



# Keeping The Helper Healthy



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”Self-care is never a selfish act. It is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put here on earth to offer others.”

-Parker Palmer  
author, educator, and activist



“...we hear the story told with such intensity, or we hear similar stories so often, or we have the gift and curse of extreme empathy and we suffer. We feel the feelings of our [loved ones]. We experience their fears. We dream their dreams. Eventually, we lose a certain spark of optimism, humor, and hope. **We tire. We aren't sick, but we aren't ourselves.**”  
(C. Figley, 1995)

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## COMPASSION FATIGUE



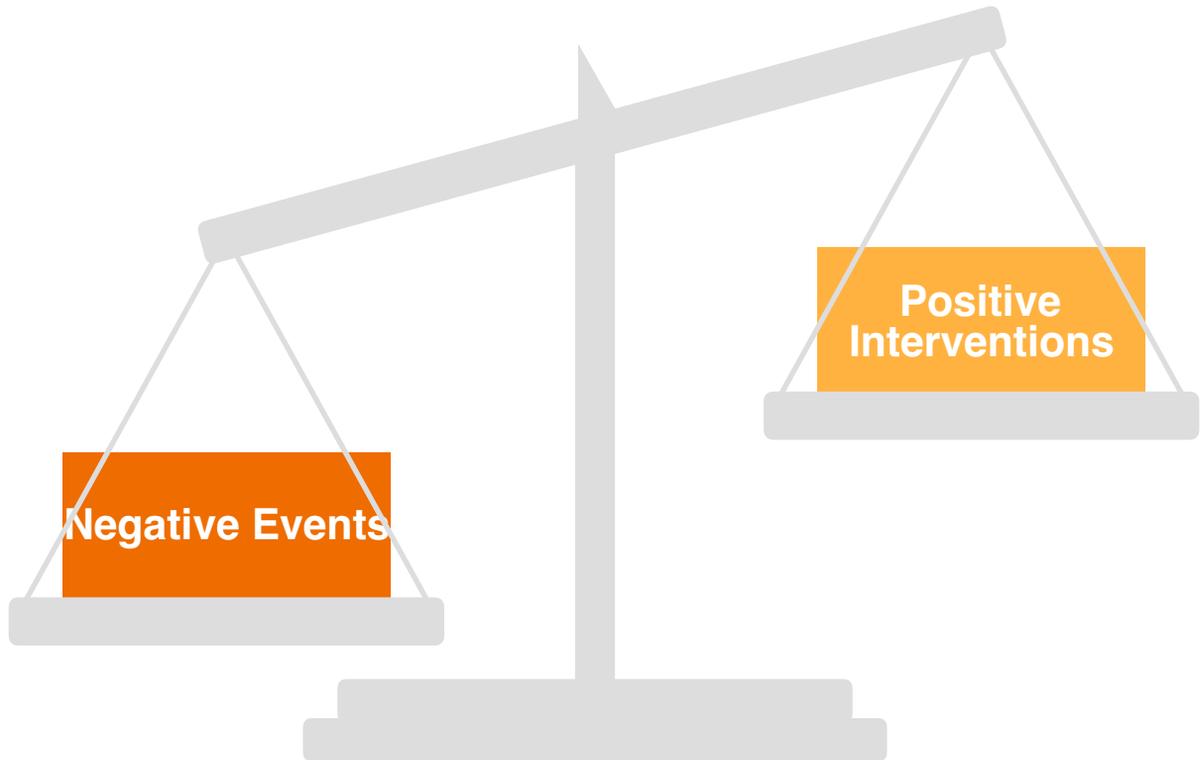
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## Compassion Fatigue/Burnout



- Care for ailing loved one
- Care for elderly parents
- Living with a loved one dealing with addiction
- Coping with your own long term addiction recovery
- Long term care of disabled spouse/child
- Trauma and concern related to children's choices
- Living with long term, chronic pain
- Ongoing effects of divorce/other losses
- Long term church or volunteer service
- Helping professionals



Repeated negative events without positive interventions  
create **harmful** physical & emotional results

# BURNOUT

Burnout occurs when you experience long term stress resulting in a state of **physical and emotional exhaustion, loss of energy and loss of hope.**





# WARNING SIGNS





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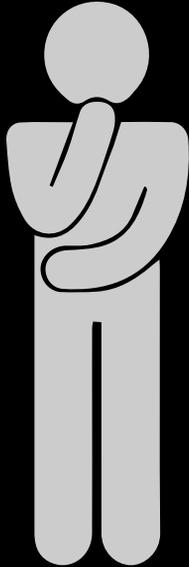
- ▶ withdrawal
- ▶ sadness
- ▶ exhaustion
- ▶ loneliness
- ▶ low self esteem
- ▶ no interest in things
- ▶ suicidal
- ▶ fantasies about dying
- ▶ shame
- ▶ fatigue
- ▶ increased irritability
- ▶ frequent headaches
- ▶ low sex drive
- ▶ sleep too much/not enough

- ▶ racing thoughts
- ▶ trouble sleeping
- ▶ lack of focus
- ▶ overwhelmed
- ▶ increased heart rate
- ▶ panic attack
- ▶ fear
- ▶ sluggish/exhaustion
- ▶ gastrointestinal problems (irritable bowel, ulcers)



# WARNING SIGNS





# STRESS

**"Left untreated, stress can lead to serious ills, including heart disease, depression, anxiety, and diabetes. It could even speed up the spread of breast and ovarian cancers, research suggests. Untamed tension may also pop up as aches and ills that make us feel crummy on a daily basis."**

--American Psychological Association

**"Stress impacts all your systems - musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, respiratory, everything."**

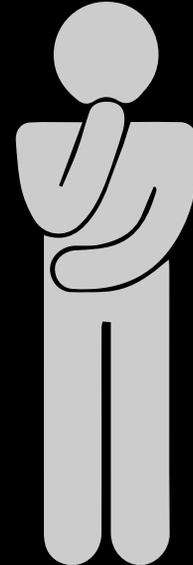
--Michael McKee, Psychologist  
Cleveland Clinic

**"As annoying as those eye twitches and stomach knots are, we should be thanking our bodies for the heads-up. Physical symptoms that accompany stress are part of the body's warning system."**

**-Dorshan Mehta, Medical Director  
Massachusetts Medical Center**

**"The body and brain are not subtle about telling you when you're stressed... when you get regular headaches or you're not sleeping well, stop and think to yourself, What's going on? Don't just pop pills and plow ahead."**

**-Alice Domar, Director  
Center for Mind\Body Health at Waltham Massachusetts**



**STRESS**



## Breathing Deep

- **Position:** upright and comfortable, don't overdo it!
- **Alternate-nostril:** “hang 10” with thumb holding nose
- **Switch:** “hang 10” with pinky holding nose



Work-Life-Balance

BURNOUT



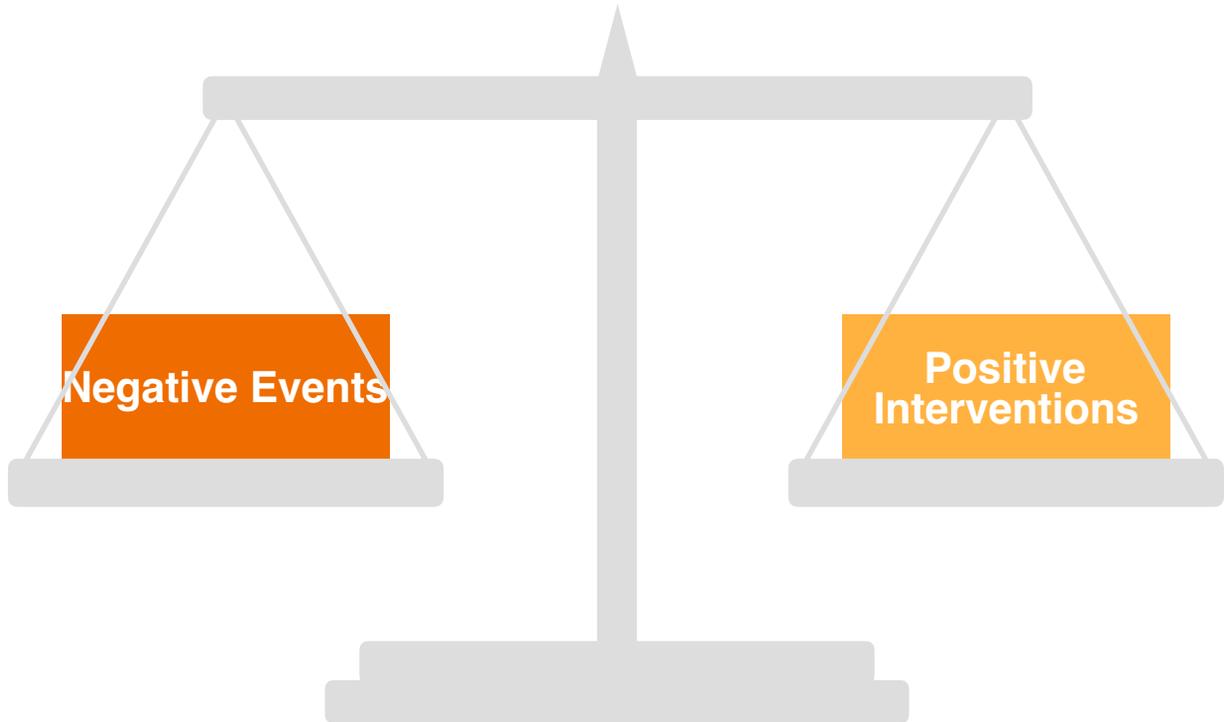


# MAINTAINENCE (SELF CARE)



- Mindfulness
- Meditation/Breath Work
- Exercise - Physical Activity
- Gratitude
- Spiritual source
- Yoga
- Sleep
- Healthy Eating
- Connect with Others/Family & Friends
- Hobbies/Interests
- Music
- Self Soothing/Massage/Hot baths
- Take Breaks - short and long
- Set Boundaries
- Therapy
- Delegate/Share the burden





Repeated positive interventions that balance negative events create **healthy** physical & emotional results

**TIME**  
SPECIAL EDITION

# MINDFULNESS

THE NEW SCIENCE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Tune In to Your Body

The Power of Slow Eating

Five-Minute Meditation

LifeStar

**Brain**

**Releases Happy  
Chemicals**

**Pain**

**Diminishes  
Hurtful  
Sensations**

**Anti-inflammatory**

**Swelling subsides  
with Arthritis &  
Asthma**

**Heart**

**Lowers Blood  
Pressure**

**Stomach**

**Smoother  
Digestion**

# MEDITATION

# Breathing Lessons



Breathing exercises - a staple of mindfulness and yoga practices - have been shown to help control blood pressure, improve heart rate, make arteries more flexible and activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which tamps down the body's fight-or-flight response to stress.

LifeStar<sup>★</sup>



GIFTED KIDS: WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT NURTURING GENIUS

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

**MIND**

BEHAVIOR • BRAIN SCIENCE • INSIGHTS

January/February 2017

Mind Science [Sci.American.com](http://Sci.American.com)

# THE EXERCISE CURE

Why it may be  
the best fix for  
depression

THE CHEMISTRY  
OF DESIRE

HOW TO LEARN A  
NEW LANGUAGE

LifeStar 



The second you start running, pedaling or lifting a dumbbell, **your body's chemistry begins to change.** Exercise boosts your heart rate, sending blood, oxygen, hormones and neurological-chemicals surging through the body. Some evidence suggests that habitual moderate exercise retires the brain and immune system to better cope with physical and mental strain.

# Exercise Away the Blues?

In the case of depression, the collective evidence to date suggests that **the answer is an emphatic yes...** Scores of experiments now show that exercise is much more than a temporary distraction from mental woes...it appears to combat depression in a number of ways: by strengthening our biochemical resilience to stress, encouraging the growth of new brain cells, bolstering self-esteem and possibly even counterbalancing an underlying genetic risk for mental illness. A 2013 review of the literature Cochrane, regarded as a leader in evidence-based medicine, concluded that exercise is just as effective a treatment for depression as medicine and counseling.

A recent meta-analysis, published in 2016, echoes Cochrane's finding. A team of international researchers examined 25 of the most rigorous experiments and determined that exercise, especially moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise is indeed a potent treatment for depression.

The researchers further calculated that it would take **at least 1,000 contradictory studies to negate the affirming evidence** that has piled up so far.



# GRATITUDE

- **YOU'LL BOOST YOUR ENERGY LEVELS**
  - those who regularly wrote down things for which they were thankful consistently reported an **ever-increasing sense of vitality**.
- **YOU'LL GET HEALTHIER**
  - improved kidney function, reduced blood-pressure, stress-hormone levels and a stronger heart. They avoid behaviors like smoking and drinking excessive alcohol. They exercise, on average, 33% more and sleep an extra half-hour a night.
- **YOU'LL BE MORE RESILIENT**
  - We're better at bouncing back from loss and trauma.
- **YOU'LL IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP**
  - Christine Carter says, "**You can't be grateful and resentful at the same time.**"
- **YOU'LL BE A NICER PERSON**
  - People can't help but **pay gratitude forward**. When appreciation is expressed, it triggers a biological response in the recipient's brain, including a surge of the feel-good chemical dopamine. So when you express gratitude he or she feels grateful in return, and the back-and-forth continues.
- **HOW TO GIVE THANKS**
  - Research has shown that one of the best ways to home in on the people and the experiences we appreciate is through writing in a **gratitude journal**.

“Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?... **kill me, I pray thee...**”

- Moses, Numbers 11



"When you wrestle with the devil surrounded by human misery, you might have good cause to be depressed. I know from the years I spent ministering in prisons...to be depressed in such situations simply makes you human. **To carry on through the depression reveals the hand of God.**"

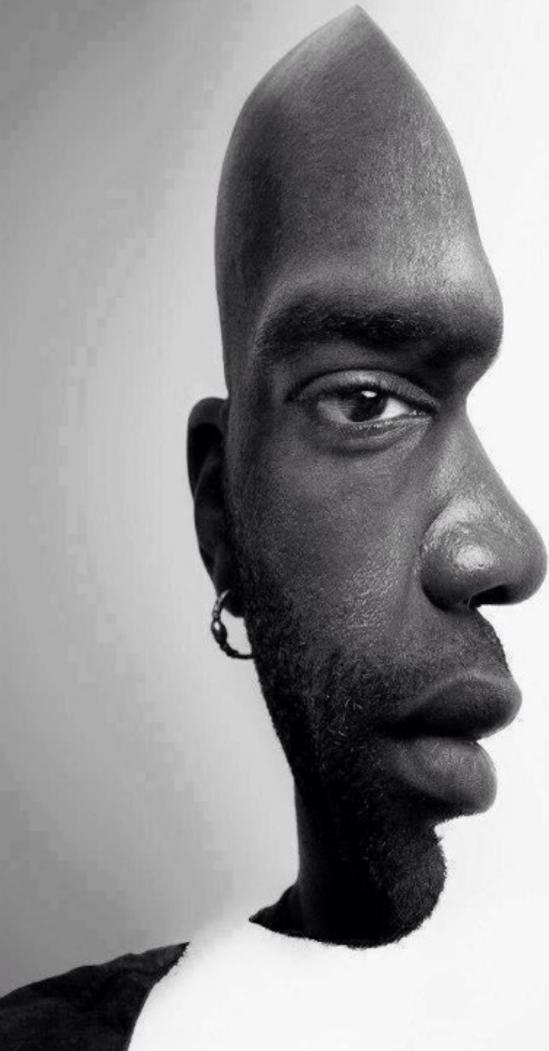
- Mother Teresa



"When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to **change ourselves...**Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose ones own way."

- Viktor Frankl





"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

- Dr. Wayne Dyer



I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,  
I can see all obstacles in my way  
Gone are the dark clouds that had me  
blind  
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright  
(bright)  
Sun-Shiny day.

I think I can make it now, the pain is gone  
All of the bad feelings have disappeared  
Here is the rainbow I've been prayin' for  
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright  
(bright)  
Sun-Shiny day.

Look all around, there's nothin' but blue  
skies  
Look straight ahead, nothin' but blue skies

I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,  
I can see all obstacles in my way  
Gone are the dark clouds that had me  
blind

It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright

## SUGGESTED READING

- Time Magazine Special Addition Mindfulness: The New Science of Health and Happiness
- The Scientific American Mind. Jan/Feb 2017. "The Exercise Cure: Why it May be the Best Fix for Depression."
- Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life. Kabat-Zinn J. New York: Hyperion, 1994.
- The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation. Nhat Hanh T. Boston: Beacon Press, 1987.
- The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself. Michael A. Singer New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2007
- The Alchemy of Fear. Gilley K. Boston: Butterworth-Hainemann, 1998.
- The Truth About Burnout. Masiach C. Leiter MP. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass; 1997.
- Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized. Figley CR, ed. New York: Norton, 1995.
- American Institute of Stress (website) - "Compassion Fatigue"
- Family Practice Management. 2000 April 7 (4): 39-44
- Man's Search for Meaning. Viktor Frankl, 1946