

Top Tips for Wellbeing

Augustina Tetsola, Trauma Informed Coach



1

Mindset

Developing a healthy mindset in which the choice is made to live more consciously rather than from the subconscious programmes. So often our fears and struggles in our mind can blow an issue out of all proportion so learning to calm the fluctuations of the mind, understanding that our mind is predisposed to attach to negative thoughts, practising mindfulness, observing and being a witness to your thoughts.

Helping people to understand their fears are what's driving it, surrendering and accepting the things we cannot change. Surrendering and self-compassion are immensely powerful ways of being which can lead to creating mindful and peaceful inner landscapes, it's often said that when we go on a journey of self-discovery and work on creating that inner peace within ourselves then we can "live from the inside out" so that the way we respond to the world outside of us will be more harmonious.

Holidays, short breaks and retreats are great ways of pressing the parasympathetic nervous system reset button but for sustainable long term wellness your own daily routine is the best way forward.

2

Develop your own Wellness plan

Small but powerful changes which will support the parasympathetic nervous rest and digest functions to create homeostasis and lead to more ease and balance in the body. Fear, anger, stress and anxiety leads to the sympathetic nervous system being engaged which produces cortisol and adrenaline in the body. Having the right balance of these hormones is important for good health but producing too much of either is harmful. Chronic stress can be addictive because in addition to cortisol, stress releases dopamine which is a feel good chemical that encourages repetition by mobilising the brain's reward centres, stress can cause a natural high. By practising these Wellness routines you can reduce the impact of stress on the nervous system and engage the rest and digest functions which amongst other functions keep you calm, safe, connected and balanced.

3

Sleep

The body getting proper rest when sleeping is very important to overall well-being. The body's internal clock is naturally aligned with the cycle of day and night, Circadian rhythms dictate multiple processes in the body, you can maintain a healthy circadian rhythm by keeping a consistent sleep schedule. Adults should sleep at least seven hours a night starting between 10:00pm and 11:00pm. Getting less than this on a regular basis has been linked with poor health. Melatonin - the sleep hormone is at its highest around 10pm onwards and cortisol levels start to rise around 3:00am or 4:00am the body's melatonin which is the sleep hormone and cortisol which is the stress hormone follow a 24 hour pattern, cortisone helps you get up and keep you awake.

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Meditation

Daily meditation for up to 30 minutes each day is an immensely powerful way of creating Wellness in the body, mind and spirit. When we allow the mind to rest - the heart and body is calm. The many health benefits include lowering blood pressure, improving sleep quality reducing anxiety and stress. There are many different types of meditation and relaxation techniques that can lead to inner peace. Meditation calms and quietens the mind from endless chatter, negative thoughts and intrusive thoughts. Contrary to popular belief meditation is not about controlling our thoughts it's about not letting our thoughts control us and the relaxation response is rest and digest. Although I've mentioned up to half an hour or more I appreciate that time can be very difficult to create therefore even a few minutes a day you can start to see how mind chatter is reduce leading to balance, peace and mental clarity. This practise is effective in that it creates emotional and physical well-being by emptying the information overload that builds up over time which can lead to stress and sometimes even mental despair. Increasing self-awareness and focusing on the present moment reduces negative emotions because in the present moment nothing is wrong.

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Mindfulness

This is my favourite practice which can be practised anywhere at any time it is described simply as moment to moment non judgmental awareness, having an increased awareness and acceptance of living in the present moment, observe your thoughts and emotions but let them pass without judgement, you can be the witness and the observer. The understanding that we are not our thoughts is a very profound and powerful way of reducing stress and anxiety which is often brought on by our predisposition for negative thoughts.

6

Breath Exercises

There are many different breath exercises and they have the effect of releasing and relieving stress, improving energy levels and lowering the blood pressure and detoxifies the body. Like so many other practises the breath tones the vagus nerve - this nerve is responsible for creating calm imbalance in the body. By stimulating the vagus nerve the Parasympathetic nervous system is engaged. The following breath practises are effective:

- A) Diaphragmatic breathing or deep breathing is done by contracting the diaphragm
- B) 4:6 breathing for focus and calm. So you breath in for 4 seconds and exhale slowly for 6 seconds.
- C) 4-7-8 breathing for anxiety. You breath in for 4 seconds, hold for seven seconds and then exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat this 6-8 times.
- D) 6:6 coherent breathing where you inhale for 6 seconds in to the belly and then exhale smoothly for 6 seconds.

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Nature heals and restores

Any time outdoors is good for us, what you are seeing, hearing, experiencing at any moment changes your mood for the better and engages the parasympathetic system. A change of scene and a chance to connect with nature, woodlands, forests makes us feel emotionally better, reduces anger, fear and stress, and increases pleasant feelings.

8

Yoga

Wellness is about connection which is why yoga works very well at resetting the nervous system - it connects the mind, body and spirit. This ancient spiritual practise (more than 5000 years old) creates harmony so we can live in the modern world. Restorative yoga with its focus on breathing, slowing down and opening your body through passive stretching is the perfect antidote to burnout as it embraces the power of rest. Hatha yoga, yin yoga and yoga Nindra, are all yoga styles which bring mind body energy connection - calming the mind and nervous system and engaging the parasympathetic nervous system.

9

Blue health

Spending time near or on water is good for physical and mental health, if you can't get near a beach then look for a lake, river, waterfall or canal, even recorded sounds of water are soothing.

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Develop an Attitude of Gratitude

Practising gratitude daily by keeping a diary or journal and listing at the beginning and end of each day several things that you are grateful for is good for mental health, reducing stress and anxiety. It's a very powerful way to get the mind to focus on the positive aspects of their life.

Gratitude turns what little you have in to abundance and changes your perspective on life, it will help to reduce the negative mind chatter which many people subconsciously default into.

Other useful tips for reducing stress in your work environment



- Simply Pausing often throughout the day, allowing the mind to rest.
- Avoid Multi -Tasking, practising mindful moment to moment non-judgemental awareness will foster calm, presence and more connection.
- Find your gratitude shell, pebble or any object that you can hold in your hand to remind you to think about the things you are grateful for in the moment and disconnect from negative chatter or mind fluctuations.
- Gentle movement of the body even at your desk like stretching, twisting, wriggling toes and hands, tapping on hands, chest and legs gently and yawning.
- Take a break away from your desk. Have lunch away from the work desk, preferably if the weather permits take a walk outside or sit on a bench. As you walk or sit, take time to mindfully notice and connect with your environment, take notice of the beautiful colours in nature, the sky above, the texture and quality of your breath as it is on the outside as opposed to inside the office space, and the beauty of the landscape. If we pay attention we can see the beauty in all of the trees, plants and vegetation it doesn't have to be a rainforest to appreciate all of the beauty in green spaces. Intentionally feel your feet connecting with the ground and notice how you feel in your body.
- If you find yourself still struggling to create a good work life balance and find purpose and enjoyment in your work after you have done all you can with your wellness plan then it really might be time to find a job which more closely reflects your purpose , values and beliefs in life, referred to by Simon Sinek as "Finding your Why", a job that you are passionate about that is fulfilling is much less likely to cause burnout.

Recommended books and resources

- The relaxation response by Herbert Benson
- Buddha's brain by Rick Hanson
- Mindfulness : A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world by Prof Mark Williams and Dr Danny Penman
- The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle
- Insight timer meditation app
- Headspace meditation app

Note about the author:

Augustina Tetsola worked as a Criminal Lawyer for over 20 years where she experienced first-hand some of the challenges of burnout. Augustina took an early redundancy package and now works as an Integrated Trauma informed Coach to support trauma recovery and healing. She specialises in divorce, life and business coaching and trains other coaches. Augustina is also a trained yoga teacher and mindfulness instructor. Augustina is passionate about supporting women to gain the mindset and know-how so that they can crush the curveballs that life throws at us and use the experience of overcoming obstacles to create their dream life.

Augustina is an Associate of Animo Leadership.