



Helping Your Team (and Yourself) Manage Stress

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**Stress is on
the rise...**

The Center for Disease Control estimates that 75% of medical visits are related to stress.





“Top leaders are also struggling: about 80 percent of executives reported mental health issues in 2020 and 38% turned to drugs or alcohol to cope with symptoms.”

-HBR article, 9/14/21



Stress is on the rise...

What can we do as managers and leaders to help our teams (and ourselves) effectively manage stress and anxiety?



Our agenda



The Fundamentals



Intention & Focus

Exercise: Values (three parts)

Exercise: Calendar Hack



Mindset


Exercise: CBT Worksheet

Exercise: Moving to Action

Headline:

By being intentional, we can train our brains to reduce stress.

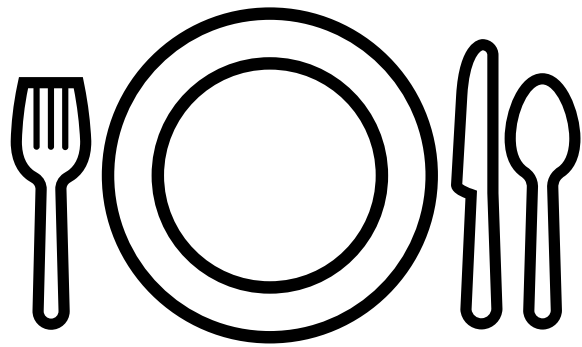




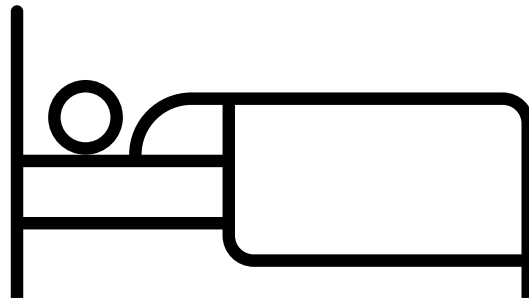
Stress: mental pressure or worry resulting from adverse or very **demanding circumstances**.

Anxiety: a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease, often about an imminent event with an **uncertain outcome**.

Blood Flow




7.1 vs. 6.2



40%





I've created an **addendum** of hardware and software tools and a **reading list** in case you want to delve deeper into any of the topics.



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Stress is often created from an **integrity gap** between what we sense is true and right for us and the way we're behaving.

Have you taken the time to articulate your **dearly held values**?

Exercise

Values Assessment

List of 230 Personal Core Values

Acceptance	Courage	Genius	Optimism	Smart
Accomplishment	Courtesy	Giving	Order	Solitude
Accountability	Creation	Goodness	Organization	Spirit
Accuracy	Creativity	Grace	Originality	Spirituality
Achievement	Credibility	Gratitude	Passion	Spontaneous
Adaptability	Curiosity	Greatness	Patience	Stability
Alertness	Decisive	Growth	Peace	Status
Altruism	Decisiveness	Happiness	Performance	Stewardship
Ambition	Dedication	Hard work	Persistence	Strength
Amusement	Dependability	Harmony	Playfulness	Structure
Assertiveness	Determination	Health	Poise	Success
Attentive	Development	Honesty	Potential	Support
Awareness	Devotion	Honor	Power	Surprise
Balance	Dignity	Hope	Present	Sustainability
Beauty	Discipline	Humility	Productivity	Talent
Boldness	Discovery	Imagination	Professionalism	Teamwork
Bravery	Drive	Improvement	Prosperity	Temperance
Brilliance	Effectiveness	Independence	Purpose	Thankful
Calm	Efficiency	Individuality	Quality	Thorough
Candor	Empathy	Innovation	Realistic	Thoughtful
Capable	Empower	Inquisitive	Reason	Timeliness
Careful	Endurance	Insightful	Recognition	Tolerance
Certainty	Energy	Inspiring	Recreation	Toughness
Challenge	Enjoyment	Integrity	Reflective	Traditional
Charity	Enthusiasm	Intelligence	Respect	Tranquility
Cleanliness	Equality	Intensity	Responsibility	Transparency
Clear	Ethical	Intuitive	Restraint	Trust
Clever	Excellence	Irreverent	Results-oriented	Trustworthy
Comfort	Experience	Joy	Reverence	Truth
Commitment	Exploration	Justice	Rigor	Understanding
Common sense	Expressive	Kindness	Risk	Uniqueness
Communication	Fairness	Knowledge	Satisfaction	Unity
Community	Family	Lawful	Security	Valor
Compassion	Famous	Leadership	Self-reliance	Victory
Competence	Fearless	Learning	Selfless	Vigor
Concentration	Feelings	Liberty	Sensitivity	Vision
Confidence	Ferocious	Logic	Serenity	Vitality
Connection	Fidelity	Love	Service	Wealth
Consciousness	Focus	Loyalty	Sharing	Welcoming
Consistency	Foresight	Mastery	Significance	Winning
Contentment	Fortitude	Maturity	Silence	Wisdom
Contribution	Freedom	Meaning	Simplicity	Wonder
Control	Friendship	Moderation	Sincerity	
Conviction	Fun	Motivation	Skill	
Cooperation	Generosity	Openness	Skillfulness	

Take the 5 words you chose that represent your **values** and turn them into actionable sentences.



E.G. 'Family'

I value my family and I will _____.

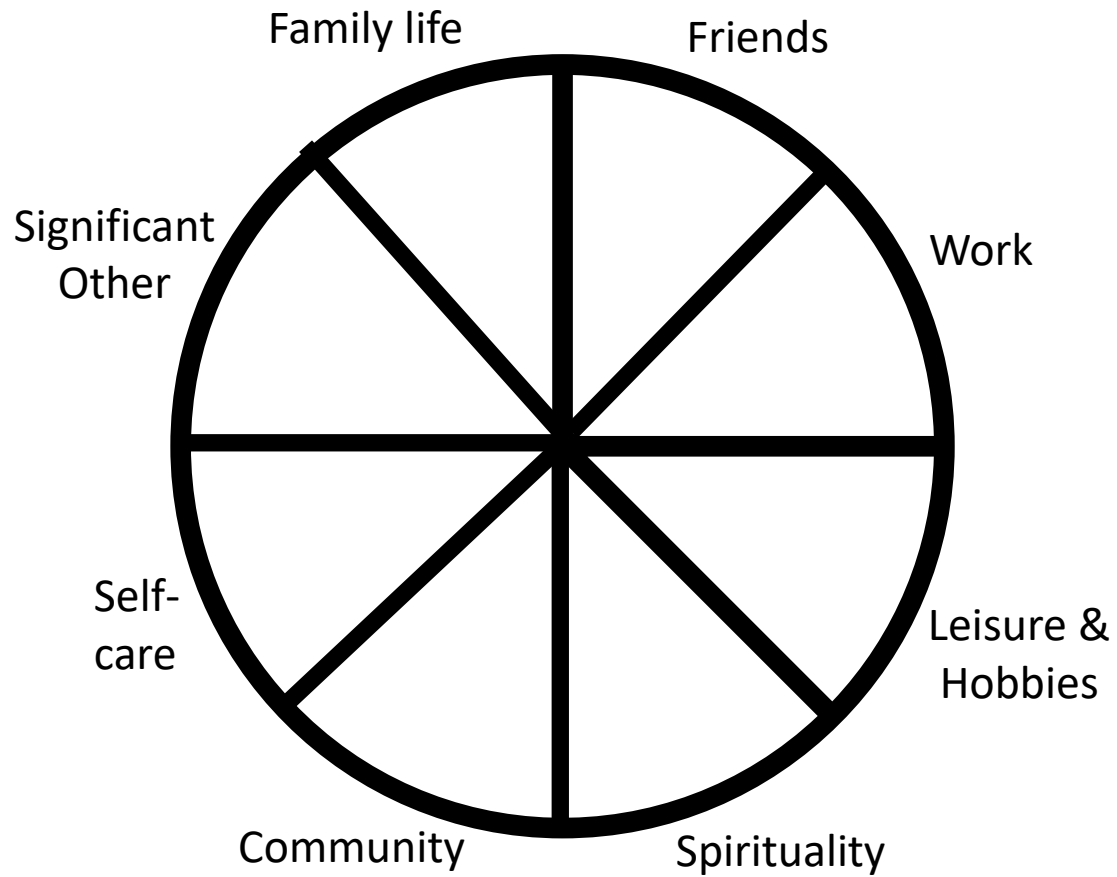
I value my family and when I get home from work, I will put my phone away in a drawer from 6:30-9pm.

Example: 5 Dearly Held Values

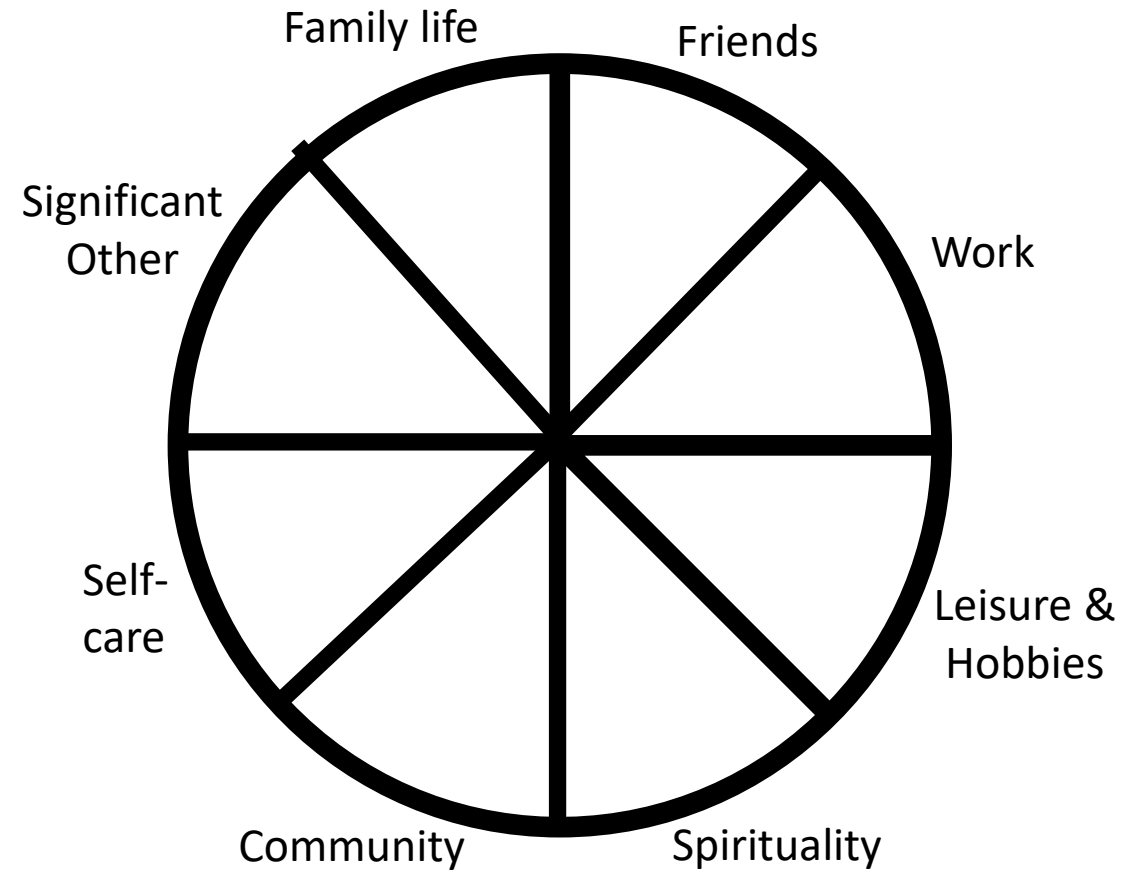
1. I value my family above all else. I will prioritize my time management decisions accordingly.
2. I value service – helping others and being useful. I will teach students and counsel entrepreneurs with a full heart and will train to become a Stephen Minister at church.
3. I value my health and am taking better care of my body. I'll prepare for a Lake Michigan swim.
4. I value continual improvement and at work I will deliver more value than I've been paid for – but will hold the line at 60 hours of work per week.
5. I have learned to value the little things in life and will remember to slow down and notice the beauty around me. I will go for nature walks at least 5 days per week.

The Wheel of Life Exercise

Now?

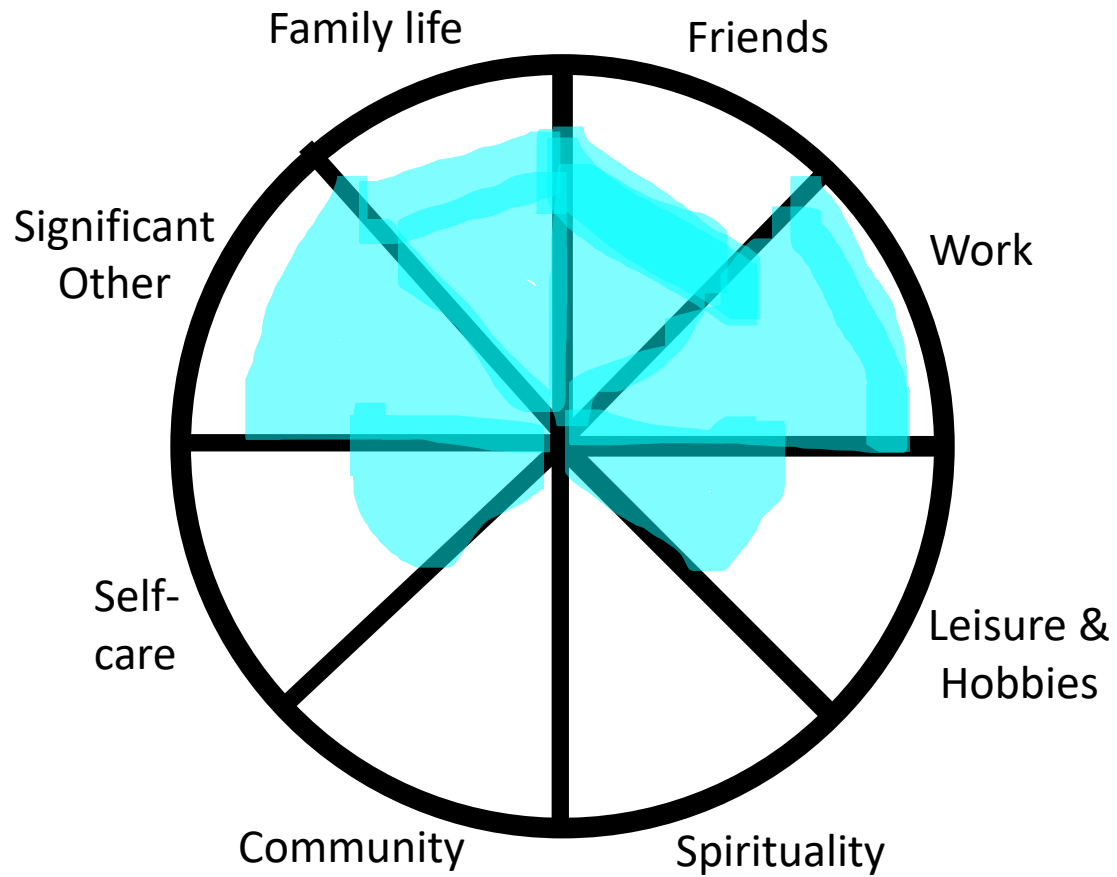


Adjusted with your values?

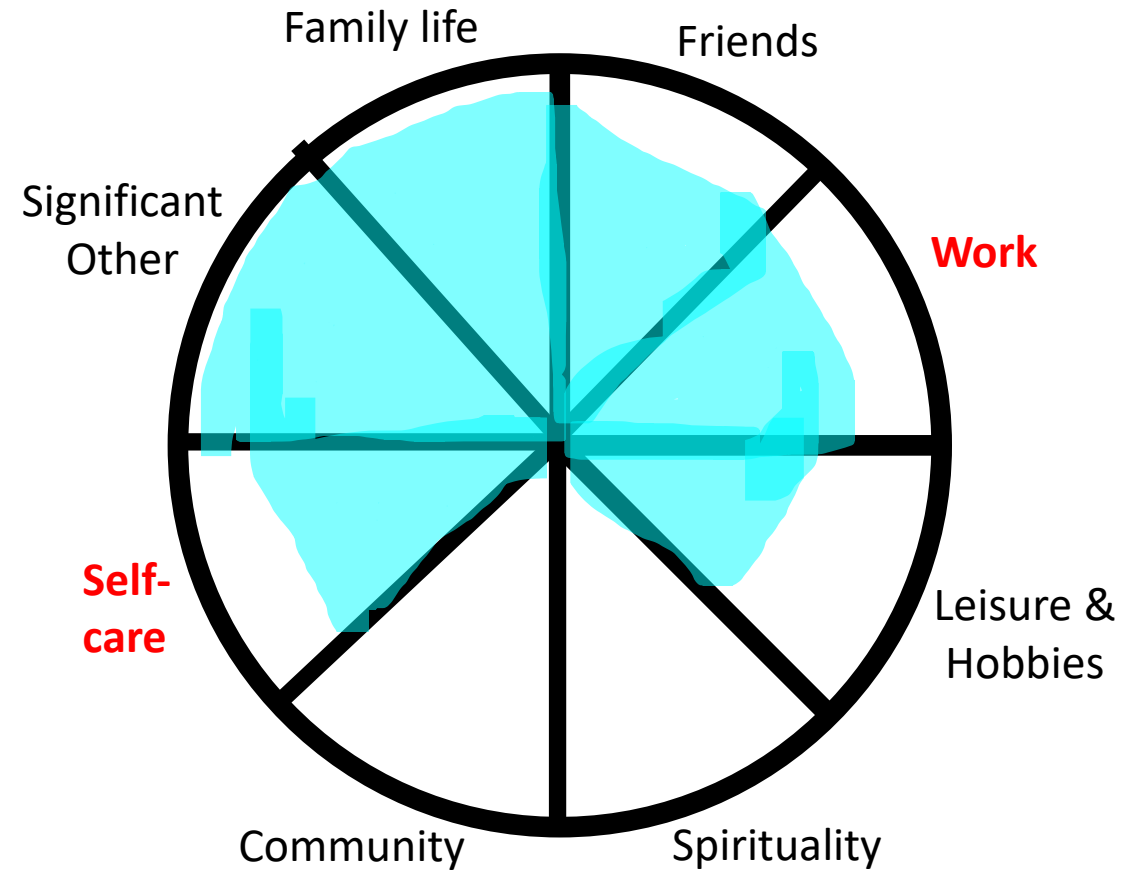


The Wheel of Life Exercise

Now?



Adjusted with your values?



*What are you going to say 'no' to,
in order to live your values?*

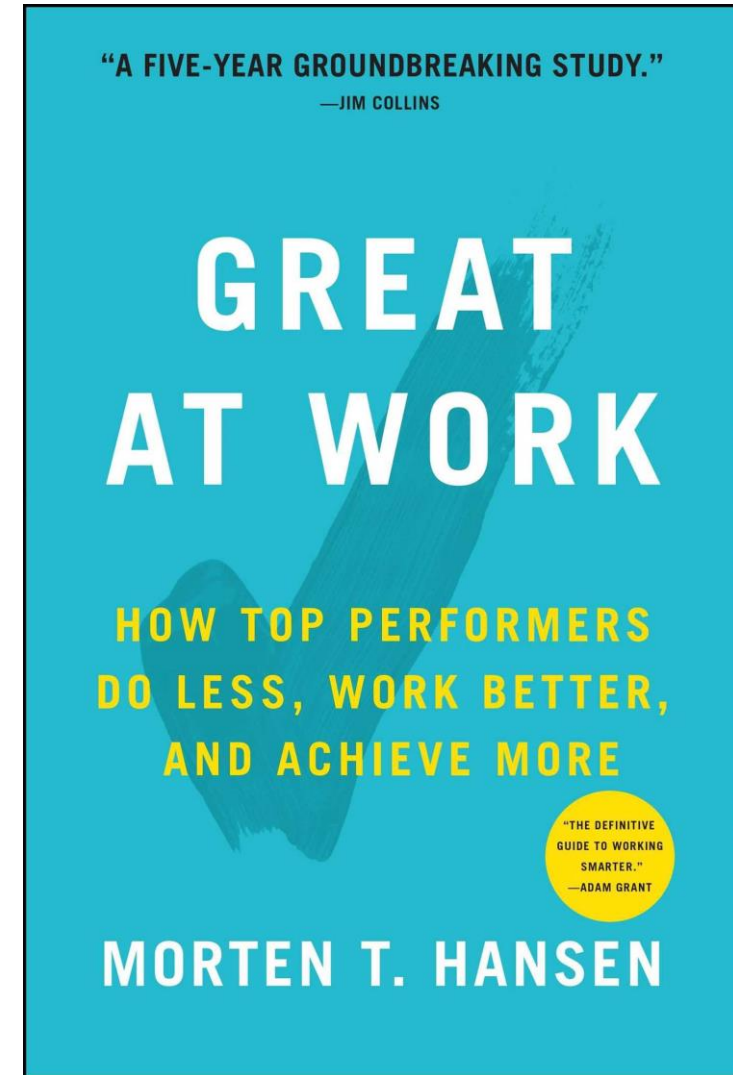


“People are effective because they
say ‘no’ and ‘this isn’t for me.’”
- Peter Drucker



Hansen's research behind being "Great at Work"

"In our quantitative study of 5,000 workers, we found that employees who chose a few key priorities and channel tremendous effort into doing exceptional work greatly outperform those who pursued a wider range of priorities."



The Concept of Essentialism:

Living by design, not default.

Taking a disciplined, systematic approach to determining your highest point of contribution and being very deliberate in how you spend your time.

Key Concepts of Essentialism

1. Explore & Evaluate

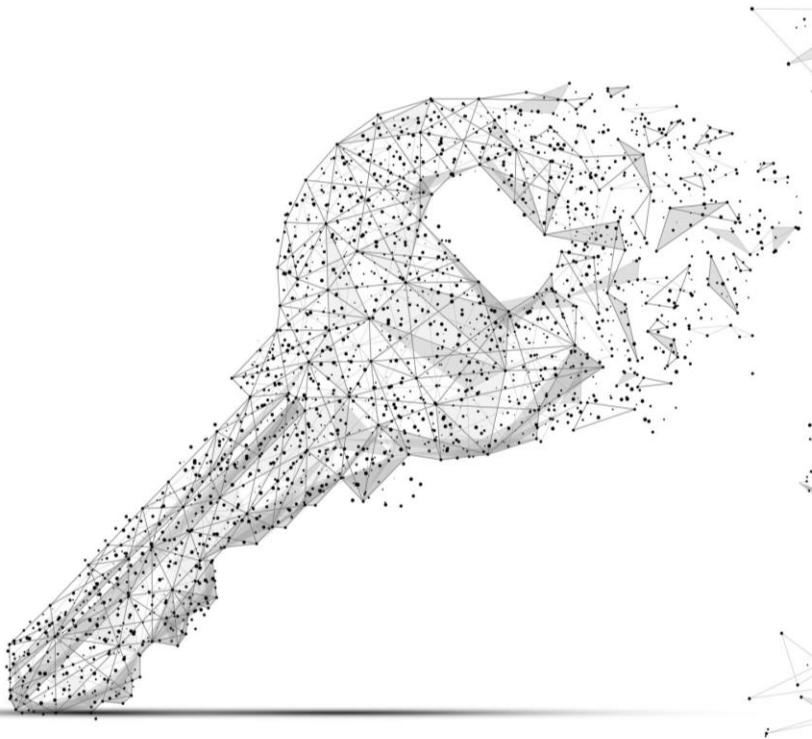
- a. Systematically explore and evaluate a broad set of options before committing.
- b. Ask three questions:
 - i. *What inspires me?*
 - ii. *Where am I talented?*
 - iii. *Is this significant (to me/the world)?*

2. Eliminate

- a. Decide, don't straddle. (Discuss 90% rule.)
- b. Eliminating often means pushing against social expectations and accepting the reality of trade-offs.
- c. Learn to say 'no' – but with tact.

3. Execute

- a. Don't work in response mode. Remember: *Your in-box is often someone's else agenda.*
- b. Batch your day and create time buffers.
- c. Manage your calendar – don't let it manage you.
- d. Re-prioritize on an ongoing basis.



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Is your calendar
working for you
or
are you working
for your calendar?



Take out your calendar and with your team, conduct a calendar hack.

- 1. Examine a typical work week and look for ways to simplify it.**
Discuss the number of hours you can cut by delegating tasks, reducing unnecessary meetings, cutting the meeting time, etc.
- 2. Now, discuss as a team, how you all might reallocate your saved time**
to other important areas such as ‘thinking work’, customer visits, time with your family, your health and fitness, etc.



Our agenda



The Fundamentals



Intention & Focus

Exercise: Values (three parts)

Exercise: Calendar Hack

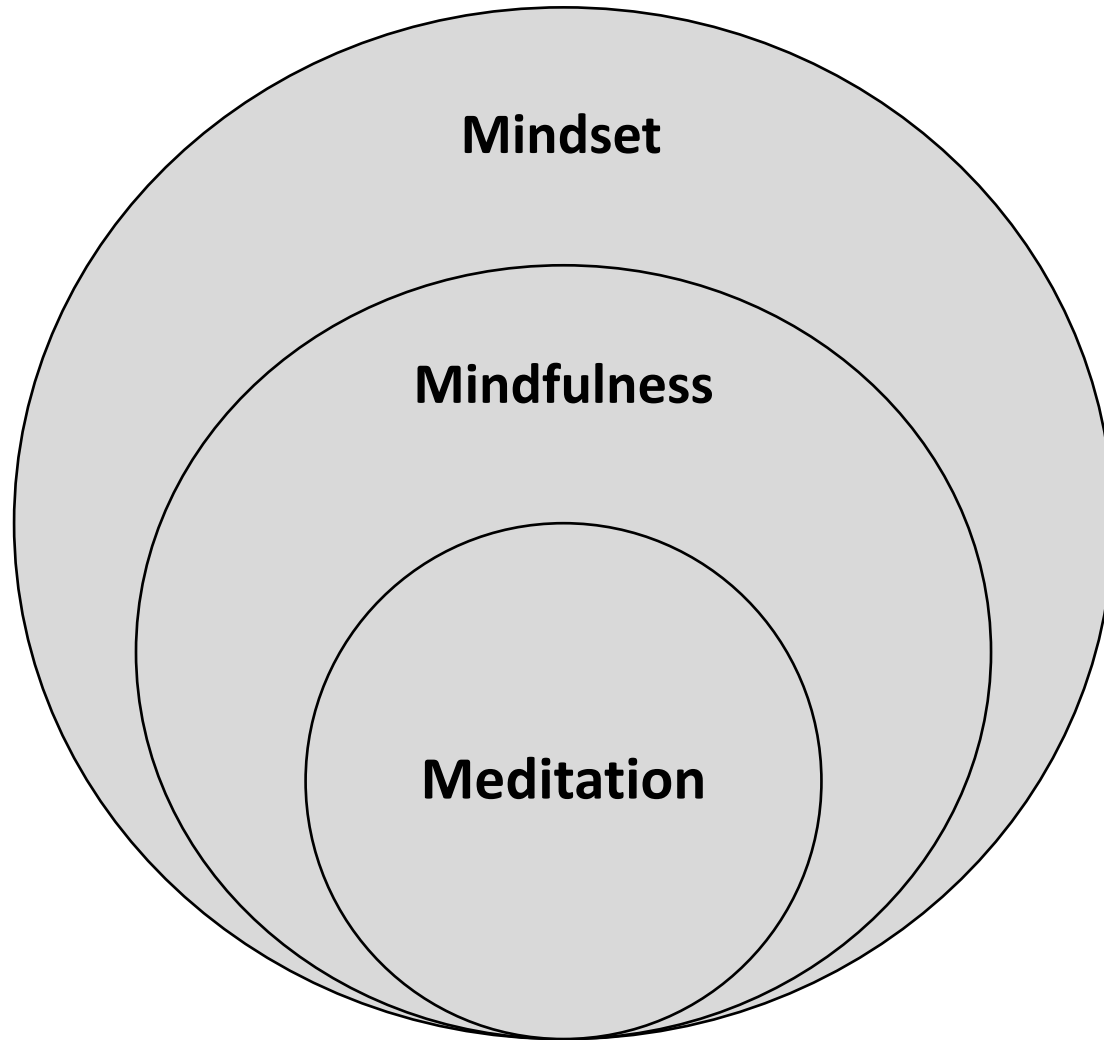


Mindset

Exercise: CBT Worksheet

Exercise: Moving to Action

A few definitions

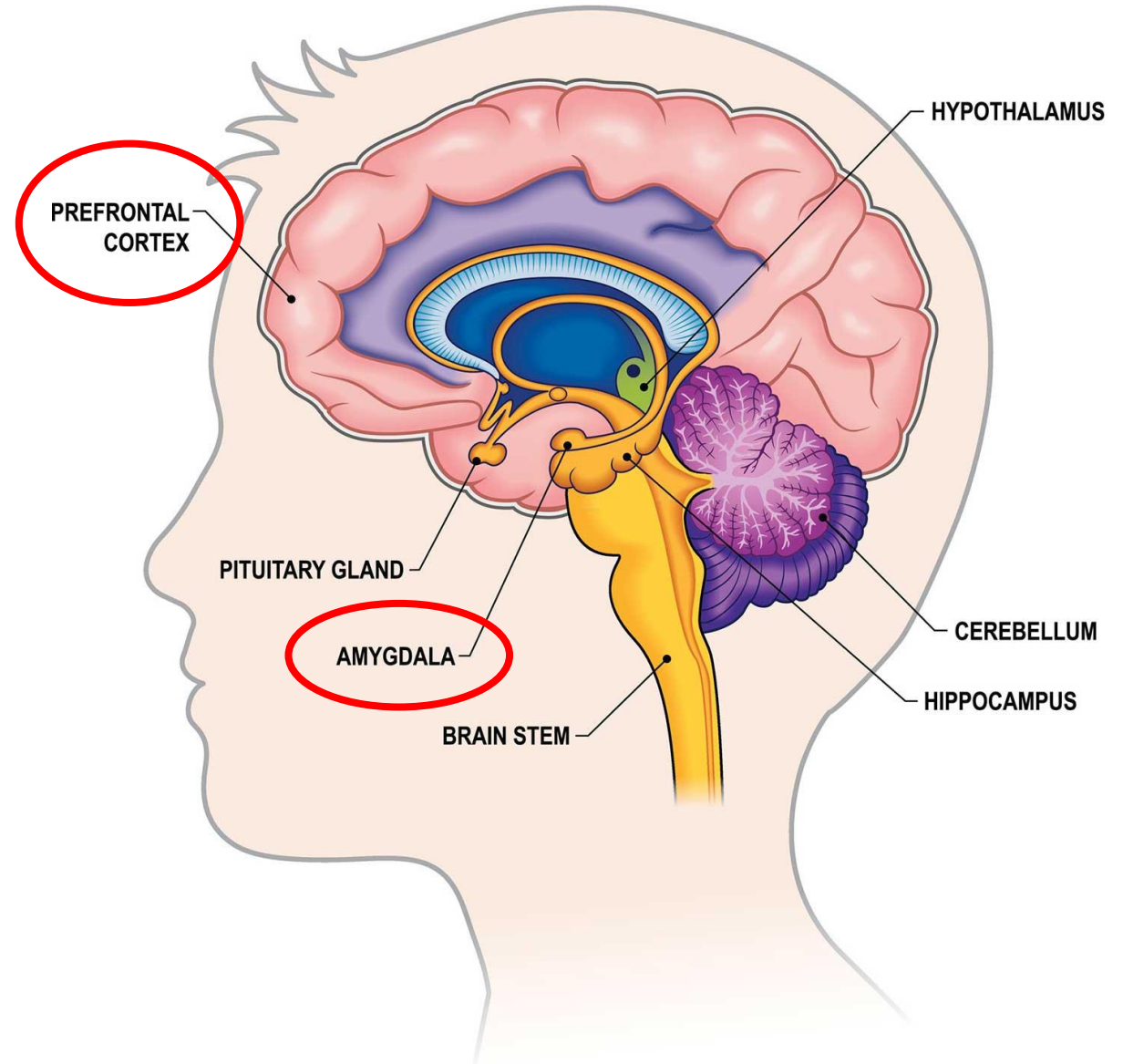


Mindset: our attitudes and beliefs that shape how we view the world.

Mindfulness: the awareness that arises by paying attention to the present moment, nonjudgmentally.

Meditation: a practice to train awareness and attention and achieve a mentally clear state.

Several key areas of our brain related to stress



**Another key area related to stress:
the Default Mode Network (DMN)**

(Mind wandering and worrying)



Our Negativity Bias

- A Harvard study showed that we get caught up in 'mind-wandering' for 47% of our waking lives.
- According to recent research, we have over 6,000 thoughts per day. Most are negative and repetitive. We have a negativity bias.
- Yet according to research, 85% of our worries never happen.

An Approach to Stress Reduction

1st Step

- **Recognize the stressor / negative thought**

- Trigger => Feeling => Behavior => Result

2nd Step

- **Pay attention to the results of your action**

- 'Play the old tape'

3rd Step

- **Find a better stress reduction alternative**

- Bring curious awareness to the situation

- ✓ Key tools: **CBT** and **meditation**

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

CBT is simply a method of examining the accuracy of your thoughts. You identify any distortions and uncover alternative, accurate ways of thinking.


To practice CBT, when you have a recurring negative thought, ask yourself questions like:

- ✓ *What evidence do I have for this negative thought to be true?*
- ✓ *Are there any viable alternative explanations?*
- ✓ *What happens if I flip perspectives?*

My Trip to Bentonville

I will walk through this
CBT Worksheet with an example.

THOUGHT DISPUTATION EXERCISE (A CBT model adapted from ActivInsight)

EXERCISE 

1. Write a concise sentence describing something that you experience as stressful. It's helpful to use the words "should" or "shouldn't." (Example: My spouse should more understanding when I get home from a hard day at work.)

2. How strongly do you feel this belief is true? (1-10 scale, 10 = strongest).

3. How do you feel when you believe this? (e.g. afraid, angry, abandoned, annoyed, anxious, confused, depressed, desperate, embarrassed, frustrated, helpless, impatient, hurt, nervous, jealous, etc.)

4. How do you act when you feel this way? (e.g. argue, blame, belittle, complain, cry, drink, eat, fight, escape, give up, gossip, interrupt, lose sleep, obsess, overwork, preach, pretend, shut down, smoke, yell, etc.)

5. Write the negation of your statement from step one. Try adding 'In reality' at the beginning of your new statement and 'at this time' at the beginning or end. (Example: In reality, at this time, my spouse shouldn't be more understanding when I come home from work.)

6. Write below all the proof you can find that supports the new negation statement. You may want to write more than one negation statement. (Example: In reality, at this time, my spouse shouldn't be more understanding when I come home from work, given that I am often cross and stressed out and I quickly retreat to my office.)

7. How do you feel if/when you see the truth behind your negation statement(s)? (e.g.: calm, clear, compassionate, curious, enlightened, enthusiastic, excited, free, grateful, honest, humble, peaceful, happy, optimistic, supportive, tolerant, truthful, understanding, etc.)

8. What actions might come from this? (e.g. acceptance, apologize, communicate, delegate, exercise, explore, focus, follow through, forgive, give thanks, listen, make amends, network, open up, participate, prioritize, reach out, share, support, etc.)

9. Now read your original statement from step one again. How strongly do you feel this belief to be true now? (1-10 scale, 10 = strongest).

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THOUGHT DISPUTATION EXERCISE

(A CBT model adapted from ActivInsight)

- 1. Write a concise sentence describing something that you experience as stressful.** It's helpful to use the words "should" or "shouldn't." (Example: My spouse should more understanding when I get home from a hard day at work.)

The Bentonville leaders should have been more open to and supportive of my Walmart.com strategic direction.

- 2. How strongly do you feel this belief is true?** (1-10 scale, 10 = strongest).

8

- 3. How do you feel when you believe this?** (e.g. afraid, angry, abandoned, annoyed, anxious, confused, depressed, desperate, embarrassed, frustrated, helpless, impatient, hurt, nervous, jealous, etc.)

Angry, frustrated, exasperated, anxious, even helpless

- 4. How do you act when you feel this way?** (e.g. argue, blame, belittle, complain, cry, drink, eat, fight, escape, give up, gossip, interrupt, lose sleep, obsess, overwork, preach, pretend, shut down, smoke, yell, etc.)

I tried to be persuasive, but when it didn't work I retreated and licked my wounds. Then I complained to people close to me about their lack of vision. I lost sleep over it too - 'If I can't get their support, why am I here...?'

5. Write the negation of your statement from step one. Try adding 'In reality' at the beginning of your new statement and 'at this time' at the beginning or end. (Example: In reality, at this time, my spouse shouldn't be more understanding when I come home from work.)

In reality, at this time, the Bentonville leaders shouldn't be more open to and supportive of my Walmart.com strategic direction.

6. Write below all the proof you can find that supports the new negation statement. You may want to write more than one negation statement. (Example: In reality, at this time, my spouse shouldn't be more understanding when I come home from work, given that I am often cross and stressed out and I quickly retreat to my office.)

In reality, at this time, the Bentonville leaders shouldn't be more open and supportive of my Walmart.com strategic direction because I didn't pre-sell the Walmart.com vision enough and may have caught them a bit off-guard.

In reality, at this time, the Bentonville leaders shouldn't be more open and supportive of my Walmart.com strategic direction because the timing of my presentation was unfortunate - our earnings was the next day and they seemed distracted.

In reality, at this time, the Bentonville leaders shouldn't be more open and supportive of my Walmart.com strategic direction because the Supercenter stores model of growth was still viable (ROIC is over 25%).

In reality, at this time, the Bentonville leaders shouldn't be more open and supportive of my Walmart.com strategic direction because my audience was all store-centric operators - they weren't immersed in the disruptive power of the Internet as I was...



7. How do you feel if/when you see the truth behind your negation statement(s)? (e.g.: calm, clear, compassionate, curious, enlightened, enthusiastic, excited, free, grateful, honest, humble, peaceful, happy, optimistic, supportive, tolerant, truthful, understanding, etc.)

Calmer, more tolerant and less frustrated and exasperated

8. What actions might come from this? (e.g. acceptance, apologize, communicate, delegate, exercise, explore, focus, follow through, forgive, give thanks, listen, make amends, network, open up, participate, prioritize, reach out, share, support, etc.)

Finding opportunities to educate the Bentonville leaders on the possibilities of the Internet and our role in it. Also looking for other ways to seed the Walmart.com vision - 1:1 and also more 'improptu' discussions in a more casual environment in Bentonville...maybe over dinner.

9. Now read your original statement from step one again. How strongly do you feel this belief to be true now?

(1-10 scale, 10 = strongest).

5

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Complete the CBT Worksheet



Meditating...

Four Big Benefits of Meditating

- 1) Helps reduce stress and anxiety.**
- 2) Increases ability to concentrate.**
- 3) Can reduce blood pressure.**
- 4) Helps rewire our brain.**



Meditation: Rewiring the brain

An ENORMOUS research finding from the past 20 years:

We can change the neural make-up of our brain.





If meditating isn't your bag, you might try:

- **Walking meditation**: Go outside and take walk. Clear your mind. Note your legs and your breath as you walk. Soak in the sounds & smells without evaluating anything.
- **Noontime break**: Find a time, mid-day, to unplug for a short period of time. I put on headphones (play ambient music), turn off my lights, lock the door, sit with good posture and focus on my breath, nothing else, for 15 minutes.
- **Body scan**: You feel stressed. Your muscles are TIGHT. So conduct a body scan. Start with your facial muscles and move all the way down to your toes. Gently prod yourself: 'Relax my trapezius muscles – let my shoulders fall.'
- **Mindset check-ins**: Are you ruminating, going through that doom loop over an event? Examine your thoughts: "Am I interpreting this situation accurately? Are there other explanations I should consider?"

Reorienting toward Positivity

- ✓ Develop good habits around the fundamentals (**eat, sleep, exercise**).
- ✓ Establish your **non-negotiable values** and make them actionable.
- ✓ Use **CBT** to challenge your negative interpretation of events.
- ✓ Create **mantras**.
- ✓ Get **outside** – breathe it in!
- ✓ Assess (and possibly reduce?) your **media diet**.
- ✓ Reduce your time spent with **negative people**.
- ✓ Develop a **mindfulness practice**: meditation, yoga, quiet walks, etc.



Now what?

Write down **three action steps** you and your team members will commit to taking coming out of this session.

Possible Action Areas

Sleeping: _____

Eating: _____

Exercise: _____

Intention: _____

Mindfulness: _____

Thank you

