	27 Busy	28 Busy	29 Busy	30 Busy





“I can handle it”

- We can handle 3 things at once – more than that and we are “toast”

Beyond that humans show significant decline in

- accuracy
- handling problems
- speed of solving problems
- visual and short term memory.





BURNOUT

ATTITUDES ARE CONTAGIOUS. MINE MIGHT KILL YOU.

- 
- Burnout is a cycle of negative emotions, paralysis and withdrawal.
 - It is the body's response to putting too much effort into something without taking in what you require to restore yourself.
 - It is mental, emotional and physical exhaustion that leads to diminished interest and anxiety.



Are you burned out?

a quick survey....

Am I burned out?

- You try to be everything to everyone
- You get to the end of a hard day, and feel like you have not made a meaningful difference
- You feel like the work you are doing is not recognized
- You identify so strongly with your responsibilities that you lack a reasonable balance or “personal time”
- You feel you often have little or no control over your responsibilities
- You are experiencing: disturbed sleep, headaches, “butterflies”, muscle tension, memory problems, anxiety, increased fatigue





Who is vulnerable to burnout?

Burnout \neq Lazy

Those with tenacity, dedication and a strong sense of responsibility are most vulnerable to burnout.

- 
- Burnout is not an attitude problem
 - Burnout is related to the failure to recognize the demands of the human side of caregiving.
 - When we are burned out we slip from productive and caring to frustrated and cranky.

- 
- The bad news....
 - Stress cannot be eliminated completely.
 - No stress is not a good thing though!
 - Without some stress we do not build resilience skills.
 - The good news....
 - We can learn to manage our stress . With practice, we can keep our stress at healthy levels that keep us alert and motivated to face challenges.
 - How we deal with stress is what matters.

Stress Recognition

- **Increase Awareness** of stress...
- **Increase Choices** for dealing with stress...
- **Increase Control** and decrease personal stress...

Stress Response

- Stress is responsive to simple interventions

Practicing self-care strategies is the most important thing we can do to reduce stress.

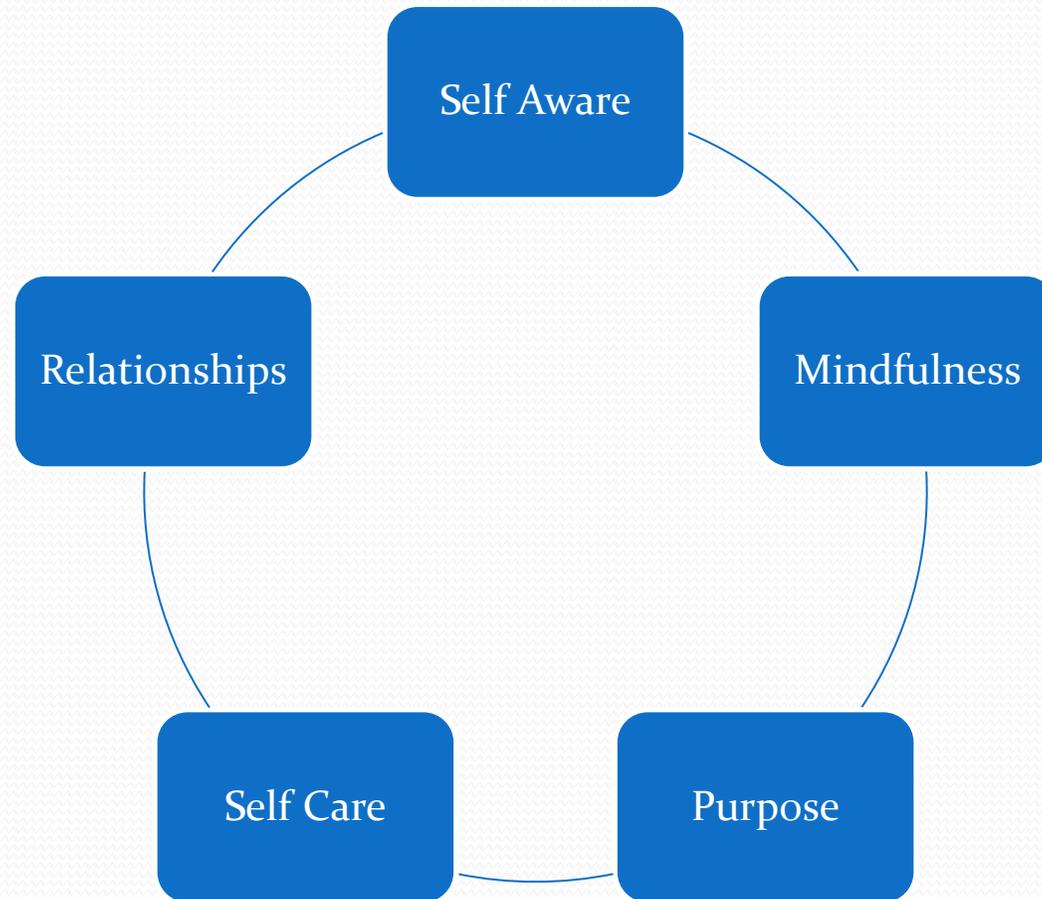
Resilience

- Resilience is our ability to cope and the availability of resources related to our health and well-being.
- Our resiliency will only be protected and enhanced by what we do.

Resilience

- **Personal resilience** is our capacity to absorb stress and stay healthy - our “bounce-back-ability.”
- **When we're resilient** we can deal with life's irritations, challenges and disappointments and still be ok.
- **When we're not** we can be knocked sideways by small things – and then take it out on others or ourselves.

Resilience



Self Care

- Protect Prefrontal Reserves**
 - Single Tasking**
 - Hydrate, eat, learn**
- Fatigue Management**
 - Sleep hygiene**
 - Caffeine/sugar/alcohol ; use it carefully**
- Respect your circadian rhythms**
- Time outside (enjoy nature), healthy exposure to sunlight**
- Posture, Breath, Gentle Stretching, Yoga, Meditation, (tool)**
- Good food at the correct time**

Why do we sleep?

- Recharge our batteries:
repair and rejuvenate
 - Improved Immune System
Function
- Memory Consolidation
- Emotional Regulation



The Reality of Fatigue

- Moderate sleep deprivation can produce impairments in cognitive and motor performance equivalent to blood alcohol of .10 !
- One third of all drivers have reported falling asleep while driving
- Errors 2.5 times more likely between 4-8 AM
- Changes in brain chemistry make sleep deprived people crave high calorie foods and inhibits the self control mechanism that helps resist that temptation.
- Reduction in the ability to form new memories
- Negative memories are most resilient to fatigue

Our brains interpret
prolonged fatigue as
a stressor.





Disrupted sleep
increases fatigue

Fatigue diminishes ability
to cope with stressors
in a healthy way



Inability to cope
with stressors
disrupts sleep



Better Night of Sleep

- **Skip the snooze button** (makes you more tired) – falling back asleep and waking up again takes too much energy and you won't gain any deep sleep
- **Avoid eating within 2-3 hours** of sleep onset, it is harder for your body to wind down when it is still digesting
 - Use caffeine wisely-the effects may last for several hours after ingestion and can fragment sleep
 - Remember that soda and tea contain caffeine
- **Don't stay in bed more than 15 – 20 minutes** – if your mind is racing get up- sit in a chair until you are sleepy
- If your pets awaken you keep them outside of the bedroom
- Take a warm bath or shower – meditate for a few minutes if possible



- **Manage the bedroom environment**

- Room darkening shades or curtains
- NO TELEVISION
- Soft music or white noise
- If you are a clock watcher at night – hide the clock.
- Comfortable temperature
- Bedding that makes you feel good
- Lavender/Chamomile diffusers/oils

- **Get outside in the natural afternoon light** (even if it is cloudy) even for a few minutes to reset circadian rhythms.

- **Exercise in the morning** provides boost of energy, decreases stress hormones, and improves sleep quality (75% more time in deep sleep).





... a few more self-
care tips....

Food

- Eat food, not food products, mostly plants, not too much
- Breakfast: fats and proteins
 - (eggs, cheese)
- Lunch: fruits and vegetables
- Dinner: carbs
 - (pasta)



- Don't skip a meal
 - Appropriate snacks help keep your blood sugar stable
 - Eat with someone who eats well
- Decrease the amount of sugar and caffeine
 - Quick highs lead to quick lows
- Be careful with alcohol
- Avoid eating 2-3 hours before bedtime



Foods that help decrease stress

- Avocado
- Leafy green vegetables
- Turkey
- Salmon
- Blueberries
- Pistachios
- Dark chocolate
- Seeds: pumpkin, sesame, sunflower



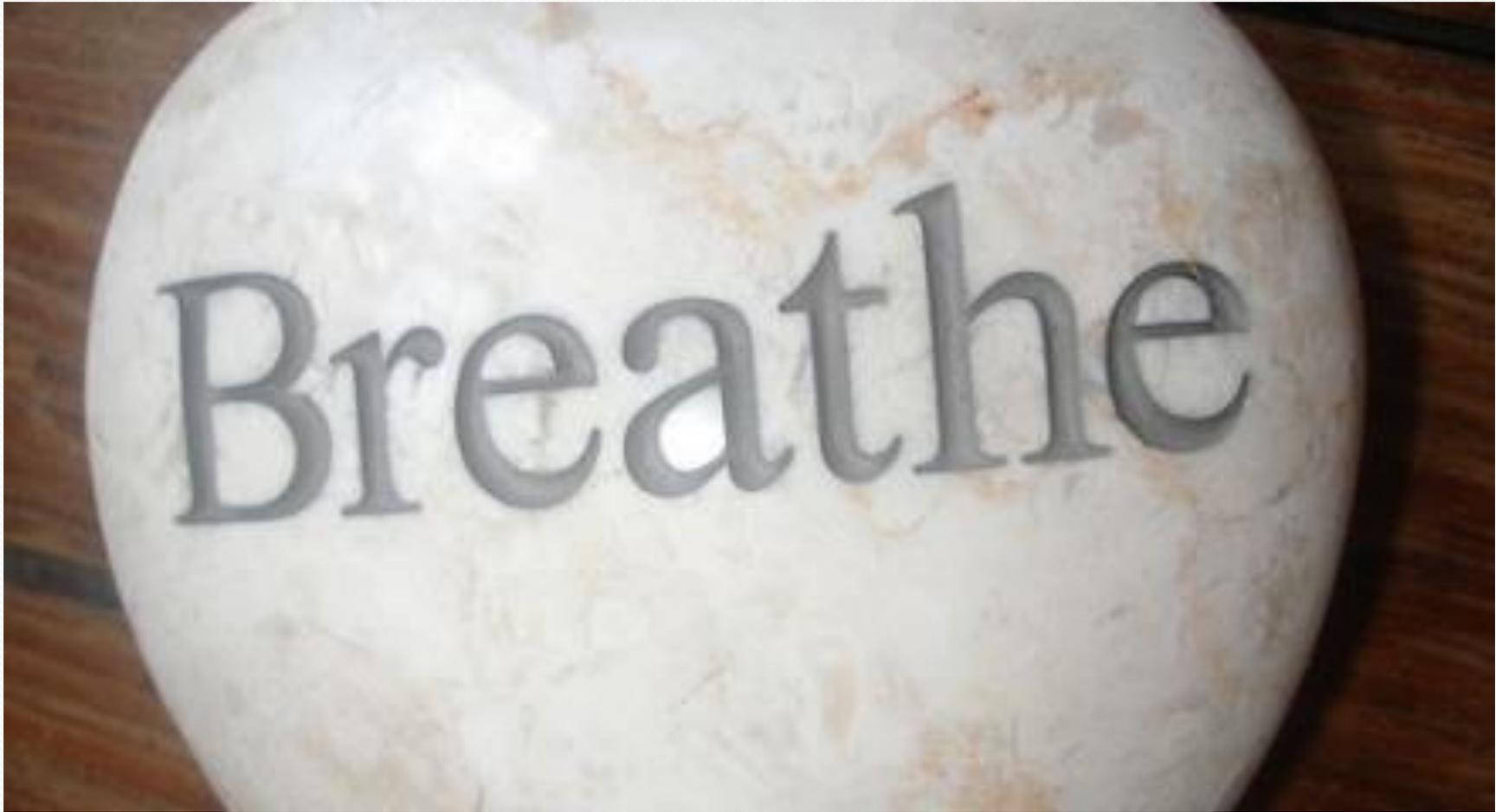
Vitamins that help decrease stress

- B Complex:
 - Vitamin B12
 - Folic Acid





Turn it off... for an island of 10
minutes of prefrontal restoration



Deep Breathing

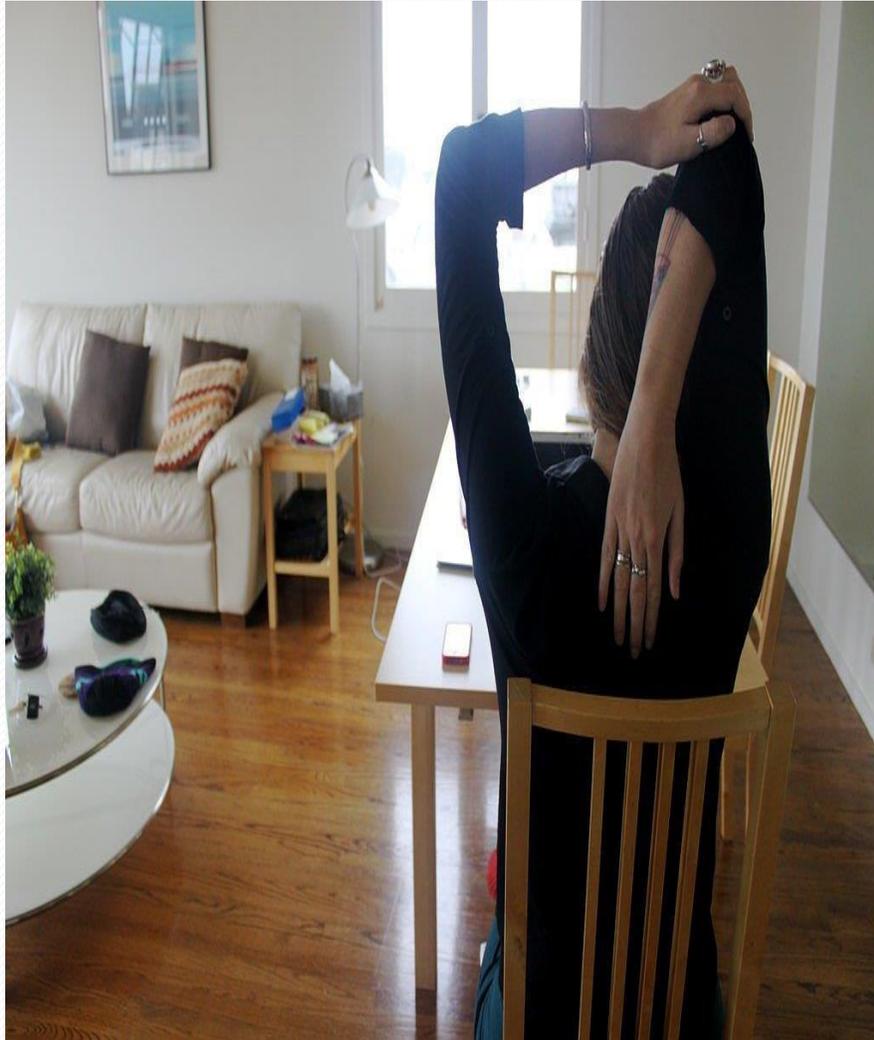
- Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress, relax and reduce tension.
-sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax.
-sends this message to your body.
- Breathing exercises are easy to learn and easy to do anywhere.





BAD POSTURE (EXAMPLES OF)

Stretch !!



Self Massage

Benefits:

- relax muscles and releases tension.
- increase blood flow and oxygen to the tissues (can reduce blood pressure).
- increase flexibility.
- alleviate headaches.
- lessen depression and anxiety.
- release endorphins for natural pain relief.
- boost your immune system.



- Use your fingers to massage in circles from the bridge of the nose, along the hairline and to the temples.
- Gently rub the fleshy part of your palm between your thumb and index finger
- Rub the palm with your thumb from the wrist to the base of each finger.
- Gently rub your shoulders in small circles while rolling your head and neck



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So you mean to tell me
a stress ball isn't for
throwing at people who
stress you out?



www.facebook.com/ShutUpImStillTalking

Self Awareness

–Enhance Self Awareness

- Stress Recognitions/Threat Awareness
- Three Good Things (tool)
- Signature Strengths (tool)
- Monitor Personal Burnout triggers
 - emotional exhaustion

Signature strengths

- **Signature Strengths, Self-Rating Scale**

- Everyone has a characteristic set of strengths and virtues, that is, things that they are “good” or “strong” on. Research in Positive Psychology suggests that there are (at least) 24 strengths and virtues that are recognized in most cultures.

Strength	Description
1. Curiosity Rank _____	You are curious about the world and you strongly desire experience of it. You are flexible about matters that don't fit your preconceptions. Curious people do not simply tolerate ambiguity but they like it and are intrigued by it. You seek out novelty, and you are rarely bored.
2. Love of learning Rank _____	You love learning new things, whether you are in a class or on your own. You always loved school, reading, museums - anywhere and everywhere there is an opportunity to learn. There are domains of knowledge in which you are the expert, and others value your expertise. You love learning about these domains, even in the absence of any external incentives to do so.
3. Judgment Rank _____	You think things through and examine them from all sides. You do not jump to conclusions, and you rely only on solid evidence to make your decisions. You are able to change your mind. You are very good at sifting information objectively and rationally, in the service of the good for yourself and others. You do NOT just think in ways that favor and confirm what you already believe.

- (Adapted by Jonathan Haidt, from M.E.P. Seligman, 2002: [Authentic Happiness](#))



Random Acts of Kindness

Doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise that has been tested

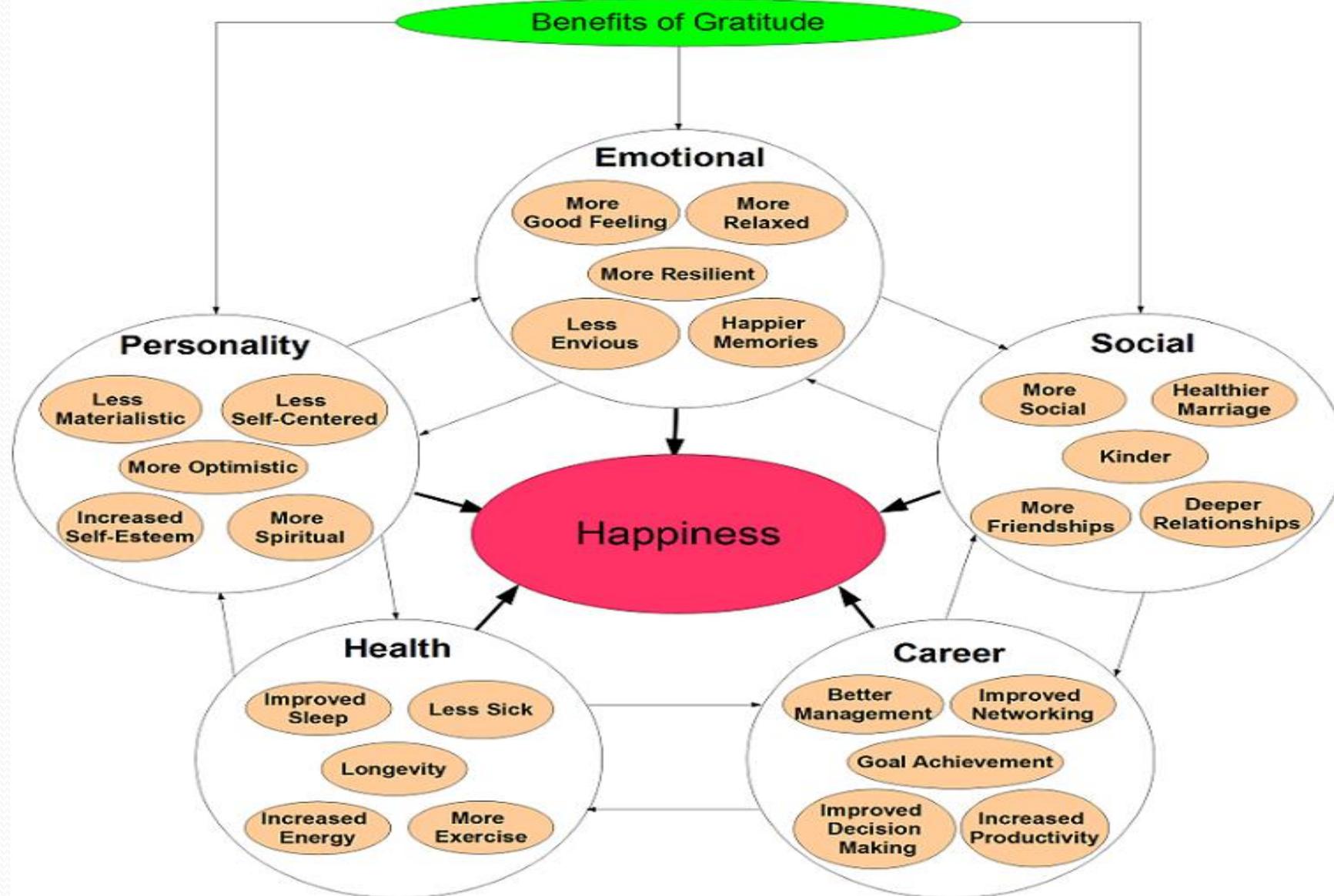
Find one wholly unexpected kind thing to do tomorrow and just do it. Notice what happens to your mood.

- Marti Seligmann, 2011



The Benefits of Gratitude

- Developing an “attitude of gratitude” is one of the simplest ways to improve your satisfaction with life.
- Gratitude may be one of the most overlooked tools that we all have access to every day.
- Cultivating gratitude doesn't cost any money or take much time, but the benefits are enormous.



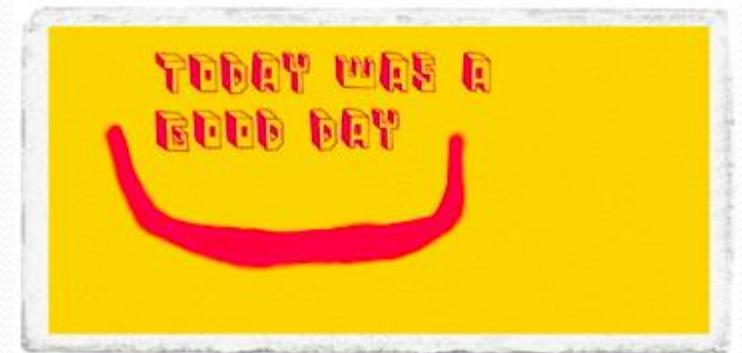
Three Good Things

- Memories are tricky: good ones are like Teflon, they slip away, while the bad ones stick like Velcro (especially when we are tired)
- Three Good Things retrains our brains so that we can remember the good things, and our role in bringing them about



Three Good Things

- For 14 days, reflect on the positive, and your role in bringing it about
- Best time is right before sleep onset
- Better sleep quality, positive interactions, see positive patterns
- Beware of transitions – some people fall off on their Three Good Things in transitions to and from the weekend



My First Three Good Things



Mindfulness

–Mindfulness: Awareness that is reflective, non-judging and accepting

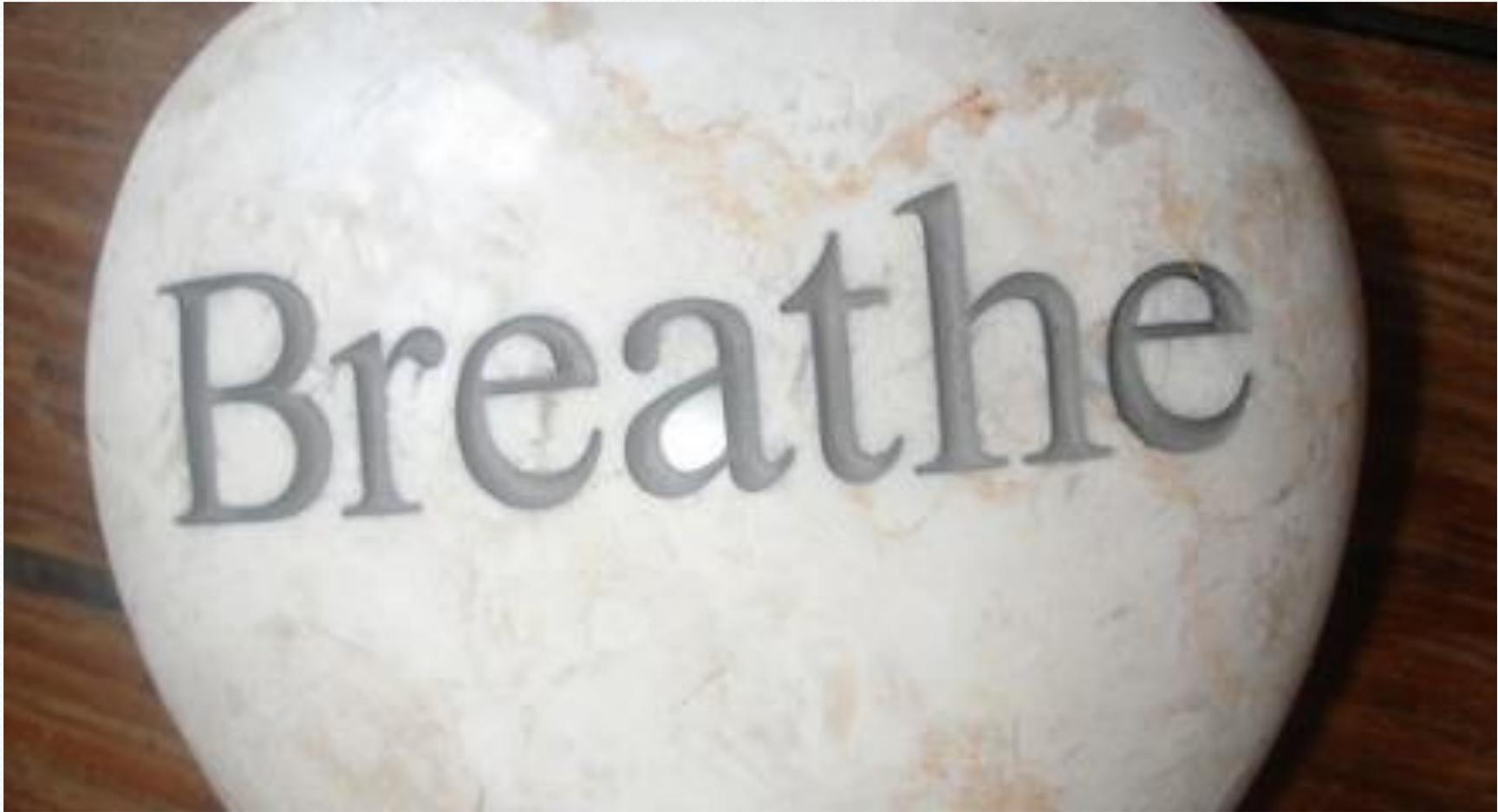
- Deliberately notice the little things without evaluating them
- Mindful Breath/Mindful Posture (tool)
- Mindful Resilience Writing (tool) (also under Purpose)

What is Mindfulness?

- When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings without judging them good or bad.
- Mindfulness means being in the moment with a **focus on the present.**

Mindfulness exercises to start your day

- A little gentleness and taking a few moments to pay attention to the body can have a strong impact on how the rest of the day unfolds.
 - **Curate Your First Sounds:** Choose an alarm that does not make your body tense and startled, something gentle and soothing—chimes, bells, more relaxing music.
 - **Hydrate Before You Caffeinate:** Rather than going straight for the coffee or tea, take in a big glass of water. Your body is dehydrated and needs water. *Then* move to your coffee or tea.
 - **Observe Nature:** Instead of grabbing your technology, go outside and take in the sky, take in a tree or take a minute to look out the window. Allow your eyes and body to take that in. Then move on to starting your day.



Relationships

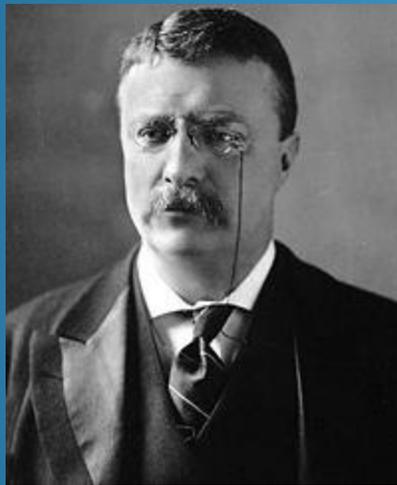
–Supportive Relationships

- Spending time with significant other (walk & talk), social support from/for others, learn about your colleagues
- Friends who validate you
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Give self-care permission
- Beware of negative loops in self and others
- Beware of your exposure to negativity: Nasty-Nasty-Nice-Nasty-Nasty-Nice





The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.



Theodore Roosevelt;
The 26th US President



Its nice to be right.....

.....but that doesn't mean the
other person has to be
wrong.....



“But it would be fine if he would only.....”

- You can only control your own behavior-and that's hard enough !

Decreasing the Risk for Exposure to Negativity

Nasty-Nasty-Nice



Awkward Hammer

- Stop the behavior
- Acknowledge the feelings
- Move on



Relationships and Resilience

A primary factor in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family.

Relationships that create love and trust, provide role models, and offer encouragement and reassurance help bolster a person's resilience.

- Validating friends (that don't judge you)
- Rhythms and routines of friendships (predictability)

Attachment

An abundance of research shows that the perception that one has supportive others to turn to in times of stress buffers against the harmful effects of stress

Cohen, 1992; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Sarason, Sarason, & Gurung, 1997).



BEST FRIEND.

4 a.m. Friend:

Is there someone in your life whom you would feel comfortable phoning at four in the morning to tell your troubles to?

- If so, you are likely to live longer than those who say “no.” (called the capacity to *be* loved.)
- Conversely, loneliness is such a disabling condition that it suggests the pursuit of relationships is fundamental to well-being.

Purpose

–Cultivate Purpose & Meaning

- The mindset/attitude we take toward others and toward events
- Spirituality
- Frame burnout: a trigger for personal growth
 - Know Thyself; Look Around
- Meaning Making Through Experiential Writing (tool)

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.”

-Viktor Frankl



Research has shown that having a sense of purpose can:

- Boost our confidence
- Boost our immune system.
- Promote mental wellbeing.
- Promote pro-social behavior.
- Improve your sense of contentment
- Improve your “happiness” factor

- If you have been looking for happiness, the good news is that your choices, thoughts and actions can influence your level of happiness.
- Dedicate time to family and friends
- Appreciate what you have
- Maintain an optimistic outlook
- Create a sense of purpose
- Live in the moment





Finding our purpose is a very personal thing and involves:

- Thinking about the people that are really important to us and how we want them to think and feel about us.
- Knowing what our talents and strengths are.
- Thinking about what we truly love to do and trying to fit that into our work and leisure time.

Experiential Writing

- Writing is a vital part of keeping yourself resilient. It can help you coalesce your thoughts, can give you an avenue for expressing yourself, and can also provide a way of developing personally and professionally.



Experiential Writing

- Clinical trials indicate that writing about stressful or traumatic experiences can enhance your immune system's response, reduce recovery times and promote physical, psychological and social well-being.
- Specifically, writing can be:
 - A de-stressor and can release tension and settle the mind.
 - A mood-changer, with the capability of making you happy.
 - An outlet to help you let go of negative thoughts
 - A form of therapy for enhancing psychological healing and growth.
 - A way to increase self-confidence.

Why Does Writing Work?

Allows you to use negative emotions to focus on the positive

Mechanisms:

Emotional exposure

Cognitive restructuring

Self-regulation

Secrets.....



What Secrets Bring...

- Social isolation
- Disruption of working memory
- Impaired performance
- Interference with memory formation

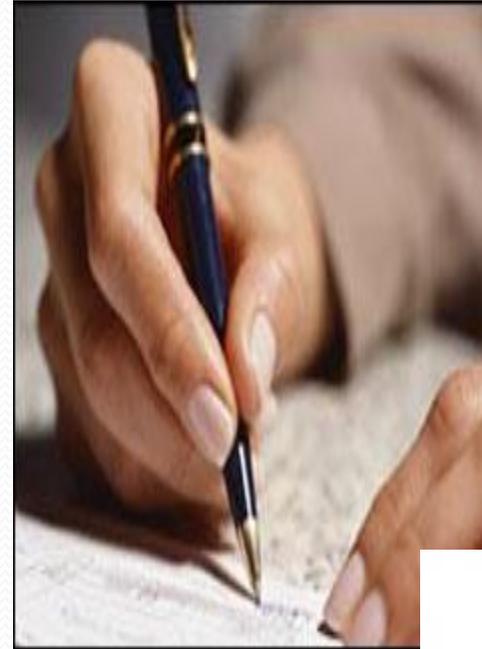






The Writing Paradigm

- Write for 3-5 days; 25-30 minutes per day
- No feedback to others unless you choose to share.
- Do with it what you will.....



Tips for caring for the caregiver:

- Ask for help:
 - Don't be a control freak!
 - It lets people think you don't need help and can turn people away.
 - Give each person a responsibility – then let them handle it!
 - Each person has a different strength – find and encourage it.
 - appointments/medications/financials/groceries/meals/household tasks
 - delegate transportation if possible on a rotating basis
 - Even kids/teens can assist
 - set up meds if not complicated/cut snacks/change pillow linens/read aloud/encourage exercises

Tips for caring for the caregiver:

- Hire someone for small tasks
 - Teenagers can earn \$\$ for cutting grass or raking leaves
 - A handy man can usually finish a task more quickly and for less cost!
- Reach out to your place of worship/local school/ community groups or scout troop.
 - Handy man services/chores/transportation services.
- Remember:
 - OK to say NO!!
 - What works for you is the right “normal.”
 - Its ok if someone does it differently!
- Consider respite care as possible (a few hours to a few days)

Tips for caring for the caregiver:

- Recognize your limits and acknowledge them .
- Keep your sense of humor
- Trust your instincts
- Take a break
 - When you are away – stay away
- Join a support group – available in person/online
- Acknowledge your feelings
 - Ok to be angry/resentful/feel guilty/feel grief . Its what you do about it that matters.

Two Quick Exercises

Write down a commitment on how you will take care of yourself.

- self-care techniques
 - maintain rituals, nap, manage food intake and caffeine, sunlight
- managing your reactions and energy
- Mindfulness
 - Three Good Things
- deep breathing
- managing exposure to negativity



Whatever works for you !

- Spend a minute to identify a “stress/wellness buddy”
- Commit to watching out for each other
 - Remind your buddy about some of the tools for stress management
 - Be available to your buddy as needed
 - Be aware of additional signs of stress in your buddy
- Seek professional assistance if needed.



**Give yourself permission to ask for help!
You are not alone!**

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- If you have questions regarding Resilience Education please contact:

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