



The Victory Summit® Virtual Event: Mental Health and Wellness

Stress Management, Mindfulness, and Parkinson's

With Brian Luke Seaward, PhD

Recorded on September 17, 2021

Davis Phinney Foundation

Polly Dawkins (Executive Director, Davis Phinney Foundation):

We are thrilled to welcome to the virtual stage, Dr. Luke Seaward, the topic that we've asked you to speak on today your expertise really is applicable to all humans I would expect, and that our particular passion is, is Parkinson's. And so we look at life through a lens of what will help a person with Parkinson's and all those who are affected by Parkinson's and your message, the reason we've asked you to join us is really universal to all of us. I've got some questions to start off. My first question comes out of curiosity. How did you get into this work? What drew you to this work? And what, tell us a little bit about your journey.

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah, well, that's where I have some connection to Davis and Connie. I got in this work because of my passion in the field of sports psychology. And for a number of years, I was a sports psychologist with the Olympic biathlon team for the ADA Calgary Olympics. And after that ended, the money ended. And so I went back into academia where I have been teaching for quite some time now. I have a top selling textbook on the topic of stress management. And as well as you may have heard you say a few other books, I've written along the way there, but we typically say that stress is an equal opportunity destroyer. It affects everybody. And as we can see in the past several months to a couple of years, it's affected us in ways we didn't even know was possible.

So I'm very much driven by the idea of how stress affects performance. And of course the elite Olympic athlete is the epitome of performance, but it comes all the way down to everything from how we sleep, how we communicate, how we drive, everything and of course you know, being here in Colorado for as long to have now, when what happened at Columbine happened, I think it's close to 20 years ago, I then was asked to go down and speak to the the faculty of the school down there. And I ended up having several students when I taught at the University of Colorado who were in that building dodging bullets.



So my experience with stress has kind of taken me places I never thought possible, but the bottom line is that everyone's got stress. And the question is how do we best navigate through this gracefully?

And I'm convinced that that's possible. When I meet people like Davis and Connie, and I've met scores of people who've had hellacious experiences, oh my God, man, I've written books about this. There's two ways you can do this. You can either go through as a victim or as a victor. And the victim stories are all the same. And the victor stories I take delight in because as I ask them, how'd you get through this horrible event? They say this. It's almost like they all have the same punchline to a story. They say at the time I was going through this, I thought it was a worst thing that could've ever happened to me. But now, I can honestly tell you it's the best thing that's ever happened to me. Whether it's cancer or losing a child or being a quadriplegic. And I'm thinking to myself, would you repeat that? I want to make sure I got that right. And they say it again. It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. And you've got to think to yourself, how is that possible? But they've learned to see the bigger picture and not just focus on the one aspect that has been the biggest challenge.

Polly Dawkins:

A question that maybe we could start with some definitions. So our audience, we can all be on the, about the same page. You've started with stress. How do you define stress? Or how do we understand stress?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah, well I think before we do that, I'd like to define the word wellness because it's been around for a while, but it's kind of like got different aspects. So my definition of wellness is this, it's the integration, balance, and harmony of mind, body, spirit, emotions, where the whole is always greater than some of the parts. So we're not just a physical body, we're a lot more than that. But then, so I'm gonna use that template with mind, body, spirit, emotions throughout this whole presentation. So we're going to come back to this, but what are some definitions of stress? Probably the most famous one comes to us from Hans Selye, the grandfather of stress management, who says that stress is wear and tear on the body. And I think anybody who's ever had a tension headache, knows what that's like, anyone who's gotten older, knows what that's like.

But another definition says that stress is the loss of emotional control. And I think to the example of road rage, and you know, that's definitely a case of this. We see this a lot in the news these days, all kinds of rages. Another one says that stress is the inability to cope with problems, a very cognitive-based definition. And this one I like the best, but it's really hard to quantify. It says that stress is the absence of inner peace. How do you quantify inner peace? Now, the reason we've always had so many different definitions and there's scores more is that this topic of stress is a study in the field of psychology, physiology, anthropology, sociology, theology, and a few more, and everyone has their own take on it from their own perspective. They don't really talk to each other. But if you were to get these experts in a room and say, no, one's leaving till we come to a consensus, you might hear them say, this, stress is a "perceived threat," and we will put the words perceived in quotes. And then we say in parentheses (real or imagined) because we can all make mountains out of mole hills. You know, I love the quote by Mark Twain, who says, "I'm an old man now. And I have known a great many problems in my life. Most of which never happened." Stress is or perceived threat, real or imagined to our mind, body, spirit, or emotions.

And I want to focus on all four aspects because so much of the Western biomedical models says that stress is a physical thing, and it's not, it's a lot more comprehensive net. And also this particular model of wellness. There's no division between mind and body, body and spirit, spirit emotions, it's all one incredibly dynamic situation here. Yet in the Western mind, we try to divide and conquer. And the physical is the most obvious because it's the most easily measurable, height, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, but the mind is so important. The emotions as Connie mentioned, with mood is so important. And how do you talk about spirit? It's not the same thing as religion. It's the health of the human spirit, it's the vitality. It's a lot more than that, but anyway, so those are some definitions. I got one more definition for you about this stress is any change you encounter in your life. Boy, we're going through a lot of change right now.

Polly Dawkins:

Exactly. May I ask you a quick question or a quick thing? Some, one of the symptoms of Parkinson's is a slowness of movement, a slowness of processing. And one of those is the thinking and processing and listening. So I'm going to ask that we maybe slow down a little bit, so our audience, that's okay, you



don't know our community as well as we all do. If you wouldn't mind, we'll take this a little bit slower so people can understand since we don't have a transcript yet for folks, and we will send the notes. So if you don't mind that, and I might ask you to repeat a few things, so that we can grab on to them, if that. Your excitement and your passion is getting me excited as well.

Brian Luke Seaward:

When I get excited I speak faster. So I gotta, I gotta slow it down. So thank you.

Polly Dawkins:

Well yeah and we're also learning what your field and it's so interesting. And we can do part two of this too next time for our audience. Another question is somebody in the chat has, Debbie Perkins has just asked, what then is mindfulness?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah. Great question. And it is definitely the buzzword and has been the buzzword for about the past 10 years. So I'm going to give you a simple explanation because we could spend hours on this one question and we don't have that much time, but mindfulness basically is learning to live in the present moment. Now by and large, let me go back a page into our earlier discussion about definitions of stress, wherever there is prolonged stress, there is ego and the ego actually is what trips the fight or flight response and says, you know, "Danger Will Robinson. We got problems here." So you need your ego. You know, I live outside of Boulder. I could tell you, I see bumper stickers that say, kill the ego. And I'm like, no, don't do that. You need it. You need your ego.

But when the ego gets involved outside of fight or flight survival, then all hell breaks loose. So mindfulness, the best definition I ever heard of mindfulness and meditation is this, it's learning to domesticate the ego. And the tagline is if you don't, you're going to have poop all over the place. So going back to the idea about ego, the ego pulls us out of the present moment into the past. And in the past, we have senses of anger and frustration or the future, which is often about worry or anxiety. Fight or flight. Anger is fight. Fear is flight. Those are the two primary stress emotions. So mindfulness says, let's live in the present moment and leave anger and fear out of the picture.

Polly Dawkins:



Boy, we've all been living in sort of extreme present moment over the last 18 months, haven't we, without being able to do much planning.

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah yeah.

Polly Dawkins:

Can you tell us what role that stress and mindfulness play in someone's mental health and wellbeing or wellness?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Sure. so I like to break things down into short-term and long-term, and what we typically say is that in the short term for survival purposes, stress actually is good. It helps you survive, you know, the problem, the threat, and short-term increases heart rate, increases breathing, increases sweat response. Sometimes your voice goes up, but this doesn't last very long. You can't live like that. And so ultimately, we, we go back down to a lower state of being hopefully at homeostasis. But the long-term effects can be problematic with stress that persists, because what it does is it creates the definition of wear and tear of the body. It really causes havoc. And one of my favorite definitions or explanations about stress is that the body becomes a battlefield for the war games of the mind.

Brian Luke Seaward:

If we don't learn to resolve stress, then it's going to have an effect on our physical body. And if we already have a problem, a situation like Parkinson's, then this is going to exacerbate it, I think the research is pretty clear on that. You know, I can pick a number of diseases, but let's just focus right now on that one. This is going to cause more neural stimulation. It's going to cause more problems with the heart, the cardiovascular system, the immune system, we could spend hours on this one, too. Back when I was in college learning this, I was told that the association between stress and disease was about 50%. And that was a very, very liberal estimate. Today, the experts are saying it's more like 90% and that's a conservative estimate. And then when I learned this Polly, that the cortisol, that primary stress hormone, and there's lots of them. We have this cocktail going through our body as we get stressed out, but cortisol is a big one.

Cortisol when it gets done with all of its responsibilities, for fight or flight, which is to help increase blood pressure, heart rate, and even the glucose and free fatty acids. It does all kinds of stuff. It's actually, cortisol can be your friend in the short term. In the long term, it destroys white blood cells. I heard that and I was like, why isn't this headline news? Forget Kim Kardashian. This is important stuff. And so the long-term stress basically can shut down the body or certain parts of the body, certain systems. You know, and I go back to this this quote from Albert Einstein, who says you can't prepare for war and peace at the same time. And the same thing can be put back onto the human being, is that we can't be breaking down the body and rebuilding the body at the same time. You know, back in the sports lingo, we tend to use the term anabolic, to build up, and catabolic, to break down. Well some of the people who are in the field of stress and physiology like Bruce Lipton says you cannot be engaged in relaxation if your mind is turning out all kinds of stressful thoughts to where your physiology is having an effect on your immune system. The two are not compatible. One has to be turned off so the other one can actually do its work.

Polly Dawkins:

One of the questions from the audience is would you be able to share one or two mindfulness practices or techniques that our audience could try on their own?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Sure. You want to do that now? Or do you want to wait, maybe like closer to about the last 10 minutes or so.

Polly Dawkins:

Sure. Okay. Let's hold that one for the end, let's go back to another definition, which is resilience. That's another one that really has been gaining popularity. Tell us what resilience means and what that looks like.

Brian Luke Seaward:

I'm smiling because this too is a buzzword. And you know, next week I fly out to do a gig to talk to the military and they use that word a lot. And they said that don't use that word when you're here. We've heard that enough. And so I want to use the word adaptation. I was like, don't be on hand, but let me go

back to some definitions here. Cause that's a really good place to start. So first of all, I got to tell you that there is no agreement on what resiliency is. Everyone seems to have their own take on it. And I have to laugh because I've done several presentations. And some people say there's three principles of resiliency. And some people say there's seven steps of resiliency. And some say there's 14 aspects of resiliency and I have to laugh because the numbers keep going up. But here's some definitions. I'm going to read these to you because I don't have it memorized, but I like, there's two of them I want to share with you. The power or ability to return to the original form, position, et cetera, after being bent, compressed, or stretched. To be elastic. And how about this one? The ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like, to be buoyant.

So those are just two definitions. There are hundreds of them, but I will tell you right now that there's no one formula for resiliency because everyone is so different, and everyone's challenges are so different. And so you know, before the term resiliency ever became popular, I coined an expression called muscles of the soul. And when I asked these people who had been through hell and back, how'd you do it? They would say things like it was my sense of humor. It was my sense of patience. It was my sense of forgiveness. It was my sense of optimism. And as I heard these people describe these aspects of what got them through hellacious experiences, not just, you know, one day, but like, you know, decades. I thought to myself, these aren't gifts for a chosen few. These are birth rights for everybody. We all have these.

And so if I could connect some dots here, I think that resiliency is the muscles of a soul. The things that we have innately that help us get through one step at a time, one day at a time to navigate toward what Joseph Campbell called the return home, the return to homeostasis. And that brings in this idea of the hero's journey, which everyone's on. And I want to tell you that everyone who's listening is definitely on. And I also want to put a shout out to the caregivers because I know there's a lot of people in the audience here who are taking care of people, loved ones with this disease and you too, I want to say, thanks, but you too need to to honor yourself with self-care and this aspect of stress management and resiliency as well. So I give talks on resiliency and I thought, what can I possibly say that would have a lasting effect to the audience where they walk home and they get it.

And so I came up with this and then of course, Reba McEntire stole this and sang a song, but I'm going to call this of resiliency, the backbone, the wishbone, and the funny bone. Now I tell you this because a lot of people think of resiliency as being the ability to persevere, to endure the hardship. And yes, that is



part of it, but it's not just stamina. It's not just strength or courage. There's also this idea of hope, faith, vision, insight, that adds to this, it's not just a physical means. And then of course, I got to tell you Polly that everywhere I read, every book I read, every person I talked to said, you got to include humor. Your funny bone is so essential. And can I just tell you a little story? It's not about Parkinson's, but I think your audience is gonna be able to relate to this.

I hope so. So I was asked to give a talk on the healing power of humor, which is, I've given this talk in the white house, to Johns Hopkins medical school, to Mayo clinic and stuff. And so I was asked to give this talk to a bunch of cancer patients after their dinner. It was like, I was put down as the entertainment and I was like entertainment. I'm not a comedian. So, but I pulled it off. Everyone loved it. I thought. Until I went to the back of the room and this woman who in a wheelchair said to me, your talk, wasn't funny. And I said, oh. And I just grabbed my stuff and I slowly kind of walked away. So I see this woman a year later, about 500 miles from where I last saw her. And I know it was her because she had the same yellow wheelchair with the basket in front.

And she comes to my presentation, and it was an all-day conference. And she comes hours, an hour early and she wheels up to to where I'm getting ready with my place here. And she says I want to ask if you would grade my homework and I gave everybody in the audience, I'm going to give it to you guys too, a homework assignment. And that is to build a tickler notebook. I want you to start looking for funny things, funny jokes, JPEGs names dear Abby letters, Dave Berry columns, something look for something funny every day, that you can put this notebook. And the research shows from people like Norman Cousins that not only do we got to take responsibility for our own health, but we need to actually focus our direction without blinders on, we need to actually look for something like this in this case, look for something funny and the story is he actually got better doing humor therapy.

So I gave everyone that night, this assignment, build a tickler notebook. I give it to my college students. I give it to a corporate executives. I give to lawyers, I'm going to give it to everybody listening here for the victory summit, start building a tickler notebook. And so this woman wheels up and she says, would you please grade my notebook? And I said, well, sure. I said, I think you'd an A. And this thing was at the size of the LA yellow pages, this thing was huge. And she had gilded pages. I mean, it was amazing how much time she put into this. And I said, you definitely get and A. And she goes, no, take it to your room tonight and look through it and then give it to me tomorrow because I want you to grade it. And I said, okay.

And then she said to me something, I'll never forget. She said, when I first met you, I thought you were an idiot. Okay. And she said, but then when I drove home, I realized maybe it's not you, maybe it's me. She said, I've been curmudgeon ever since I've been diagnosed with my disease. And she said, I know Cuba is not going to cure me. She said, but you know what I said, what? And she said, I'm no longer a curmudgeon.

Polly Dawkins:

That's beautiful. That's wonderful. I was thinking we should probably have you do some standup here for us, to help us with some humor. Let's get back to stress. One of the things, one of the issues with, with Parkinson's is dealing with just the uncertainty of how a day is going to be, what the next month is going to be, what the future, how you compare yourself to others and how they're doing. How do people make peace? Or do you have any suggestions of how people can make peace with uncertainty and the stress that's around that?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah, that is a great question. And we're definitely in times of uncertainty right now. And that's, I think part of the landscape of stress is the fear of the unknown. And like I said, we got lots of those cards being tossed at us every day. But first let me go back a page to how I teach stress management to whether it's a class or to an individual, or, you know, to an athlete or anybody. And the approach I take is both coping and relaxation, coping skills are those things that help us take a better perspective on what the problem is and work toward a resolution. So it used to be people who just taught stress management and basically is relaxation techniques, but they kind of forgot the whole coping part. And so there's two types of coping skills. You're going to laugh at this ineffective, and effective. Ineffective are things which perpetuate stress. And they may seem like they're good in the short term, like drinking and drugs and all that kind of stuff. But no that doesn't really help any. So I worked for the effective ones. I just want to read you a short list of some of these, because then will come back to your question.

Polly Dawkins:

And we'll try to capture those and then notes for people on the side. So, tell us your list.

Brian Luke Seaward:

The first one is reframing, and reframing is trying to change the perception so we're no longer threatened by it. So reframing, it's not going from the negative, the positive it's actually seeing the whole picture. It's not just a delusional Pollyanna approach. It's saying, yeah, this is bad, but here's something to balance it out or to try and even it out just a little bit. So reframing has taken a new, fresh look at it. Another one is humor. We mentioned that. Gratitude, I loved how Connie and Davis mentioned that. Prayer is a big coping technique for a lot of people. I'm really into journaling. I love journal therapy, just writing your feelings down, but the new one is called poetry therapy. And sometimes just putting your thoughts into a verse and they don't have to rhyme. But the thing about poetry therapy is I love this expression that says, it says it makes order out of chaos. And you can do that with words, and it begins to layer to other parts of your life.

I'm a real big fan of creative problem solving, which is trying to look for options into the problems that we have. And if we don't have any options that we get painted into a corner, so I'm a real big fan of that. And then of course I got humor therapy twice. There must be a reason for that. Anyways, those are different ways to which time management is a real classic. One resource management is very, very important for people with all kinds of, of challenges. But those are some things how we basically take a look at the situation and then we change the perception. So we're no longer threatened by it or minimize the threat if you will. Now, the other side of the coin is relaxation skills, and that would be things like yoga and breathing and mindfulness and Tai Chi and even going out in nature.

Exercise is a big one. I know you guys had mentioned that. So what we can do to try and intercept the stress response, you know, I know I'm gonna point at my neck so that the perceptions don't turn into chemicals and wreak havoc on our body. So how do we deal with uncertainty? This is the million-dollar question, if not the trillion-dollar question. But the first thing I want to say is how can we begin to shift the, the perception so we're not threatened by it and let's go with some, some questions. Well, what things are we certain about? Well, we're certain about ourselves that, you know, we have our mental faculties, we have a sense of humor. We have family, we have resources, we can access. Those things are essential to gather in terms of the knowns.

And then the know that we can access them at will if we can, or when we can. The other part of it is the uncertainty is things like creative options. Okay. So there's a lot of things we don't know about there. What can we actually plan for with options so that we're not painted into a corner? Which a lot of times we can feel like we are, you know, this whole bit about isolation that alienation with lockdown and stuff.

So those are some aspects too, but the most important thing I can say right now is first identify the levels of anxiety. Are there anxiety feelings there and think to yourself, okay, what kind of fear is this? Is this the fear of failure? Is it like, I'm not doing what I should be doing?

Is this a fear of the unknown? Is this the fear of rejection? There's lots of different ways we can kind of identify this. And then you know, so much of the psychology of stress says, yeah, but is that really a fear? I mean, are you really being rejected? And then you go through this whole process and realize, well, not really. So begin to bring the fear down to size and then realize that, you know, maybe it's not so bad after all. And I don't want to make light of this. The last thing I want to do is spout rainbows and unicorns, because I too, I'm from Boulder. But I do want to say that it's important to grieve a situation and obviously with a disease like this, this is definitely something to take very seriously, but at some point, we want to move out of the grieving process into the adaptation process.

And that's part of the working with the unknown too, is how do we adapt to the changes that we're encountering? And we can all do that. You know, that's part of Cooper Ross's death and dying model. You know, first there's a denial. Can't believe this is happening to me. Then there's anger. We want to skip down to acceptance and then adaptation. And we've all actually had a lesson in adaptation with this COVID thing, but there's layers upon stress for everyone. And so what I want to say is a quote that I learned from this woman who survived the concentration camps, which to me is like the epitome of ultimate stress. I know there's a lot of bad ones out there, but that I think takes the cake. And she said, giving up is a final solution to a temporary problem, that beautiful.

Polly Dawkins:

Do you have ideas or strategies of if we're stuck in that grief or loss or the sort of bad or even anxiety, how to move to adaptation?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah. One of the things that we recommend is to do a little grieving ceremony. Write down how you're feeling and why you're feeling this way. And then it may be that, you know, just like when we have a funeral for someone who has died, we have a grieving ceremony for the loss of a situation. So it may be that, one of the favorite things I hear from my students and participants in workshops is to plant something like a tree. And that tree becomes a symbol as it grows. That's a symbol of yourself. And

again, we got to prune it there, or maybe we take some fruit and stuff, but or maybe it's a garden, maybe it's, you know, planting bulbs, perennials in a garden, but something where we take the feeling and as best we can do something with it creatively.

And so I know one person told me that they, they lost their child to cancer, and she began to go through photos and begin to do poetry. And she put together this book, that was her grieving. But it was a celebration. And that's what I want to say that this is, we begin with the what I call is a BMW, Bitch, Moan, and Whine. And you're right. I mean, we all have to do that, but at some point we want to turn that into a neutral and then get to a positive. So turn this into some kind of celebration. And that may sound odd for people who are hearing this, who are just have just been diagnosed, like celebrating what the death of my life. I don't think so. That's okay. Take it, take a moment to grieve where you are right now. And that's perfectly normal. It's perfectly natural. And I would be questioning the fact if you didn't do that because that's part of the process, but what we don't want to do is get caught up in perpetual grief because then we get caught in the Whirlpool of negativity. And so that's, like I said, that's the victimization. I love the expression that says once a victim, twice a volunteer.

Polly Dawkins:

Yeah. We see that folks who do best living with Parkinson's are those who are able to somehow get out of that stuckness, that grieving process and move on and and then share their stories of how they've done. So, Lorraine Wilson in our audience says, I have written on everything you listed in your managing stress, a creative journal, one, a holy moment fascinates me. What has been your experience when you lead a group through this writing, this type of journal exercise, or journal entry?

Brian Luke Seaward:

It's like, we all have been taught how to fly. Oh, thank you so much. You're the one who bought the book. Okay. Yeah, Holy Moment. Well, I think in there, I may have mentioned the fact that my dad was dying and I ended up going to a dolphin place. I think it was SeaWorld. And I got hugged by a dolphin, how strange is that, I was like sitting here crying on his dolphin, an empty pool tank and this dolphin comes out from nowhere. And then I just felt compelled to hug it. That was a holy moment for me. I got to tell you I've since had many, many more, but when we do that as an exercise, when people share them, it's almost as if you take off all these wet clothes and you just float or you fly.



I mean, it's a magical moment when we realize that this is just a costume, we're so much more than that. And thank you, I got to come back that day. I gotta put that on my Facebook page, holy moment. And we need more of those. And, yeah, that's magic. I got to tell you a little story here, I can go on forever about this, but I take people on group trips to Ireland and the very first year we were there, we go for summer solstice because that's one of the Irish Celtic holidays, if you will. More the lights. If you've ever been to Ireland, if you haven't seen it you know, it's a lot of clouds. I mean, like it's a lot of rain. That's why I call it the Emerald island.

And so we're there for like four or five days. Nobody sees nothing but clouds the whole time, but we go to this place called galleries oratory, and we do this ceremony for summer solstice. And the song that is sung typically is here comes the sun. We did it at 10 o'clock at night. And we're in this little tiny stone church in the Dingle peninsula. And all of a sudden, the clouds break open and the sun comes through, and this door is made specifically for this day and the whole room lights up and our tour guide, he says something magical is a foot. And I realized that the average used the term magical to mean spiritual. And so a holy moment definitely is a spiritual moment.

Polly Dawkins:

That's great. Love that. Good. A couple of other questions here. I'm going to, Dr. Pontone came on here. I'm going to put his video off cause he'll be up next. Another question we had said, let's get back to some strategies and some practices. So perhaps you could chat with us about some strategies for either mindfulness, we've talked about journaling, we've talked about moving out of grief, but do you have any other strategies that you might suggest for folks, whether it's stress strategies or mindfulness strategies or techniques, something people could walk away with today and say, I'm going to do this.

Brian Luke Seaward:

Yeah, I like to everyone right now, they could, if you got a piece of paper and pencil draw a big circle and that blank piece of paper in the back of your book, and then draw a line north and south, east and west and make one quadrant body, the next quadrant emotions, the next quadrant mind, and the next quadrant spirit. So we're going to try and do something in all four quadrants. And I would like to encourage everyone to visit this Mandalah every day. And so I'd like you to have you write in the quadrant for the body. What are some things you can do for the body? Now, maybe it's exercise like Davis mentioned on a medicine ball, maybe it's going for a walk. Maybe it's a yoga. Any kind of physical

activity put in there because what this is going to do is you're gonna have to have a sympathetic rebound effect. That's gonna calm the nervous system.

Polly Dawkins:

That's it. I want to do a visual for folks. This is really crude. I don't even know if you can see it, the four quadrants. So can you repeat it again?

Brian Luke Seaward:

Mind, body, spirit, emotions. It has one of those aspects of it. And so, so in the body, we're going to write down some activities that we can do for bringing the body's nervous system down to more homeostasis. So maybe it's exercise, hopefully it's exercise of some kind. Maybe it's a yoga, even if it's like chair yoga, which is real big right now. And if you can't do chair yoga, you can do eye yoga. You know, we did Connie and Davis did facial expressions. You can do that with your eyes, upper right, lower left, like that. So yoga. Tai chi. You can actually do chair Tai Chi too. That kind of thing. So you get the idea. I know at time's short here, so I'm going to hopefully cover all four of these. In terms of emotions, let's put down a humor. And I'll give you again, the assignment for the tickler notebook, try and find one funny thing a day.

And I guarantee if you keep that mindset, you're going to find more than one. Okay. Also in emotions, and this is just me, so if you don't like, my ideas just don't use them, but music to me is very emotional. So I make a new playlist. In fact, I have one called above the fray, songs that lift me up, raise my spirits and the song happy is on there. The song on from, oh God what's that one, I've forgotten now, but they did a video with all the old-fashioned movie scenes there, it's about dancing, uptown funk. So maybe like 10 songs make a new playlist of songs that lift your spirits.

Okay. So, and poetry can be emotional too, if you want, you can do some poetry therapy there, maybe like do a poem, not every, but you know, just maybe like once a month or something like that. The mind, now let's talk about mindfulness. The mind basically is how well we perceive information, how well we process information and how well we communicate information. So it's all about information, at least in some perspective there. So I like to actually sit quietly, sit still and just focus on my breathing. And we did that earlier today with, with Connie and Davis. This is one type of meditation, mindfulness

meditation, to be present moment with your breath. Some of you may have heard the term energy work and that's where and Polly, I can send this script to you and you can post it one.

It's where you actually just imagine that you're holding a Nerf ball just made of light. And you just focus on that. And then you sometimes when I first learned this, you may have noticed that I don't have any hair. When I first started this, I had sod that I was trying to make grow back over my head. I'd bring it over my head. It didn't do much, but my skin looked really good. Anyway, so that's another example of mindfulness. Sometimes just taking a piece of paper like journaling and just writing down ideas that come to your head so that you don't get distracted and distractions are the Achilles heel of mindfulness. Think to yourself, I just want to be the present moment. And then all of a sudden you get an alert on your cell phone and, you know, you see the world's going to hell or something.

By the way, we do a whole talk on digital toxicity, but we'll save that for a different day. And then spirit. Now, a lot of things with spirit, you may say, are tied to emotions. Humor is, is again a very spiritual thing, not sarcasm I might add, but but by the way I learned the word blessed, is, I'm sorry, silly is another word for blessed. It's a derivation of the word blessed. So if someone says, don't be silly, say I'm going to be silly. Prayer can be in this category. I like to be a nature. I go to Rocky Mountain National Park and I, with my little handheld hummingbird feeder, and I get hummingbirds to come to my hand. That's a spiritual moment. That's a holy moment. As you mentioned earlier, to me, nature is definitely a part of that.

So I do photography. Photography brings me into a whole new realm of the spiritual realm. And I can, I'm thinking right now, problem solving, okay. If I had tremors, how can I do photography? One thing you do is you could set up your camera on a tripod to where, you know, you're going there are going to be things, you can get a remote and just press the remote. So you don't all have to do is hold a remote. You don't have to hold a camera and think that, oh my God, it's blurry. There's ways around this. You can be creative around this. And so photography for me is a very spiritual experience. And if you want, you can find me on Facebook. I tend to post my photographs on Facebook. I just saw a Bobcat yesterday, amazing, as a spiritual experience, too. So lots of ways in which we can do. Singing is as a spiritual experience for some people, some music is somewhat like that.

Creativity. I'm a real big fan of using the creative process as a spiritual process. And my wife and I make these photography yearbooks. We go through our, all our photographs in December and make a a Shutterfly or apple photography book. So being creative is an idea too. And when you begin to do this,



then it takes your mind off of things like the politics or global warming or whatever else, personal issues, but it just kind of gives your body a chance to relax, to find that sense of homeostasis. And again, I'm not spouting here rainbows and unicorns. I know that that this is a very serious health challenge, and my heart is out to you, and you are my heroes. On the same token, we don't have to wear this as a badge of victimization.

Polly Dawkins:

I'm not sure how we could end that on a better note. Really, really lovely. Thank you for spending time with us today and hope that you'll learn from being a part of our community and come back and join us again.

Brian Luke Seaward:

I'm delighted. And I'm honored. And send love and compassion out to everybody. And thank you so much for being bright lights to the planet.

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