

MINDFULNESS: EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AT WORK

**Discovering the truth about
ourselves is a lifetime's work,
but it's worth the effort.**



Fred Rogers

Bianca Bentzin

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Being Well with Bianca**

QUESTION:

**What causes stress in
the workplace?**

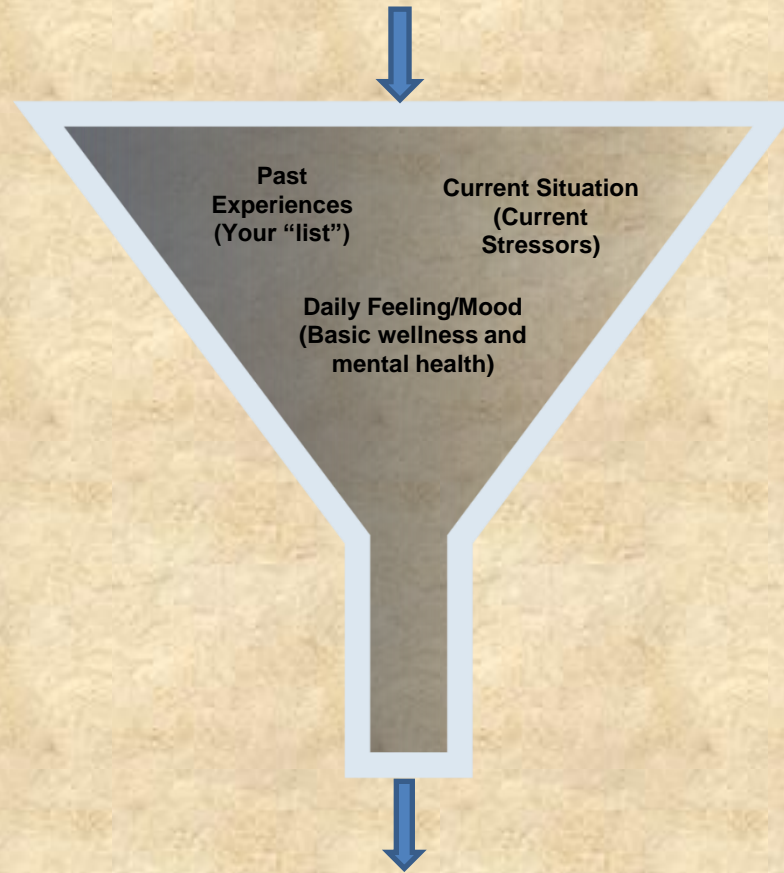
Put your answer in the chat.

Life Event	Mean Value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual Difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (i.e.. birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc)	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state (i.e.. a lot worse or better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments w/spouse (i.e.. either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc..)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.)	29

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23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, attending college, joined mil.)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living condition (new home, remodeling, deterioration of neighborhood or home etc.)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress manners, associations, quitting smoking)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major changes in working hours or conditions	20
32. Changes in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activity (i.e.. a lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (clubs, movies,visiting, etc.)	18
37. Taking on a loan (car, tv,freezer,etc)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less than usual)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers (""")	15
40. Major change in eating habits (a lot more or less food intake, or very different meal hours or surroundings)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Major holidays	12
43. Minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc)	11

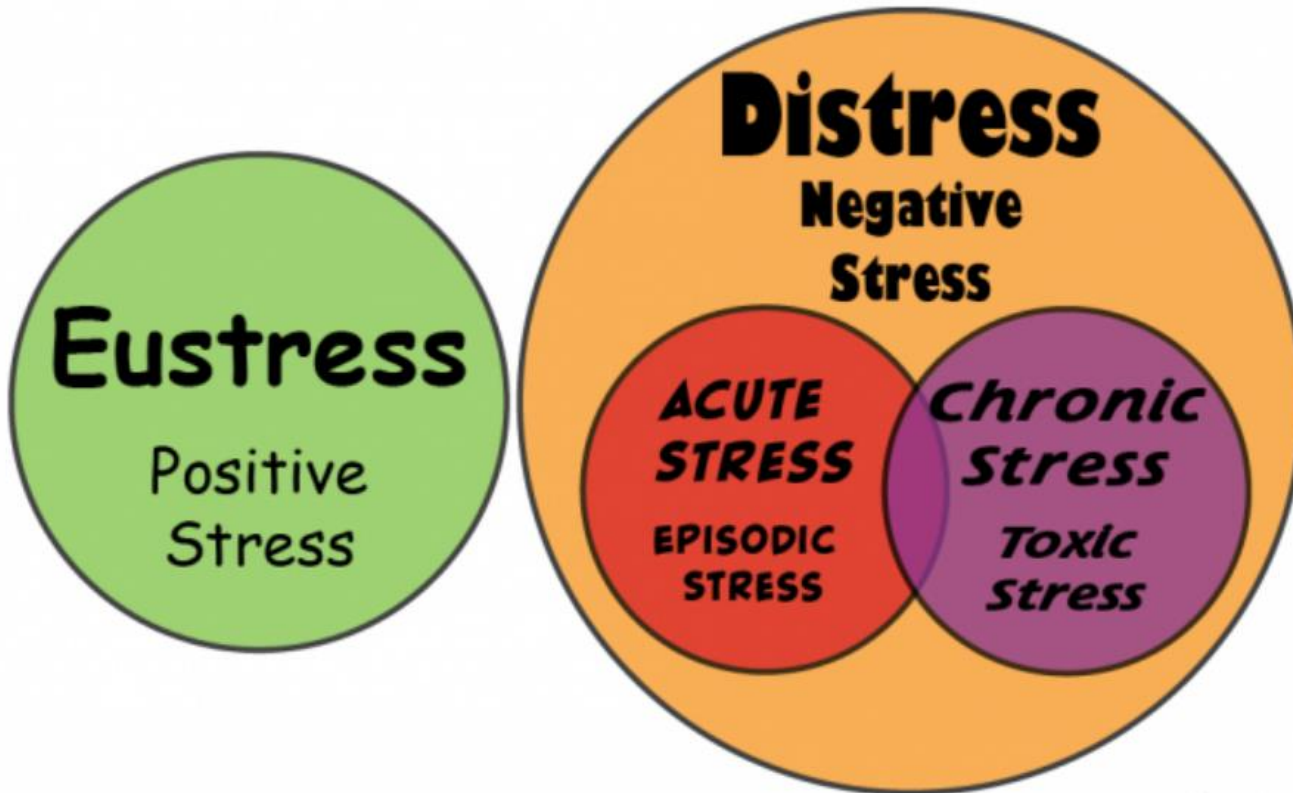
Now, add up all the points you have to find your score.

Information or Experience

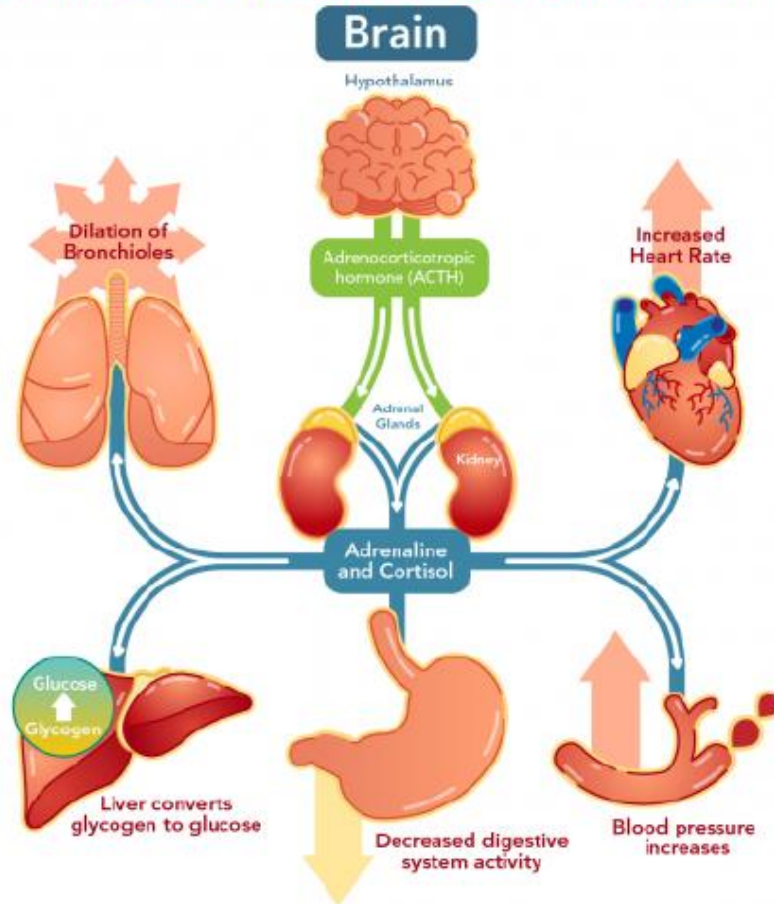


Your reaction to or interpretation/perception of the person or situation

TYPES OF STRESS



STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM




IMPACT OF STRESS ON BODY AND BRAIN

On your body	On your mood	On your behavior
Headache	Anxiety	Overeating or undereating
Muscle tension or pain	Restlessness	Angry outbursts
Chest pain	Lack of motivation or focus	Drug or alcohol misuse
Fatigue	Feeling overwhelmed	Tobacco use
Change in sex drive	Irritability or anger	Social withdrawal
Stomach upset	Sadness or depression	Exercising less often
Sleep problems		

WORKPLACE EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

- **Our brains resist change.**
Our brains crave homeostasis
and will work hard to keep it.
- **Your brain tries to convince**
you are right – even when you
are wrong.
- **Look to relationship**
science.



**Consider how hard it is
to change yourself and
you'll understand what
little chance you
have in trying
to change others.**

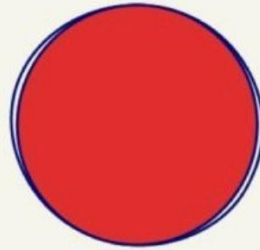
WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

- **Negative Bias - Our brains are hard-wired to see the negative (starts in infancy).**
- **Confirmation Bias – we reject information which does not conform to our beliefs/decisions.**
- **Hindsight Bias – things look different with the benefit of context**

GETTING TRIGGERED IN THE OFFICE, ON THE WAY TO WORK, ETC., ETC.

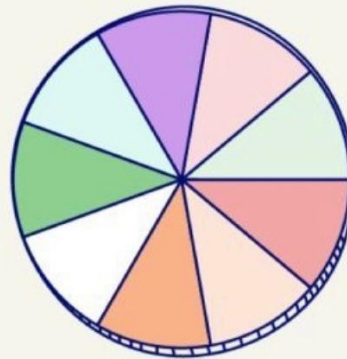
- **Everyone gets triggered - EVERYONE**
- **The past is not always in the past. (Sorry.)**
- **Stress can make us feel out-resourced. (So can fatigue, hunger, lack of physical activity)**
- **Draw from your past and present challenges to compassionately connect with others.**

What People Think Empathy Is



■ Feeling sorry for someone

What Empathy Actually Is



- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Sensing other people's emotions | ■ Really listening to what others have to say |
| ■ Mirroring someone's feelings | ■ Understanding another person's feelings |
| ■ Imagine what someone is thinking | ■ Imagining how someone is feeling |
| ■ Identify how a person is feeling | ■ Seeing things from another point of view |
| ■ Feeling overwhelmed by others' tragedy | |

PRINCIPLES OF EMPATHY

- 1) Connecting with empathy MUST precede advice. (Don't jump to "fixing".)**
- 2) Responding to someone who is in their emotional brain with your logical brain will escalate a situation.**
- 3) Empathic listening de-escalates. Needing to be "right" escalates**
- 4) If you are struggling to connect with empathy, the problem is not the other person.**



**You seriously
have no idea what
people are dealing with
in their personal life.
So just be nice, it's
that simple.**

Take a Break (I mean it!)

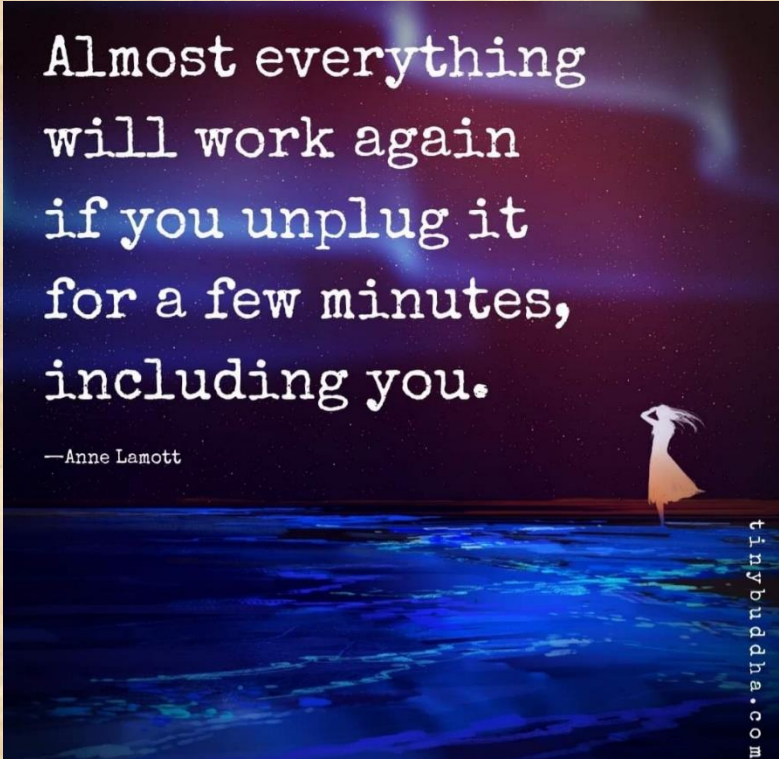
The power of nature to heal

Mental health days

Meditate (seriously)

Nap – Exercise – Anything

Set strong boundaries

A quote by Anne Lamott is displayed on a dark, starry background. The text is in a white, typewriter-style font. Below the quote, there is a small silhouette of a person standing on a beach, looking out at the ocean. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Almost everything
will work again
if you unplug it
for a few minutes,
including you.

—Anne Lamott

RIGHT NOW,
THIS IS
HOW IT
IS.

What is mindfulness meditation

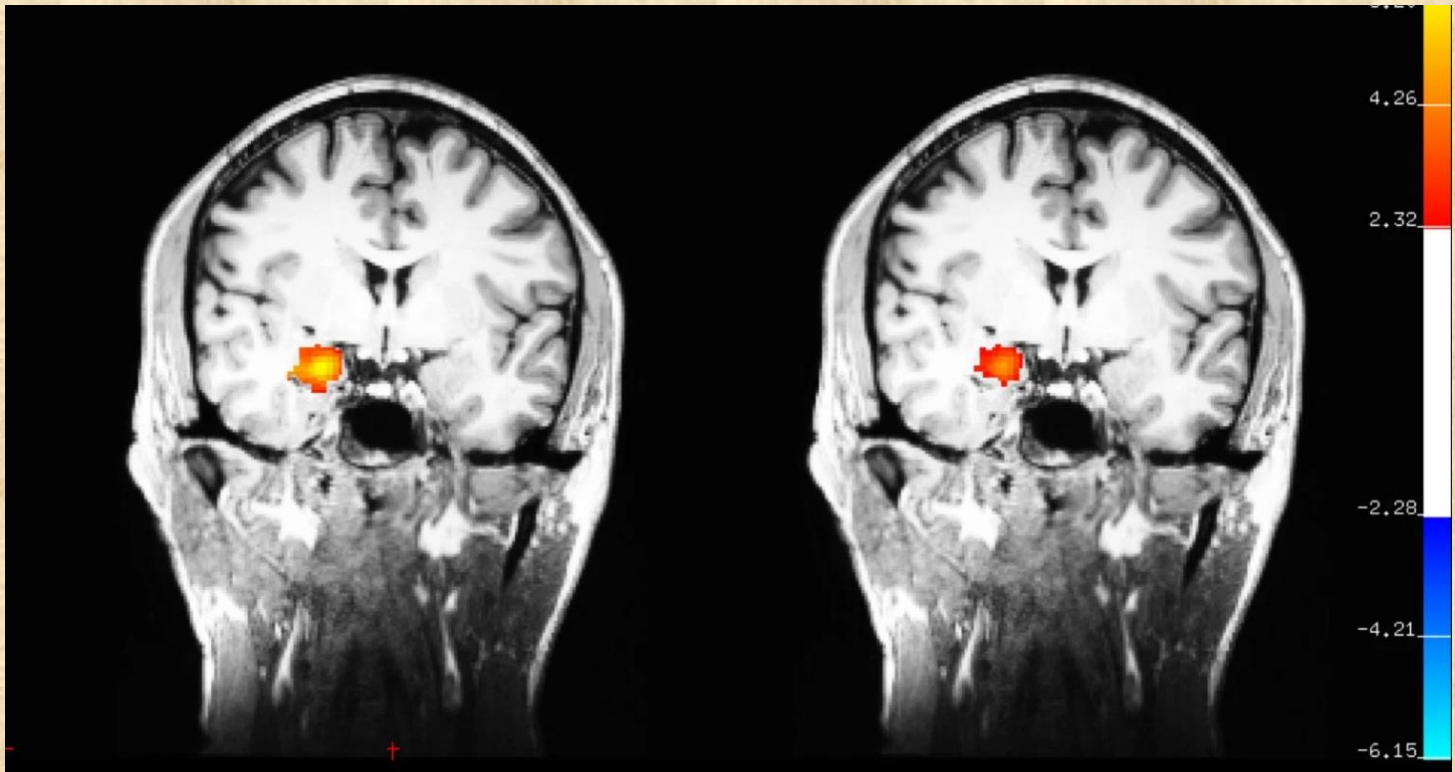
One Definition = Non-judgmental awareness of the present moment.

- **Be aware of the present moment**
- **Simply noticing feelings and thoughts as they come and go.**
- **Regain control over our attention. (Counter acts the damage social media has done.)**
- **Instead of “one day at a time”, it’s “one minute at a time”**

Why meditate . . .

MRI scans show:

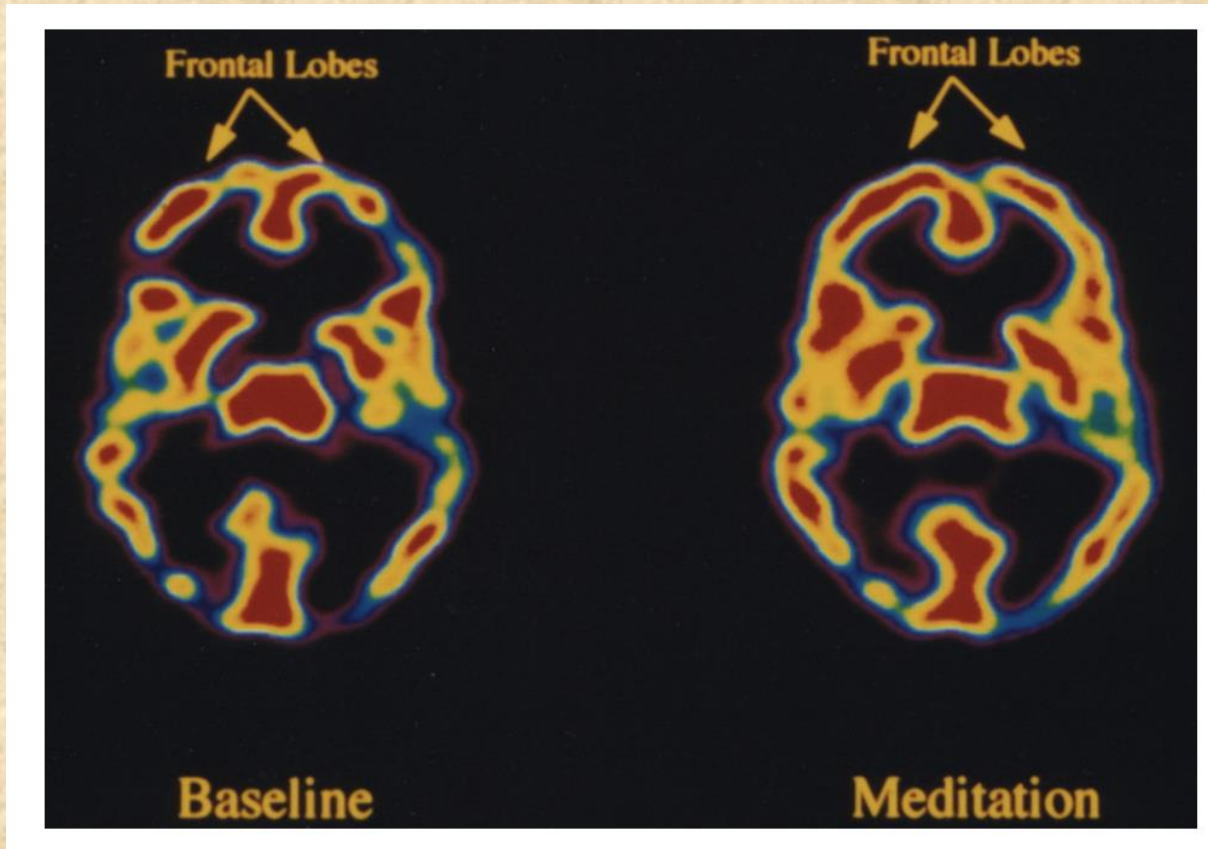
- After an eight-week course of mindfulness practice, the brain's "fight or flight" center, the amygdala, appears to shrink. (The amygdala, associated with fear and emotion, is involved in the initiation of the body's response to stress.)
- As the amygdala shrinks, the pre-frontal cortex becomes thicker. (Pre-frontal context is associated with higher order brain functions such as awareness, concentration and decision-making.)
- The connections between the areas of the brain associated with attention and concentration get stronger.
- After eight weeks of mindfulness meditation, there was an increase in cortical thickness in the hippocampus (the area which governs learning and memory)



Left: Amygdala when study participants were watching images with emotional content before learning meditation.

Right: After eight weeks of training in mindful meditation the amygdala is less activated.

Source: The Harvard Gazette



With meditation: Increase of activity in the meditator's frontal lobe, responsible for focusing attention and concentration.

Source: NPR

Why meditate . . .

Need more reasons?

- Widely accepted as a useful part of a treatment plan for anxiety and depression.
- Regularly prescribed as part of chronic pain management.
- Learning to “be still” and “quiet the mind” can help with sleep. Your brain needs a vacation from the stress of modern society.
- Can be used “in the moment” to help when dysregulated.
- Long lasting effects - positive brain activity in people who have learned to meditate and do so regularly remains steady even when they are not meditating.

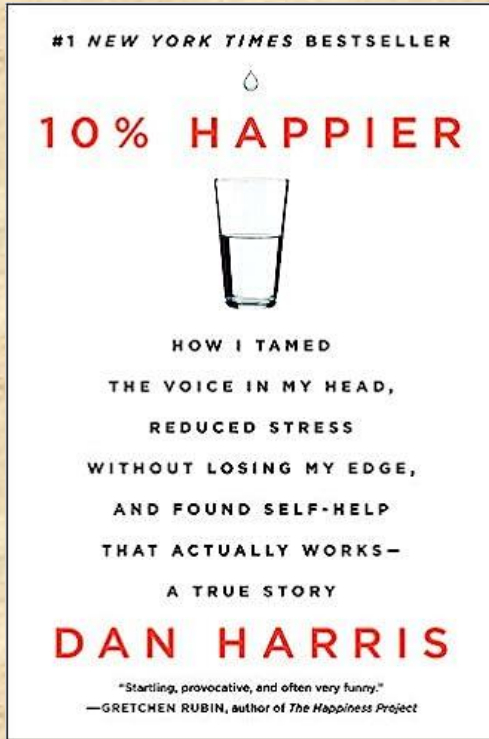
What holds us back . . .

- The paradox
- “It’s hard to calm my mind.”
- “I don’t know how to do it? What if I do it wrong?”
- “I don’t have time.”
- “It’s boring.”

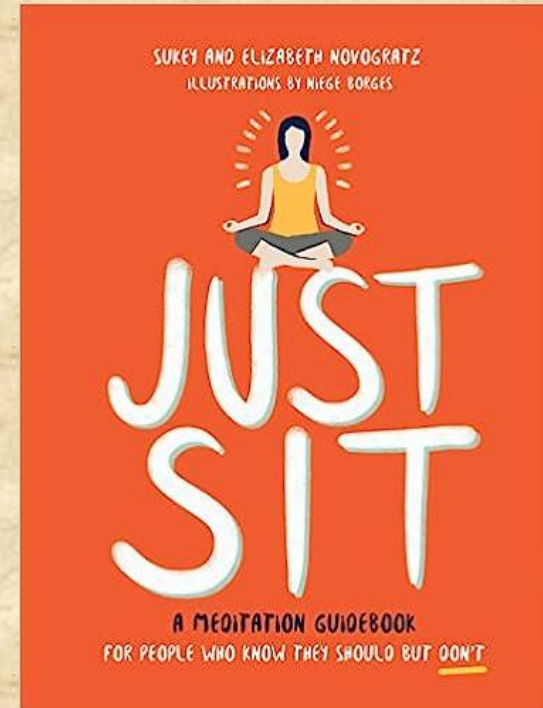
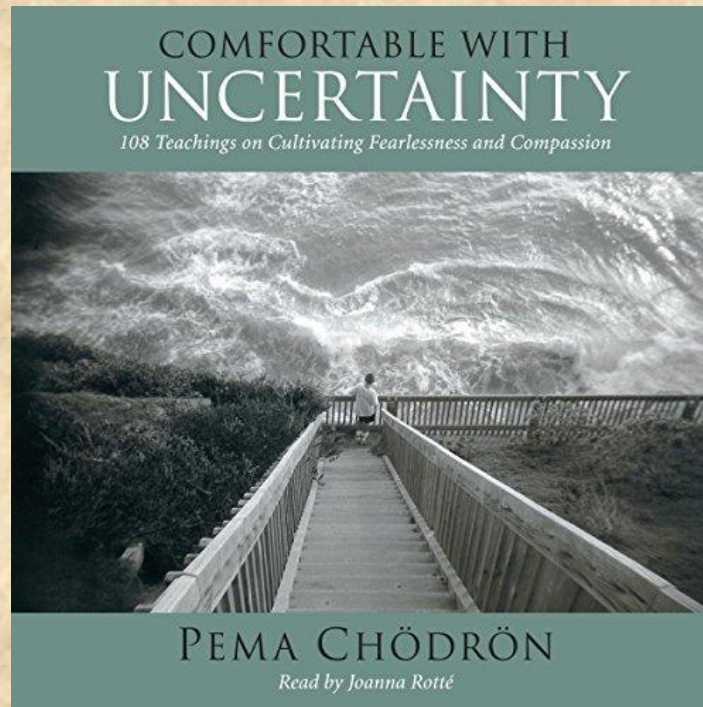
How To Get Started

- **Be kind to yourself – no judgment**
- **Find a regular time to help create a habit**
- **Keep it brief**
- **Find a posture that works for you**
- **Choose a type you enjoy**
- **Meditation apps (Free = Insight Timer)**
- **Other things – aromatherapy, spa or meditation playlists.**

Book Recommendations



(also a podcast)



To protect your energy...

It's okay to cancel a commitment.

It's okay to not answer that call.

It's okay to change your mind.

It's okay to want to be alone.

It's okay to take a day off.

It's okay to do nothing.

It's okay to speak up.

It's okay to let go.

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