

M2 Be A Stress Master Series: Week 6

Up to this point we have looked at the various ways stress manifests in our lives. Perhaps surprisingly, most are from the inside-out.

- Our thinking patterns and habits
- How we relate to life's experiences (*with resistance or acceptance?*)
- How we care for ourselves in the realms of nutrition, exercise, sleep, and connections
- What we do (*Is your heart singing?*)
- How much we do (*examine that to-do list*)
- How we do it (*think multi-tasking here*)

We have agency in all these areas – yes all of them! In other words, our stress can be manageable by learning to pay attention on purpose, listen deeply, and recognize and honor our signs and symptoms. It requires letting go of the “push on through” mentality and begin to reset our stress meter with kindness. Shift from stressed to blessed with kindness.

KINDNESS...

- Is part of our true nature. We were born kind.
- Is an expression of love, respect, regard, care, and appreciation.
- Strong, not weak; courageous, not cowardly; heartfelt, not heartless.
- Engages and operates from the parasympathetic branch of our nervous system.
- Gets silenced by our states of busyness, doingness, comparing, competing, complaining.
- Is NOT about being nice, agreeable, or virtuous. It's about authenticity.

INTEROCEPTION, THE SIXTH SENSE OF AWARENESS (Inner Knowing)

- Interoception is “the ability to be aware of internal sensations in the body, including heart rate, respiration, hunger, fullness, temperature, and pain, as well as emotion sensations.”¹ Interoceptive awareness is associated with emotional regulation.
- This felt sense information is provided by the **vagus nerve**
 - Key regulator of the parasympathetic nervous system – rest, digest, tend, befriend, calm, connect
- Know your stress response symptoms. Be curious about and investigate what “fight, flight, freeze, fawn” *feels* like.
- Kindness as Cure: being, seeing, receiving kindness resets our vagus nerve to rest, digest, calm, connect, our optimum state.

¹ American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/04/sensations-eating-disorders-suicidal-behavior>

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WEEK 6 PRACTICE

- Reflect on Kindness
 - What gets in the way of me being kind?
 - What triggers my kindness instinct?
 - How can I act kinder towards myself?
 - What life experiences need to be rewritten through the lens of kindness?
- Set a kind home tone. Environment impacts vagal nerve operation.
- What do you consume in the form of news and media? This impacts the vagus nerve too. Remember our cells are listening to everything we say and take in and respond accordingly.
- Befriend yourself with kindness
 - Breathe – long, slow, deep
 - Take time – linger longer to sink in the good stuff
 - Find stillness and space
 - Gentle healing touch – releases oxytocin
 - Gratitude journal

And remember KISS – Kindness Is Simple and Sacred

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