Rising Above Your Stress:
How mindfulness & understanding neuroscience can enhance your wellbeing

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To give you more motivation, energy, and sense of peace:

- Name your energy thief. Dive into it, get clear about it.
- Add in ways to calm your nervous system, throughout the day, to put your brain and body back into its best possible state.
- Strategies include:
  - Deep breaths, as well as sighing
  - Walk or sit in nature
  - Yoga, tai chi, meditation
  - Reach out to your community, talk with a friend
  - Cardio or other workouts
  - Morning pages - 5 mins or 3 pages continuous writing
  - Humor / Laughter
  - Listen to music

How stress affects your brain [VIDEO]

Excerpts from this video by Madhumita Murgia (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE&t=35s)

"Not all stress is bad, it can give you an extra burst of energy, or added focus for a project.

However, when stress is continuous, it begins to change your brain – it's size, structure, and function. During a stressful moment, your body releases cortisol, which prepares your body for action [fight or flight]. High levels or cortisol, over time, wreak havoc on your brain.

Key points:

- Cortisol can literally cause your brain to shrink in size. Too much of it results in the loss of synaptic connections between neurons and the shrinking of your prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain that regulates behaviors like **concentration, decision-making, judgement, and social interaction**.

- Stress leads to fewer new brain cells being made in the hippocampus. This means chronic stress might make it **harder for you to learn** and **remember things**, and can cause mental health issues such as **depression**."

Resources – Blogs & Videos

This handout: Rising Above Your Stress: www.sabrina-woods.com/mindfulness

Blogs, Meditations & Music

Sabrina Woods, Mindfulness Resources - http://www.sabrina-woods.com/mindfulness.html
Mindful.org – Healthy mind, healthy life - https://www.mindful.org/
Yoga music on Youtube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RTZNLL0wss

Videos

Benefits of Mindfulness (Interview with Sabrina Woods, 15 mins) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSXpHUYLK88
The Happy Secret to Better Work TEDx - https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work
Hardwiring Happiness TEDx, Dr. Rick Hanson - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpuDyGgleh0
Parasympathetic Response: Train your Nervous System to turn off Stress - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FpKpW0EhYo
The Sympathetic & Parasympathetic Nervous Systems, Dr. Russ Harris - www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2825kDSo4M