

Mindful Relationships

Tools for cultivating self-
and other- awareness

B Grace Bullock, PhD

What is mindfulness?



Benefits of Mindfulness

- **Mood disorders and psychological stress** – Systematic review of 209 studies finds mindfulness-based therapies ***effective for reducing symptoms of depression anxiety and stress*** (Khoury, Lecomte, Fortin et al. 2013).
- **Workplace stress** – Systematic review of 9 studies finds mindfulness-based interventions ***help to improve physiological indicators of stress*** including cortisol production and heart-rate variability (Heckenberg, Eddy, Kent & Wright, 2018).



Benefits of Mindfulness

- **Burnout, distress in the workplace** – Systematic review of 81 studies of mindfulness-based interventions in the workplace reveals ***overall reductions in employee burnout, distress, anxiety and depression*** (Lomas et al. 2018).
- **Leadership** – Systematic review of 19 studies finds mindfulness-based interventions for leaders ***may improve managers' wellbeing and resilience and increase leadership skills*** (Donaldson-Feilder, Lewis & Yarker, 2018).
- **Mental health of health workers** – Systematic review of 41 studies finds mindfulness-based interventions ***generally associated with positive indicators of wellbeing*** such as “life satisfaction” (Lomas, Medina, et al, 2018).



BREATHE: 7 Skills

Breath awareness

Regulation via intentional breathing

Experiencing emotion

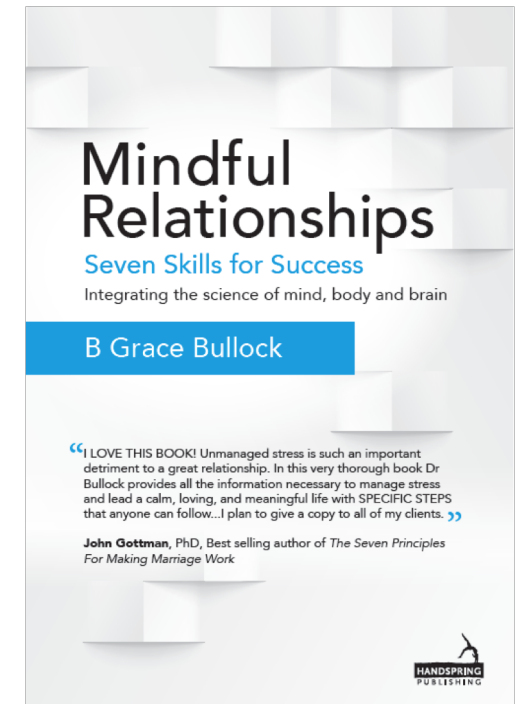
Adjusting mindset/stories

Taking a purposeful pause

Humor: Life as practice

Engaging others mindfully

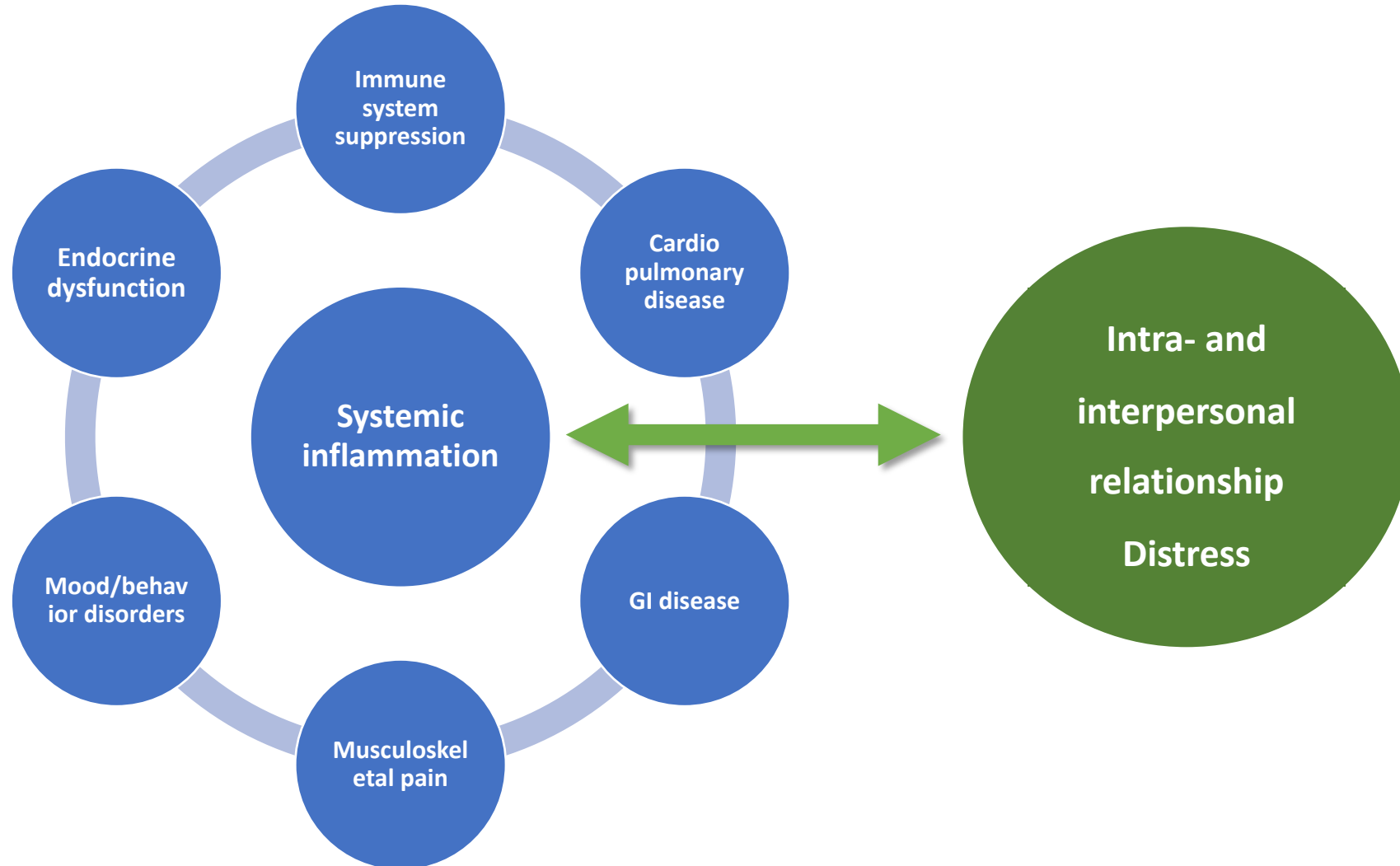
Mindful
Relationships
Seven Skills for Success
Integrating the science of mind, body and brain



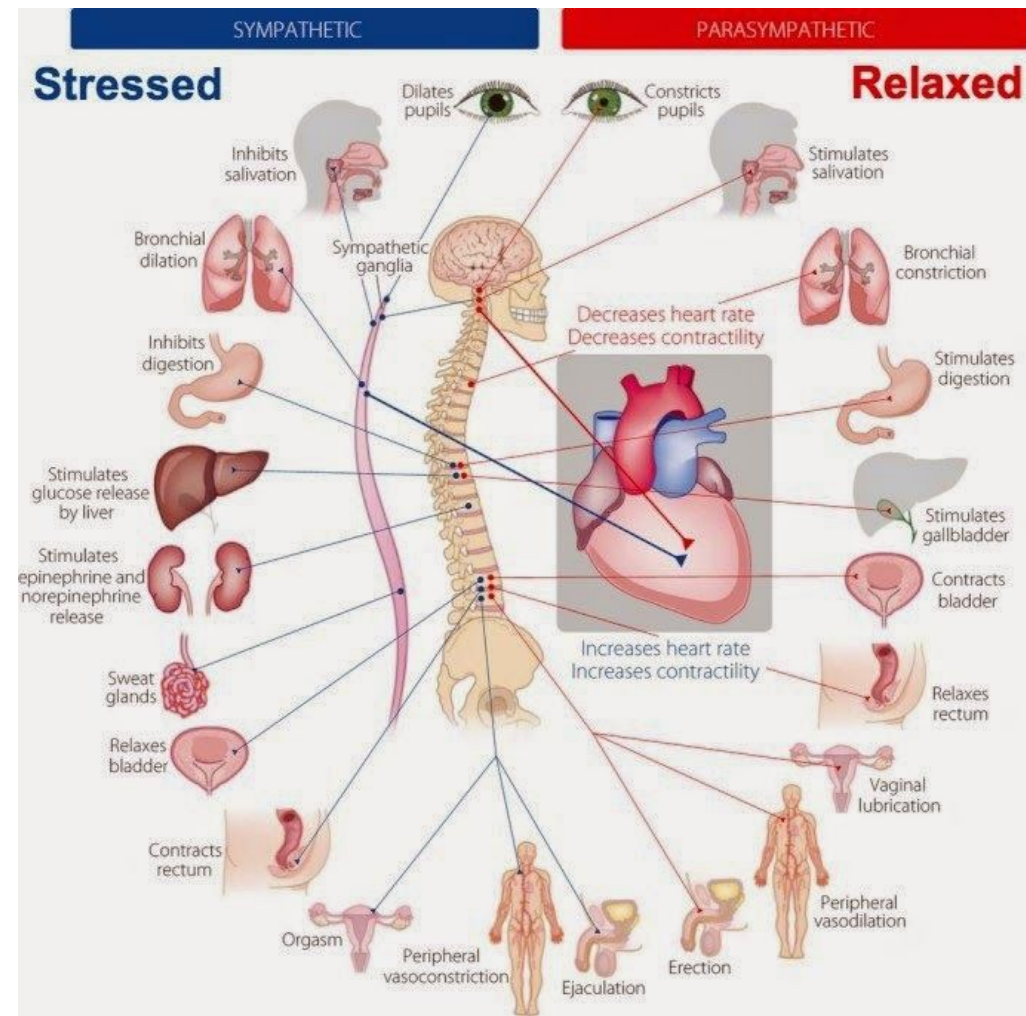
Stress



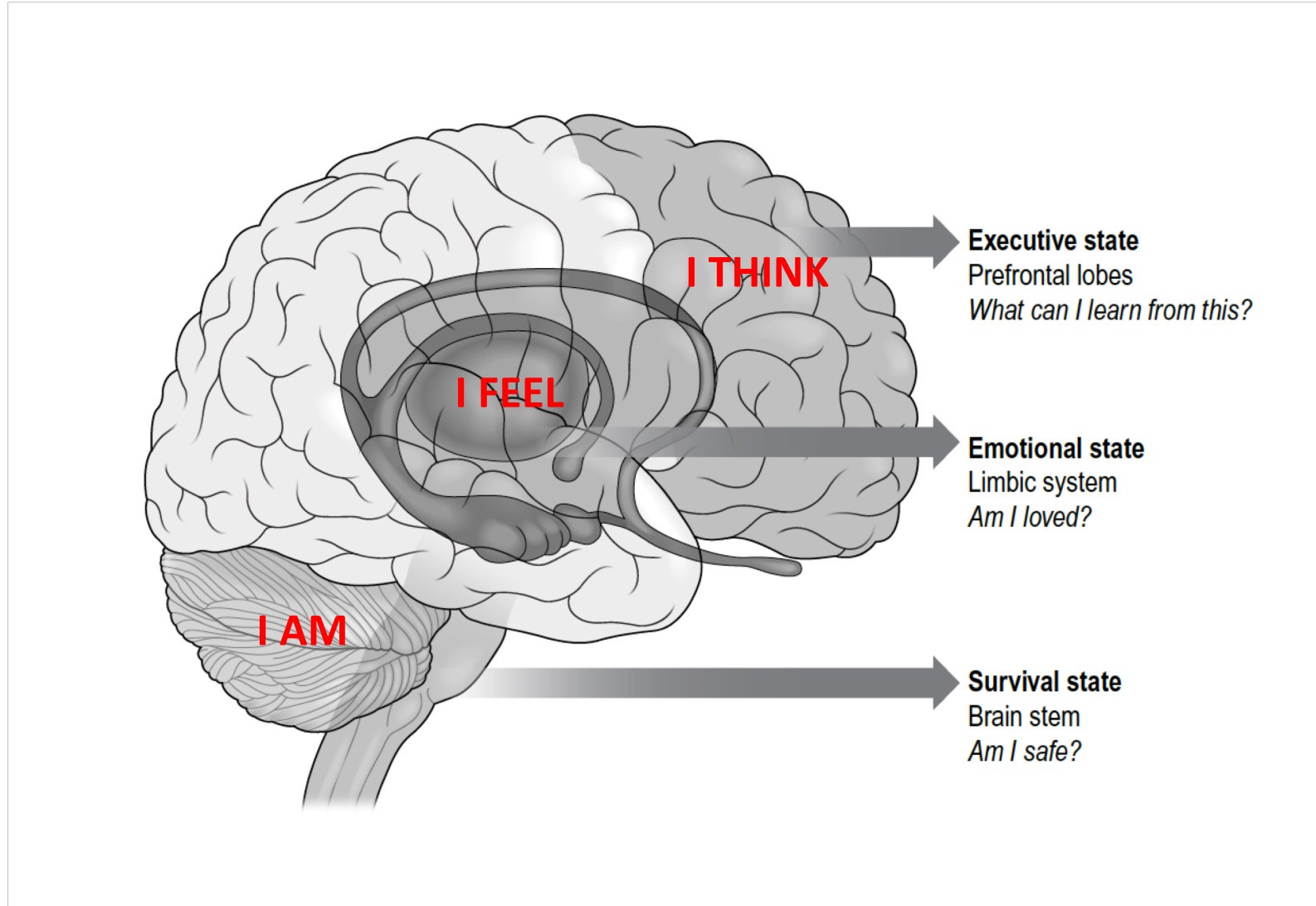
Impacts of chronic stress



Autonomic nervous system



Stress and the mind-brain



How does this work in relationship?



Observing your experience

Upregulated
SNS

Dysregulated



Extremely angry, scared/anxious, overwhelmed, out of control.



Agitated, anxious, angry, or very uncomfortable.



WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Just right! Can cope with stress.
Calm, but not tired. Alert, not anxious.

Downregulated
PNS

Dysregulated



Feel like shutting down, spacy, sluggish, forgetful, uncomfortable.



Numb, zoned out, frozen, in Twilight Zone, going through the motions.

© Allen & Tang

Regulate before you communicate



Intentional Breathing



The mind

- Mental suffering top 10:
 - Worrying
 - Judging
 - Comparing
 - Guilt
 - Shame
 - Regret
 - Self-criticism
 - Unworthiness
 - Imposter effect
 - Your unique addition



Image by Pascal Lemaître

Mindfulness and the mind

- Recognizing the stories that we tell:
 - Who we are – identity stories
 - *“I am a good person trying to make a difference.”*
 - *“I am an introvert.”*
 - The people we meet – relational stories
 - *“So and so doesn’t like me.”*
 - *“So and so makes me feel better about myself.”*
 - The world that we live in – survival stories
 - *“The planet may not be inhabitable in 50 years.”*
 - *“I feel safe in my town.”*



Becoming aware of your story

Write down one line about who you are.
You may use descriptive phrases like, “I am tough”, “I take care of others before myself”, “I am good at math”.

Then ask yourself the following:

1. Where did this story come from?
2. Is this my story or someone else's?
3. Is this story true for me now?
4. Does this story contribute to my happiness?



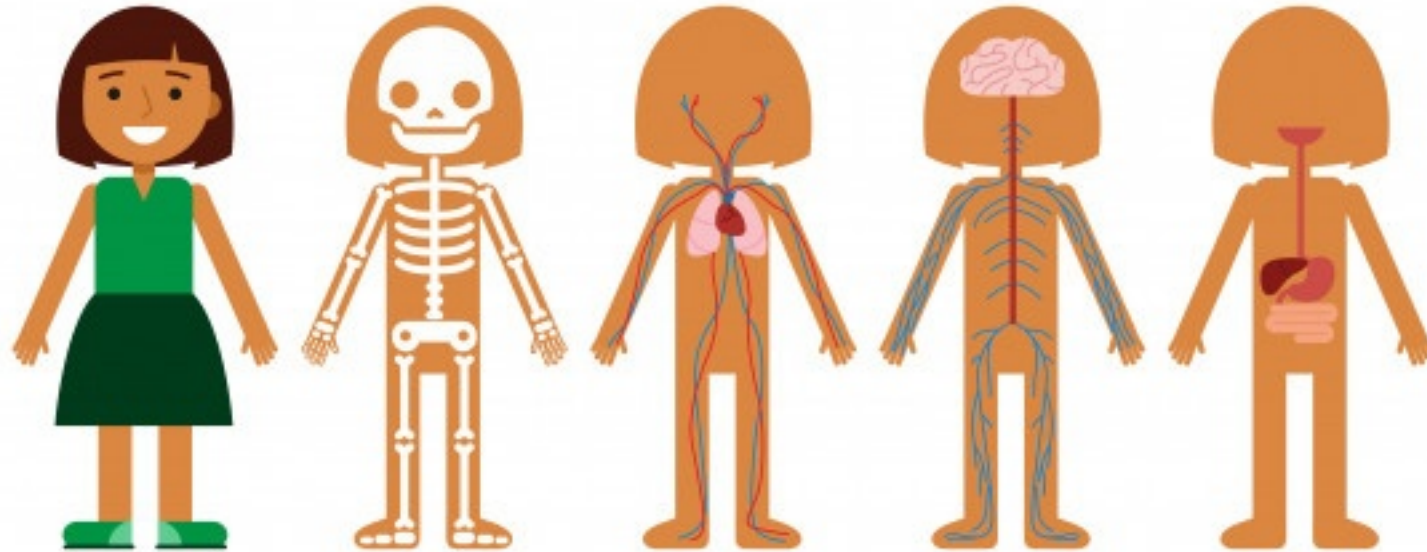
The Worst Day Ever ?

By Chanie Gorkin

Today was the absolute worst day ever
And don't try to convince me that
There's something good in every day
Because, when you take a closer look,
This world is a pretty evil place.
Even if
Some goodness does shine through once
in a while
Satisfaction and happiness don't last
And it's not true that
It's all in the mind and heart

Because
True happiness can be obtained
Only if one's surroundings are good
It's not true that good exists
I'm sure you can agree that
The reality
Creates
My attitude
It's all beyond my control
And you'll never in a million years
hear me say that
Today was a good day.

Mindfulness and the body



Movement to balance mind & body



Mindful: a way of being in relationship to self and other

- Pause
- Get to know your window and learn to talk about it
- Use breath- and body-based tools to regulate your nervous system and mind
- Regulate before you communicate
- Get to know your stories and examine them
- Practice regularly
- Humor, humor, humor
- Engage others with kindness



Resources

- My website www.bgracebullock.com
“Resource” page
- Mindful magazine – www.mindful.org
- Calm.com
- Insighttimer.com
- www.mindfulrelationships.me
- The great outdoors!

