

The American Institute of Stress

CONTENTMENT

Your source for science-based stress management information

Volume 8 Number 1

Spring 2019



**Creating
Balance
In Life**



The mission of AIS is to improve the health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence of stress management in education, research, clinical care and the workplace. Diverse and inclusive, The American Institute of Stress educates medical practitioners, scientists, health care professionals and the public; conducts research; and provides information, training and techniques to prevent human illness related to stress.

AIS provides a diverse and inclusive environment that fosters intellectual discovery, creates and transmits innovative knowledge, improves human health, and provides leadership to the world on stress related topics.

Your source for science-based stress management information

CONTENTMENT

We value opinions of our readers.

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Contentment is a quarterly magazine published in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter with news and advertising designed with the general public in mind. It appeals to all those interested in the myriad and complex interrelationships between stress and health because technical jargon is avoided and it is easy to understand. Contentment is archived online at stress.org. Information in this publication is carefully compiled to ensure accuracy.

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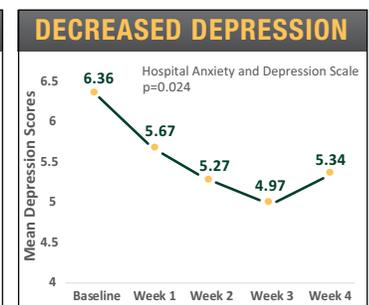
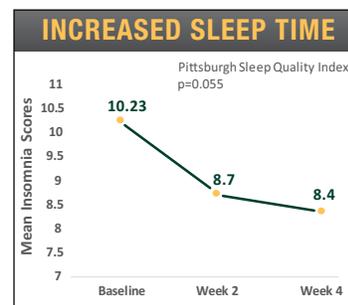
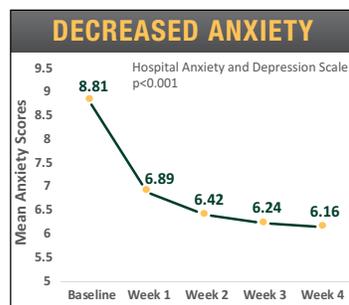
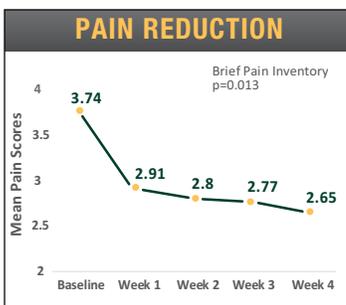


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REFERENCE

Yennurajalingam S, Kang D-H, Hwu W-J, Padhye NS, Masino C, Dibaj SS, Liu DD, Williams JL, Lu Z, Bruera E. Cranial electrotherapy stimulation for the management of depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and pain in patients with advanced cancer: a preliminary study. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. 2018 Feb; 55(2): 198-204.

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CONTENTS

Volume 8 | Number 1

Spring 2019

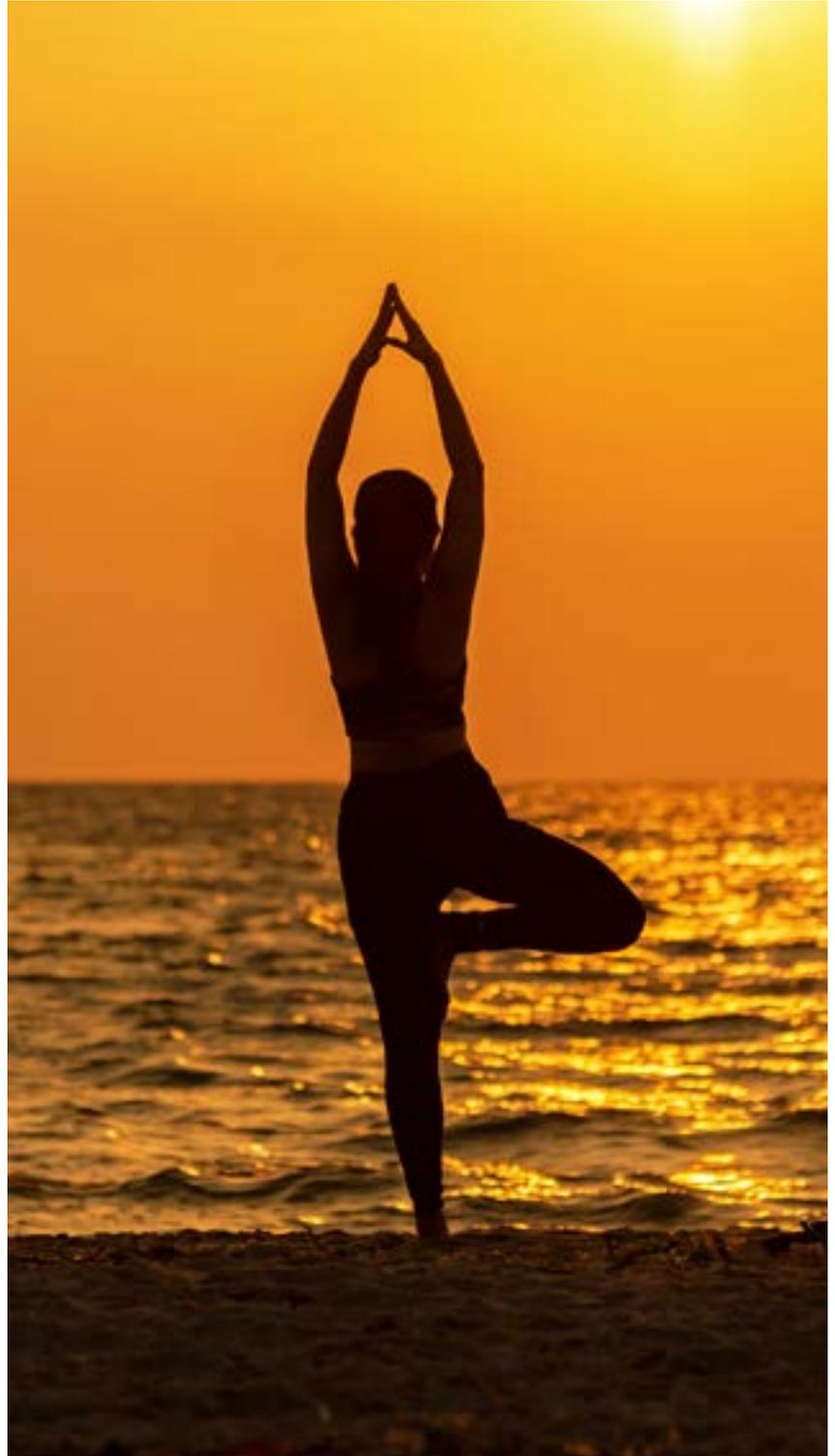
4 Finding Peace In The ‘Stress Is Normal’ Age

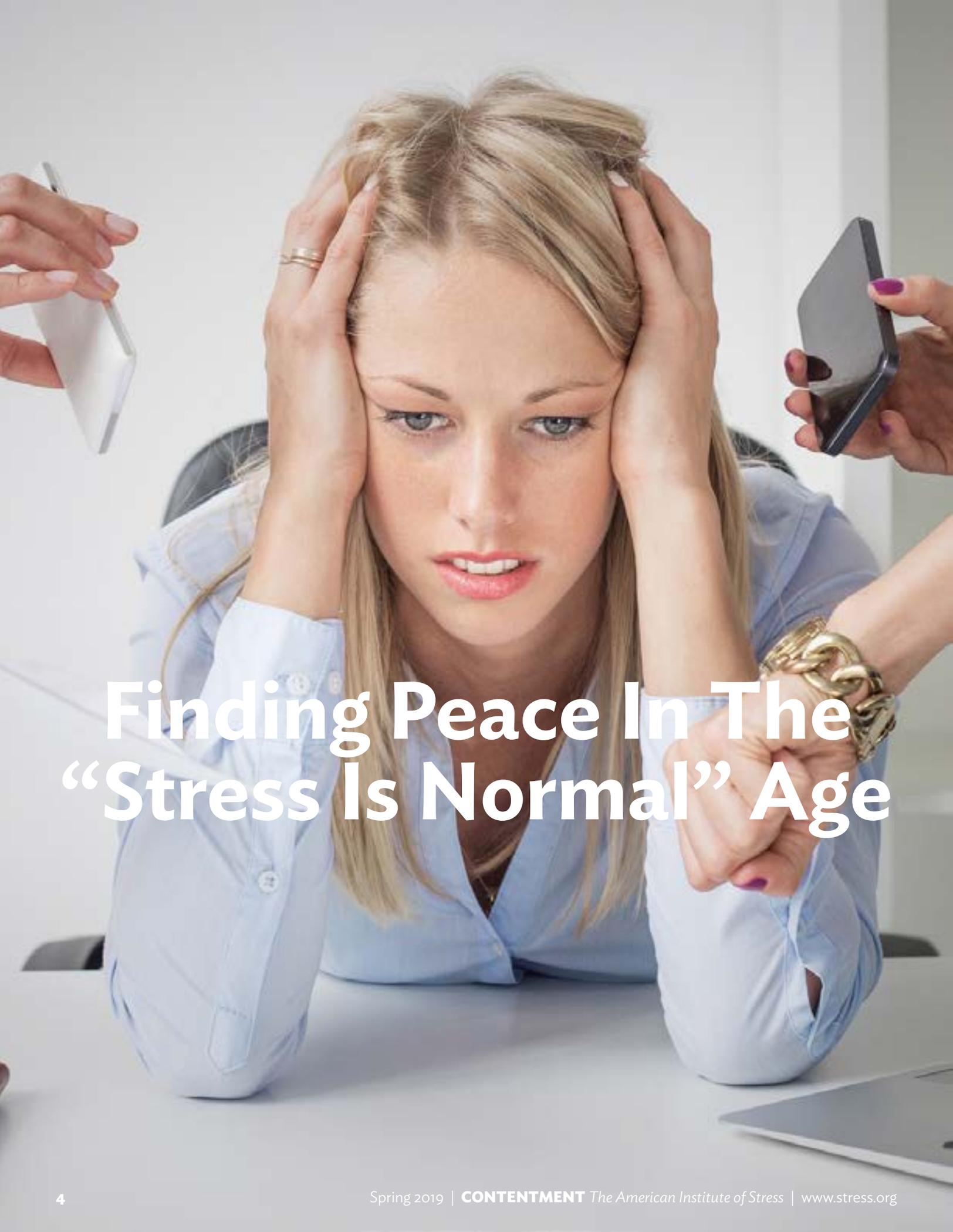
8 Dr. Maroon’s Square One: A Simple Guide To A Balanced Life

12 7 Foods To Help You Sleep

14 Reframing Stress

16 Social Psychology Of Well-Being





Finding Peace In The “Stress Is Normal” Age

As I read the article, *Losing Weight in the Anti-Diet Age*, in the New York Times, I was struck by the relevance to the world of stress management. Of course, stress management is physiologically critical to losing weight. (So frustrating... but you are wired to prepare for famine!)

But more importantly, there has been a subtle shift in the conversations and even marketing of both diet and stress management. We are so over feeling guilty, deprived and hopeless after multiple failed diet attempts based on the science-(or media?)-of-the-moment fad. And similarly, we've had enough of the stress whining and ineffective Band-Aid approaches.

Yes, we are stressed... now what?! Bring on the real solutions based in real science! Beyond the discussions of how to do more with less, balance crazy demands, lead through change, etc., my super-smart,

high-achieving clients reveal cravings for a sense of peace, a sense of being OK, in chaotic, overstuffed lives.

The good news for dieting and stress management is the shift to fitness. Focusing on what makes you healthy, whole, and strong will make you more stress resilient (and a healthier eater!) Healthy cells support healthy thinking and healthy choices. Self-care is about creating healthy cells to serve your life and the lives of those who matter to you.

Self-care strengthens you physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually (connectedness) to be healthy, productive, and happy. It is not a luxury or indulgence to be on your own to-do list! Self-care is good leadership, responsible "adulting," better parenting, and critical to your well-being and capacity to contribute.

Fitness of mind, body, and spirit is also key to finding peace in chaotic times. 'Mindfulness' is a resilience skill that

Focusing on what makes you healthy, whole, and strong will make you more stress resilient (and a healthier eater!)



builds your ability to find calm, clarity, safety, flexibility, connection, and hope, despite the circumstances. It is not some mysterious destination of equanimity for Zen monks only, but simply a practiced skill of awareness that empowers you to move from reactive to responsive, mentally and emotionally.

Physical fitness supports your stamina as well as the health of those brain cells needed for emotional and mental strength. And spiritually, you are actually wired to connect to survive! Greater purpose and community intrinsically motivate humans. So... why do we tend to withdraw when reaching out is one of our greatest powers?

Of course, we all already have a laundry list of things we could/should be doing better to be more fit. Let go of that guilt! And take small steps to learn what you need to feel strong in each arena of your life. Take an inventory then find tiny shifts to nourish your best self. This is a marathon of tortoises, not a sprint to well-being. Your cells notice each miniscule step forward.

1. What do you need to feel physically fit? More sleep? More stretching? Some veggies between pints of Halo?
2. Mentally: what are your brain cells craving? Breaks? Creative time?
3. What makes you emotionally strong? Think of your best bounce-backs: what/who gave you power? What habits keep you grounded?
4. What connections matter most to you? What habits keep you feeling connected?

Brainstorm a list of ideas and play with one or two in coming weeks. Notice how you feel and play some more. Tiny shifts.

Change the conversation in your head and among your friends/family/colleagues, and you will help everyone leverage the strengths and powers of being adaptable humans. Talk less about circumstances and more about individual strengths, creativity, compassion, courage, and self-care.

Learn what nurtures your mind, body, and spirit, and you will find your power to meet challenges with grounded values and priorities, wisdom, and resilience. You will find more peace in the chaos.

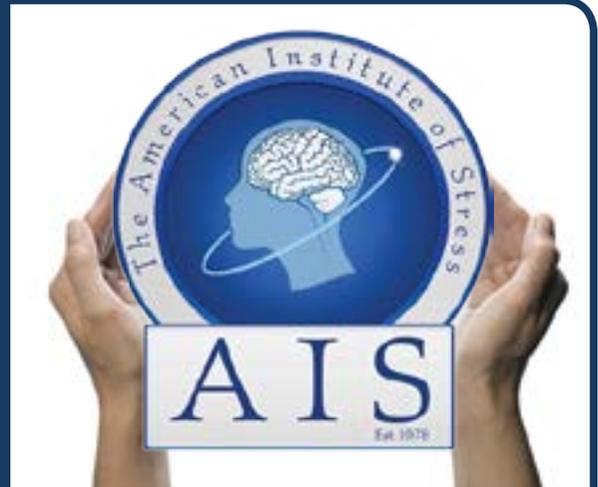


Cynthia Ackrill, M.D. is a leader in the field of leveraging stress for optimal productivity, health, and happiness. With a background in primary care and advanced training in applied neuroscience (a look under the hood!), certification in wellness and leadership coaching, she combines the science of human performance with wisdom, humor, and heart to address the critical relationships between thinking styles, behavior choices, performance capacities, leadership effectiveness, health, joy, and deep career/life satisfaction. She headed the Workplace Stress board of The American Institute of Stress, is on the faculty of multiple leadership/coaching programs, and contributes widely to the media, including Katie Couric, Today Show and Huffington Post.



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Maroon's Quick Tips For Healthy Living



1 In the new edition of **Square One**, you talk about burnout syndrome and the havoc it can wreak on one's personal and professional life. In a culture that places so much emphasis on work, what can we do to stay balanced?

A. The most essential thing we can do to stay balanced is to have insight into our daily activities. As the Buddhists say, we must be "aware or mindful" of our feelings or activities and the amount of stress we are experiencing. If we're not aware and mindful, we won't be able to take the steps to "re-wire," or retrain, our brain by reorienting our priorities.

2 You often speak about balanced and mindful living. What does it mean to live mindfully, and how can we incorporate those principles in our daily lives?

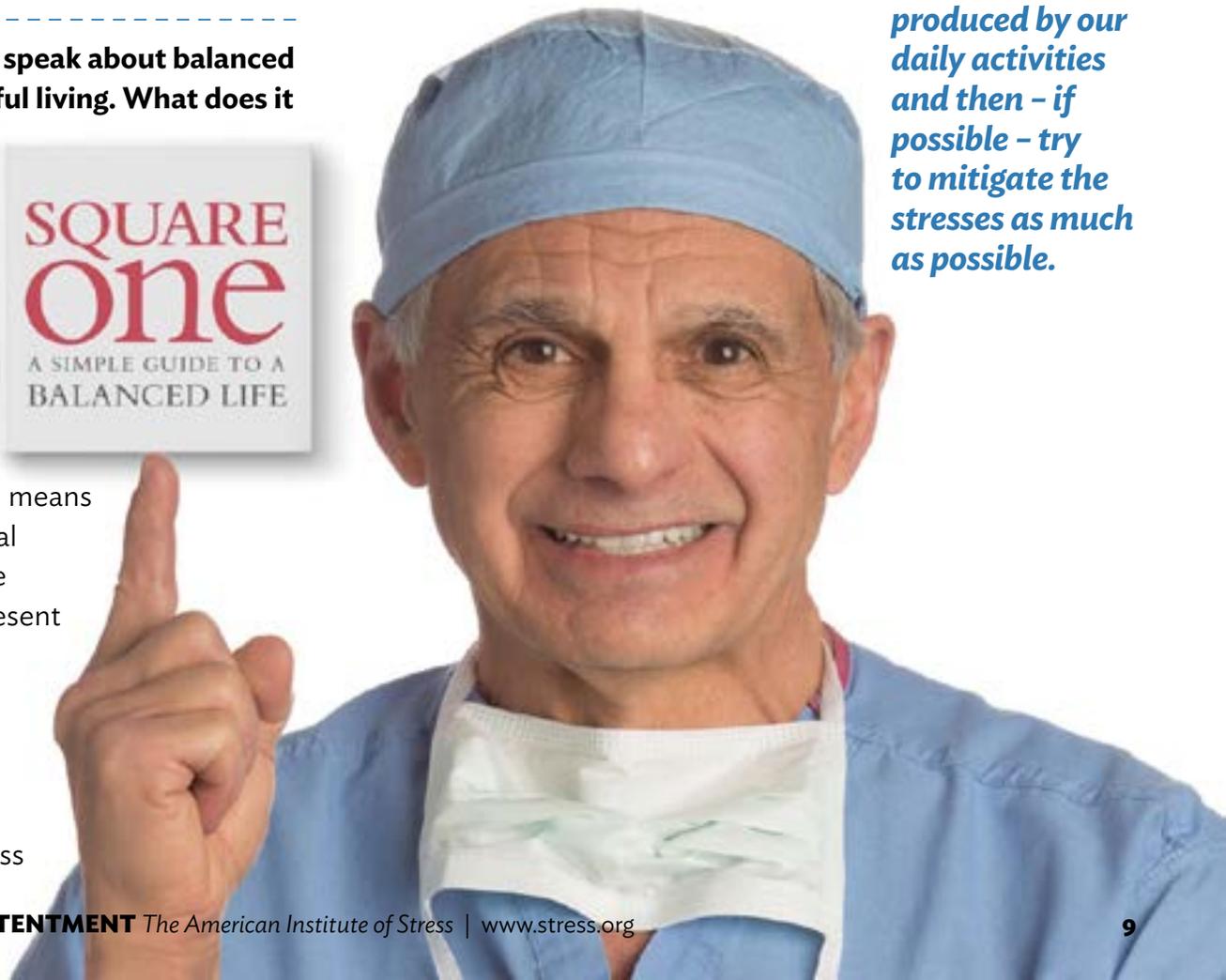
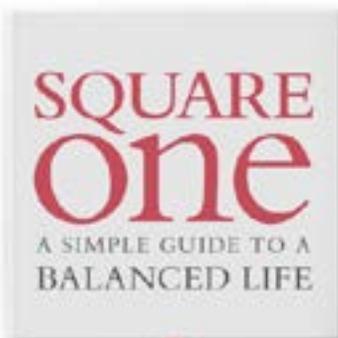
A. Being mindful means being an impartial observer. It is the ability to stay present in the moment without allowing the mind to get side-tracked. Mindfulness is a state of awareness

without judgment—awareness of both the long and short-term effects of your everyday choices and decisions.

3 Spirituality is one of the core areas of focus in **Square One**. In a world that's so focused on perceivable reality, what can we do to enhance our spiritual understanding of ourselves and our place in the world?

A. Spirituality is about discovering, through prayer, meditation, and contemplation, what your real purpose is in life. It is said that the purpose of life is a life of purpose. As I address in **Square**

The one mindful living tip I would give is to be aware and develop insight into the stress produced by our daily activities and then - if possible - try to mitigate the stresses as much as possible.



One, he who has a “why” to live for can bear almost any how. Only by being aware and mindful can we discover our purpose, or “why” and also can we realize that our purpose may change as we pass through the various seasons of our lives.

burnout. Caregivers of family members are over 50%. It is simply epidemic in our current society and one of the reasons that the topics I address in Square One are so important today.

4 People often believe that burnout only happens to those who have stressful careers, such as doctors or police officers. Do you think burnout is limited to stressful professions?

A. Since publishing my book I have discovered that “burnout” is epidemic not only in professionals but in students, struggling mothers, soccer moms, and lawyers, often with the heavy incidence of alcohol abuse and incredible stress. It is estimated that at any one time, one out of three physicians experience

5 If you could give one ultimate mindful living tip, what would it be?

A. The one mindful living tip I would give is to be aware and develop insight into the stress produced by our daily activities and then – if possible – try to mitigate the stresses as much as possible. This is sometimes impossible to do because of job, family, or responsibilities. In that case, physical activity, prayer, and meditation can reduce the toxic cortisol that destroys brain cells and the lining of our blood vessels and results in many of the diseases of aging.



Dr. Maroon is a world-renowned neurosurgeon with extensive experience in the medical field. Educated at Indiana University, Georgetown, and Oxford, Dr. Maroon lives and works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he serves as the leading neurosurgeon for the Pittsburgh Steelers. With more than 40 years of experience, research, and study, Dr. Maroon continues to be a leader in his field, specializing in minimally invasive surgery, sports medicine, personal fitness, nutrition, and innovative concussion management. As an Ironman triathlete, Dr. Maroon lives and breathes his own advice and is a fierce advocate for square living.



BODY ELECTRIC

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The American Institute of Stress is an executive producer of Body Electric: Electroceuticals and the Future of Medicine, a documentary film aimed to revolutionize the way we think about health and the human body. This 68 minute movie, by British producer/director/writer Justin Smith, is available online and on DVD for purchase through AIS.



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7 Foods To Help You Sleep

Many of us go through stretches of not sleeping well, including having a hard time falling asleep and waking up throughout the night. Paying attention to what we eat can help us reduce chronic stress and stimulation and ease our brains and bodies into more effective sleep. Eating right before bed can be disruptive, as the digestion process can keep us awake, and may even cause problems with heartburn. But eating the right foods and the right time can actually help us relax. A small, strategic snack can help balance blood sugar so that we sleep through the night. Here are a few great pre-sleep snack options to help you rest more effectively:

Almonds. (Or other nuts and seeds). These are high in magnesium, often called the relaxation mineral. A study reported in the Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine noted that consuming too little magnesium may make it harder to stay asleep. Magnesium can also help prevent leg cramps, a common cause of nighttime waking.

Bananas. Contain the natural muscle-relaxants magnesium and potassium, as well as being high in vitamin B6 (which is needed to make our sleep hormone melatonin).

Kiwis. When volunteers in a research study at Taipei Medical University in Taiwan ate two kiwis an hour before going to bed, they slept almost a full extra hour. Kiwis are full of vitamins C

and E, serotonin and folate, all important nutrients for sleep.

Tart Cherry juice. High in natural melatonin and was shown in a small study to help with sleep. Just don't buy the sweet juice or the sugar will actually cause more problems with your sleep than help!

Popcorn. Funny one for a nutritionist, but this is actually a reasonable snack high in fiber. Just buy some good organic popcorn (not the microwave bags) make with a good quality oil like coconut oil that can handle heat and add on something like nutritional yeast (B vitamins!) and Himalayan pink salt. Eating more fiber could be key for better sleep as it prevents blood sugar surges that may lower melatonin and the resulting blood sugar drop that triggers stress hormones.

Warm cup of milk. If you tolerate dairy, this may help since it is a good source of calcium, a mineral that plays a role in the regulation of melatonin. Milk is also rich in the amino acid tryptophan which has a calming effect on the body. And for many people, this has happy memories of being a kid!

Hummus. This also has tryptophan, which helps raise serotonin and melatonin. Eat the dip with some veggies like carrot sticks. They are high in B6, which is needed to convert the tryptophan. That will also give you some carbs for that tryptophan to cross into your brain, and you are getting some of that fiber to help sleep too. Super sleep snack!



Lee Bougie, MSc RHN is a researcher, science teacher, speaker, and holistic nutritionist based in Vancouver Canada. She currently works as the Research and Development Manager at Nested Naturals, teaches at the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition, and runs workshops on various wellness topics. Lee's biggest passion in life is learning and then passing along that knowledge to others. She has completed the Stress Mastery Professional Educator Certification Program and is a Diplomate of the American Institute of Stress.

A close-up photograph of two hands, one from the top right and one from the bottom left, with their index fingers pointing towards each other to form a rectangular frame. The background is a soft-focus sunset or sunrise over a landscape with mountains and trees, with a bright light source behind the clouds. The overall color palette is warm, with oranges, yellows, and soft blues.

REFRAMING STRESS

My friend Lynn had an unexpected family emergency and given some difficulties with airline connections, she decided to drive the nine hours to her destination. When I saw her the day before she left, she was not particularly excited about the drive but the next afternoon, I received the following text from her.

"Hey Rich, how is this for resilience; I decided that I often work a 9-hour day with only short breaks and so my job today was just to drive 500 miles. Once my brain approached it like a work day, it became very doable. Gratitude for good weather, podcasts, music and cruise control. Here safe and sound."

Lynn's used the resilience technique of "reframing," which entails changing the way you look at a situation and mentally making a statement to yourself about how you will view the a. Reframing works as a resilience strategy because, as you remember, stress is not caused by outside events but how we react to them.

Our reptilian brain usually creates the first message we have about an impending challenge, but our executive brain has the capacity to override the emotions and create a new perspective. Lynn changed her thinking and it made her journey fun and not dreary.

Here are a couple of tips to help you become a reframing expert:

- Pay attention to the messages you are giving yourself, particularly if they are overly negative. Write them down and then write down the opposite. So instead of "I'm dreading this presentation," you can write "I'm excited about speaking to my colleagues."
- Think about best case outcomes. Our negativity bias is constantly pushing us towards why things won't work out. Begin logging best case endings and play those out in your mind. Share them with others, which helps make them real.
- Sleep on it. No need to make a decision without some additional thought. Let your sleeping brain consider the options. Just make sure you go to bed considering all the choices, which will help you wake up with the right one.
- Acknowledge what went well. Lynn shared her gratitude about what helped her reach her destination with energy. Recognizing what works creates a new habit.

Your challenge this week: Reframe a negative into a positive by changing what you tell yourself in the spoken word. Let me know how that little action saved you some angst, got work done better and maybe even created some joy.

<https://www.citrinconsulting.com/about/richard-citrin/>



Richard Citrin, Ph.D., MBA is a leadership and organizational psychologist whose career has included being a clinician, small business entrepreneur, health care executive and now a consultant helping organizations improve the performance of their employees and the success of their businesses. His 2016 book, *The Resilience Advantage* discussed ways that organizations create a culture that moves away from the blaming mentality of stress management to an empowering mindset of resilience.

Social Psychology Of Well-Being: Make Your Net Work For You

begin by placing the idea of ‘wellness’ into a larger context of our social and community lives. Wellness – well-being – and wholeness can be seen as way points along a continuum. Wellness can be seen as an idea anchored at the physical end of a spectrum of increasing degrees of social connection ending with wholeness or ‘authenticity’. It is the degree of ‘enmeshment’ of a person into a larger community which can mitigate chronic stress.^{1,2}

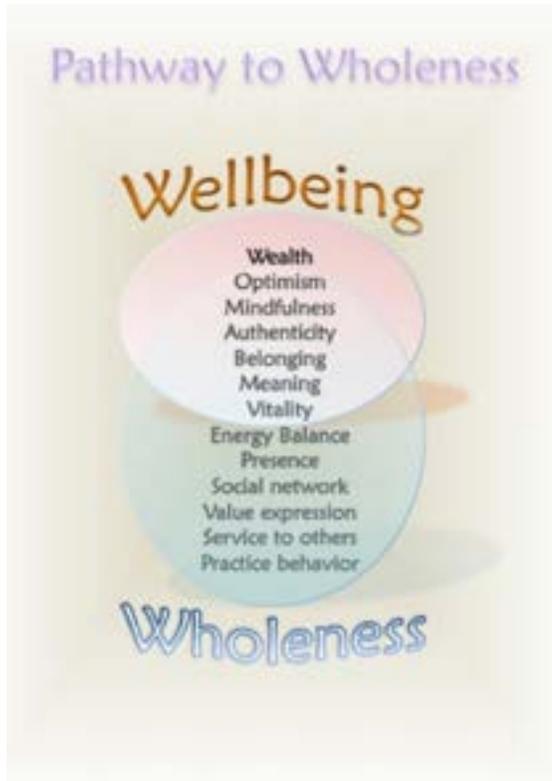
What is well-being and how does that relate to wholeness?

These terms often used interchangeably, but a community that supports wholeness will have a lot more psychological impact than one that merely

supports well-being. But what about the larger picture? “Well-being” is the term being bandied about as the large picture idea. But is it enough to be comfortable, healthy, and happy at work? Yes, there are positive business benefits to “well-being” programs. But I would offer that well-being and wholeness are different things. Well-being brings you balance in the present. Wholeness pulls you toward the future.

Well-being is a necessary — but not sufficient — idea to promote the growth, resiliency, and totality of a person. Wholeness is more than physical. It’s the emotional connection reflected in community culture that is life affirming.³ Take a look at this picture:





You may notice that I have excluded wealth from the concept of wholeness. Some people may quibble with that, but if the workplace and community isn't generating wholeness, no amount of compensation will matter. Money, physical things, and possessions beyond a level of simple physical comfort won't bring wholeness to your life. Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama certainly are wealthy people in the everyday sense, but they are also living examples of wholeness in the person.

Well-being is a necessary — but not sufficient — idea to promote the growth, resiliency, and totality of a person.

From Context to Practice

Indeed, the social psychology of 'wellness' and related ideas is about how we live our lives, how embedded we are in our social world and most importantly, how that impacts our beliefs, attitudes

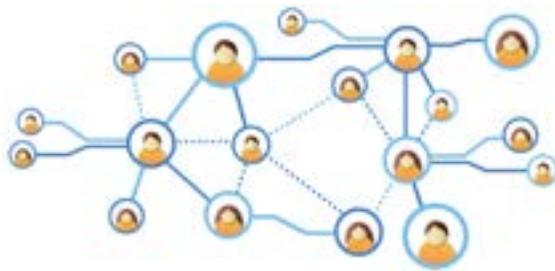


Your ability to express your values also builds trust with your community and reinforces collaborative behavior.

and ultimately behavior. Simply, I see our social networks as the structure which can intervene between psychological perceived stress and physiological effects.

To me your connection to your real life social network (not just the one on Facebook) is part of wholeness. In fact, the structure of your social network has been shown to relate directly to your emotional states. But how does one put that thought into practice?

If we depict your social network graphically it usually looks something like this.



There are three basic variables in your network which can be affected.

1. Size. Number of people in your network which includes not only your first order connections but second order connec-

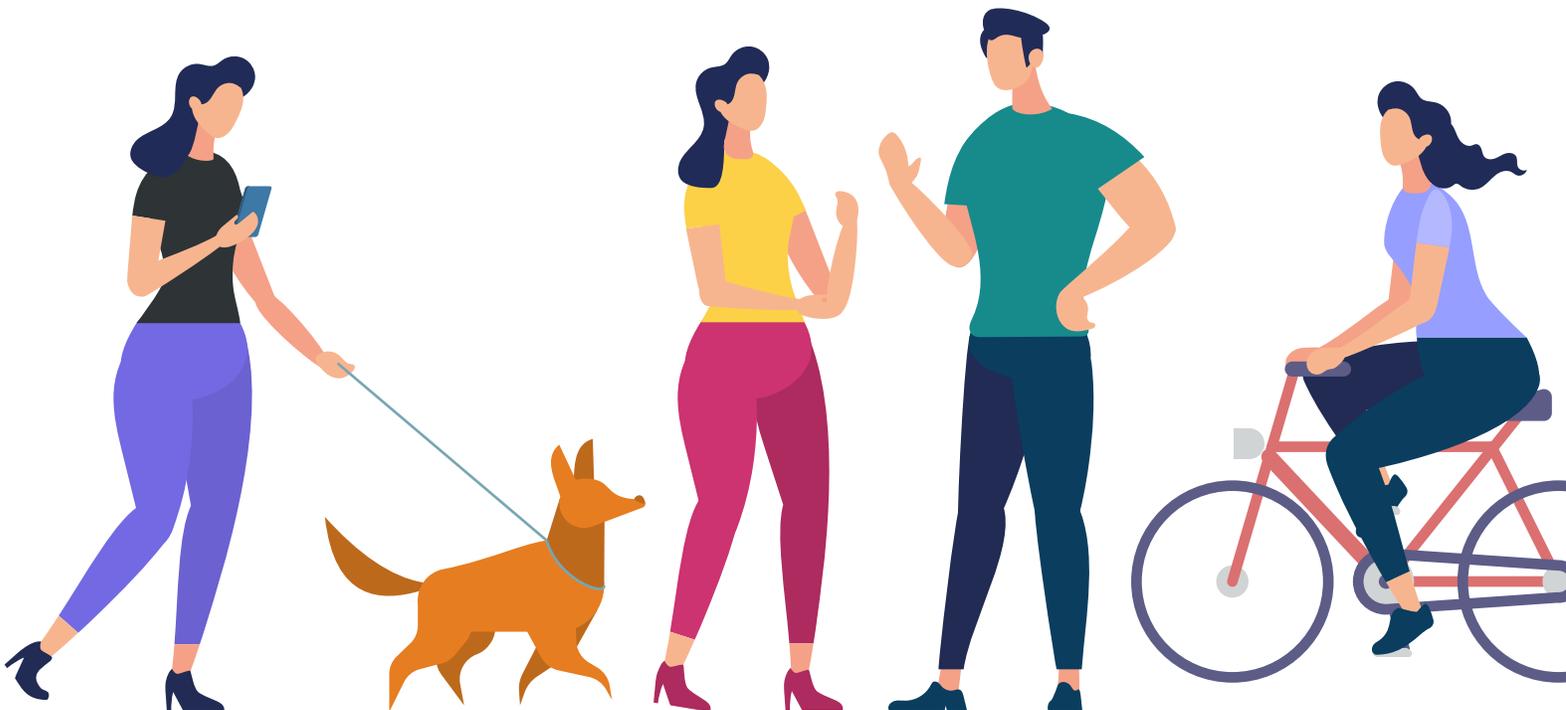
tions (people who know people you know)

2. Density. The ratio of the number of people to the number of connections. A network where everyone knows everyone is a dense network.

3. Strength of connection. Each connection can be measured in terms of emotional intensity; instrumental value and 'authenticity'.

Space prohibits a dissertation length explanation here. (You can find this in the footnotes). If you change the size, density and strength, what happens from a social psychological perspective?

Your ability to express your values also builds trust with your community and reinforces collaborative behavior. In a larger sense, wholeness comes from being in service to others and something larger than yourself. Finally, do you practice what you believe? If the community hinders true, open expression, and constrains behavior, I submit it is not contributing to wholeness and the physiological effects of stress are amplified.



Network Component	Change	Impact
Size	Increase	More access to novel information; innovation
	Decrease	Narrowing of perspective; being in a 'bubble of opinion'
Density	Increase	Decrease of anxiety; hostility (both inward and outward)
	Decrease	Loneliness; hopelessness
Strength	Increase	Increased trust; intimacy; disclosure
	Decrease	Alienation; Fear of others

What's a Person to Do?

People can be coached to change the structure of their social network. Separating from the negative thinkers, the “Dave the Downer” is rather obvious. But consciously reaching out and forming new network connection for the express purpose of increasingly your resiliency to stress is a new idea to most people. I promote building your own ‘Personal Board of Directors’ as a way to start. All I can say is that after 25+ years of practice, it never fails to work.

And yes, there are quantitative metrics one can measure before, during and following network interventions. Granted they are often self-reported measures but I find most social network analysis to be at least ‘reliable’ from a statistical standpoint. I confess that my own practice is still pretty much a paper and pencil exercise, some of the best 1980’s technology available.

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Dr. Charlie Grantham is the Founder of the Awakeningtowholeness.net where he pursues his priorities of teaching, writing, speaking and mentoring. Focused now on wellness, well-being and wholeness. He is a certified Master of Healing Arts and is a credentialed Reiki Master / Teacher.

He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Maryland in 1980. He has published eleven books and several dozen technical papers. He is a frequent speaker at international events and a “go to” resource for the media on a wide range of workplace issues — ranging from psychology to public policy.

He is a Viet Nam combat Veteran having served eight years in the U.S. Army as a Chief Warrant Officer in the Intelligence Corps. That time was followed by successful careers in academia as a professor and in multi-national technology companies as an Executive Director of Research and Development. He has now retired and moved to Baja – oh, I mean Tucson, AZ.



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