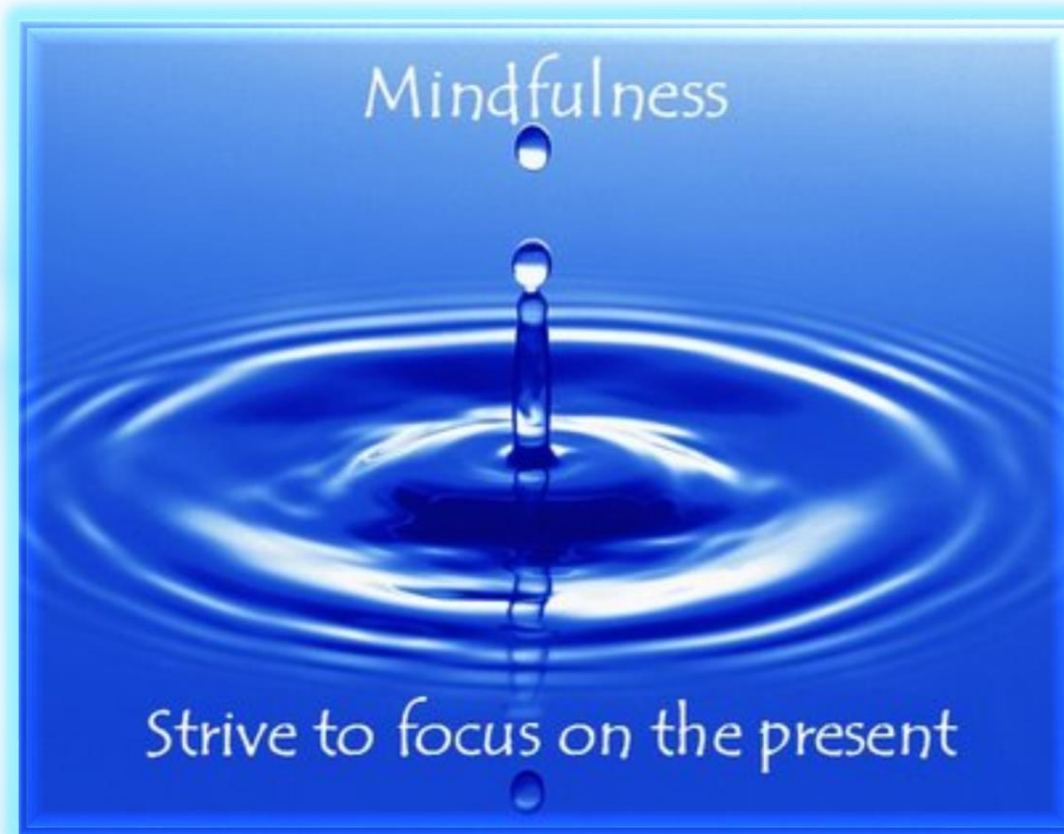




Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Stressful World

Timothy W. Pedigo, Ph.D.
Psychology and Counseling
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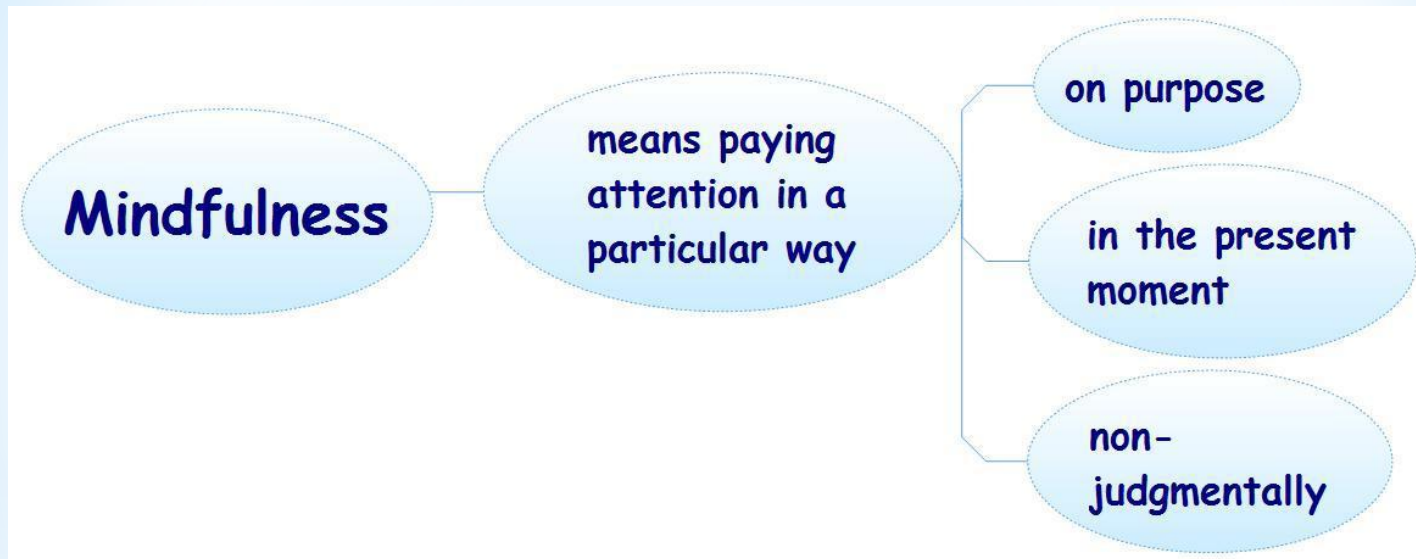


What is Mindfulness?

What is Stress?

*And How Does Mindfulness
Help with Stress?*

What is mindfulness?



- Mindfulness is a non-judgmental awareness of the present moment
- Mindfulness is not just meditation, but can be a way of experiencing emotions, experiences, eating, and all of life.

**Natural Mindfulness =
Calm Awareness + Caring**



Research Findings On Meditation:

- increases positive feelings and well-being
- decreases anxiety, depression, and stress
- reverses memory loss
- increases tolerance to pain
- strengthens immune functioning
- Improves ability to focus
- may ward off effects of ageing
- Increases capacity for emotional regulation

What is Stress?

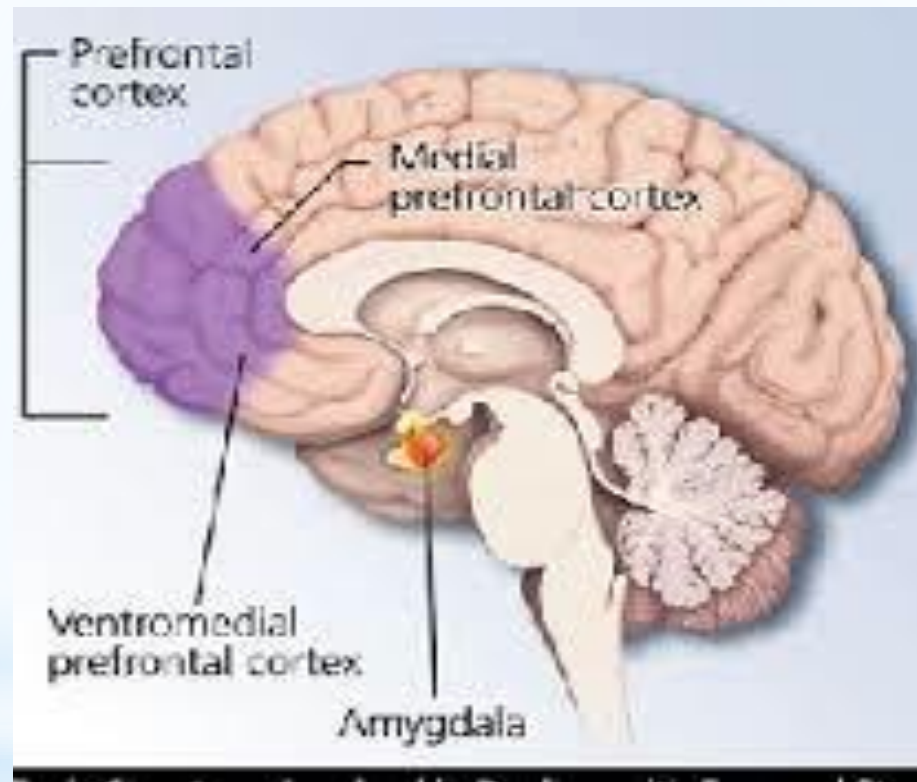
- **Eustress** - positive stress
 - Opportunity for personal growth & satisfaction
 - *Examples*
- **Distress** - negative stress
 - Can have negative effect on one's health
 - *Examples*

Walter Cannon

- * *Fight-or-flight reaction (later freeze)*
- * Outpouring of epinephrine, cortisol, and other hormones that prepare an organism to defend against a threat
- * Adaptive for our ancestors
- * Responsible for “negativity bias” (see tigers everywhere)
- * Contributes to stress-related illnesses in modern times

The Emergency Response System

Amygdala Hijacking



Our Minds are Distracted

Our minds
tend to become
overwhelmed
with so many
“negative appraisals,”
Our mind jump from
one to another
(monkey mind) .



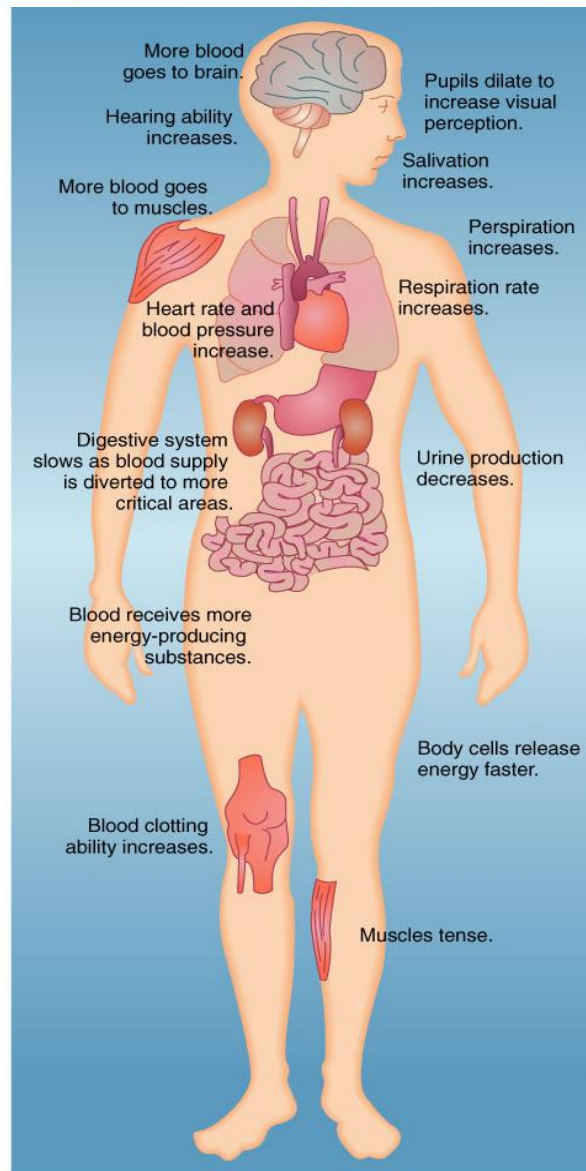
"Buy milk"
"Pick up car"
"Do laundry"
"Ironing"
"Dinner"
"Call Anna"
"Meeting"
"Go to bank"
"Do lunch"
"Call mum"
"Birthday present"
"Grocery shopping"
"Buy milk"

.....



*Our bodies become tense.

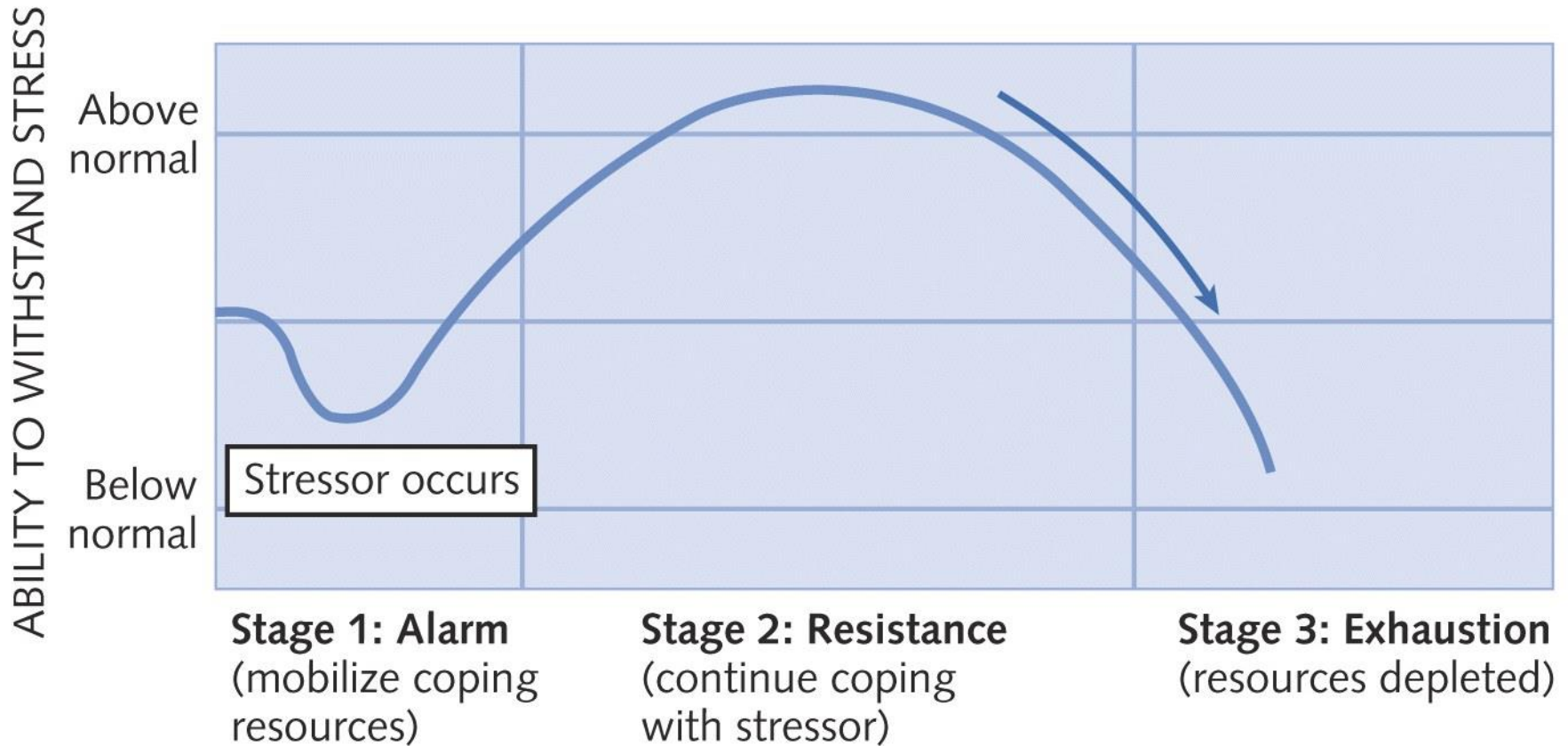




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Figure 3.2

* Seyle's Model of Stress and Illness: General Adaptation Syndrome



Stimulus-Response or Stimulus-Perception-Response?

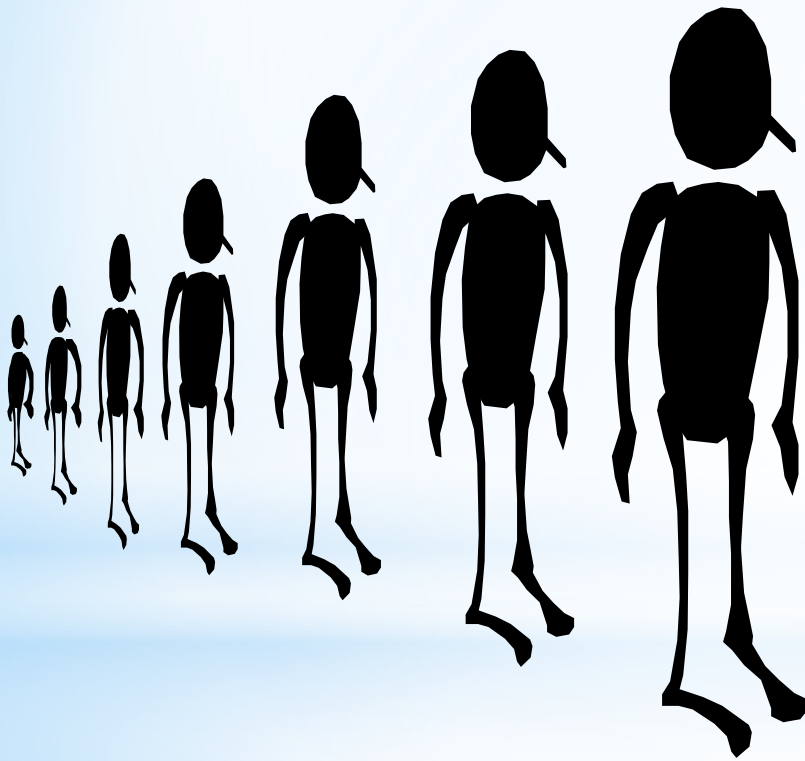
- * Stressor: any event or situation that “triggers” the emergency system of the brain (emotional brain).
- * Stress: the process by which we “perceive” and react to the events that we experience as dangerous or devaluing.
- * Reactivity: Instead of calming and using our wisdom we are hi-jacked by the emotional brain.
- * Negativity Bias: We overcorrect to be ready for attack and we misperceive negatively most of the time.

I want to learn to
live in the moment...
just not this moment.
Some other moment.
Like a moment on
the beach.



search ID: bstn275

Basic Emotions--presumed to be hard wired and physiologically distinctive



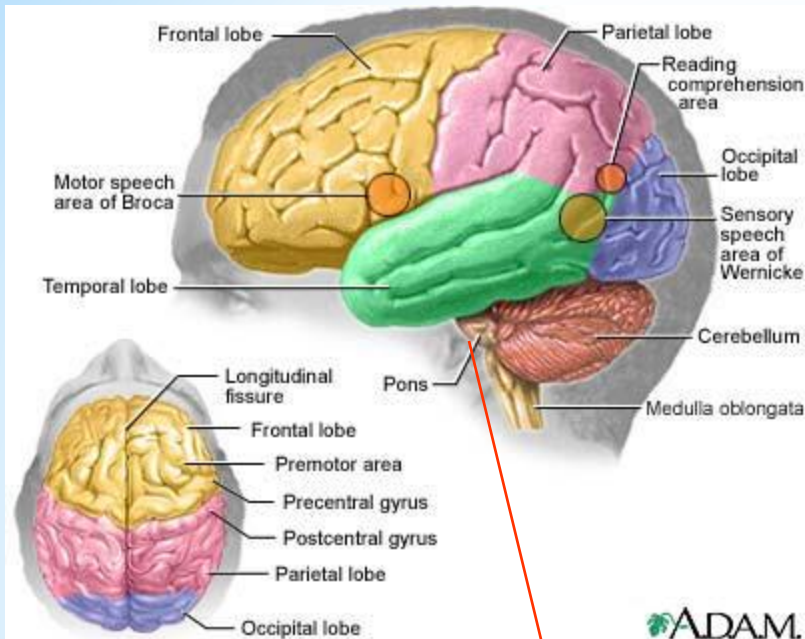
- * Joy
- * Surprise
- * Sadness
- * Anger
- * Disgust
- * Fear

Evolutionary Advantage to Emotion

*For example:

- *Fight, flight, freeze response
- *but can basic emotions overwhelm rational thinking?





To Get at Emotion, Go Deep...

Amygdala is
deep within the most elemental parts
of the brain.

The main purpose of the innermost
part of the brain is survival.

Anxiety is an emotional feeling that occurs as a normal reaction to stress.

Normal anxiety maybe unavoidable, but it has some good outcomes.

Creates challenge & motivation, and may lead to productivity and accomplishments.



How Does Mindfulness Help with Stress?



Definitions of Mindfulness:

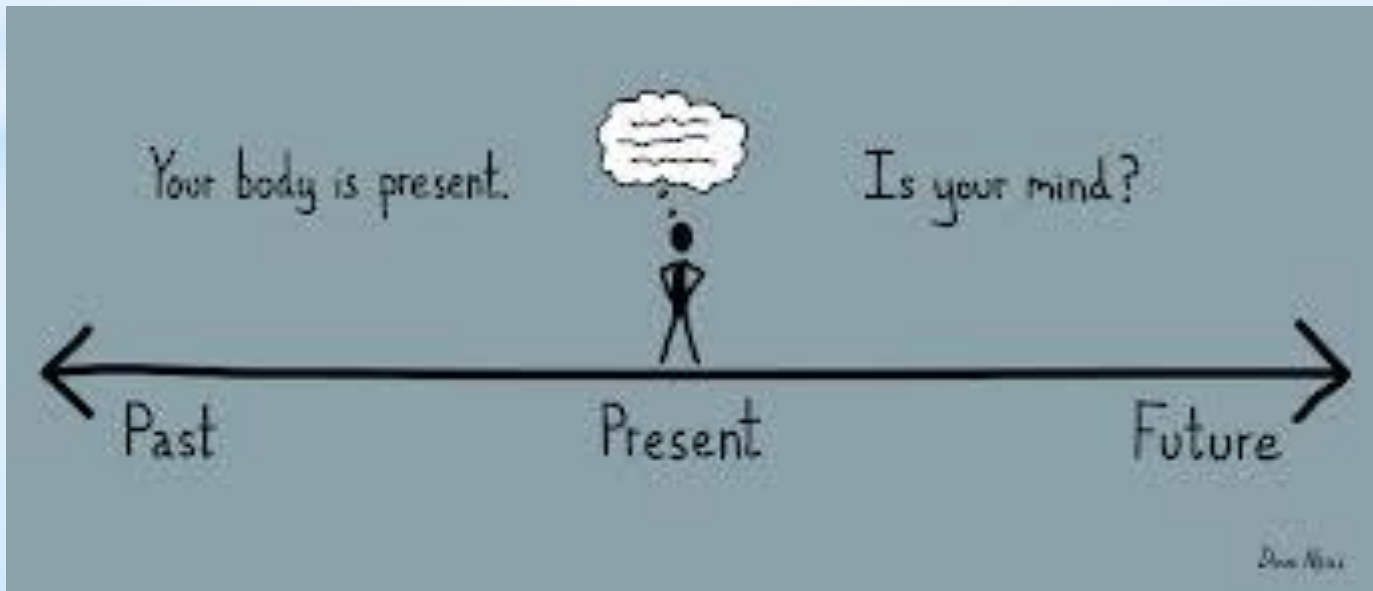
- moment-to-moment awareness
- keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality
- the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us or within us at the successive moments of one's unfolding perception
- a subtle, nonverbal experience that defies definition from a “left hemisphere” perspective.
- involves an attunement to feelings to others.



Mindfulness

Relax Your Anxious Mind

- Attention, Concentration, awareness
- Live your present moment
- Acceptance



The Three A's of Mindfulness

Attention: Mindfulness is a concentration practice in which we shift our attention with the ever changing present moment.

Awareness: Mindfulness develops our awareness of internal and external sensory environment (feeling/thoughts are the “sixth sense”).

Acceptance: Mindfulness helps us to “let go” or our tendency to fight “what is” which is a major cause of stress.

Doing Mindfulness Meditation

- Sitting meditation:
 - sitting still (try not to move)
 - back straight but relaxed
 - focus on your breath in abdomen (in-pause-out)
 - maintaining awareness of internal and external stimuli (and responses?)
 - do not try to block out anything
(sense doors are open)
 - return to breath when “caught in thought”

Mindfulness and Compassion

- Once we calm ourselves with mindfulness we can see the original pain from which our distortions developed.
- With mindfulness we can experience compassionate understanding for ourselves, instead of harsh judgment.
- By extending our understanding beyond ourselves, we can understand others better (increased empathy).

Learn to Relax and Stay Present!

(Meditation Practice)

Past = Memory

Future =

Imagination

Both occur in the **present** moment

✓ **Acceptance** - ~~**Judgment**~~

- Use mindful breathing to relate to fear & anxiety
- Respond wisely to your fear & anxiety.
- Discover Calm & ease by paying attention.
- Be aware of your breath (Present Moment).



Practicing acceptance of pain sensations, anxiety, and other emotions, we become more comfortable with our experiences as they arise, placing us on a path toward freedom from our fear.



Just like the lotus flower, we can
bloom in the muddy pond of stress