

Fall In Love...With Yourself

ANNIE PAYNE: Hi, everybody. My name is Amy Payne, and I work at the Naval Air Station here at Whidbey Island as the education services facilitator. And so that really means that I do family advocacy and prevention work and also life skills. So some stress management, anger management, communication skills. That's kind of my thing.

I work both here at the Air Station with service members in groups, their commands. I also work with family members. And then, I have the opportunity a few times a year to go out and meet people where they're deployed. So I've got to go out to a ship and kind of ride back with them. And we also have Air Command's that go to places like Italy and Japan. So I get to go really literally all over the world talking to service members about these things.

And so, we're going to-- we can get right into it, Maggie. So I like to sometimes tell people a little bit about why I feel qualified to talk to you about the stress management. And I'll tell you, I've been a military spouse for over 20 years, and my husband's on deployment right now. One week after he left for deployment we found a major leak in our kitchen and the whole thing had to be torn out.

I live in-- that was-- and also, that was like three weeks before Christmas. So I live-- I live in base housing. And so he was gone, it was Christmas, half our house was in containment. We've now moved, and my daughters and I are kind of doing this. So I have had a pretty high level of stress around here. And so I'll channel some of that into-- I have used many of these techniques trying to get through some of that stress stuff.

So I really welcome people to come off mute and talk. You can type in the chat. Also, I ask lots of questions. I talk a lot, and so if you don't answer me, then you'll just be hearing my stories, which might get old a little bit. But-- so, the building I work at is called the Fleet and Family Support Center. They, along with the Navel Center for Combat Operational Stress Control put together this curriculum called Mind Body Mental Fitness.

It is a six part series. Today, we're going to talk about the first part, which is stress resilience, and I think that's really kind of the baseline for the whole thing. And then we'll go to the next slide. And I kind of already said we're going to talk about stress today, so we can keep moving. It's hard when you're not doing your own slides.

So our objectives are going to be kind of talk about the different domains of resilience and how we can build some of that resilience up, talk about energy management and really kind of our allostatic load and how much stress we're putting on versus when we're able to take that break. And then maybe we'll talk about some skills, some meditations and recalibration. So there's a quote here that I think is worth mentioning that says, the oak fought the wind and it was broken. But the Willow bent when it must and survived.

And I think that's really true in the military. We talk about resilience all the time, but it really applies to everybody. The more resilience we have, we're able to kind of bounce forward when things happen. So you can go onto the next slide.

So if somebody wants to come off mute or type in the chat box. Oh, somebody's got a Big Willow tree in the backyard. So what is a stressor? Maybe not what stresses you out, but what is the definition of a stressor, if somebody doesn't mind answering.

AUDIENCE: You have an outside force that causes you to stress.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. Yeah, it's something that's putting a pressure on you. And it can absolutely be external, but sometimes it's internal too. I know that I tend to put a lot of stress on myself, put a lot of things on myself. And so a stressor is just something that's causing our body to respond, and our body's response is that stress.

And so, we're going to watch a video in a little bit that talks about this. So I won't say it too much. But I really-- when I talk about stress resilience, we want to talk about how we can use stress as a signal and to motivate us, and not just to think of stress as this bad thing and this heavy load.

There's actually some studies that show when you use stress as a signal and a kind of a motivator that your body stays more healthy than if you think, Oh, I've got all this weighing down on me. So it's-- we want to transition people into thinking stresses their friend instead of the enemy.

All right, next slide. So probably everybody's heard of flight, fight, or freeze. This is one of my favorite things to talk about when we're talking about stress. And does anybody-- you can raise your hand, or you don't have to, but does anybody kind of identify as that fighter? I do most of the time. And really, we can all be kind of different, have different responses at different times.

But what I really want to point out is if you are the fighter, that doesn't mean you're going after a bear with a sword. But when we have a fight response to stress then we're looking at it like that stressor is a challenge. And so we want to kind of step up and meet that challenge when we're kind of in that fight response.

Whereas, if we're in flight, it doesn't mean we're running away. It's not a sign of weakness or we're scared. It just means we're choosing not to engage we are not going to do whatever this is. So a lot of times I tell people that flight response might be your mom calling and you're about to walk out the door or something. Some people may choose, I don't have time for that right now, and you just don't answer the call.

It doesn't come off as, like I said, as a weak or running away type of thing. It's just you're choosing not to engage right now. And there are times when kind of both of these are appropriate or inappropriate. And

so does anybody have any kind of-- anything where one of these may be an appropriate time, either fight or flight. Or inappropriate, either one.

AUDIENCE: I know that for certain projects with school, especially like group projects. When I get super stressed out with group members not doing something, I just focus-- I use that to focus in on getting my portion done as well as I can, and then creating backup contingency plans. So that's usually when I fight. Flight is usually when I'm having a disagreement with somebody. I'll try to run away for a while, and then come back on it with a fresh face.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. Really think about it and give that time to respond. Yeah, for sure. And there are times you may not want to be. If you're in a situation and there's an emergency where it may not be safe to be the fighter. It might be a place where you need to keep yourself and maybe even other people safe. I talk about flight being an appropriate response when somebody maybe don't see eye to eye with their supervisor.

And again, I know I'm going to say it all night. I work in a military community. And so there are a lot of times where people don't have that option to just really kind of hash out what's going on. It's kind of a, you need to do what you're told. And so the flight may be a better response at that time. And Maggie's saying, children.

Yeah, all the time. We can get into those power struggles where we're kind of making this challenge for ourselves where there doesn't need to be one. Not...

AUDIENCE: So much anymore, because they're older. But when they are little, it just felt like they're constantly just tugging on you constantly.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. Well, and then when they're older, there's that struggle to not do those things and kind of let them do what we've taught them to do.

AUDIENCE: Right.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. And I think kind of in a school world, even looking at academics and homework, there are those individuals who-- those fighters who do it-- they got the assignment today. Yes, they have three weeks to do it, but they're going to go home, they're going to do their outlines, they're going to get their research, they're going to start today. And then there's this kind of flight people, who think, yes, I've had three weeks to do it, but now I only have two days, and it's time to buckle down and get it done.

Some call that procrastination, but I personally like to call it using stress as a motivator and my friend in getting that work done. OK, you can go on to the next slide. And so these are some things that happen when our body is in this physical-- when our body is in these stress moments. And your mind, your focus can narrow. Your brain might be processing a little faster.

As far as your body, you've got these stress hormones releasing, your blood pressure might go up. But these responses happen both in fight or flight. So different responses, but some of the same thing's happening in your body. I just like to kind of point that out, whether sometimes I do this and I talked to people who are really think they're always-- always fighters or they're always running from whatever the challenge is. And so really, our bodies are doing the same things. It's just our brain trying to decide, are we going to engage in this or not.

OK, next slide. So some really common stressors for people are work, school, our relationships, health of us or others. Does anybody else have any kind of stressors things that get to them that aren't one of those kind of common things? I'll say, it might-- Oh, go ahead. Sorry.

AUDIENCE: Oh, I was just going to include mental, like mental health in that help.

ANNIE PAYNE: Absolutely. Absolutely. We are having-- it's really nationwide. There is such a shortage of mental health providers that people-- it's really a healthy behavior to seek this help, and people aren't able to get in or it's taking a really long time to see clinicians. And so that's absolutely a stressor on top of somebody who already realizes they're kind of dealing with some things.

Finance is a huge stressor for lots and lots of people. And then, COVID. Absolutely. Whether what are the current quarantine guidelines, what does that look like. I think now you can quarantine on your 15 minute break from work. And otherwise, you need to be there. That's a joke in my office anyway.

But we-- even down to people deciding if they're going to continue working or not because of their decision to be or not be vaccinated. I talked to people all the time who are losing-- they're choosing to lose their retirement or their income, because they're choosing-- they're deciding what's best for them as far as a vaccination. And that is a huge, huge decision that's going to affect not just right now, but for the rest of their lives. And so that's absolutely a major, major stress we have right now.

I talked to people who are trying to decide what to do once they leave the military. Are they going to go to school, are they going to open a business, are they going to-- and I know that people who are in school right now are thinking those same things. So lots and lots of big stressors out there.

And so, my next question. And again, you can come up or you can type in the chat box. Is, how do you know when you are under a lot of stress other than your brain is just telling you. But are there any ways that any of you kind of really feel. You feel a certain way or you notice yourself doing certain things.

AUDIENCE: Let me tell you.

ANNIE PAYNE: Go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Oh, I've been waiting for this moment. Oh, I get like, it's almost this mental image of pulling my hair out. I just-- Oh! It's fine. Everything's fine. I'm cool. It's cool. There's three dogs in my room right now as I'm trying to finish something and host an event. I'm fine. I touch my hair a lot.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. I can get that one. All right, somebody was going to-- somebody else. Oh, Amanda I think was the next one that was going to talk, but she said she gets body aches. I don't notice any feeling in my body when I'm really stressed, but I know that I have such a short temper, I'll say, with my children and family and even the dog when I get home.

She's so excited to see me, and-- we have an eight month eight-month-old German Shepherd puppy. And she's so excited to see me, and I know that is going to be the case when I walk through the door. But if I'm carrying this big load of stress, and that's not fair to her or my kids when they just asked me a question and then I snap at them because they wanted to know where the mixing Bowl was.

So lots-- I will tell her hi for you. Yeah, it really manifests for differently for different people. I have a coworker that when she comes to this training with me she talks about how she feels-- she almost feels her shoulders rising, because they get tighter, and tighter, and tighter. And so we all kind of realize that in different ways.

But really there's these four domains of stress and how we feel stress and how we can build resilience to stress. And that's our mind, somebody is talking about they can't sleep. And that may be because their mind is racing, or they're thinking about all the things they need to do or didn't do, or it's just going go and going. And also, adversely, our minds, we can just kind of shut down.

We're not going to focus on it. We're going to maybe veg out and watch TV or something to really slow our mind. And there's all kinds of things with body. People talk about appetite, either more appetite or lack of appetite. Wanting to have more physical activity or the opposite, less physical activity.

Socially, again, those two polar opposites. We either are stressed out at home maybe, so we don't want to be there, and we want to go out and do other things. Or, and this is one that I have been guilty of, is we have plans that we-- it's something we know will enjoy and we really want to do it. But when it comes time, we don't want to go. We'd rather stay home.

And especially in this-- we've been living in this COVID environment where we got so comfortable just staying at home and doing things. Sometimes I think it's easy to say, I'm not going to make it tonight. And then, spiritually, this could mean religion. A lot of people think that's what I mean, and it absolutely could mean religion, but also just things you connect with.

So, I know a lot of people that go out and just enjoy being in nature and walking. We live in such a beautiful area, and that can really kind of lift spirits. But if you're really stressed out, you may not want to do that, may not make the time for that. We're going to talk about these domains a little bit more. Next time, instead of talking what stresses us out, we'll talk about what helps.

Oh, Yeah. Fredricka gets quiet and avoids people. I sympathize with that one for sure. All right, Maggie. You can go to the next slide.

So, I know I said I'm going to talk about the military all day. And if you've been around the military, you've seen this kind of thermometer. And really, we talk about these different areas as where you are and kind of getting back to green and so we know that stress is inevitable. It's not in our control. Things are going to happen.

And so if we are in the green, that doesn't mean we're stress free, but we're pretty mission ready. Whether that means we're going to go to work and we're ready to do our job, or school, or going home from work or school. We're pretty good to go. And then those stresses are going to happen and we're going to get into the yellow and react.

And so, this may be something like, oh, you're leaving 10 minutes early. You look at the clock, you thought it was 7, it's 7:10. That might be a stressor that puts you up into the yellow because now you're thinking in your head. Well, I'm going to have to go to this way, or I'm going to miss this, or I can't stop and get my coffee, whatever it is. But you can kind of generally recover from that and get back down to the green.

But what happens if you're already 10 minutes late, and then you pull out and somebody cut you off in traffic. Well, you're a little more in that yellow, a little deeper dug in. And then maybe you spill your coffee as they cut you off. So now, you're mad, you want to yell at the person, you're going to be late, and now you've got coffee all over you. So are you going to go home and be more late, or you've got some decisions to make.

These are all things that on a normal day we can kind of overcome and eventually get back down to that green. That's not going to affect us for future-- more than a little bit. But sometimes, we have more stressors and where we can't get back down to green. So we kind of start into that orange, what we call injured in the Navy. And so this may be when we see, whether in ourselves or somebody else, behaviors are becoming a little more different. Maybe more persistent.

And at this point, we recommend sometimes that maybe you should talk to somebody. Maybe a counselor, a chaplain, your doctor. You might need a little boost to kind of get over this hump and kind of get you back down towards the green. And then if things are even beyond that then we get into that red, that ill. And that's where we really want to get people some medical treatment, whether it's for-- however they've decided to deal with their stress.

It could be medical-- sorry, not medical. It could be alcohol or chemical dependency issues. It could be-- sorry, somebody just walked in. I lost-- I lost track what I was saying. It could be we're realizing that somebody who had ADHD that was managed for a long time, now they've got these things piling on top of them and it's not able to be managed. So we need to get them in and get them some treatment, maybe some medications.

But what we want to do is build everybody stress resiliency so you can kind of get back down there to that green, if that makes sense. All right, you can go to the next slide, Maggie. OK, so I think that I'm going to be able to share this. Let me get it up.

AUDIENCE: I'll stop sharing then.

ANNIE PAYNE: OK. Let's see. Again, I'm-- just give me one second. I have to find it. OK, now I should be able to.

So this is Doctor Kelly McGonigal. She-- this is a Ted Talk. Oh, my goodness. Well, I'm having some issues. Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to-- I'm going to play it where you'll be able to hear it. You just won't be able to see it, but it's just her standing on a stage.

I just need one second. Sorry about that. I-- all right, can you hear? OK.

KELLY MCGONIGAL: I have a confession to make. But first, I want you to make a little confession to me in the past year, we could just raise your hand if you've experienced relatively little stress. Anyone? How about a moderate amount of stress? Whose experience a lot of stress?

Yeah, me too. But that is not my confession. My confession is this. I am a health psychologist, and my mission is to help people be happier and healthier, but I fear that something I've been teaching for the last 10 years is doing more harm than good, and it has to do with stress. For years, I've been telling people stress makes you sick, it increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease.

Basically, I've turned stress into the enemy. But I changed my mind about stress. And today, I want to change yours. Let me start with the study that made me rethink my whole approach to stress. This study tracked 30,000 adults in the United States for eight years. And they started by asking people how much stress have you experienced in the last year.

They also asked, do you believe that stress is harmful for your health. And then, they use public death records to find out who died. OK. Some bad news first. People who experience a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43% increased risk of dying. But that was only true for the people who also believed that stress is harmful for your health.

[LAUGHING]

People who experience a lot of stress, but did not view stress as harmful were no more likely to die. In fact, they had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study, including people who had relatively little stress. Now, the researchers estimated that over the eight years they were tracking deaths, 182,000 Americans died prematurely, not from stress, but from the belief that stress is bad for you.

[LAUGHING]

That is over 20,000 deaths a year. Now, if that estimate is correct. That would make believing stress is bad for you the 15th largest cause of death in the United States last year, killing more people than skin cancer, HIV/AIDS, and homicide. You can see why the study freaked me out. Here I've been spending so much energy telling people stress is bad for your health.

So this study got me wondering can changing how you think about stress make you healthier? And here, the science says Yes. When you change your mind about stress, you can change your body's response to stress. Now, to explain how this works, I want you all to pretend that you are participants in a study designed to stress you out. It's called the social stress test.

You come into the laboratory, and you're told you have to give a 5 minute impromptu speech on your personal weaknesses to a panel of expert evaluators sitting right in front of you. And to make sure you feel the pressure, there are bright lights, and a camera in your face, kind of like this. And the evaluators have been trained to give you discouraging non-verbal feedback, like this.

Now, that you're sufficiently demoralized, time for part two, a math test. And unbeknownst to you, the experimenter has been trained to harass you during it. Now, we're going to all do this together. It's going to be fun-- for me. OK.

I want you all to count backwards from 996 in increments of seven. You're going to do this out loud as fast as you can starting with 996. Go. Go faster. Faster, please. You're going to slow. Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! That guy made a mistake. We're going to have to start all over again. You're not very good at this, are you. OK. So you get the idea. Now if you were actually in this study, you'd probably be a little stressed out. Your heart might be pounding. You might be breathing faster, maybe breaking out into a sweat.

And normally, we interpret these physical changes as anxiety or signs that we aren't coping very well with the pressure. But what if you viewed them instead as signs that your body was energized, was preparing you to meet this challenge? Now, that is exactly what participants were told in a study conducted at Harvard University.

Before they went through the social stress tests, they were taught to rethink their stress response as helpful. That pounding heart is preparing you for action. If you're breathing faster, it's no problem. It's getting more oxygen to your brain. And participants who learned to view the stress response as helpful for their performance, well they were less stressed out, less anxious, more confident.

But the most fascinating finding to me was how their physical stress response changed. Now, in a typical stress response, your heart rate goes up and your blood vessels constrict like this. And this is one of the reasons that chronic stress is sometimes associated with cardiovascular disease. It's not really healthy to be in this state all the time.

But in the study, when participants viewed their stress response as helpful, their blood vessels stayed relaxed like this. Their heart was still pounding, but this is a much healthier cardiovascular profile. It actually looks a lot like what happens in moments of joy and courage. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90s.

And this is really what the new science of stress reveals, that how you think about stress matters. So my goal is a health psychologist has changed. I no longer want to get rid of your stress. I want to make you better at stress, and we just did a little intervention.

If you raised your hand and said you'd had a lot of stress in the last year, we could have saved your life. Because hopefully, the next time your heart is pounding from stress, you're going to remember this talk, and you're going to think to yourself, this is my body helping me rise to this challenge. And when you view stress in that way, your body believes you and your stress response becomes healthier.

ANNIE PAYNE: OK, what do you think about that?

AUDIENCE: Interesting tape. It's like when I'm pretending that I'm-- like if I'm feeling sick, and I'm like, I'm not sick, and then I just like talk myself out of not being sick.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. For sure. So I put in that chat box, Kelly McGonigal is her name. This is actually, we listened to about half of the video. She goes on to talk about how stress responses go down when you are in a caring-- when you're doing something that you're caring about others and caring for other people. Now, that doesn't mean to a fault or to where you're kind of running yourself down, but it is interesting if you want to see the rest.

I put her name in the chat box. And so, Maggie, you can go to the next slide, please. And so what do you guys think of-- how do you define resilience when you think-- when you hear that word? What does that mean to you?

AUDIENCE: The ability to bounce back.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. So, in BMF, we talk about bouncing forward, and I think it means the same thing. But when you're learning from this behavior or from this stress response and whatever is happening, we like to say that you're bouncing forward because you're growing and you're learning, so you're moving forward. So really same thing.

I have-- I have a 19-year-old daughter, who is one of the most resilient people. She's had so many things go on with her. Her-- the year she graduated from high school was when we started this COVID world that we're living in. And then she was-- her first year, she was to be at WSU was the year that everything went remote, and then no dorms, no nothing, and then it's kind of one thing after another. And she just kind of kept chugging along, trucking along. And so, I just kind of ask-- would like to ask everybody to kind

of think of a person that is really, you think of when you think of really resilient. And-- we don't have to talk about them or anything, but just kind of think of that person, and then think of some other characteristics of theirs that you think may kind of lend to that resilience. All right, Maggie, next slide.

So I said we're going to talk about these again. And we saw them earlier, our mind body, soul, and spirit domains. And so now, what I'd like to know, instead of what stresses you out, is what relieves some of your stress. What are some things that you can do to alleviate when you get those kind of things we talked about before, when you get those body aches, and you lose your appetite, or you eat meat. What are some things that help you get out of that? You can type in the chat box or talk.

AUDIENCE: Snuggle the cats.

ANNIE PAYNE: Snuggle the cats. Running. Lots-- I get lots of physical activity on this. Somebody says, cake. Oh, Runnings like meditation. All right, we're going to talk about that in a minute too.

So running is, for you, both helps with the body domain and the mind. Quiet alone time, hiking, cleaning, organizing, time alone. Yeah, you guys have some great responses. But what I would ask is, and I hope the answer is Yes. But do you-- are you able to take the time to do those things?

And Yeah. and it's so-- so if you're talking to somebody else, think of your-- somebody you have a relationship with-- your spouse, your child, your parent. And if you see-- if you know that if they would just do this one thing that it would help them, but they just don't want to do it. You know how frustrated you get with them.

Well, I'd say, if you're not taking making this non-negotiable time to do these things that relieve your stress, you're doing that same thing to yourself. So lots of times I'll say something, and I have a friend, and she says, are you the pot or the kettle? And so, I'm asking all of you, I like to talk about having that kind of non-negotiable time to do these things that relieve stress. And people's first-- usually, what I hear is, I don't have time. I can't find the time in the day. I don't have time for that.

And then, we talk about, OK, well let's really take an evaluation of the time you spend in a day doing some things where we could find this time. So do you spend 15 minutes a day maybe scrolling your phone? And generally, I get yeah. Yeah, people spend that much in a day scrolling their phone, or scrolling the TV channels to even find something to watch.

So maybe, in that 15 minutes, instead of phone scrolling or channel scrolling, we could put that down and maybe go for that walk, or go for that 15 minute run. I talked to a lot of people about having their non-negotiable time immediately when they leave work. So many people that I work with have kind of like what I said, they have that stress all day at work, but then they go home and have that stress responses with their families.

And so we talk about, yeah, it gets you home 15 or 20 minutes later, but if you're a happier mom or dad walking through the door, it might be worth that 15 minutes that your spouse has to wait on you, or even if you have to pay extra for daycare, or whatever it is. But sometimes, I-- and this is something that you have to find what works for you. And it may not work for somebody else that's close to you.

My husband, it is a stressor for him, something that is a stress relief for me. But sometimes when I get home, I sit in my car and either finish listening to the last five minutes of the podcast I was listening to, or that's when I look at my phone to check my text or whatever before I-- or finish a conversation on the phone, whatever, before I walk in the door. So that I'm doing those things so that when I walk in the door I'm ready to meet kind of whatever's on the other side of it.

Whether it's my 14-year-old saying, I have to go to the store. I need graph paper. Or it's the dog who's trying to jump on me, of course, because my hands are full, or it's my husband saying what's for dinner. I'm kind of ready to handle that, because I've taken those couple of minutes and just sat. Whereas, that, to him, is such a-- I don't even think he lets the car turn off the whole way off before he's out the door and in the house, so he just cannot understand how that is helpful to me.

And I talk about that because we have these relationships, which a lot of times is a source of stress. But what works for one of us, may not work for the other. And we have to know that if we have this non-negotiable time to do whatever it is that helps us feel better, that is for our-- that is for our partners, and for our children, and for our schoolwork, and jobs, and all those things to. Does that make sense? Yeah, OK good.

Brene Brown, who a lot of people are familiar when I say that name. She's somebody who talks a lot about. Really everything she says I think is brilliant. But she talks about scheduling this white time for yourself. And that's what I call non-negotiable. This time where you are just doing something that you enjoy doing.

You don't have to wait until you're stressed out to kind of do these things to get you back down to that green. If you enjoy reading a book then maybe you work it into family time, where everybody sits down and read a book before bed. You can kind of share those things, but also, that's kind of a way to get your time to do what you need to do to.

OK, you can go on to the next slide. And so, I know somebody-- I think, Oh, Chris said that running is like a meditation to you. That would not be meditative to me. If I had to run, probably there's something chasing me and I'm running for my life. But other than that, that would not be fun for me. But if I get to sit down and read a book or just have some quiet time without anybody asking me for things or where things are.

I told you, we moved. We're living out of boxes right now. I don't have my desk space set up. So that's just what's working for us right now. But every 5 seconds, in fact, I've had a kid popped their head in here

three or four times so far, saying, where's this-- the last thing was-- well, the last thing was my car keys. But right before that it was, I can't find the sugar, and she's baking a cake.

So it was I can't find the sugar, then it was, I'm going to the commissary, then it was, you blocked me and where are your car keys. And that's in the 45 minutes that has gone on here. And they're leaving me alone because I'm in here.

So we are-- it's just a few minutes. I'm going to read through and talk about-- well, I'm going to talk about two different things. First, so mindfulness is a really big, hot word right now. And I don't know if anybody kind of tries to practice any mindfulness, but mindfulness is something that does not take any extra time.

You can literally be mindful of your breathing, which is something you do all day-- all day long. But you can choose things and be really mindful when you're doing them, and that really helps you to manage your energy, be able to get focused on what you're about to do, or maybe kind of get rid of some of the things that are clouding up your brain, that maybe you had a rough meeting or a really long meeting that could have been an email and you just kind of want to clear your mind of that. Being really mindful. And so, you could use anything.

Even brushing your teeth. You can be mindful when you're brushing your teeth. We all do that every day probably. So you can think about how much paste is on the toothbrush, and how the bristles feel against your gums versus your teeth. You can think about the temperature of the water, and do you-- is it hot or-- just really focusing on what is happening and what your body is feeling while you do a task can kind of help to do things such as like lower your heart rate, regulate your breathing, and really get you kind of in that energy management place.

And so, the other thing that I talked to a lot of folks about is meditation. And so again, I work with the military. And you say meditation to somebody in a uniform, oftentimes you're going to get eye rolls, and that's not for me, and I'm not doing that. But what I want people to do when they're kind of trying to be in that meditative state is just kind of get to a place where they just kind of feel a flow of their breath going in and out and just have some relaxation.

And another one we talk about is a grounding exercise. It's-- or recalibration. And it's-- we're going to do a meditation a minute, but this one is called 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. And I have a daughter I've talked about. I have two teenagers here. Yeah, I don't think that people in the military have to be taught to be able to fall asleep any time anywhere. I think it's just once you sign your name on the line, it's instant, like you have that in your being.

But-- no, you are right about that. And sometimes, when I do this, I will tell people, especially if it's a big group of people. I'll say, I'm looking, and so I'll know if you fall asleep when you're doing this, and sometimes they do with the meditation. So the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, it's really just using your senses and kind of grounding yourself in the moment to what's around you.

So I'll ask you to do this with me. You don't need to close your eyes or anything. You're going to need to look around. And so just tell yourself five things that you can see in the room with you. And four things that you can feel on or in your body. Now three things that you can hear. Two things that you can smell or that you like the smell of. We'll finish with one positive thing about yourself.

OK, does anybody have any thoughts about that one? I have a 14-year-old daughter, who has lots of anxiety. And she uses that one all the time. She's told her friends at school. She has a teacher that does it with students now. And I think for her, and for people who have anxiety about things, I think it can really stop your brain from racing or worrying about whatever is coming next or whatever it is that you're anxious about and really kind of bring you back into the moment.

So, Maggie's tuning out the noise.

AUDIENCE: Downstairs-- and it's like-- when everything is so quiet and I'm actually paying attention, it's incredibly loud. I tune it out all the time. It's crazy.

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. And it's-- Yeah, and thinking about what it takes for your body to kind of tune it out versus what would happen if you were just listening to it. There's all kinds of things that we could talk about that. But definitely, I think it's less stressful to be able to tune those things out. I find myself, when I'm doing something like this, like hypersensitive to the noise around me. I've just heard the front door open and close three times.

Of course, with kids in the house, that's going to happen. But it's amazing when we're focusing and really being mindful of it, what it is we're taking in or that we have been really tuning out. OK, so we are going to do this. I'm just going to I'm just going to read it. It just takes a few minutes. So you can kind of stand up, or sit up tall, but relax.

You can close your eyes if you want to, or some people do not enjoy that. So you can just find something to kind of look at and rest your gaze. So take a moment to notice your breath as it is now. Don't try to change it. Notice the length of your Inhale and exhale, and notice the rhythm and tempo of your heart beating in your chest. Noticing if there's any areas of tension in your body.

Now, we're going to slowly Inhale for four seconds, pause, and then exhale for six seconds. OK. So Inhale, 2, 3, 3, and hold. Now exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, and hold. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Now you continue on. Do that for three more rounds of breath. And as you do, you might find it helpful to say something under your breath like strong on the exhale, and maybe focused on the Inhale. Like strong, 2, 3, 4. And focused, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And I'll let you do it yourself a couple more times.

OK, and when you're back, if you don't mind letting me know if anybody noticed anything differently from when we started that exercise.

AUDIENCE: I always feel well oxygenated. My head feels lighter, but not in a bad way.

ANNIE PAYNE: OK, cool. And has anybody done any kind of guided breathing like that before?

AUDIENCE: There's a breathing I've done called Buyteko breathing, where it's like-- it's like the same thing where it's like you breathe I don't know-- 4 in, hold for 2, breathe out for seven or something, and I've always really enjoyed that.

ANNIE PAYNE: So we know what works for you for relieving that stress. Oh, Yeah. Guided meditation. Yeah. It's nice to hear from people who have done some things and aren't super resistant to it. I spend a lot of my time with people who are resistant. So we can go on to the next slide, Maggie.

One second. Just a little bit. Yeah. Sorry. She needs help for the cake. So we talked about mindfulness a little bit. And that's something that can, if you practice mindfulness and have it kind of in your brain, that can help you to recognize stress really before it comes a problem. If one of your symptoms is being stressed is your heart rate increases and it starts to race. Maybe when you feel that climbing you're using your mindfulness to recognize it.

And then these are just some skills. I'm not going to read them all to everybody. But I really like to point out that energy management, where you can kind of recalibrate your body to really think clearly and perform, like I talked about, somebody who may be anxious about something really kind of recalibrating and thinking about what's around them and really grounding them. And then meditation, you can absolutely use to optimize that recovery time or optimize going into something.

All right, next slide. We're almost finished. This is, I like Missouri mountain, because it's got all these things. And if anybody wants-- I know this is recorded, but if anybody wants to take a screenshot or write down some of these things. These are all things that if you don't know what it is, it's an easy Google search away.

But I-- the very top one is called progressive muscle relaxation. It's just what it sounds like. You can start kind of at your toes, all the way up to your head, or start at the top of your head and go all the way down to your toes. And really kind of either notice if a muscle is tense and kind of let it relax, or tense it up on purpose and then feel it feel it relaxed. I know a lot of people who talk about doing that when they get into bed and really focusing on that can keep their mind from racing.

We did that grounding exercise with the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. I like to use goal setting a lot to help build up some resilience, some resilience to stress. All right, next one, Maggie. And so just to finish up, we talked about how stress affects those four domains of resilience for us, talked about energy management.

Hopefully, learned some skills, or even some ideas to get us to that personal-- back down to the green. And then one more slide, Maggie. So here's my name and my email if anybody has questions, or wants more information about any of these things. And then I'm going to quickly just tell you about the apps on the right.

Those are available to anybody. The mindfulness coach is the one that I use the most, and it's got those guided meditations. You can kind of choose different times, how much you have available, and it'll walk you through. And again, that some of the Mindfulness Coach was made by the Veterans Administration, but it's available for anybody to download.

And that's it. Does anybody have-- just about 6 o'clock time to head off, and I really want to honor that. But does anybody have questions for me? Or anything we want to talk about. Other than how much sugar you need to put in the strawberries for the middle of the cake.

AUDIENCE: I really appreciate you going over this with us. Something that my therapist tells me to is even if you don't handle stress the way you would have wished you would have in retrospect, just to practice self-compassion and be nicer to yourself.

ANNIE PAYNE: Absolutely. Absolutely. Take care-- take care of yourself whenever possible, for sure. All right.

AUDIENCE: I had always heard too, if you're in the middle of a meltdown, or a freak out session, that splashing cold water on your face acts on the same nerves that your freak out is when it snaps you back into a different state, and that can be the beginning of like a—

ANNIE PAYNE: Yeah. Sometimes you need that response that will just knock you out of whatever kind of spiral you're in, and then kind of get you back on the right path. Yeah, that's a good idea to.