



Focus Flow

11 – Prevention

The workbook

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Reflection questions

Please take the time to reflect upon these questions for a few minutes before our weekly meeting. Make sure to answer according to your current situation and experience, not what you think it should be like. No need to judge yourself for your answers, just observe what you notice as you write them down. The first step to change is to fully acknowledge and accept our current circumstances.

- How often do you feel anxious, sad or depressed on a scale from 1-10?
- How do you know you need to take a serious break?
- What are your personal red flags for “this is too much”?
- What do you do when that happens?
- How often do you take (real) vacation and time off?
- Do you have a regular schedule for time off, e.g. at least a long weekend every 90 days?

Evidence & consequences

The following notes are for you to fill in during or after our practice. They serve to let the content sink in a little deeper, because hearing it may fade quickly. Think of it like quizzing yourself a bit to engage your active memory.

- The WHO accepted “burnout” as an occupational phenomenon in _____
- Computer workers are the 2nd highest at risk population for Depression and Anxiety Disorders
- DADs show up in physical, mental, emotional _____
- It is a slippery slope (comes in phases), and it is often not taken seriously
- Prevention matters for yourself and for watching out for _____
- Symptoms of burnout:
 - Physical: Feeling tired, drained, low immunity, headaches or muscle pain, change in sleep or appetite
 - Emotional: Sense of failure and self-doubt, feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated, detachment, loss of motivation, negative outlook, decreased satisfaction
 - Behavioral: withdrawing from responsibilities, isolating yourself, procrastinating, taking frustration out on others, skipping work

Tools

Here are your tools. None of them are black magic. Knowing about them will only benefit you if you put them into practice. Therefore I ask you to commit to applying them this week and watch what happens. Pick and choose what you want to focus on.

Physical

- Hand on heart to feel heartbeat, be present and calm down

Situation where I'll use this: _____

- Reset and retrain neuronal pathways by breathing practice & meditation

Situation where I'll use this: _____

- Deep breathing (box breath or, if acute, then count 4 in 8 out)

Situation where I'll use this: _____

- Gentle exercise like yoga, hiking, walking

Situation where I'll use this: _____

- Get sufficient sleep and good nutrition (lots of veggies and fruits)

Situation where I'll use this: _____

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Mental

- **Time off and off-technology time**

When I plan to use this: _____

- **Schedule joy and play: every day, week, month, yearly**

When I plan to use this: _____

- **Nourish your creative side**

When I plan to use this: _____

- **Rediscover joy and meaning that make work and life worthwhile**

When I plan to use this: _____

- **Express gratitude and be kind to yourself**

When I plan to use this: _____

Breathing practice

The below instructions and prompts serve for the entire course. The breathing sessions are a gentle practice to come home to yourself; a transformational exercise that increases your brain plasticity, calms the mind, and strengthens your emotional resilience.

We work with a respiratory technique that benefits your nervous system, so it has a relaxing effect on your body and mind and it may get you into a deep meditative state. While I give you the basic pattern on how to breathe and hold space for you, you let your breath be your teacher, and trust what comes through.

Preparation:

- **Food:** A full belly restricts your room to breathe, so I suggest to not have your last meal before the session at least two hours ahead of time and to eat something on the light side.
- **Space:** Decide where to do it – quiet space, safe, where no one is walking in on you while you meditate, and put your phone on silent.
- **Surface:** Choose the right surface to lay on – that could be a yoga mat, blanket, pad, or your bed. I prefer to do it on a surface a bit harder than a bed, because it might be too comfy and you get sleepy.
- **Comfort:** Have a blanket handy because you may get cold, and a bolster, big pillow or rolled towel for under knees if you have a tense lower back.
- **Eye cover:** Have something to cover your eyes, because our visual sense is very stimulating for the brain, and so it helps you go inside if you keep your eyes closed. The easiest way to make sure they stay closed is if they are covered. That could be eye pillow or eye mask (like on airplane) or a scarf, I have even done it with a headband or a dark sock.
- **Water:** Have some water close by, because you will probably be thirsty when you come out of the meditation.
- **Atmosphere:** I suggest to slightly darken the room if that is possible to support the turning inward before you cover your eyes. If you like, you can light a candle to get into a peaceful mood – completely optional.
- **Visual for me:** If you are joining from where I can see you, make sure I can see your breathing pattern, which means your torso from head/throat to belly on the camera.

Session:

- We breathe 3 times 7 minutes, take little breaks in between, and then relax for 20 minutes.
- All the breathing happens via the mouth. The breathing pattern is a two-part breath. You breathe into the belly, then into the chest, and then exhale all the way. Into the belly, into the chest, exhale. This is a gentle practice, so there is no need to work hard.
- If your mouth gets super dry, just tell your saliva to start flowing, or close your mouth for a moment and swallow if needed and then get back to your breath. If you feel a tingling sensation, that is normal, and if you feel something gets really tight, see whether you can breathe through it, and if it gets too much, just relax your breath and take a little break.
- Let your thoughts float away and just be with the sensations in your body, no attachment to them, just relax into your body and trust that your breath guides you well. You may get into a deep meditative state, but if you have trouble sliding into it, then just keep breathing and drop each thought when it pops up, because 'trying hard' will just keep you stuck in your mind. Roll with whatever comes up, and just breathe.

Aftercare:

- **Take it slow:** At the end of our active meditation, come back gently and just let that experience be. If you feel like you want to process it, then do some journaling, or just be present and let it sink in.
- **Hydrate:** Over the next few hours, make sure you drink plenty of water as you probably moved a lot of energy.
- **Ground:** Get outside and put your feet on the earth so that you ground.
- **Submerge:** It may feel great to take an Epsom salt bath or at least a nice shower to further support some rinsing off old energy.
- **Eat lightly:** Some people get really hungry doing this practice, others not at all, either way is ok. If you are hungry, eat some natural light food – fruits and veggies and nuts will probably make you feel better.

Reflection after practice

Here are some prompts to let the breathing session settle in a bit. You may choose to go over these right after the practice or the next day, but don't let too much time pass. These can serve for journaling as well.

- What came through for you?
- Which physical sensations did you experience in your body? In what way they shift over the course of the practice?
- What thoughts were coming into your mind? Were you able to let them go?
- What emotions did you feel? How did they shift, if they did?
- Were there any challenges you encountered?



Thank you for taking the
time for yourself.

See you next week and stay in your conscious presence.