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Take a Break!

Make Way for Your Creativity

Worksheet for the Workshop on Barbara Sher's
WriteSpeak Telesummit September 9, 2017

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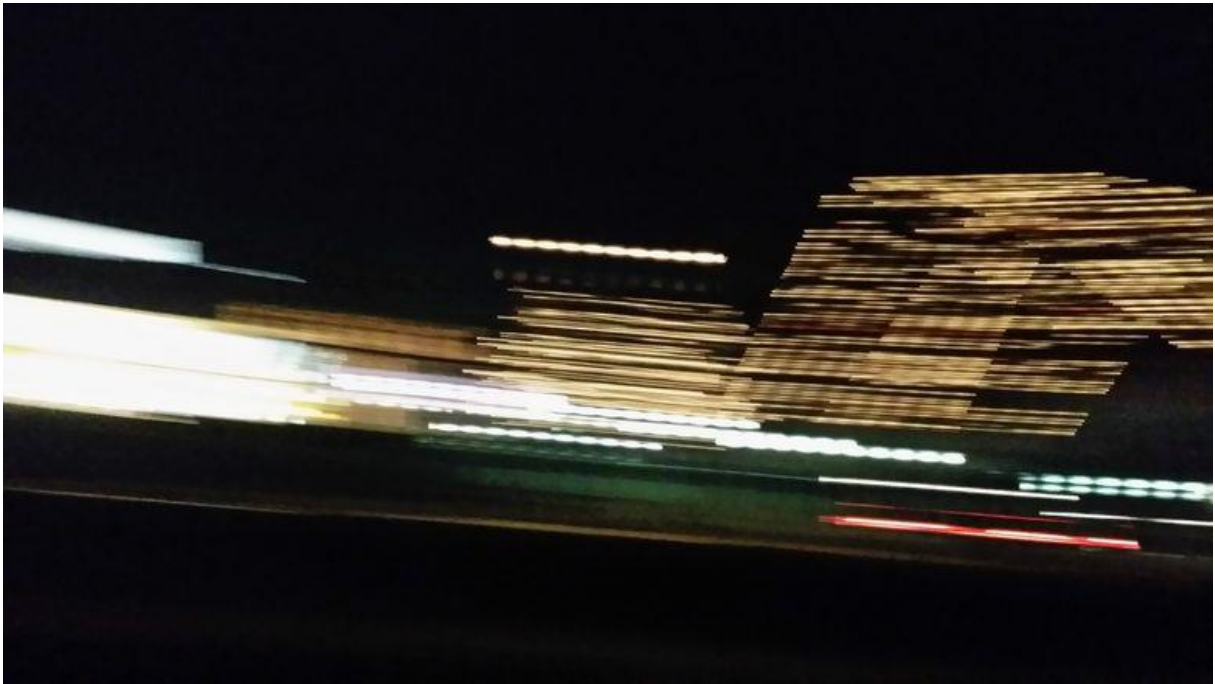
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Why Stop Stress

Stress as in “Fight or Flight Syndrome” can occur for many reasons. Individual reasons, general reasons; logical reasons or illogical reasons; big or small reasons.



Being under stress all the time is said to be unhealthy, you know. And it doesn't feel good, anyway. States of overflow can even stop us in our tracks towards our dreams, goals, and projects!

But whereas we can't avoid overflow or stressful situations or even our own “usual” responses to them in general, we *can* learn to stop them *whenever* we recognize we're in one right now. And that's a lot.

How to Stop Stress

A very short break with a mixed mindfulness technique can stop overflow easily. This gives you the opportunity to get back on track with calm focus and fresh energy.

You can re-start whenever stress is stopping you, and start heading towards your goals again.

Sometimes we just don't have 20 minutes for a full mindfulness meditation or relaxation. But we can often withdraw for a few minutes and come back to ourselves. The best part: by doing so, we get back our ability to choose.

Every time.



The “Back To Me” Exercise

The method has nine steps. I’ve put it together from different mindfulness techniques and other helpful approaches in psychology for my own use as a Scanner and highly sensitive person with strong stress response. I hope you’ll benefit from it, too.

I. Come back to yourself for a moment

1. Recognize you're under stress.
DECIDE on a Mini Ritual for going back to yourself. Now.
2. Take three deep BREATHS.
These mark the threshold to your own inner world and calm you instantly.
3. FEEL your BODY.
Don’t avoid the tension, feel it. Scan your body, feel how your breathing goes... Just be with your body for a whole minute or so. This gives you relief. The sensations will change slightly.

II. Encounter and soothe your feelings

4. Be aware of your EMOTIONS: Be aware of all your feelings: Fear. Anger. Sadness. Shame. Check: Which of them is present? Maybe dominant? Just be with them for a moment. They're just feelings. They're normal. Everyone has them.
5. Give yourself COMPASSION.
Put your hand on your chest or stomach with a comforting gesture.

It's not so easy when you feel all this tension and emotion.

* Tell yourself: "This is hard." Give yourself comfort and understanding.

* It's not as uncommon as you may think. Suffering is part of life. We're connected with others in this experience. Feel the connection.

* Be friendly to yourself. "May I be kind to myself in this situation."

6. Give a friendly MESSAGE to your younger self.
When you feel helpless, you're often meeting a smaller You.
Say what she or he needs to hear. Like: "I'm with you now. We're doing this together."

III. Go on with choice and perspective

7. Gain PERSPECTIVE: There are already two of you - child and grown-up. Maybe there's also a voice that knows about your vision? About your goals?

Ask yourself: "What could be my next step?"
You're in control again! You do have a choice.

8. Come BACK by drawing a deep breath and stretching your whole body.
Come back to daylight consciousness. Look. Hear. Connect with your outside situation.
9. Go on differently with a conscious CHOICE. We can always make a tiny change for the better.



The Effect of Getting Back to Your Flow More Often

By practicing this technique, you more often make the conscious choice what you want to focus on. This in itself makes you more mindful. And thus more creative, connected, calm, and resilient.

This exercise is really like a construction kit. You can use the building blocks in different ways, although this sequence has proven very effective.

You might want to practice single parts for five, ten or twenty minutes until you're very familiar with them. Or you might want to pick one part only (like drawing three deep breaths) and use it several times a day.

By using parts or the whole, you'll find that getting back to yourself with one single breath is an ability that can really be achieved.

Your Stopping Point can become the Starting Point to your own goals in daily life.

About Mindfulness

The whole thought of the exercise is based on the idea of mindfulness:

Observing things (breathing, body, feelings, and thoughts) as they are. Integrating them without wanting to change them. Developing a mind-set of strong (self) acceptance. Making constant choices again and again.



Let me tell you, if you're used to having a troubled, worried mind all the time like I am, these techniques come as a godsend – and they often come in very handy in daily life.

In case you want to read more about it, I'm giving you just three of the resources for this exercise and concept.

Kristin Neff: Self-Compassion

The concept of self-compassion was developed by Kristin Neff. Self-compassion (as opposed to competition and self-judgment) was proven to be soothing and strengthening, making us much more mindful towards ourselves as well as others, and more healthy. www.selfcompassion.com

Laurel Mellin: Emotional Brain Training

The concept of emotional balance used in the middle part of my exercise (in a very, very short form) was developed by Laurel Mellin. In Canada, official health programs have been built upon her insights. Read more about her here:

<http://www.ebtgroups.com/>

Ellen Langer: Mindfulness

There's also Ellen Langer's mindfulness concept. For her, mindfulness is making conscious choices instead of taking things for granted. It's proven to give us much better health, make us younger again, provide us with more creativity, and more sense of being connected.

Among other things, she's done research on creativity and how many of our presumptions are – exactly this, presumptions. Look at her lovely dog paintings! She does her paintings as she chooses to. And check out her books:

<http://ellenlanger.com/>

Visit My Quest Blog

Although my articles are going to be mainly in German, I'm trying to make the blog slightly bilingual. My blog's called **Quest – Logbook of my Creative Journey**.

It's about creativity and self-development, as in “fostering our potential”, because I think that's the quest we're all on. I write about overcoming obstacles, my Scanner thoughts, experiences, and interests. It's also about balance and flow because health issues happen to be one of my Scanner interests. Book reviews and video tips are to be expected.

My “Welcome” Blog Article in English

<https://jana-lindberg.de/welcome-to-my-logbook>

Relaxation Audio Recording

Here is the recording of the relaxation exercise above:

<https://jana-lindberg.de/medien>

Looking forward to your visit!



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