

Staff Wellness: Less Stress More Joy

New Jersey Head Start Association
Conference
May 24, 2023

BECKER'S



Who, What, Where and Why?

- Director of Education
- Life long Early Childhood Educator
- Years of Experience with Stress and Joy
- Working on Wellness

BECKER'S



Leslie Eslinger

Goals

- Identify **wellness**
- Learn **strategies** to address the stress and increase the joy
- Build a **self-care** toolbox
- Commit to memory:
Self-care is not selfish



Relax and Enjoy

Access to Handouts will be available at end of session.

Physical

Emotional

Social

Creative

Academic/Career



Spiritual

Environmental

Financial

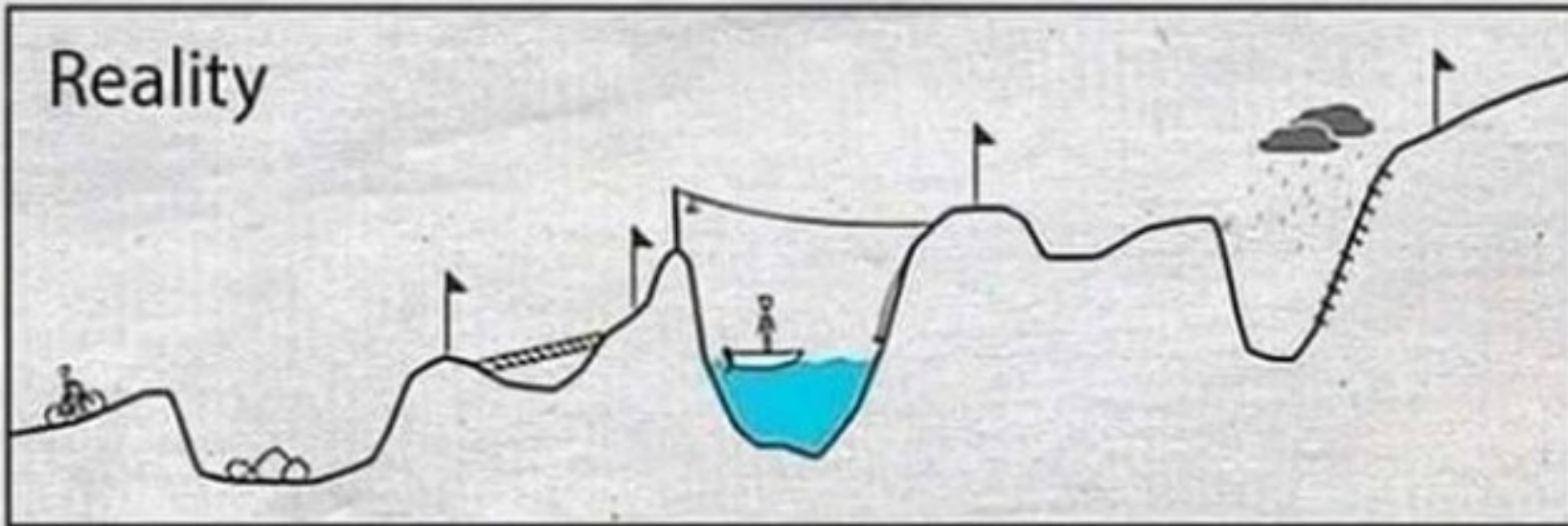
Intellectual

Rate your Wellness

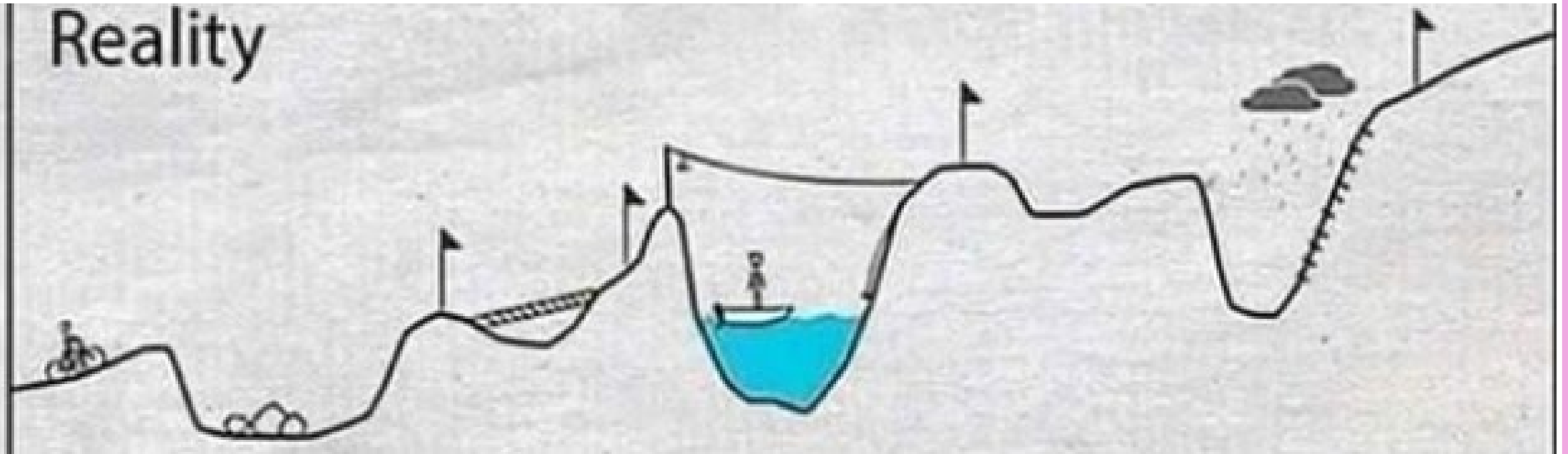
Your plan



Reality



Reality



Yes and . . .

Once you say YES and stop fighting what is, then you have more energy to focus on what you can do about it.



STRESS

- Stress is a normal human reaction that happens to everyone.
- We all deal with stress at some point in our lives.
- Not all stress is bad.
- Stress is different for everyone.



JOY

- A feeling.
- More than happiness.
- More than contentment.
- Makes us feel alive.



A feeling of great pleasure and happiness. A feeling of extreme gladness, delight, or exultation of the spirit arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction.

Call and
Response

STRESS

BREATHE

EMBRACE

JOY

WELLNESS

- Social Connectedness
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Mindfulness



Mental health hygiene focuses on using simple practices and tools to improve a person's quality of life through daily positive psychological behaviors. *

*<https://www.edutopia.org/article/small-daily-practices-boost-mental-health>



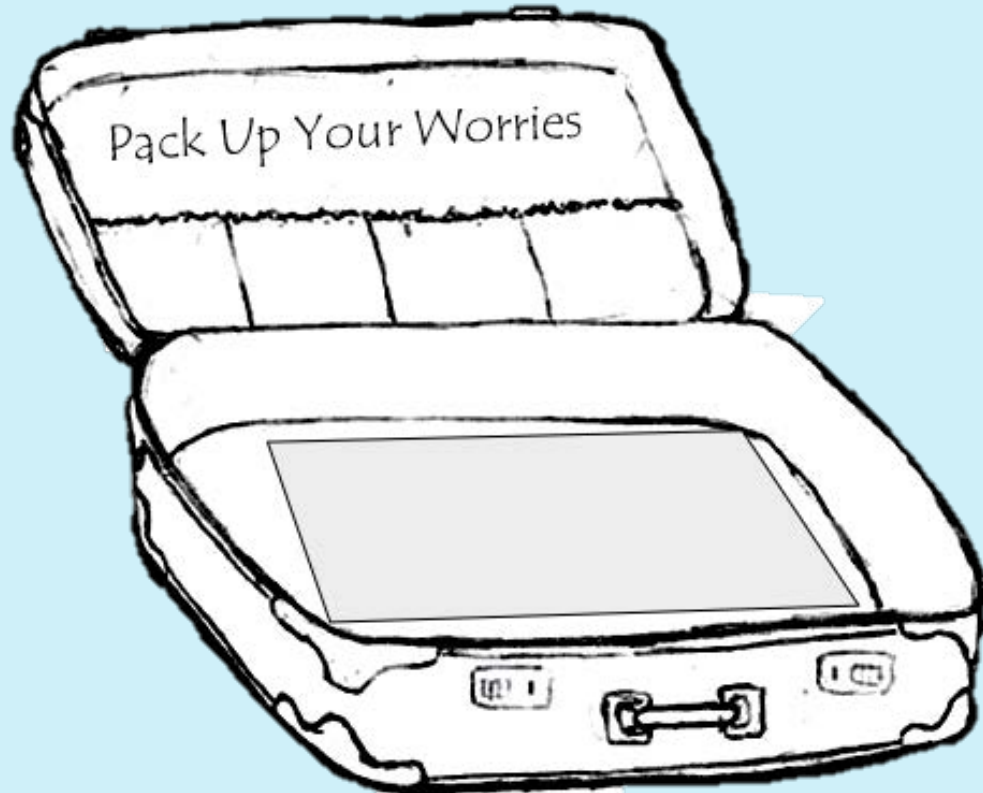
Finding our stress and joy



Partner Up



Start Packing



- My kids, my pets, my aging folks
- What's for dinner
- My bills are due
- My physical appearance
- My health; Friends/Family
- Food insecurity
- Getting it all done

The act of writing down our concerns helps to release them from the conscious mind.

Using Self-Affirmations in Stressful Times

"Now is exactly when we most need to gather our inner grit, heart, compassion and flexibility in order to respond to situations with intention and possibility, . . ."

"Positive Change through Grit and Intention," Robin Levy and Constant Hine

ExchangeEveryDay | [ExchangePress.com](https://www.ExchangePress.com): Can Self Affirmations alleviate stress?

Know Your Why

- Know Your Why | Michael Jr.
Comedian Michael Jr. goes Off the Cuff at live comedy show and uses this completely improv moment as a great illustration for knowing your why and purpose in life.



(No Cost) Action Steps to Increase your Energy and Support Positive Change

- Focus on the Positive
 - Practice Gratitude**
 - Smile and Laugh
 - Identify the Joy
 - Practice Random Acts of Kindness
 - Dance and Sing**
- ✓ Self-Care
 - ✓ Find Quiet Moments
 - ✓ **Connect to Nature**
 - ✓ **Connect to Your Why**
 - ✓ Reach Out and Ask for Help
 - ✓ **Develop Mindfulness Practices**

The image features a large, mature tree with a thick, textured trunk and a dense canopy of green leaves. The left half of the image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter, creating a gradient effect. The sun is visible through the branches, casting a warm glow.

Nature

Fascination is meditation

<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>

Gratefulness

Gratitude is pausing to notice and appreciate the people, things, and opportunities in your life.

- Note/Email
- Self-talk
- Recording – iphone/Utilities/Voice Memos



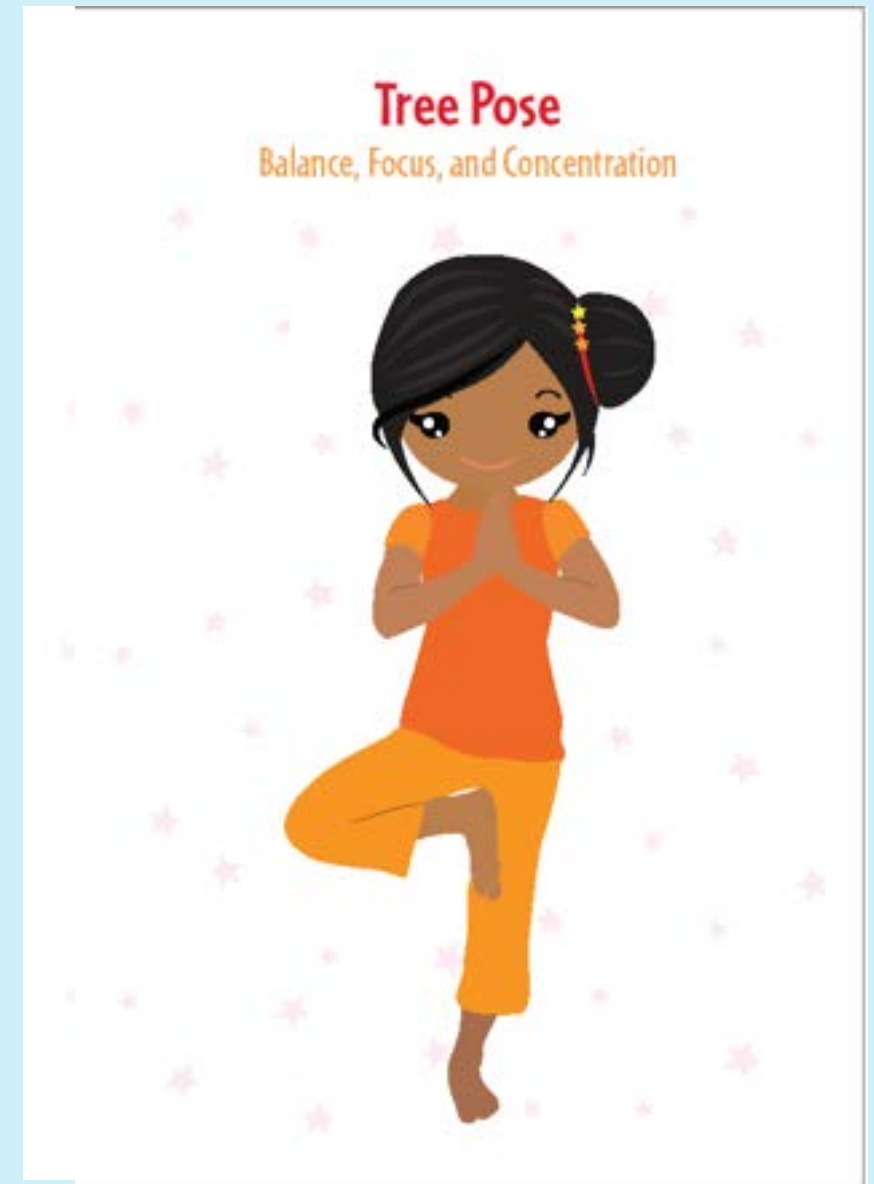
Research has found that over time, practicing a few minutes of gratitude a day is associated with better sleep, less anxiety and depression, and higher levels of optimism*

*<https://www.edutopia.org/article/small-daily-practices-boost-mental-health>

Movement

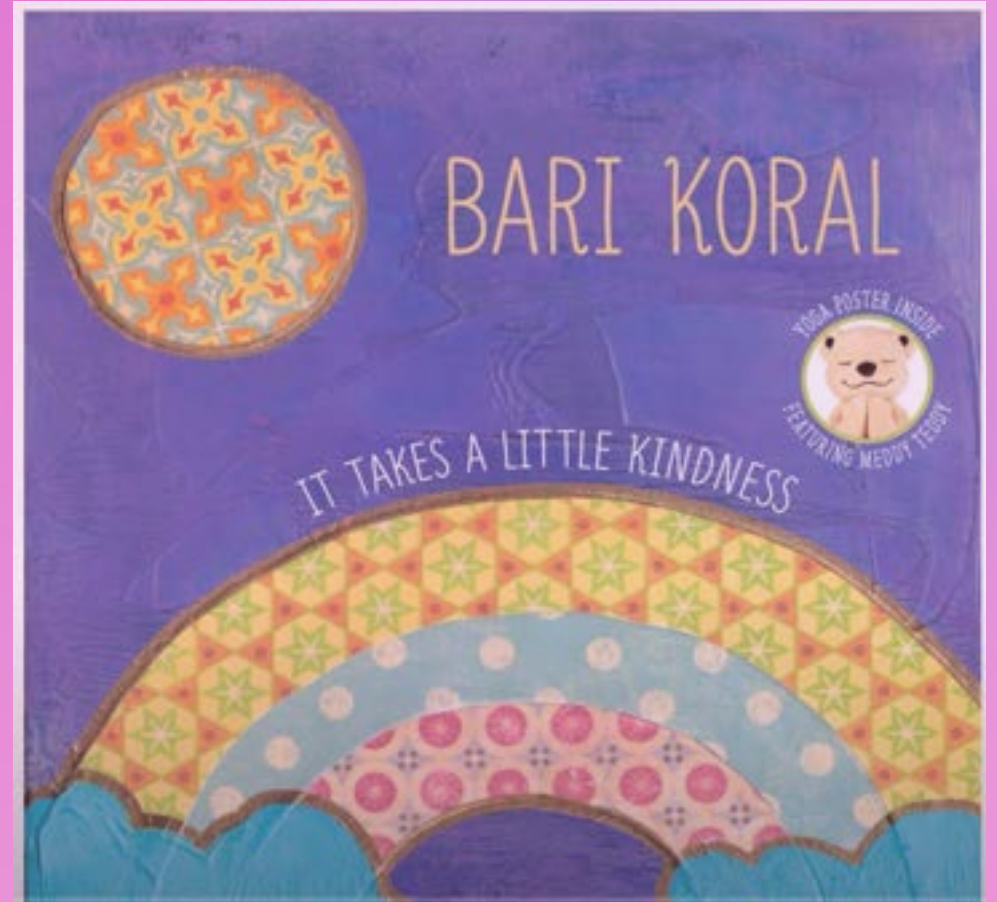
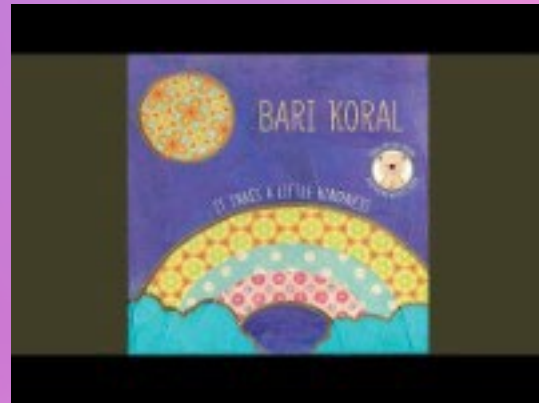
- It pumps up your endorphins
- It reduces negative effects of stress
- It's meditation in motion
- It improves your mood

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/>



Brain Break

- Mermaid Pose
 - Dragon Pose
 - Unicorn Pose
 - Rainbow Pose
- Magical 4



Keep news to one
serving a day.

Dance Freely - No
Boundaries Required!



Singing

- Relieves stress
- Stimulates the immune response
- Develops a sense of belonging and connection
- Improves mental health and mood

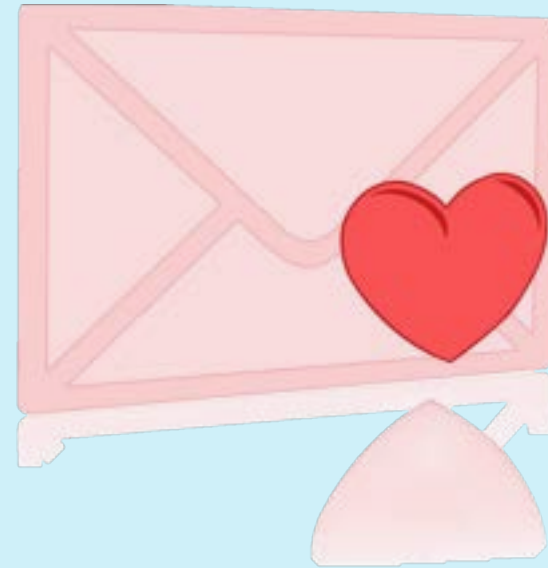


<https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-singing#benefits>

Be Kind

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

Aesop



Practicing Mindfulness

- *When teachers practice mindfulness, they are better able to manage their own stress and create a supportive learning environment for children.**



Chocolate Meditation



1. **Unwrap** the chocolate. Listen.
2. **Inhale** the aroma.
3. **Imagine** how it will taste.
4. **Place it** in your mouth. Feel the sensation.
5. **Notice** the flavor as it begins to melt.
6. **Be aware** of your first swallow.

Name your mood.

Engage all senses. Notice the sounds, colors, smells, tastes, and textures of the food and how you feel when eating.

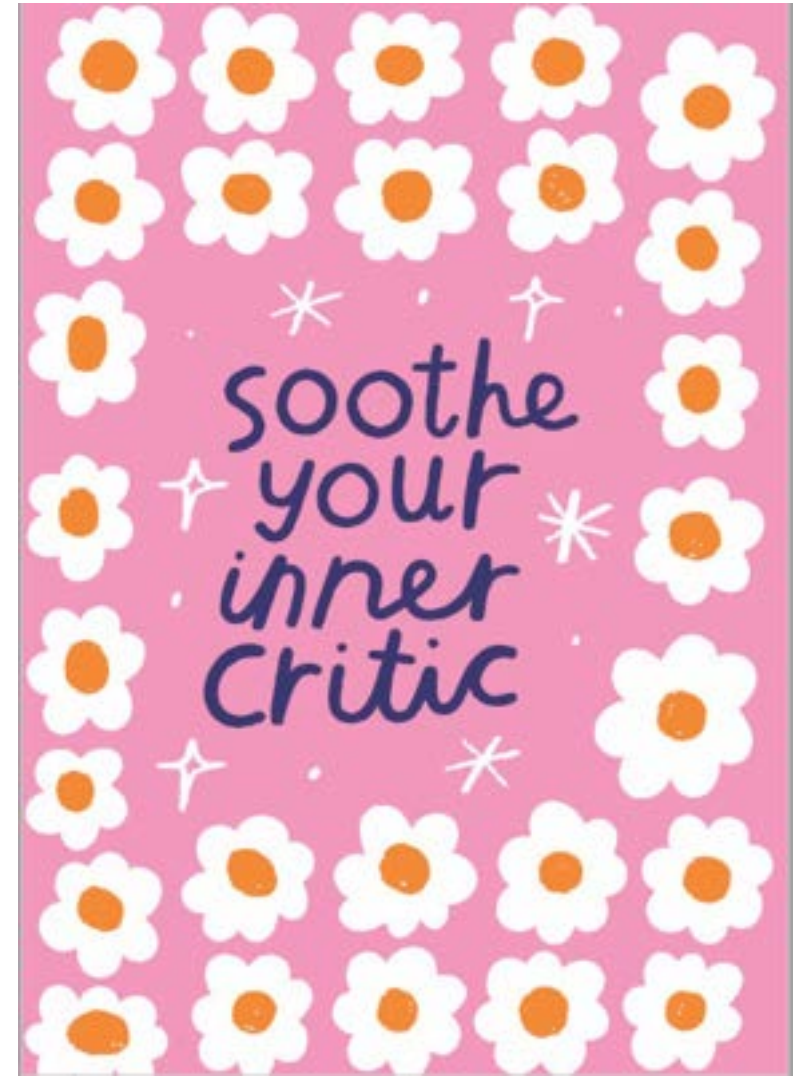
Be Present

“I’ve had a lot of worries in my life, most of which never happened.”

- Mark Twain



The #1 way to create more happiness and less stress is to start paying more attention to the conversations you have with yourself.



How many times have you finished a meal and not even realized where your food went?



Simple help for complex lives

A few years ago, I gave up clothing with patterns. Solids only, from that point on.

Before the clothing simplification, I had realized that my life was too complicated.. I decided to simplify my life with baby steps and start by drinking my coffee black. Yes! “Black,” I would smugly say. I drink my coffee black! No super grande mocha coca frappa nonfat organic free-trade soy latte cino for me – no.

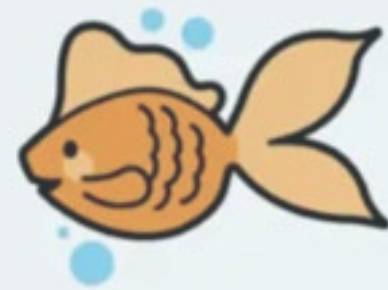
The next year I gave up toxic people.

So three years in a row, revolutionary change: wearing solid clothing, drinking black coffee, no more toxic people. I shudder to think what next year will bring.

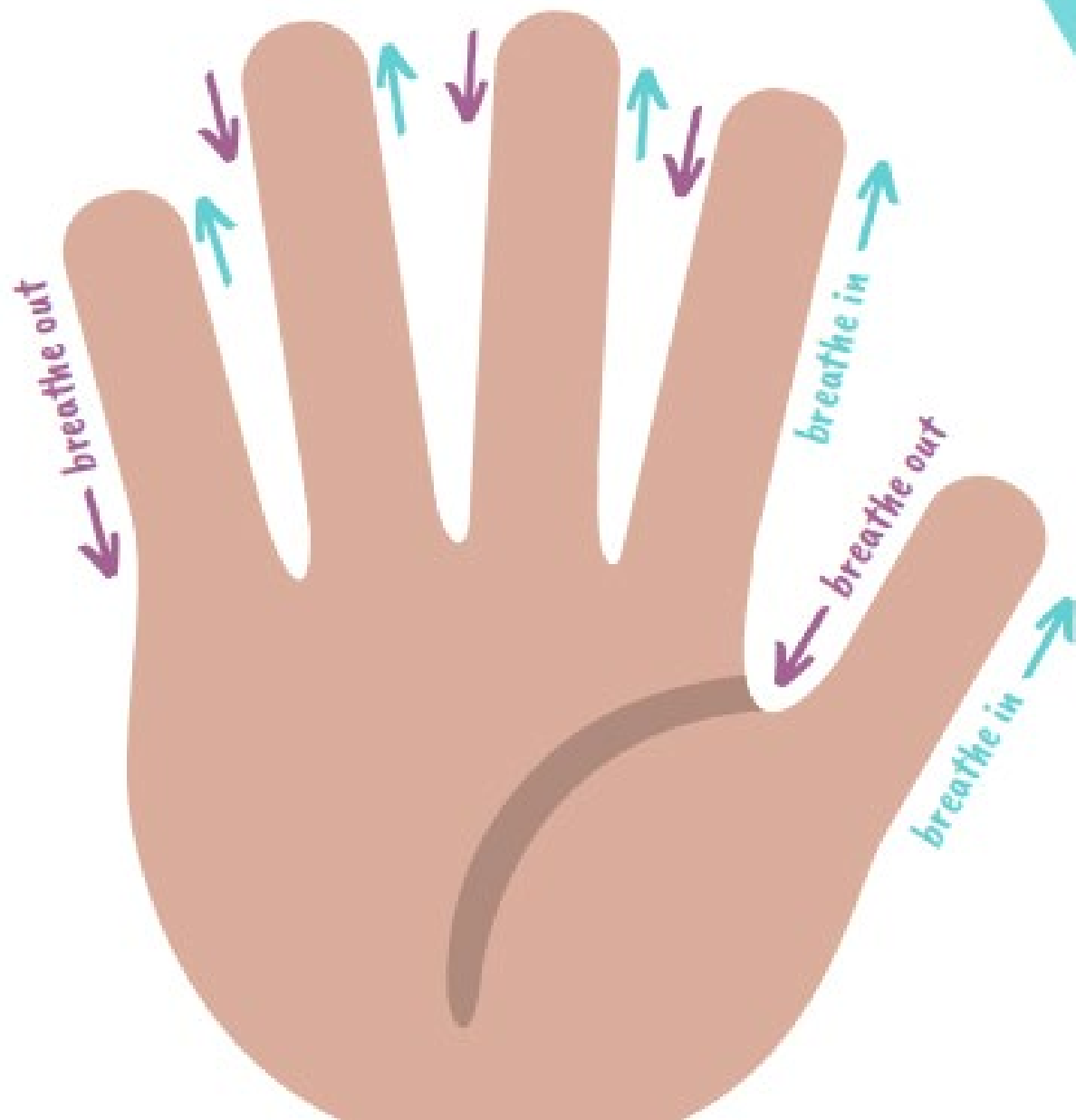
What can you simplify?

Shake it
off and
focus on
solutions.

**BE A GOLDFISH
HAPPIEST ANIMAL**



ON EARTH



Stretch out one of your hands nice and wide.

Use your pointer finger from your other hand, to slowly trace your thumb from the bottom to the top, as you slowly breathe in through your nose.

When you get to the top of your thumb, slowly breathe out through your mouth, as you trace your pointer finger down the other side.

Mindfulness Pebbles





Box Breath

Follow my finger as I draw a box in the air. Take a slow breath in as I draw a line for the top of the box. Breathe out when I draw the next line. Breathe in as I draw the line across the bottom of the box. Breathe out as I draw the last line to finish the box.



Butterfly

The butterfly pebble reminds us to inhale and exhale like a butterfly's wings. Sit in a butterfly pose with the soles of your feet together and knees apart to make your butterfly wings. As you move your legs up and down gently, breathe in deeply and breathe out completely. Soon you will feel peaceful like a butterfly.



Candle Breath

Hold one finger in front of your mouth like a candle. Breathe in slowly. Breathe out to blow out the candle flame. Repeat three times, inhaling and exhaling to blow out the flame.



Castle

Close your eyes. Imagine you are taking a magical trip to a beautiful castle. You walk slowly through a forest until you come to a clearing. Soon you see a giant castle made of stone with tall pillars and spires all around the top. Breathe in your courage and breathe out your fear as you walk towards the huge castle door. As you get closer, continue to breathe in your courage and breathe out your fear. When you finally knock on the door, the king and queen come to greet you. They are pleased to see you and invite you in. When you are ready, open your eyes.



Dragon Breath

Imagine you are a fire-breathing dragon. Breathe in deeply through your nose and breathe out a long-whispered breath from the back of your throat to make an Ahhhhh sound out of your open mouth. Take two more dragon breaths.



Hot Chocolate

Close your eyes and imagine you are holding a mug of hot chocolate. Can you feel it warming your hands? Breathe in slowly and smell your hot chocolate. Breathe the aroma all the way into your belly. Breathe out slowly. Breathe in the aroma fully and breathe out completely. Repeat three times.



Ocean Breath

Close your eyes. Imagine your belly is like the ocean. Breathe in and let the waves gently rise. Breathe out and let the waves fall. Repeat three times, breathing in fully and breathing out deeply.



Peace

Close your eyes, sit quietly, and repeat these words slowly after me:

Peace before me ...

Peace behind me ...

Peace above me ...

Peace below me ...

Peace unto me ...

Peace to all

Repeat three times. When you feel peaceful, open your eyes.



Rainbow Relaxation

Close your eyes. Think of the colors of the rainbow. Breathe in the color green. Breathe out the color blue. Take long, slow breaths. Repeat three times.

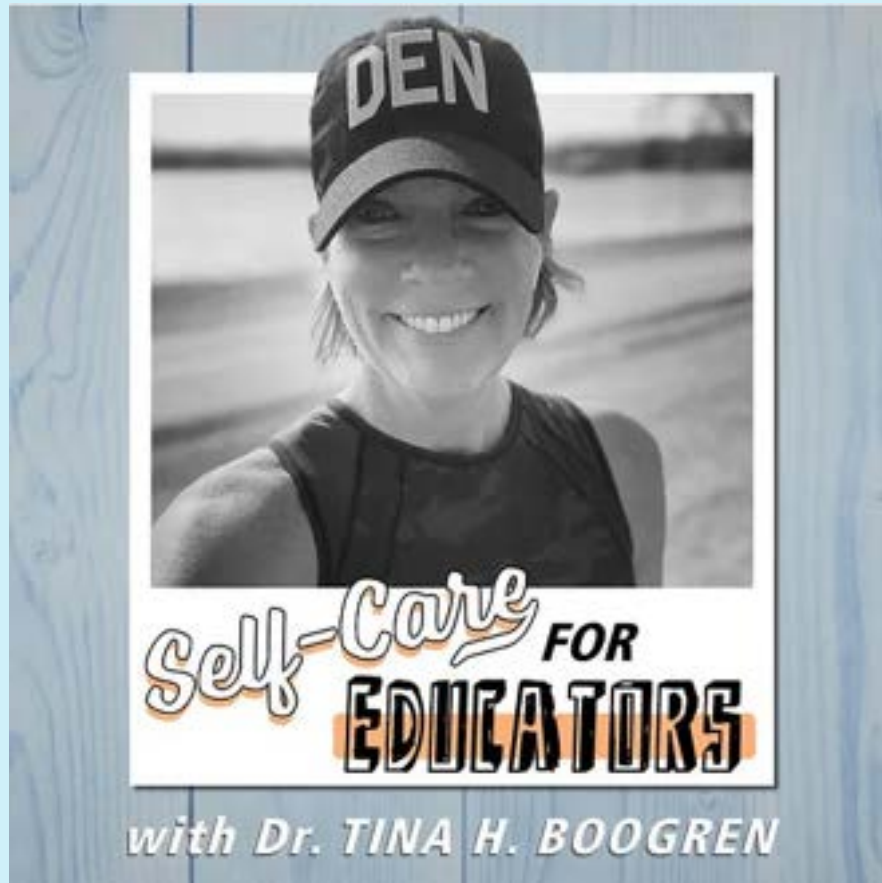
Feel free to change the colors to match the seasons.



Shark Fin

Place the tip of your thumb between your eyebrows and hold your fingers up straight to make a shark's fin. Close your eyes. Breathe in and out slowly. Repeat. Your shark is steady, focused, and relaxed.

More resources



Podcast: www.selfcareforeducators.com

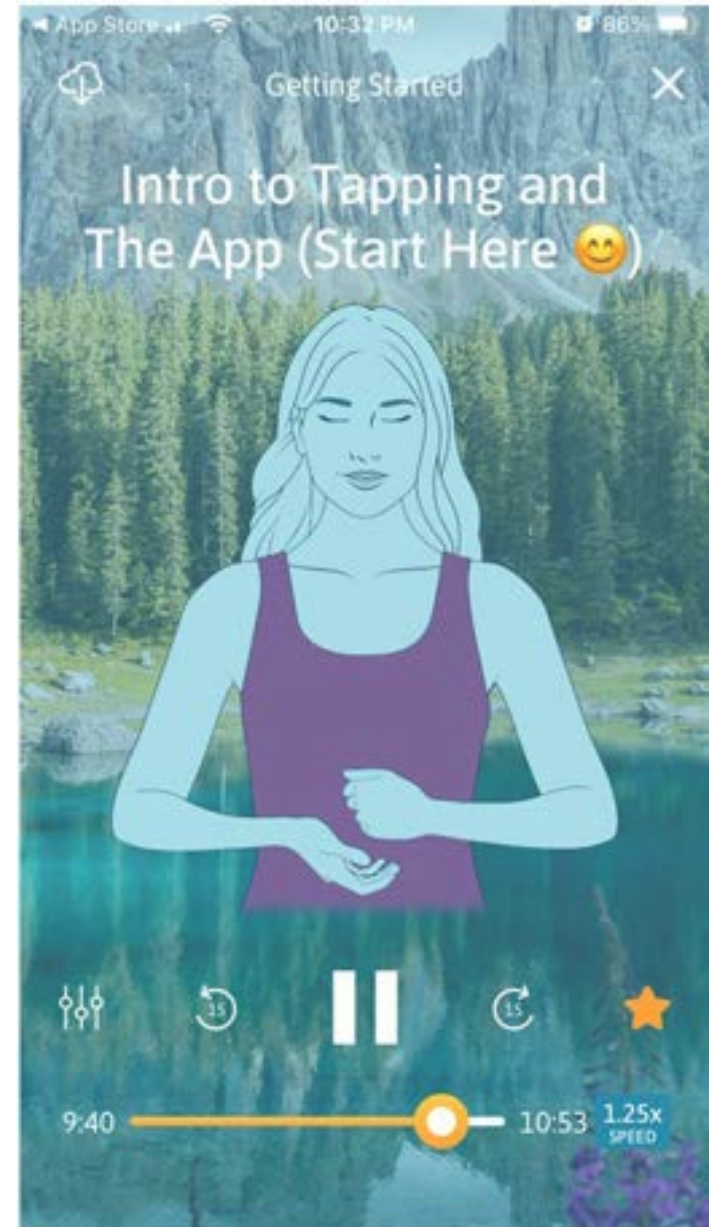
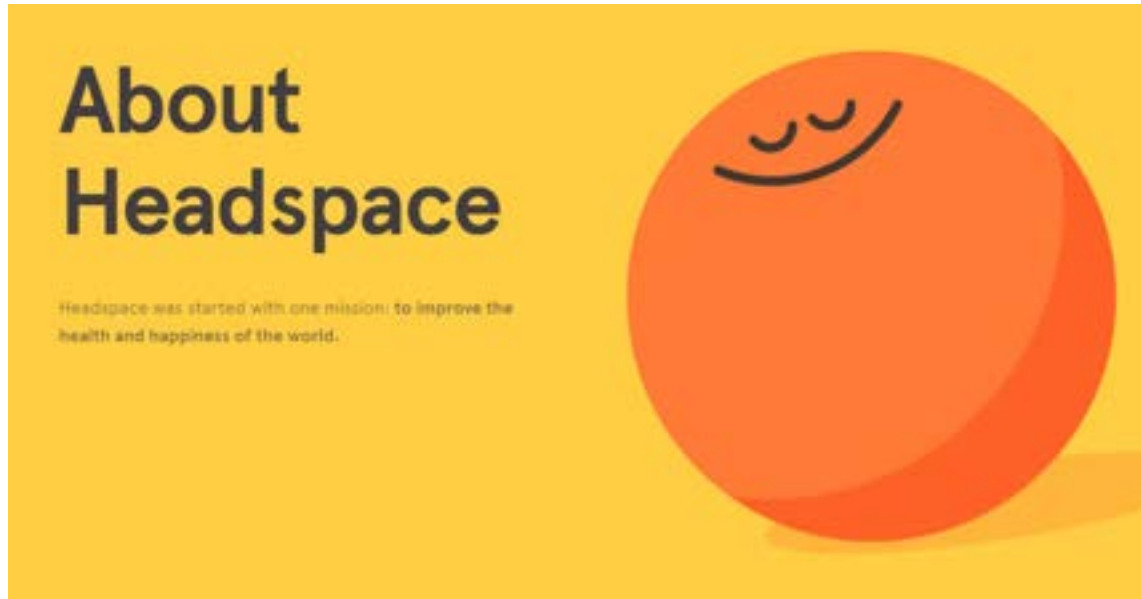


<https://insighttimer.com/>



4 Phase Meditation: Loving Kindness Compassion Joy & Equanimity

Digital Solutions



I learned lately that no one is going to hand me a permission slip and tell me to take time out for me.

- Wynonna Judd

The final word

You rarely have time for everything you want in this life, so you need to make choices. And hopefully your choices can come from a deep sense of who you are.

– Fred Rogers

Replace your worries
with your new tool box



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Thank YOU for
being here today.



<https://www.shopbecker.com/staff-wellness>

Joyfully yours,
Leslie



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