



The Wellness Flame

Stress is Costing You:

Simple Strategies for Better Health

Today's agenda:

1. Can you imagine giving your nervous system the same compassion you offer everyone else?
2. Together, let's turn the biology of stress into the biology of courage and resilience.





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+♥ HeartMath.



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- Dual Baccalaureate - Nursing and Exercise Physiology
- AHNCC Board Certified Health and Wellness Nurse-Coach
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- TEDxURI Speaker, April 2025
- Sigma Theta Tau International – 1995
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**Sooo, what
do you do???**



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HELPING YOU HARNESS BETTER HEALTH

www.thewellnessflame.com

Simple Strategy #1

Managing Stress
- Breath Awareness



What is a “stressor?”



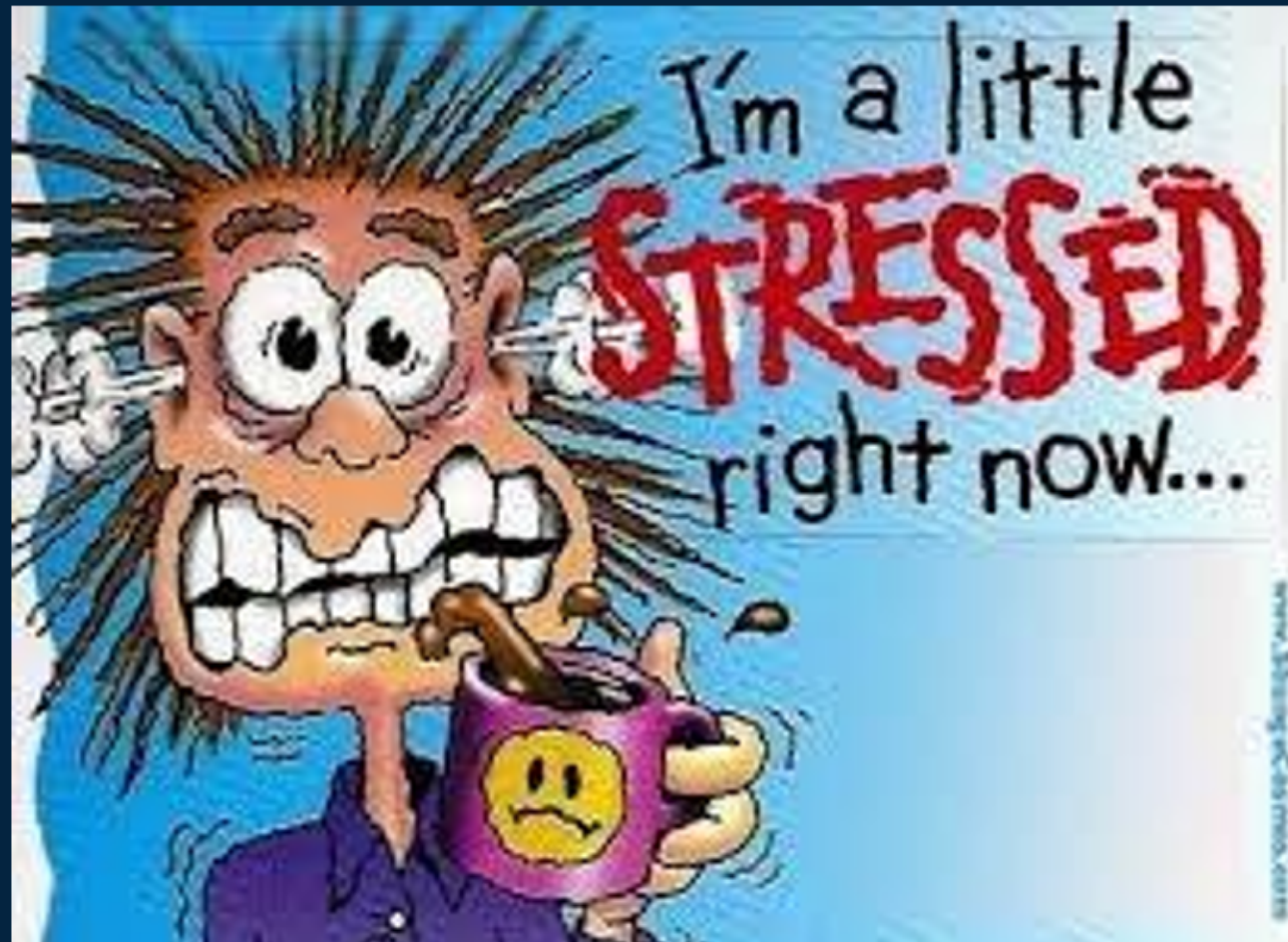
A situation, event or stimulus that causes tension or anxiety.



* Today's Fast-Paced,
High Stress World



What is a “symptom?”



- * Any physical or mental change that a person notices that suggests an unusual state in the body.



Signs and Symptoms of Stress

- Headache
- Chest discomfort
- Back, neck or shoulder tightness
- Jaw pain, tightness
- Stomachache
- Dizzy spells
- Shaky knees
- Nausea
- Frequent urination
- Body warmer or colder than usual
- Increased perspiration
- Skin blemishes
- Low energy/constant fatigue
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Rapid heartbeat
- Digestion problems
- Voice strain
- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Eating more or less than usual
- Lack of interest in normal activities
- Restlessness
- Withdrawal from friends or normal activities
- Moodiness/oversensitivity
- Short tempered/easily angered
- Lower tolerance of frustration
- Weepiness/frequent crying
- Nightmares
- Nail biting, hair pulling, finger or foot tapping
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling disorganized or overwhelmed
- Memory impairment
- Difficulty making decisions
- Repetitive thoughts
- Negative thinking
- Decreased self esteem
- Increased use of substances (smoking, vaping, alcohol or drugs)

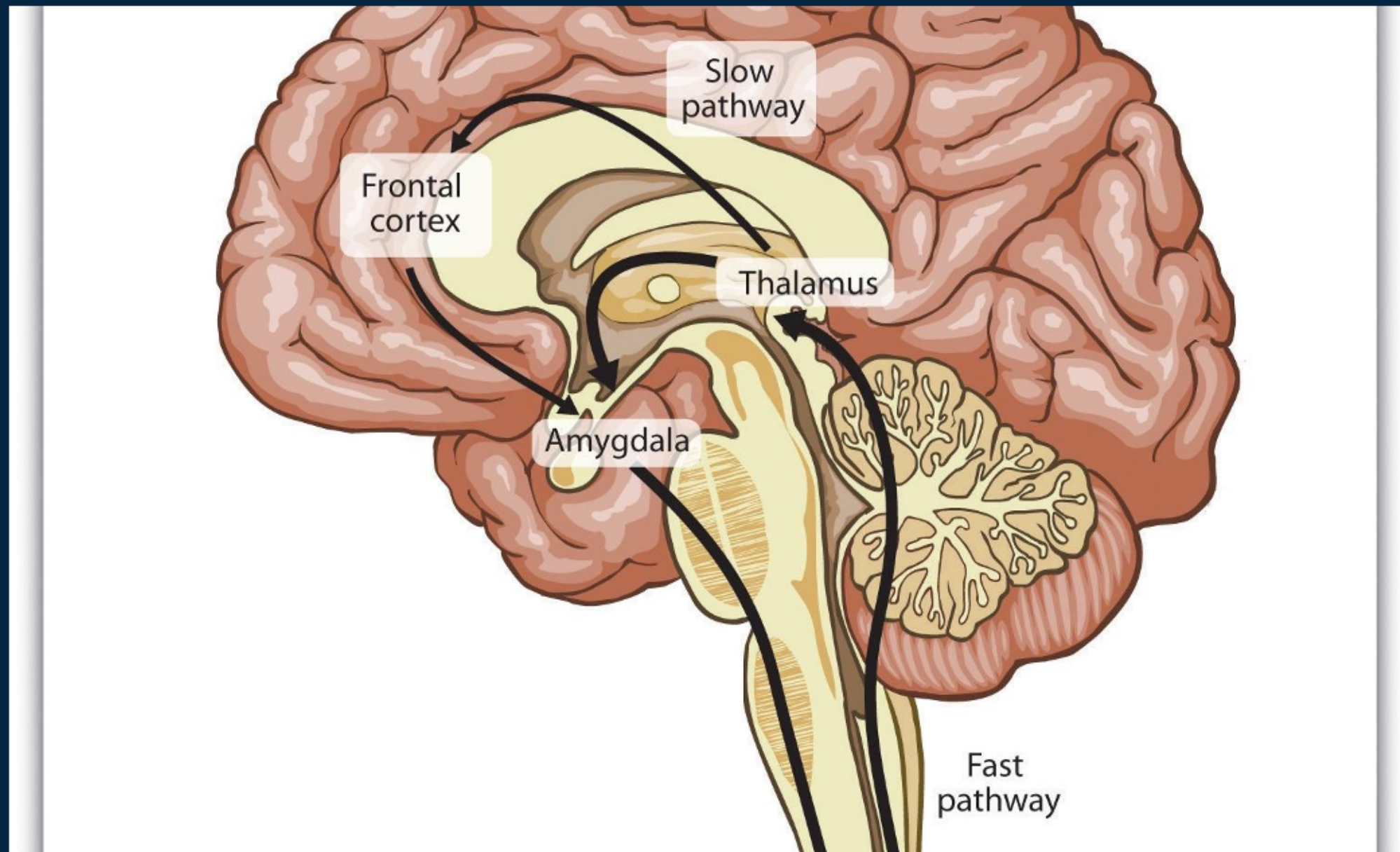


Simple Strategy #2

Managing Stress
-Belly Breathing



Stress Pathways in the Brain



Interventions to Quiet the Amygdala

1. Interventions with immediate effect on the Amygdala:

- Diaphragmatic Breathing (fMRI)
- Yoga
- Aerobic Exercise (reset button)

2. Preventive Interventions that work in advance to calm the Amygdala:

- Regular Aerobic Exercise
- Yoga
- REM sleep (strong correlation to reactivity of amygdala)





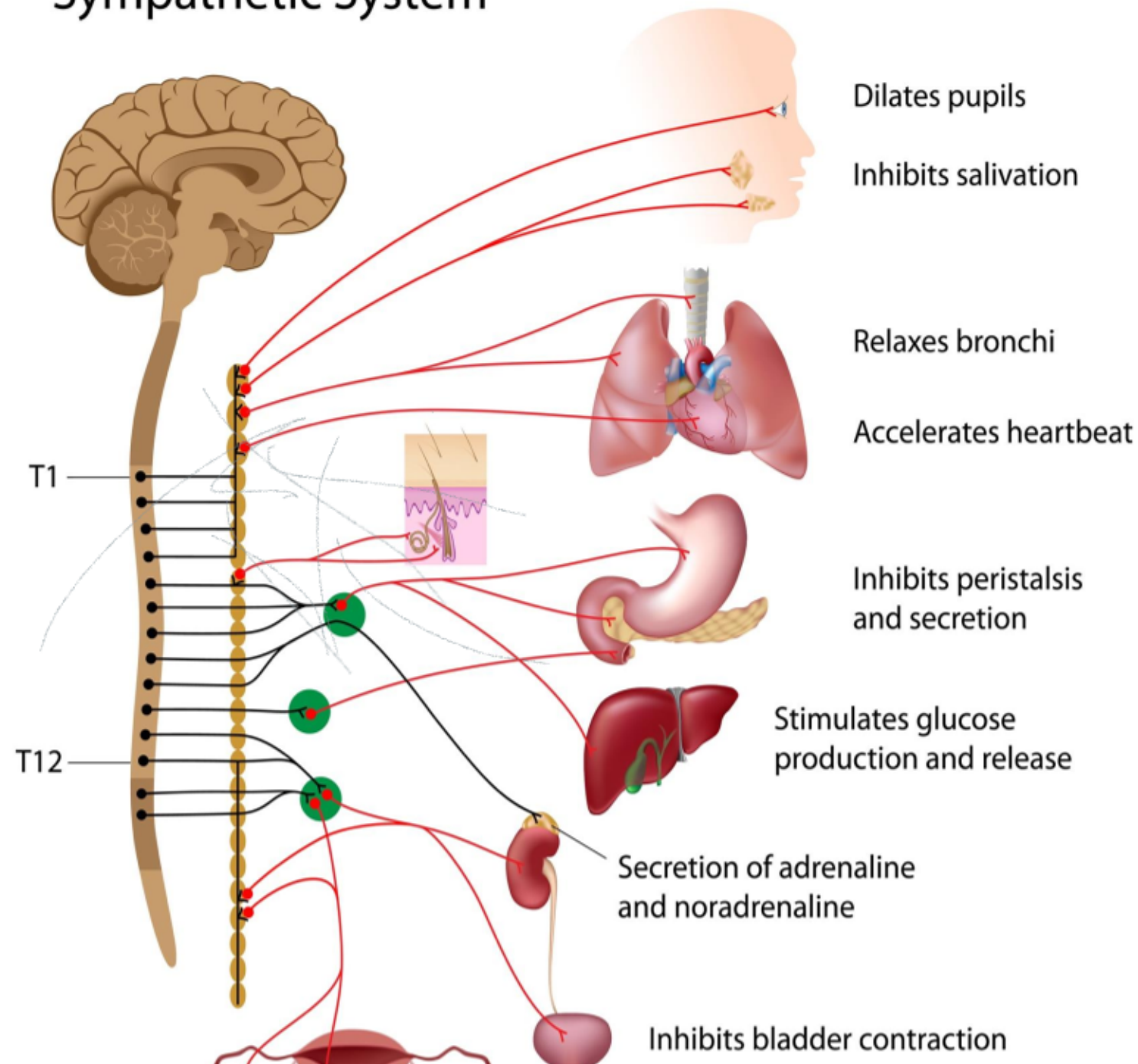
Tips to Relieve Stress

- Movement Breaks – ideas?
- Take a short nap (30 minutes)
- Listen to Music (and dance)
- Meditate/Breathe
- Get outside
- Talk to a friend/colleague
- Speak to yourself in your own head like you would to a friend



Stress in the body

Sympathetic System





How to Make Stress Your Friend

(TED Talk, Kelly McGonigal)

Study #1: Tracked 30,000 adults in USA for 8 years

- How much stress have you experienced in the past year?
- Do you believe stress is bad for your health?
- Used public health records to find out who died.



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How to Make Stress Your Friend

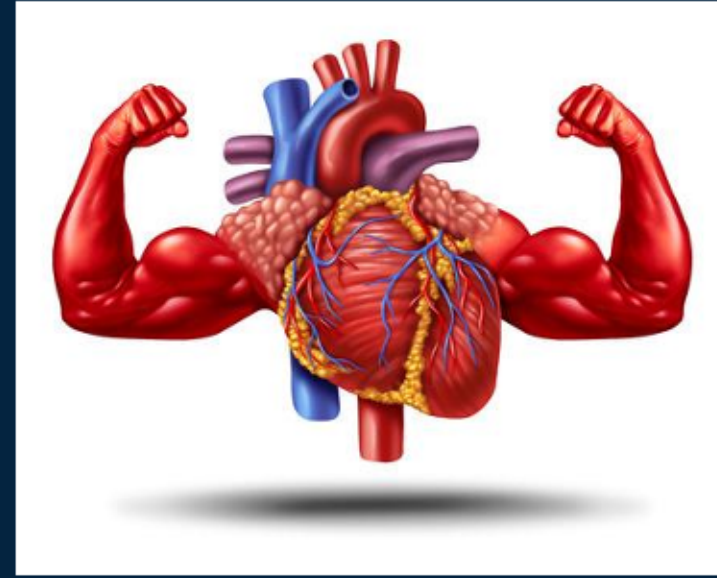
(TED Talk, Kelly McGonigal)

Results:

- High levels of stress over past year = 43% increased risk of dying
 - *ONLY for people who believe stress is bad for health*
- High levels of stress, but DON'T believe stress is bad for health
 - *Lowest risk of dying than any other group*

Can changing how you
think about stress make
you healthier?





Interpret signs of stress, not as anxiety, but as signs that your body is energized, preparing to meet this challenge!

- pounding heart = preparing body for action
- breathing faster = more O₂ to brain to think

How you THINK about stress matters!



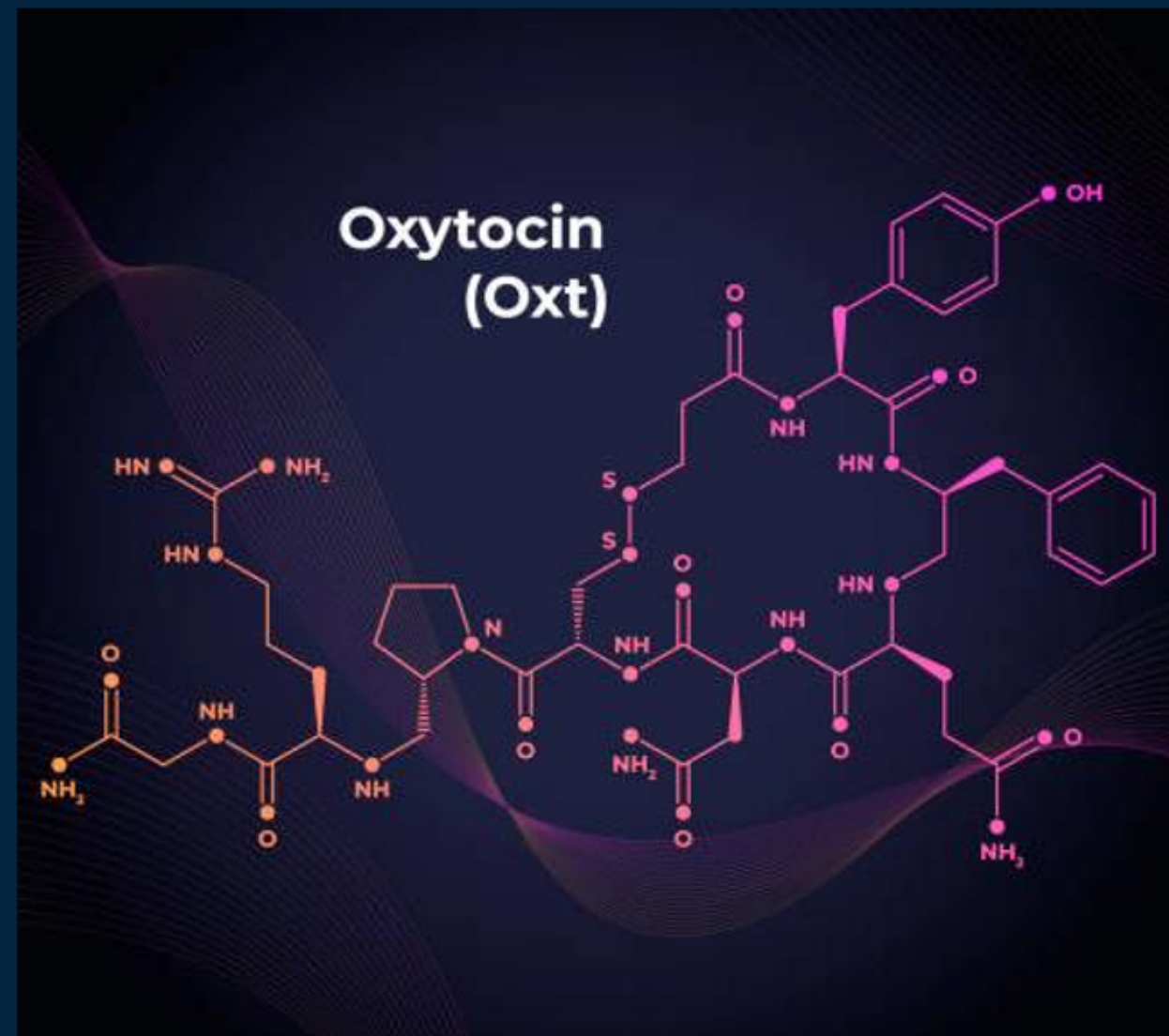
When you choose to view the stress
response as helpful,

you create the biology of courage.



OXYTOCIN

- Neurohormone – part of stress response
- Primes you to do things that strengthen close relationships
- Seek support
- More willing to help and support people you care about
- Increases empathy



OXYTOCIN

- Protects CV system from effects of stress
- Natural anti-inflammatory
- Helps blood vessels remain relaxed during stressful events
- Heart has receptors for oxytocin: helps heart cells regenerate and heal from any damage



How to Make Stress Your Friend

(TED Talk, Kelly McGonigal)

Study #2:

- Tracked 1000 adults in USA, aged 34-93
- How much stress have you experienced in the past year?
- How much time have you spent helping friends, neighbors or your community?
- Used public records for 5 years to see who died.



How to Make Stress Your Friend

(TED Talk, Kelly McGonigal)

Results:

- For every major life stressor (financial, family crisis), there was a 30% increased risk of dying.
- BUT! People who spent time caring for others showed NO stress-related increased risk of dying.



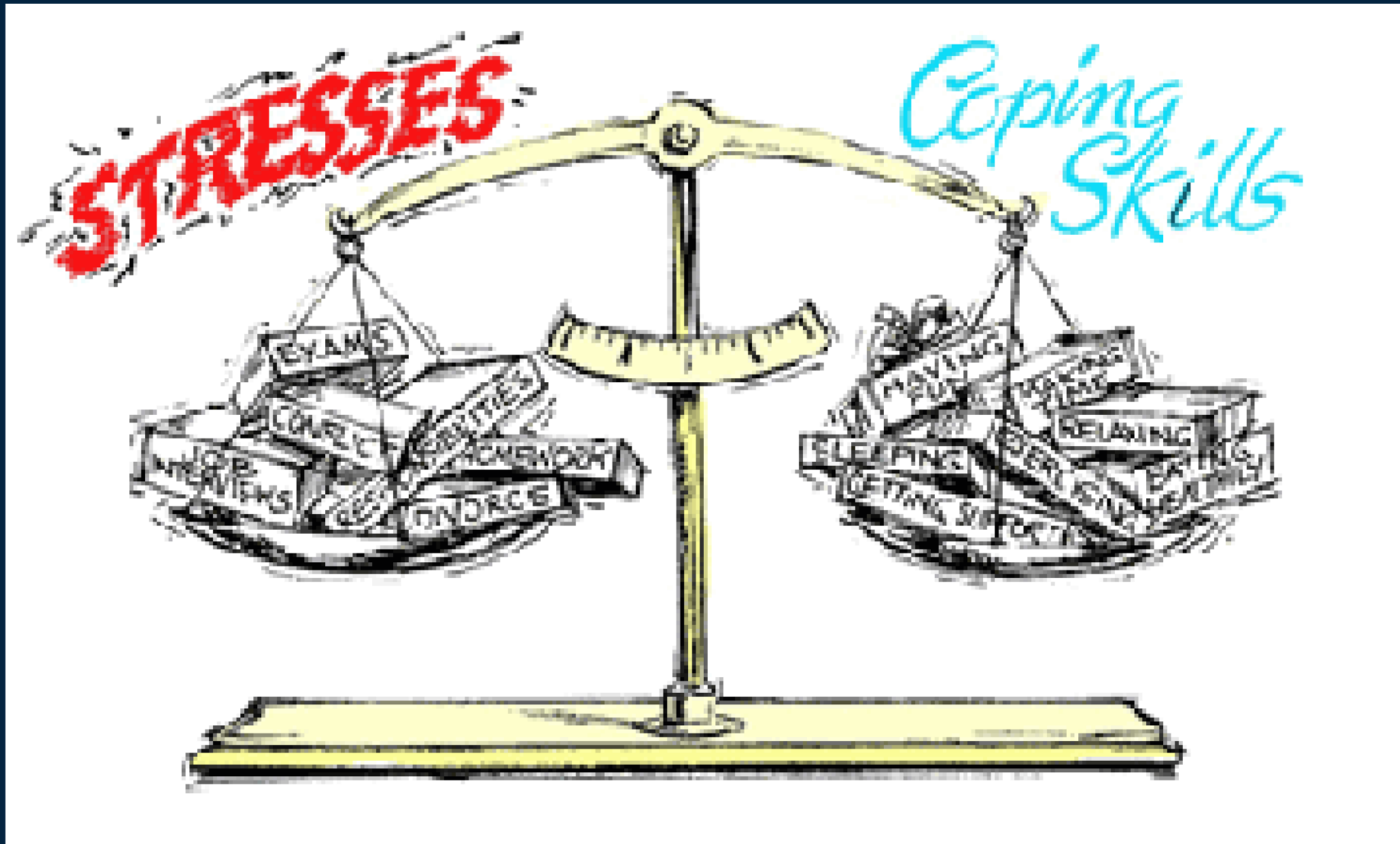
When you choose to connect with
others under stress,
you create the biology of
resilience!



Simple Strategy #3

Managing Stress
-Personal Bubble
Visualization





In the end, it's about how you think
and making meaningful connections!

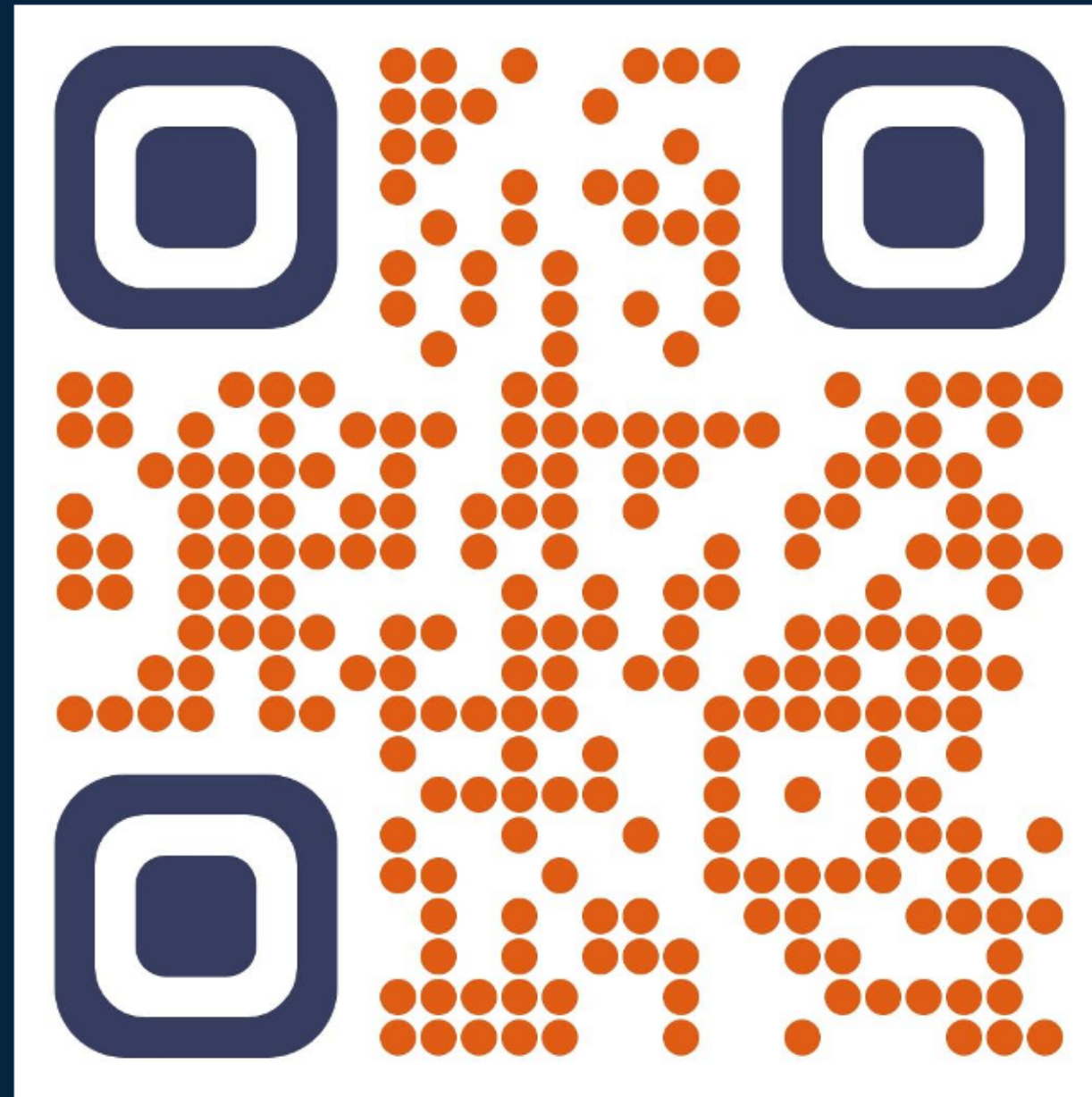


You can trust yourself to handle
life's challenges...

& you don't have to face them
alone.



To sign up for the sleep series emails,
please scan this QR code:



To receive audio recordings of the exercises we practiced today, please scan the QR code below:





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