



**TOOL KIT OF FAST, EFFECTIVE
RELAXATION TECHNIQUES FOR BUSY
PEOPLE**

with Kristy von Minden



REST + RELAXATION HOLD THE SECRET TO...

SHORT TERM



REST + RELAXATION HOLD THE SECRET TO...

LONG TERM



**If you don't make time for
your wellness, you will be
forced to make time for
your illness.**









HEALTH CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH A DYSREGULATED NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Headaches
- Neck and shoulder pain
- Insomnia
- Auto immune disorders
- Chronic and adrenal fatigue
- Addiction
- Heart problems
- Digestive issues
- More serious infection and disease

REFLECTION

Can you bring to mind a time in your life where you didn't prioritise rest and relaxation?

And what was the impact for you?

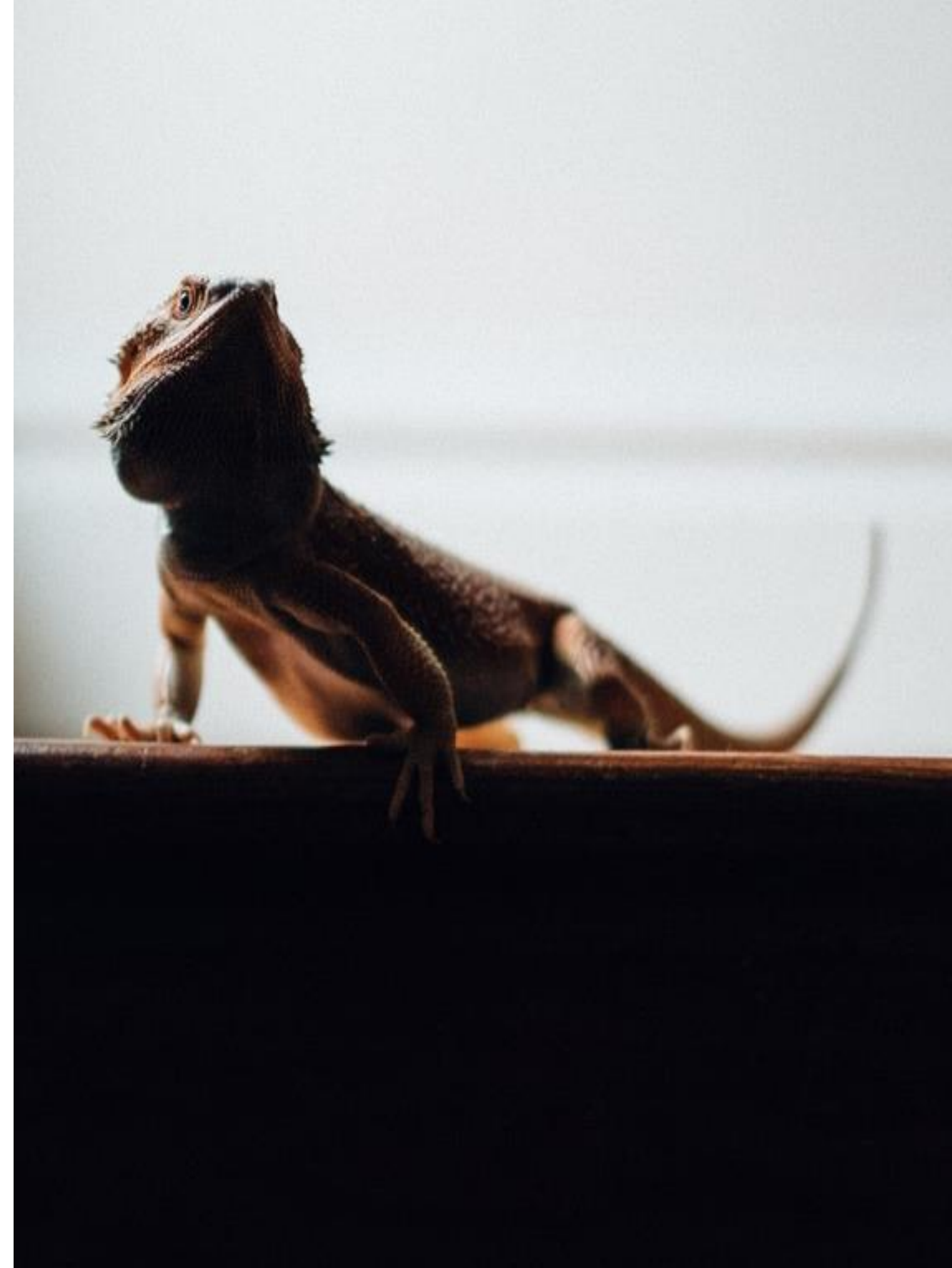
Module 1

The Science of Stress + Relaxation

SOUTHERN CROSS WORK PLACE WELLNESS SURVEY 2017

WHERE DOES STRESS COME FROM?

- Where in the body does stress start?
- The BRAIN
- We've evolved from simple creatures to complex lifeforms
- Brains were designed for **SURVIVAL**
- Lizard brain lived in simple yet more dangerous times
- Constantly scanning for signs of **SAFETY OR DANGER**



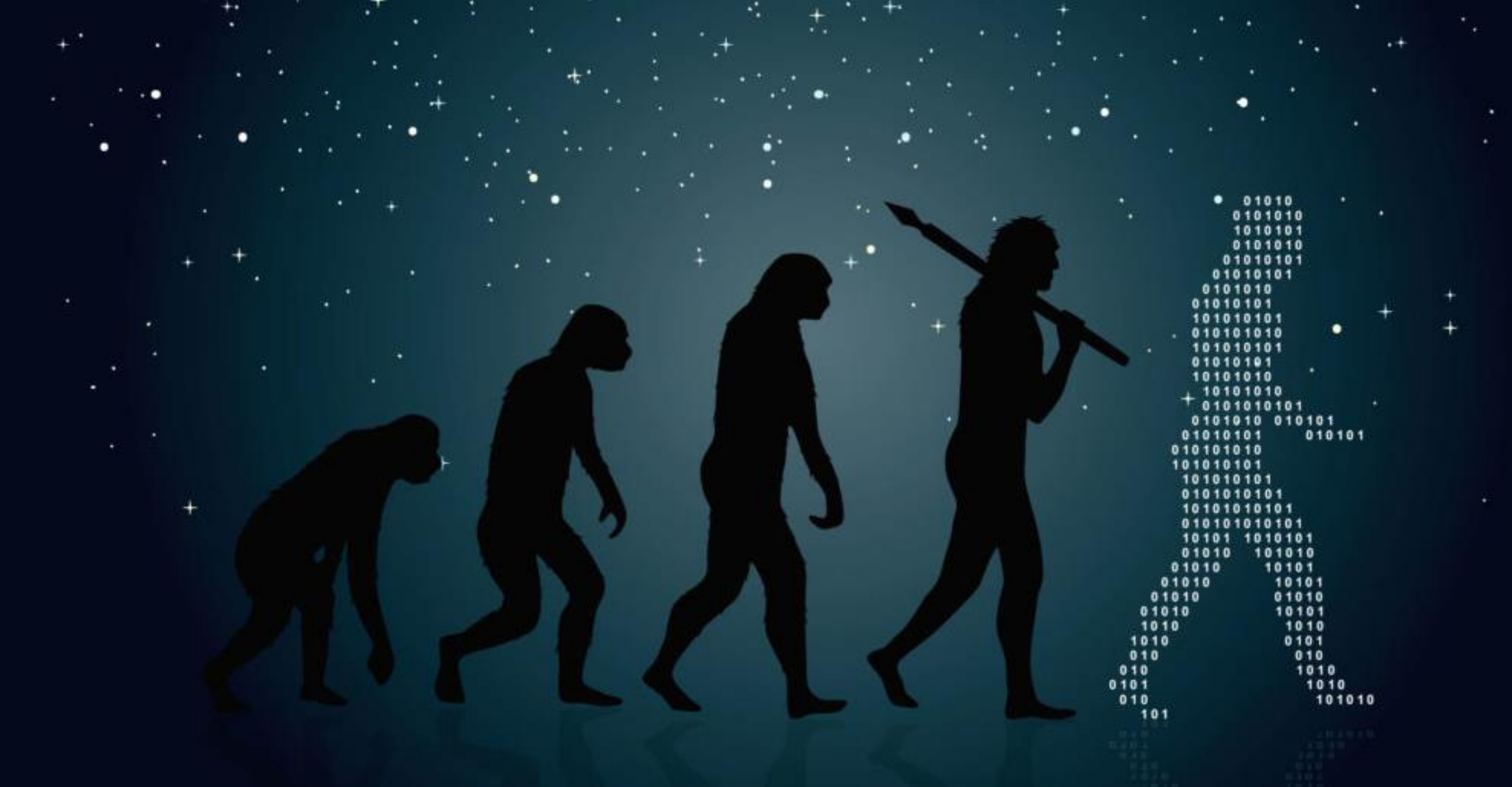
SAFETY + DANGER IN THE BRAIN

DANGER
Fight ,Flight,
Freeze

Stress Response

SAFETY
Rest + Digest +
Repair

Relaxation Response



REAL OR PERCEIVED DANGER?

Tiger crashing through the jungle
about to eat you
= Fight or Flight response engaged

Stuck in traffic / running late for a
meeting
= Fight or Flight response engaged

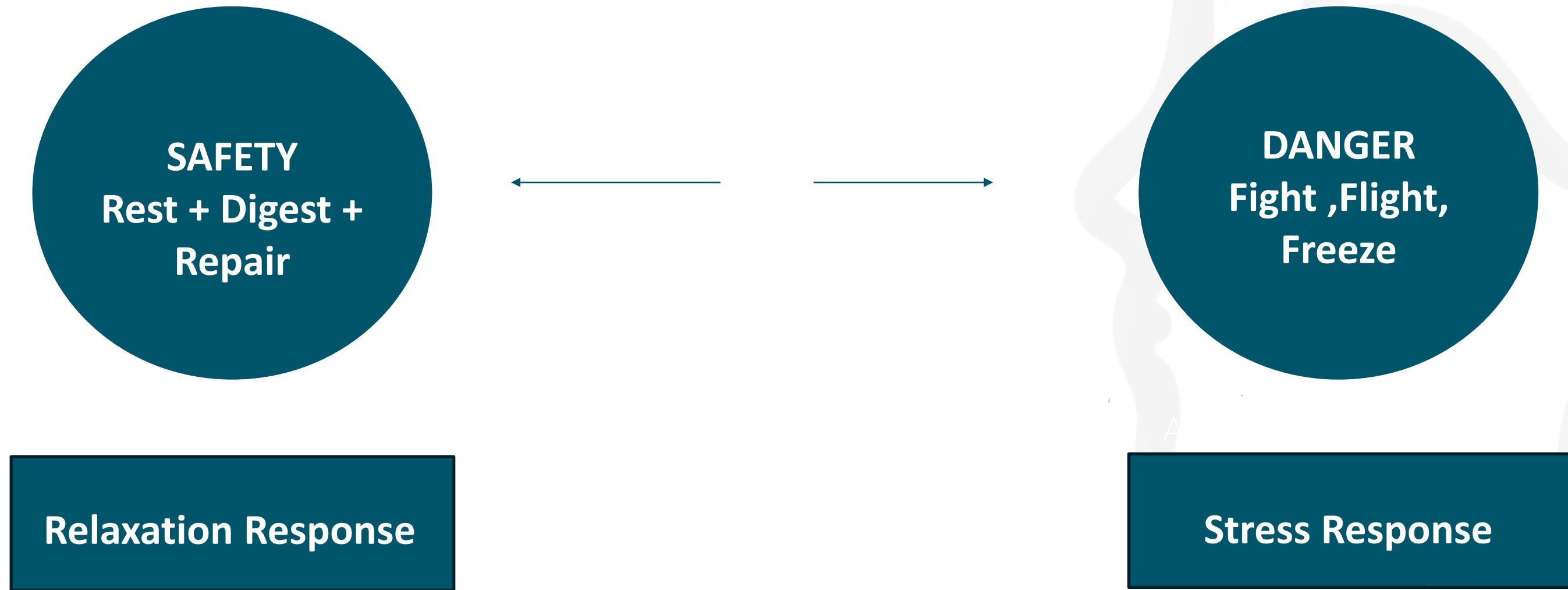


Module 2

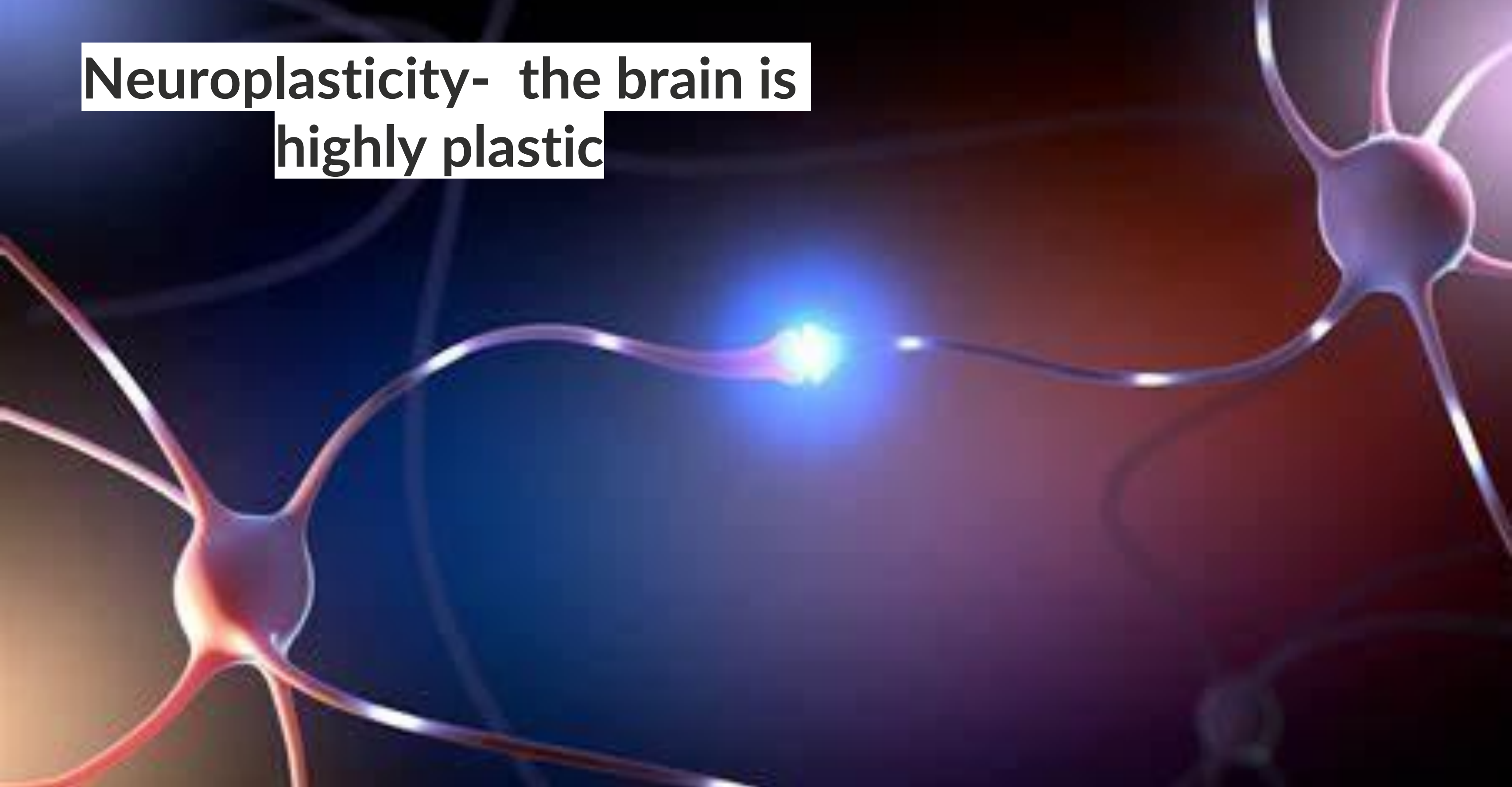
What can we learn from Neuroscience?

SOUTHERN CROSS WORK PLACE WELLNESS SURVEY 2017

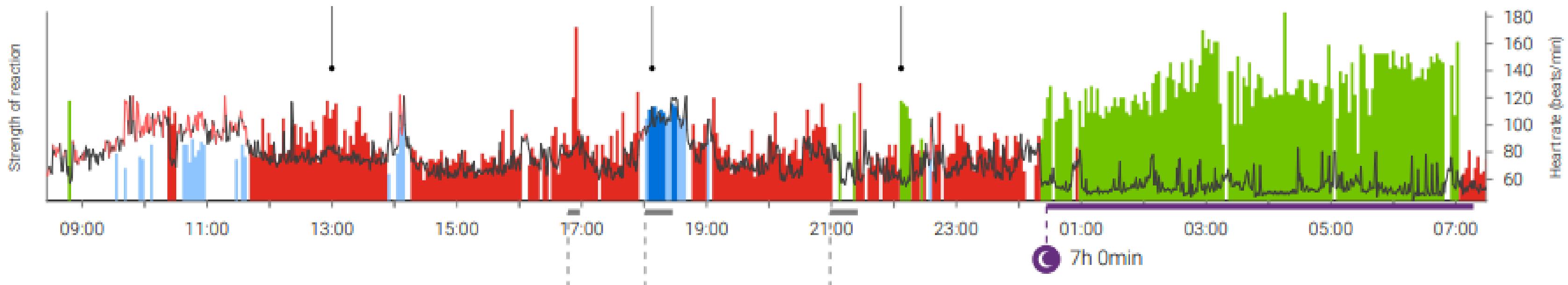
SAFETY + DANGER IN THE BRAIN



Neuroplasticity- the brain is highly plastic



REST + RELAX RECOVERY TIME



Lifestyle assessment report by First Beat

Why stress is not the problem...)

SOUTHERN CROSS WORK PLACE WELLNESS SURVEY 2017



**We've lost the art of
rest + relaxation**

EXERCISE

What are the triggers for safety zone?

- Exercise or sport
- Time in nature
- Bath, swimming, shower
- Spending time with loved ones or animals
- Hobbies (art, crafts, gardening, cooking)
- Reading
- Music, singing, dancing
- Being present and slow

Module 3

How the stress + relaxation responses effect our brains and bodies

SOUTHERN CROSS WORKPLACE WELLNESS SURVEY 2017

“

Stress is the health
epidemic of the 21st
Century.

”

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

DANGER ZONE

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Prepares you for intense physical action

- Rapid breath for increased oxygen
- Rapid heart rate for increased energy
- Increases blood flow and volume to pump muscles for action with maximum strength and speed
- Trembling due tensed muscles
- Dilated pupils for hyper alertness



DANGER ZONE

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Disengages systems not vital for saving your life

- Digestion
- Reproduction
- Immune function
- Executive functioning of your brain



SAFETY ZONE

REST AND DIGEST

- Heal
- Restore/ replenish
- Digest
- Feel resilient
- Produce energy
- Process
- Create
- Problem solve
- Joy
- Happiness
- Harmonious relationships



Module 4

Where to next? Your relaxation toolkit

SOUTHERN CROSS SCHOOL OF POLICE VELOCITY SS-IRV-2017

“

The secret of suffering is
to focus your energy not
on fighting the old but on
building the new. ”

SOCRATES

Toolkit of fast, effective relaxation techniques

These tools are evidence-based strategies you can use anytime you feel stressed, overwhelmed or anxious, to calm your nervous system and switch off your 'fight or flight' response. You can also use these proactively to build resilience to life's stressors.

Movement.

The 'fight or flight' response is designed to be followed by a short burst of physical activity to use the energy created by the body and metabolise the stress hormones. Our cavemen ancestors would have fought or run into the cave, but we are mostly sitting at our desks or in traffic when stressed.

Try anything that gets your heart rate up for five minutes e.g. stairs, star jumps, squats, walking around the block vigorously. It will return you to homeostasis and also release feel good hormones like endorphins.

Hum, sing or gargle.

This activates the relaxation response and tones the vagus nerve, which increases resilience.

Meditate.

Find a quiet space and focus on your breath or use a guided relaxation meditation. Meditation is one of the most well researched ways to calm your mind and promote the relaxation response. Even meditating for 1 minute is enough to slow your brain waves down, which will help you feel calmer and better able to focus. Try a guided meditation on an app like Headspace, Calm or Insight Timer.

Mindful Colouring.

Our brain loves colouring. There's something about colour, the small, repetitive strokes and staying within the lines that helps us stay present, reduces our heart rate, slows our brain waves and calms the fear response in our brain. It also boosts creativity and mental energy. Try 5-10 mins and use calming music for an extra boost of relaxation.

Diaphragmatic breathing.

Take 10 – 15 slow, deep belly breaths, as opposed to chest breathing, really extending the exhale. This sends a signal to our amygdala (the fear centre of the brain) that we are safe, which overrides the stress response, reverses the production of stress hormones and slows down our heart rate.

Mindfulness.

Put your phone away and bring yourself into the present moment, engaging your senses, for just a few minutes. This will promote the relaxation response, 'rest, digest and repair'. Try one of the following exercises:

- Mindful eating
- Mindful walking
- Mindful driving
- Mindful cuppa
- Mindful shower/bath
- Mindful time in nature

Other ideas.

The following also promote the relaxation response, as your nervous system will have tagged them as safe:

- Gardening
- Dancing
- Playing with children or animals
- Giving and kindness
- Yoga, Qi Gong
- Massage and touch
- Surfing
- Laughter
- Singing
- Calming music
- Gratitude

Fast, effective relaxation techniques

These tools are essential. Use them whenever you can use anytime you feel stressed, overwhelmed or anxious, to calm your nervous system and switch off your 'fight or flight' response. You can also use these proactively to build resilience to life's stressors.

1. Mindful Colouring

The 'fight or flight' response is designed to be followed by a short burst of physical activity to use the energy created by the body and metabolise the stress hormones. Our cavemen ancestors would have fought or run into the cave, but we are mostly sitting at our desks or in traffic when stressed. Try anything that gets your heart rate up for five minutes e.g. stairs, star jumps, squats, walking around the block vigorously. It will return you to homeostasis and also release feel good hormones like endorphins.

Hum, sing or gargle.

This activates the relaxation response and tones the vagus nerve, which increases resilience.

Meditate.

Find a quiet space and focus on your breath or use a guided relaxation meditation. Meditation is one of the most well researched ways to calm your mind and promote the relaxation response. Even meditating for 1 minute is enough to slow your brain waves down, which will help you feel calmer and better able to focus. Try a guided meditation on an app like Headspace, Calm or Insight Timer.

Mindful Colouring.

Our brain loves colouring. There's something about colour, the small, repetitive strokes and staying within the lines that helps us stay present, reduces our heart rate, slows our brain waves and calms the fear response in our brain. It also boosts creativity and mental energy. Try 5-10 mins and use calming music for an extra boost of relaxation.

Take 10 – 15 slow, deep belly breaths, as opposed to chest breathing, really extending the exhale. This sends a signal to our amygdala (the fear centre of the brain) that we are safe, which overrides the stress response, reverses the production of stress hormones and slows down our heart rate.

Mindfulness.

Put your phone away and bring yourself into the present moment, engaging your senses, for just a few minutes. This will promote the relaxation response, 'rest, digest and repair'. Try one of the following exercises:

- Mindful eating
- Mindful walking
- Mindful driving
- Mindful cuppa
- Mindful shower/bath
- Mindful time in nature

Other ideas.

The following also promote the relaxation response, as your nervous system will have tagged them as safe:

- Gardening
- Dancing
- Playing with children or animals
- Giving and kindness
- Yoga, Qi Gong
- Massage and touch
- Surfing
- Laughter
- Singing
- Calming music
- Gratitude



Search



16°



ENG UK



6:54 AM 3/04/2023



MINDFUL COLOURING

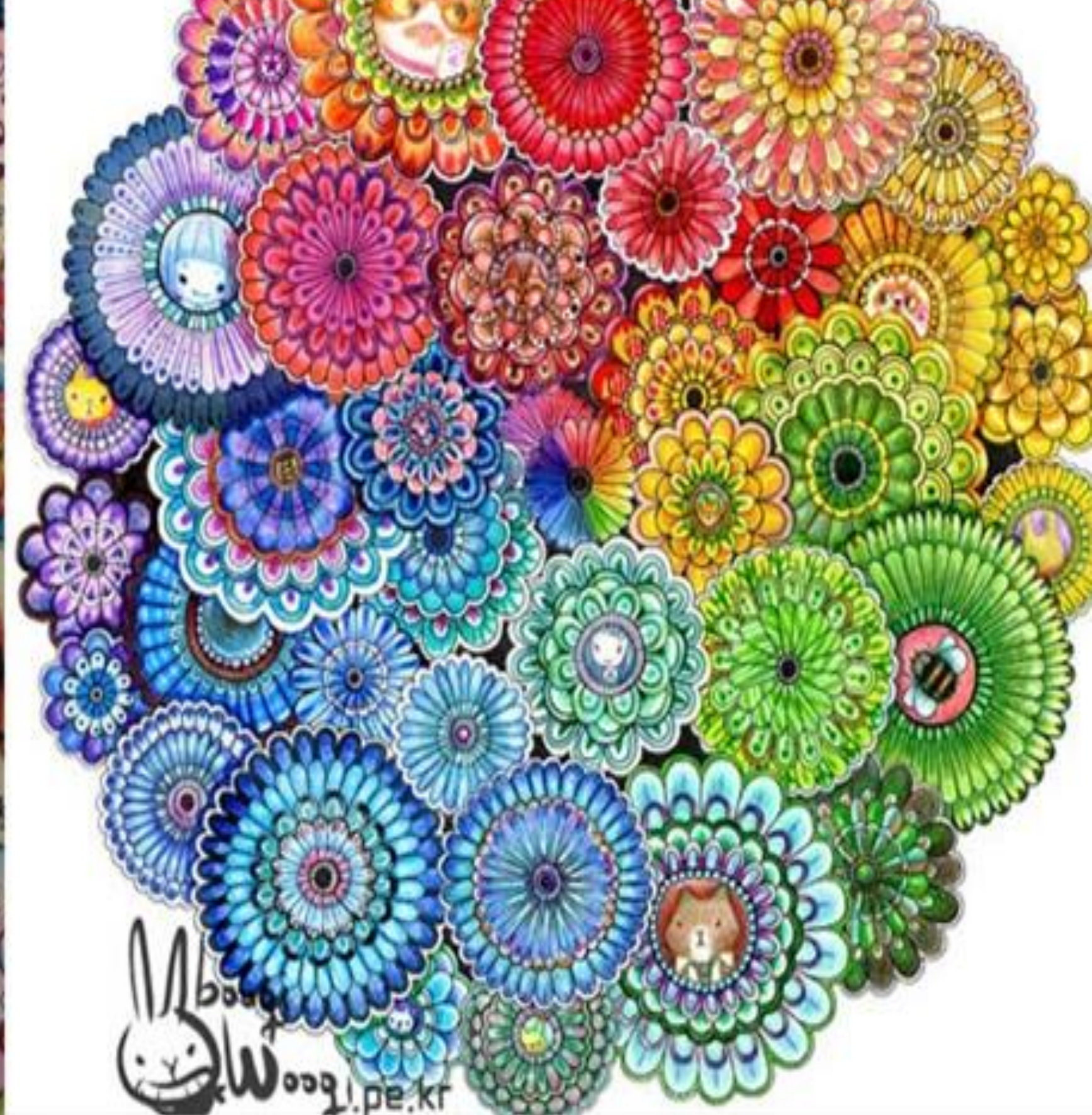
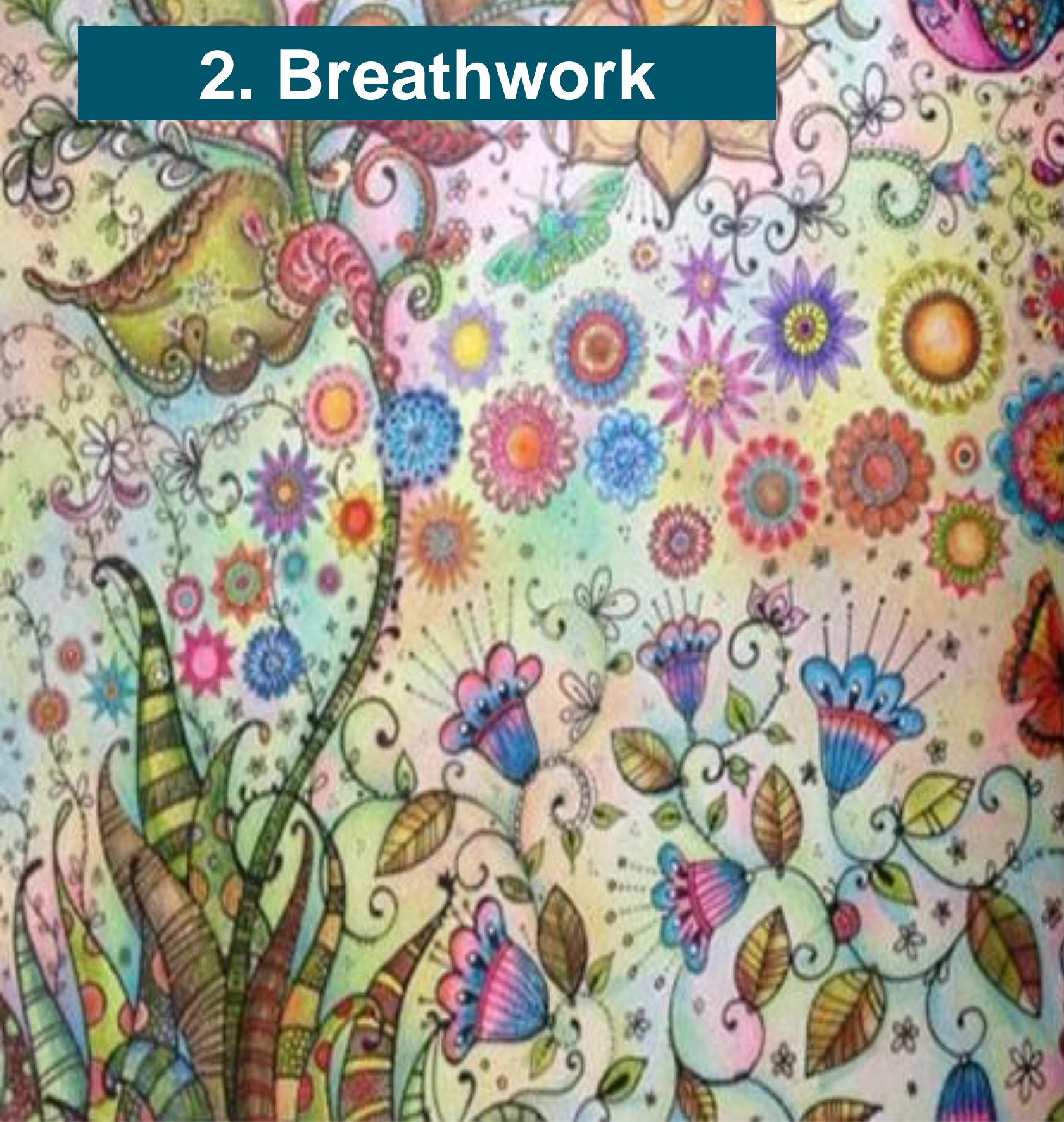
- Lowers heart rate and blood pressure
- Reduces cortisol
- Slows brainwaves
- Increases focus and creativity



EXERCISE : MINDFUL COLOURING

- Mindful colouring to brainwave music

2. Breathwork



THE POWER OF BREATH

How you breathe directly impacts how your body functions and your emotional state.

There are two types of breathing:

1. Thoracic Breathing (fast, shallow, chest) =

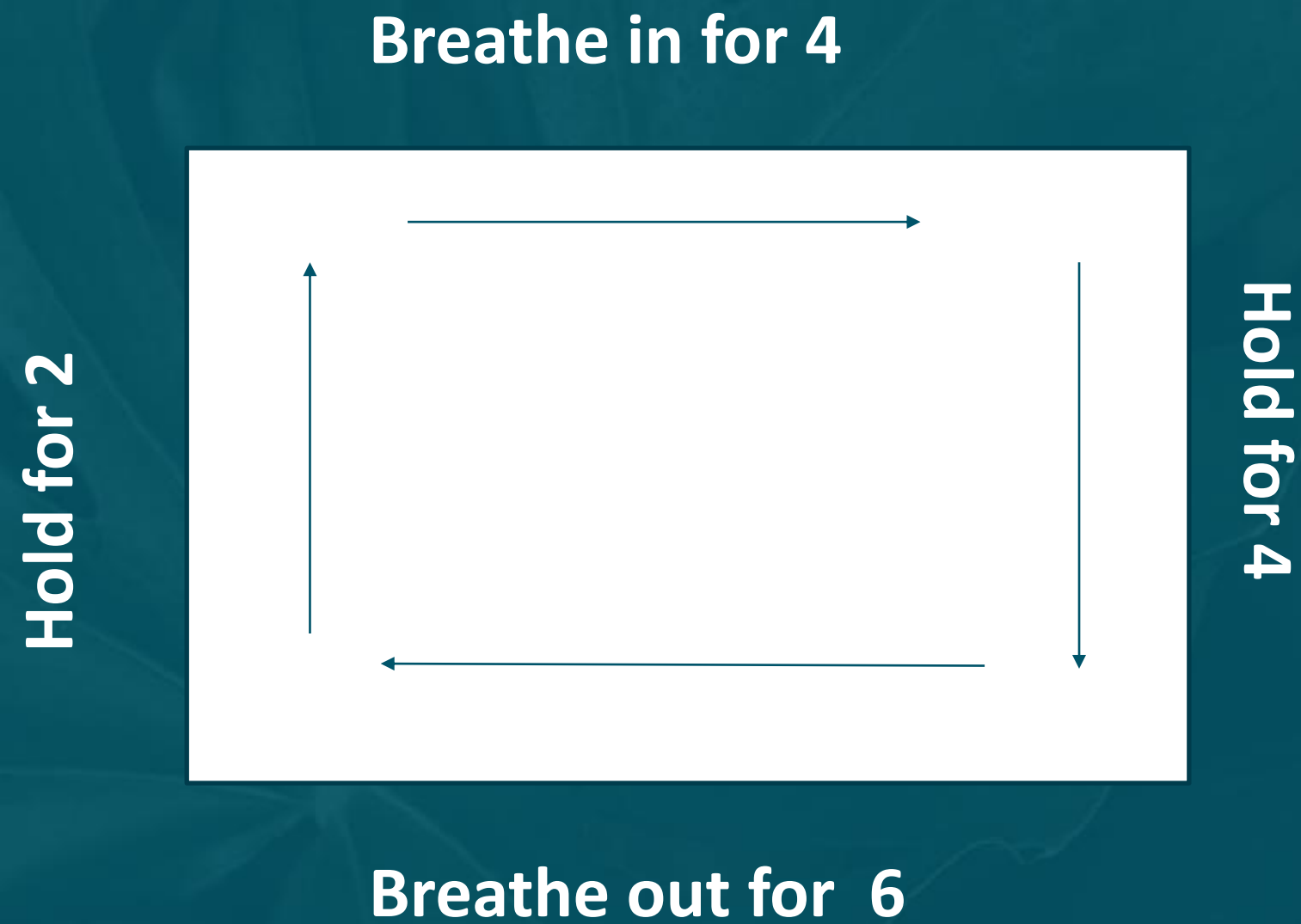
STRESS RESPONSE

2. Diaphragmatic (slow, deep, stomach)

= RELAXATION RESPONSE



EXERCISE: BOX BREATHING



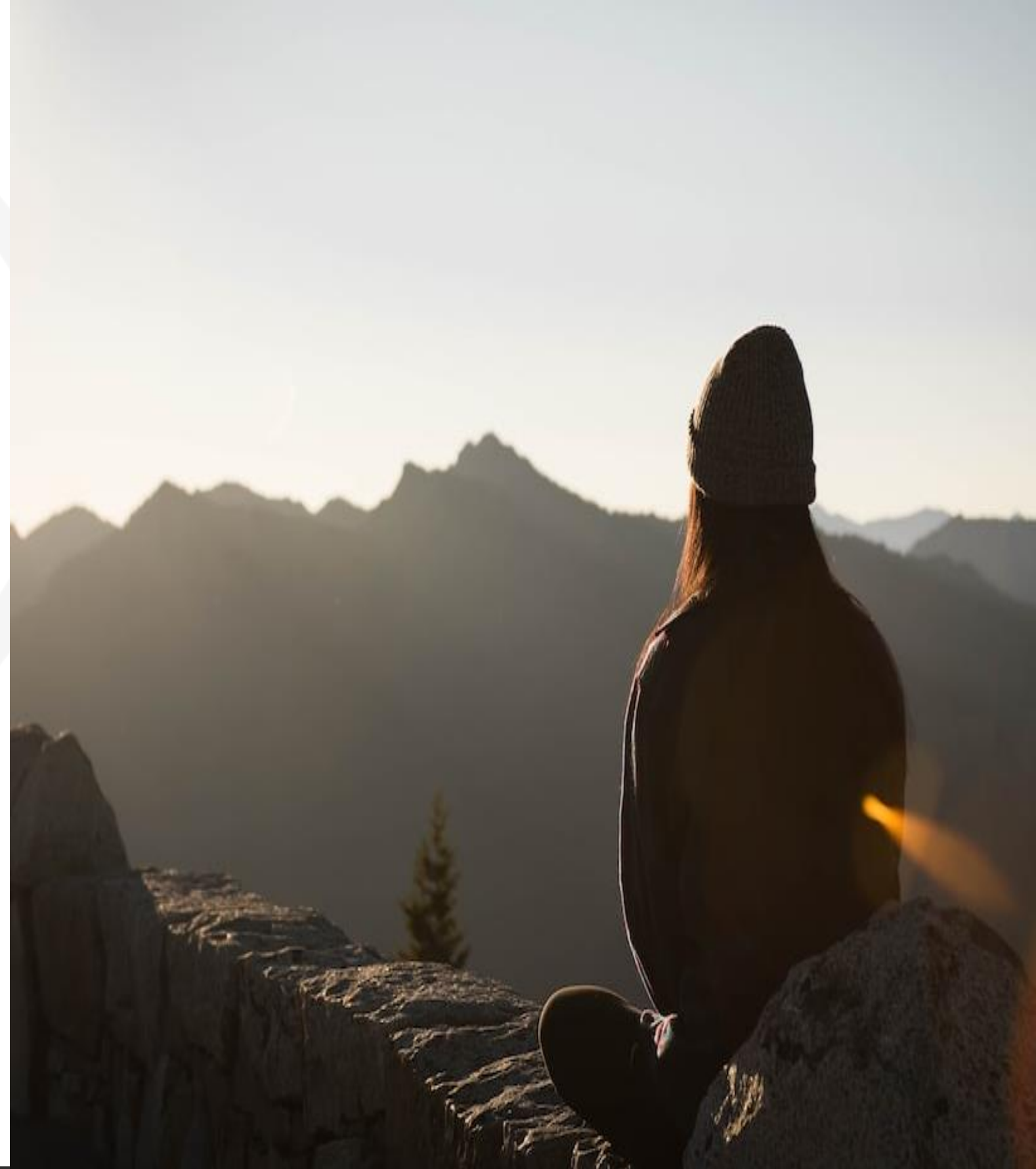
3. Meditation



MEDITATION

Meditation

Intentionally setting aside time to do a practice, guided or unguided.



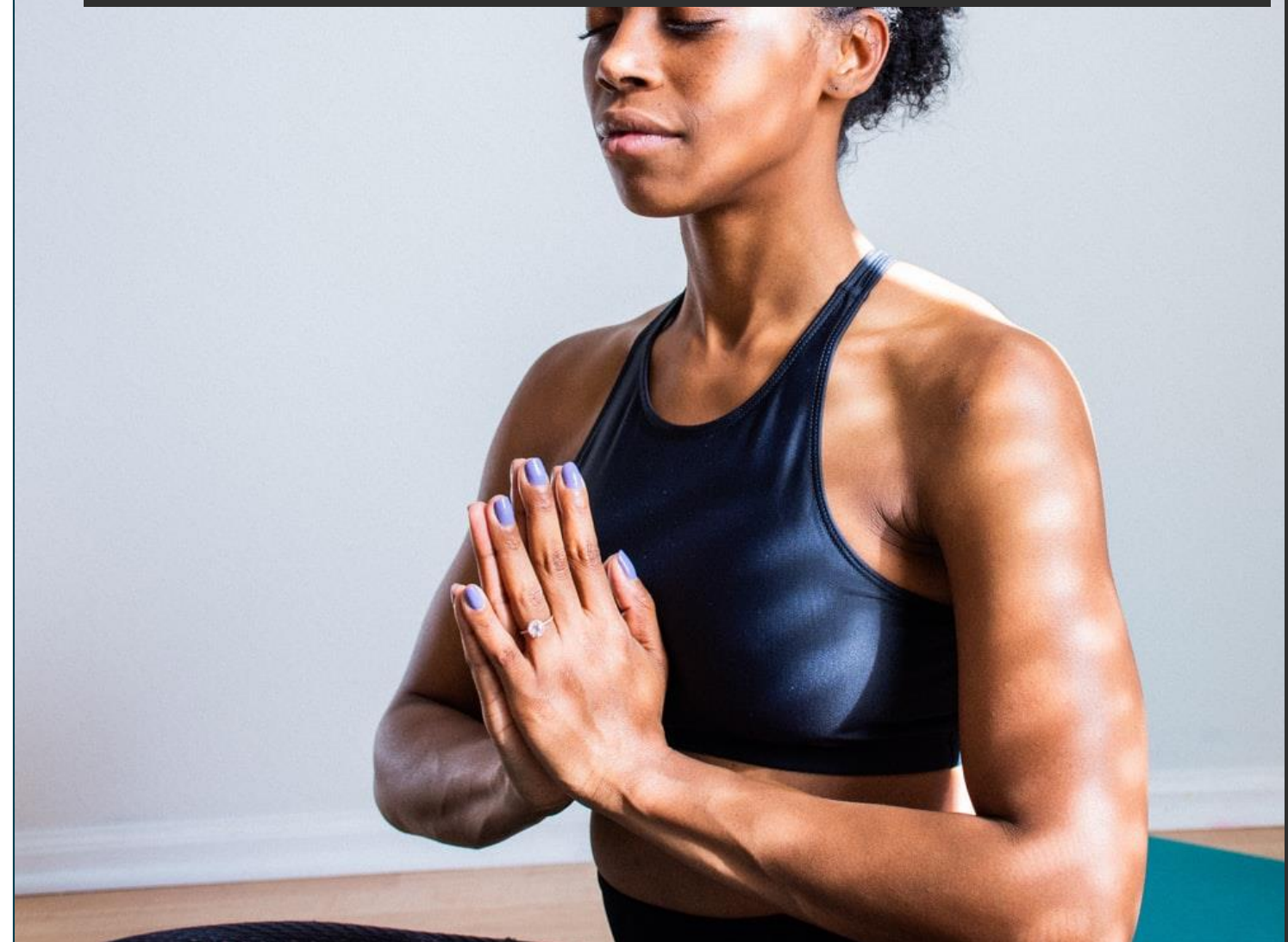
MEDITATION AND THE BRAIN

Meditation changes the structure & function of the brain

- Increases grey matter in the hippocampus
- Thickens the cerebral cortex
- Decreases size, structure and connectivity of the amygdala

Stress is experienced in the brain and so is meditation

Brain scan before and after 10 minutes meditation



MEDITATION

THE NEW MIRACLE DRUG

Decreases	Increases
Stress / Anxiety / Depression	Physical health
Impulsivity	Immune function
Fatigue	Emotional regulation + mood
Inflammation / pain	Overall wellbeing and happiness
Sleep problems	Productivity
Brain fog	Decision making/ problem solving skills

RECOMMENDED MINDFULNESS APPS



HEADSPACE®

Mindfulness:
Finding peace in a
frantic world

Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World



EXERCISE: MEDITATION

- **Relaxation meditation**

REFLECTION

- What is one insight / key message you have taken away from today?
- What are one strategy you will commit to each to look after your mental wellness each day?

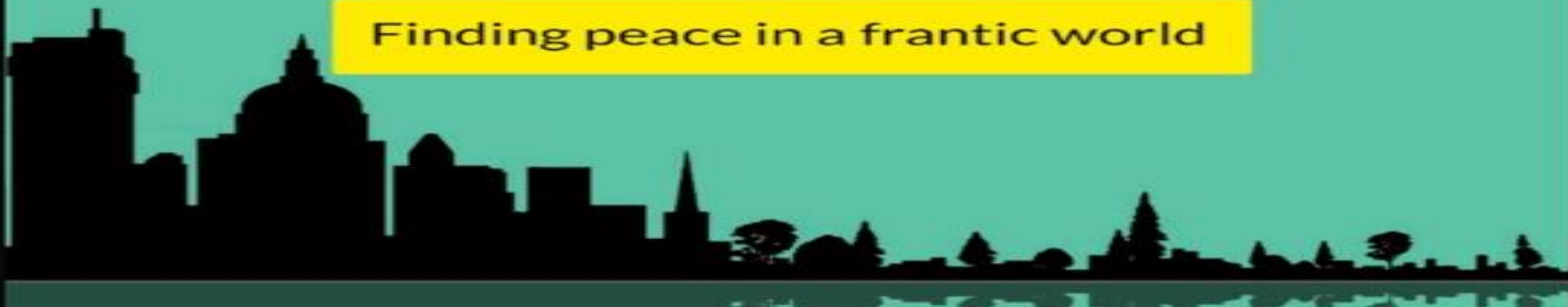
Examples of relaxation strategies:

- Movement
- Belly breathing
- Mindful colouring
- Meditation
- Time in nature
- Tech free time



Mindfulness

Finding peace in a frantic world



“we are human beings,
not human doings.”

Rebekah Broucki