

# Right Here, Right Now: Managing Stress and Anxiety in the Moment

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Pharmacy Work/Life Matters

OPA Annual Conference & Trade Show  
April 5-7, 2024

Ohio Pharmacists Association



## Disclosure Statement

- Cynthia Knapp Dlugosz has no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose.
- None of the planners for this activity have relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.

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## Learning Objectives

At the completion of this activity, the participant will be able to:

1. Discuss the neurobiology of acute and chronic stress and anxiety.
2. Recognize how our prehistoric survival brain works against us in the modern world.
3. Demonstrate brief, evidence-based approaches to managing the physical manifestations of the stress response.
4. Demonstrate brief, evidence-based approaches to addressing the cognitive and emotional aspects of stress.

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## Assessment Questions

1. Which of the following features is common to both stress and anxiety?
  - a. Stress and anxiety both have an identifiable external trigger.
  - b. Stress and anxiety both resolve quickly when the situation causing stress or anxiety is resolved.
  - c. Stress and anxiety both are rooted in fear.
  - d. Stress and anxiety both arise primarily in the prefrontal cortex.

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## Assessment Questions

2. Our threat defense system was designed to help us survive in a harsh environment. This presents challenges for us in modern times because:
  - a. We tend to overlook threats that are not immediate or physical.
  - b. We tend to overestimate and overreact to any possible threat.
  - c. We have a natural tendency to fight whenever we feel threatened.
  - d. We have a natural tendency to “go it alone” rather than ask for help.

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## Assessment Questions

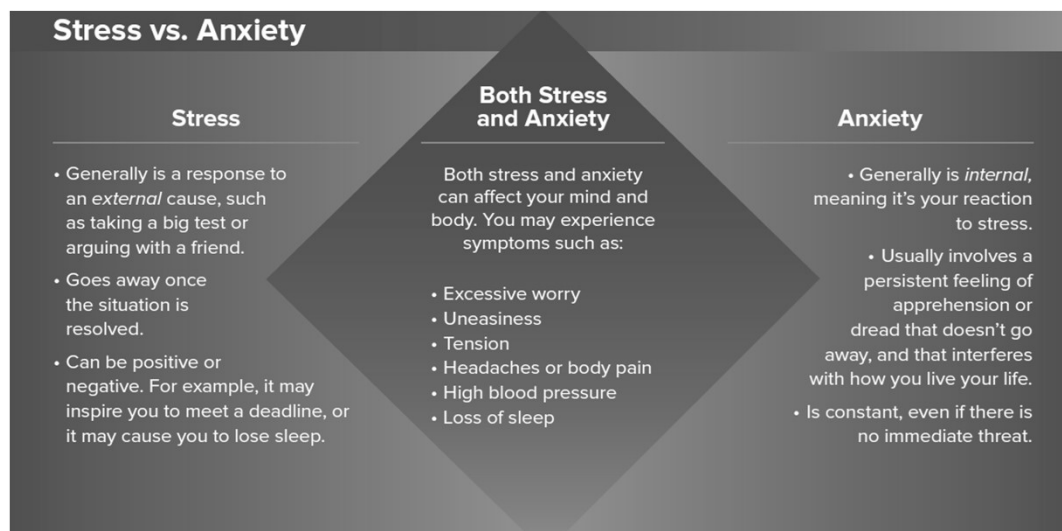
3. A key component of Relaxation Response breathing is:
  - a. Making the exhalation longer than the inhalation.
  - b. Breathing from the chest rather than the abdomen.
  - c. Making the inhalation longer than the exhalation.
  - d. Breathing in through the mouth and out through the nose.

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## Assessment Questions

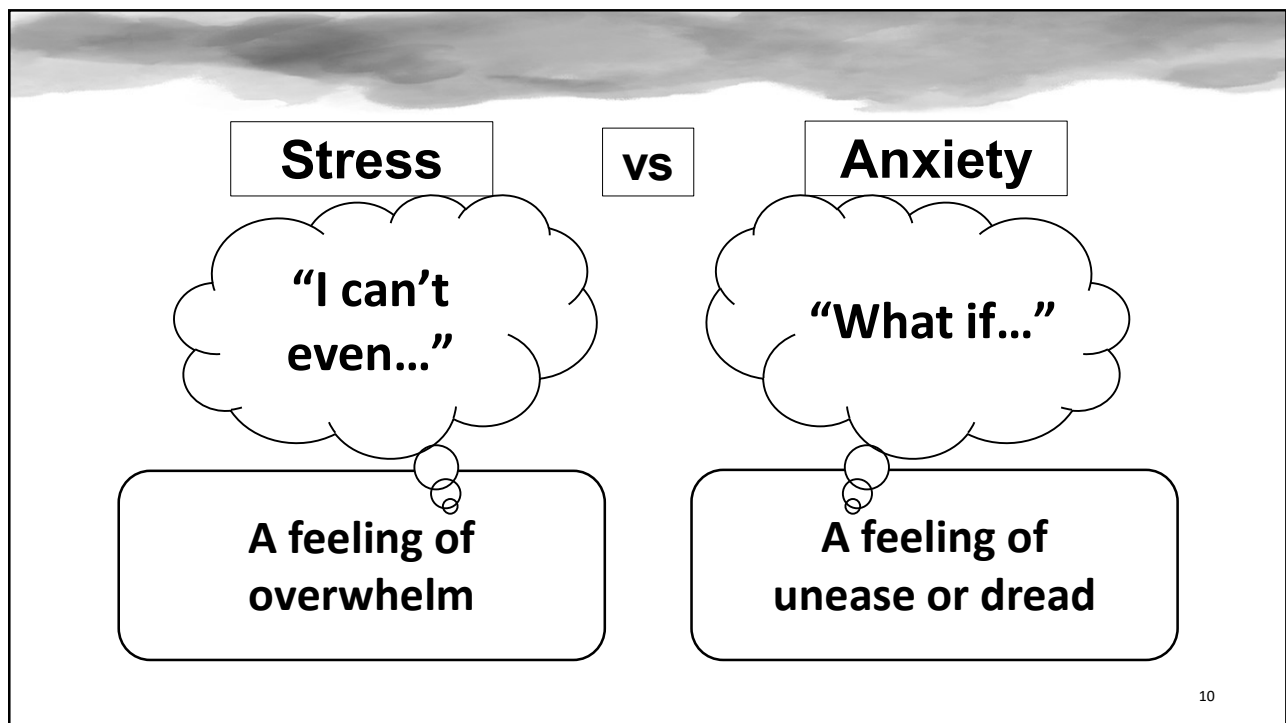
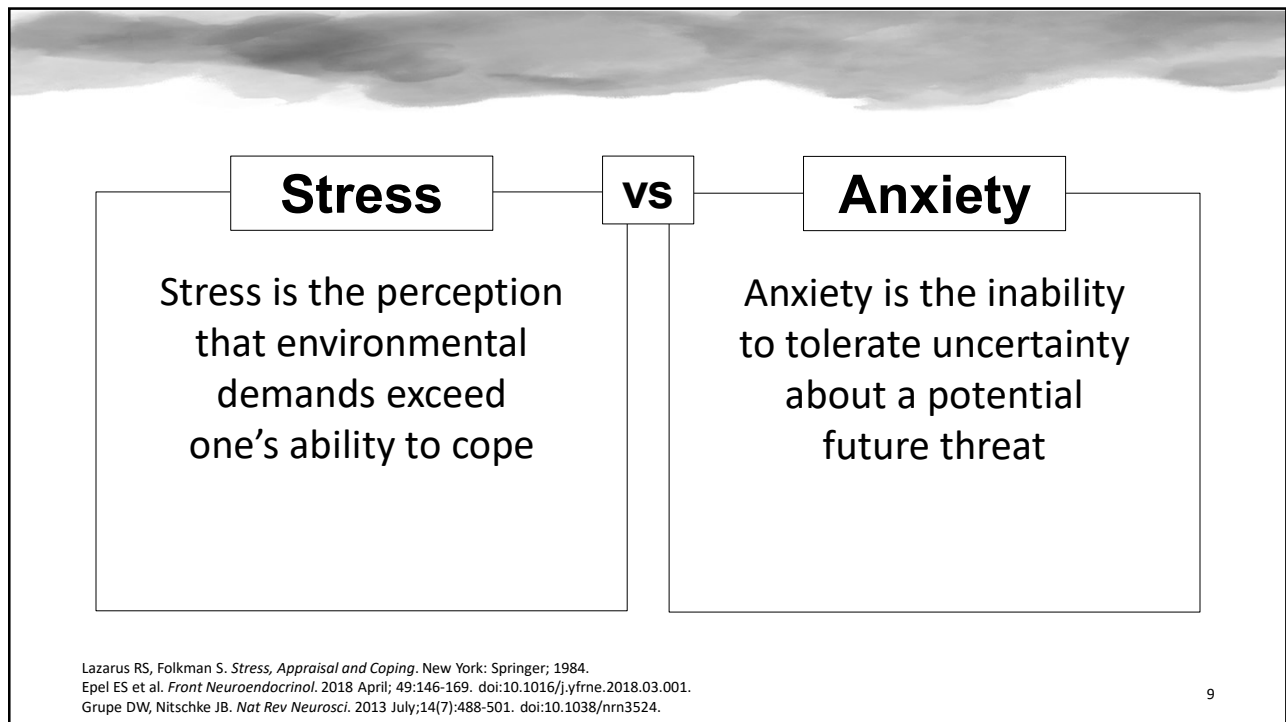
4. One approach to working with stressful thoughts is to recognize that:
- Thoughts are not actually able to cause stress or anxiety.
  - We cannot separate ourselves from our thoughts, so we need to learn to accept them.
  - We can learn to stop our thoughts through meditation.
  - Thoughts are mental events, not facts.

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<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>

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## Stress vs. Anxiety

### Stress

- Generally is a response to an *external* cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend.
- Goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.

### FEAR

### Anxiety

- Generally is *internal*, meaning it's your reaction to stress.
- Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life.
- Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>

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# We are hardwired for survival

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Our threat defense system is designed to help us survive immediate physical threats

**Fight**

**Flight**

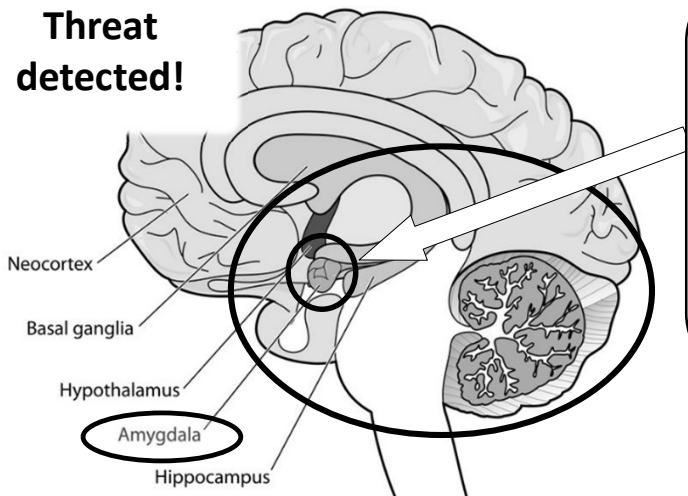
**Freeze**



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## Survival brain

**Threat detected!**



Neocortex

Basal ganglia

Hypothalamus

Amygdala

Hippocampus

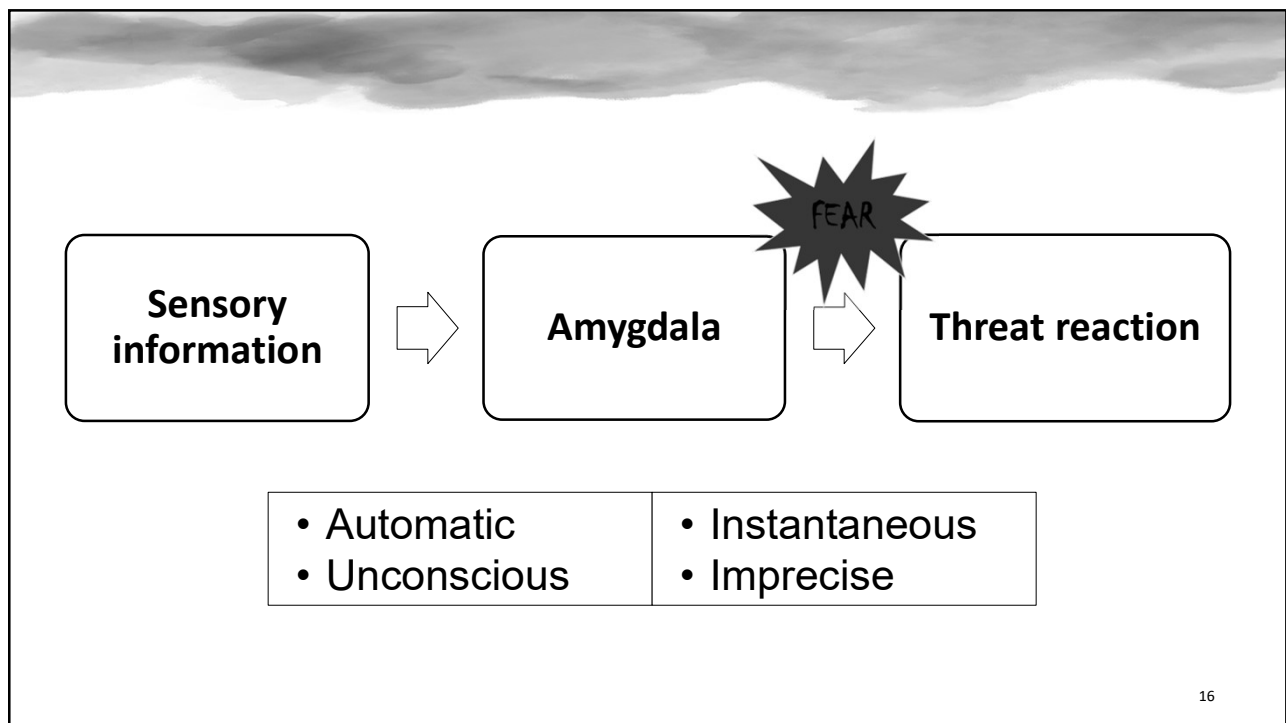
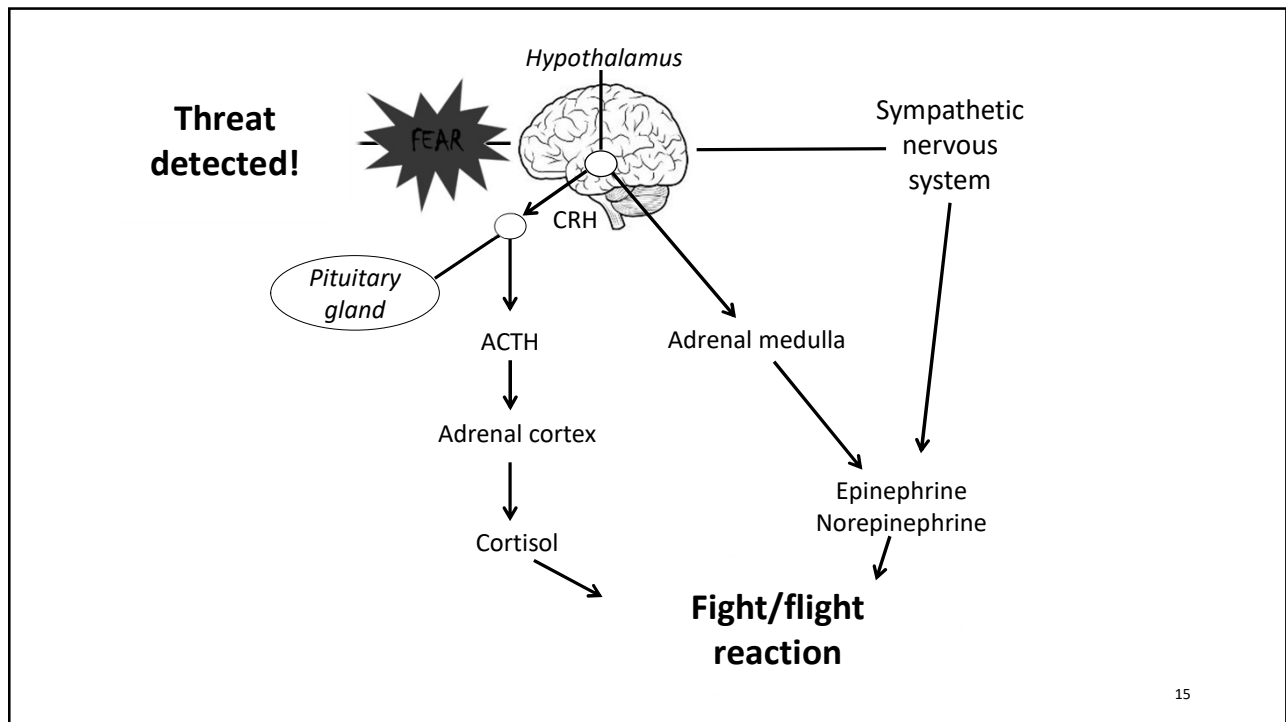
**Sensory information**

**Somatic (external)**

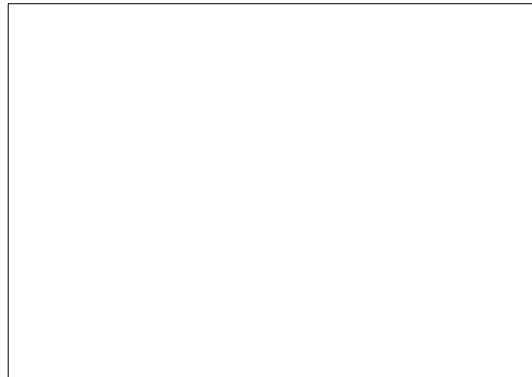
- See
- Hear
- Smell
- Touch

**Visceral (internal)**

14



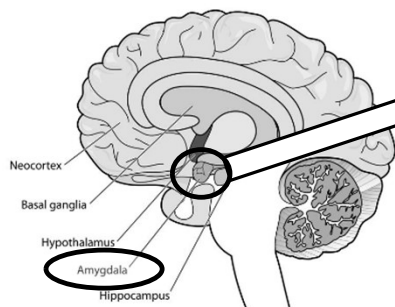
## Which mistake is more costly?



*Image source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.*

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## Danger Will Robinson!



*Image source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robot\\_%28Lost\\_in\\_Space%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robot_%28Lost_in_Space%29)*

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We are hardwired  
to overestimate  
and overreact  
to possible threats  
to our safety

*Image source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.*


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**Which is more important for survival?**



*Images source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.*


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We are  
hardwired  
to fixate on  
the **negative**

Image source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.

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The mind is like Velcro for  
negative experiences...



...and Teflon for  
positive ones

— Rick Hanson, PhD

<https://www.rickhanson.net/take-in-the-good>

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## Who would be most likely to survive?



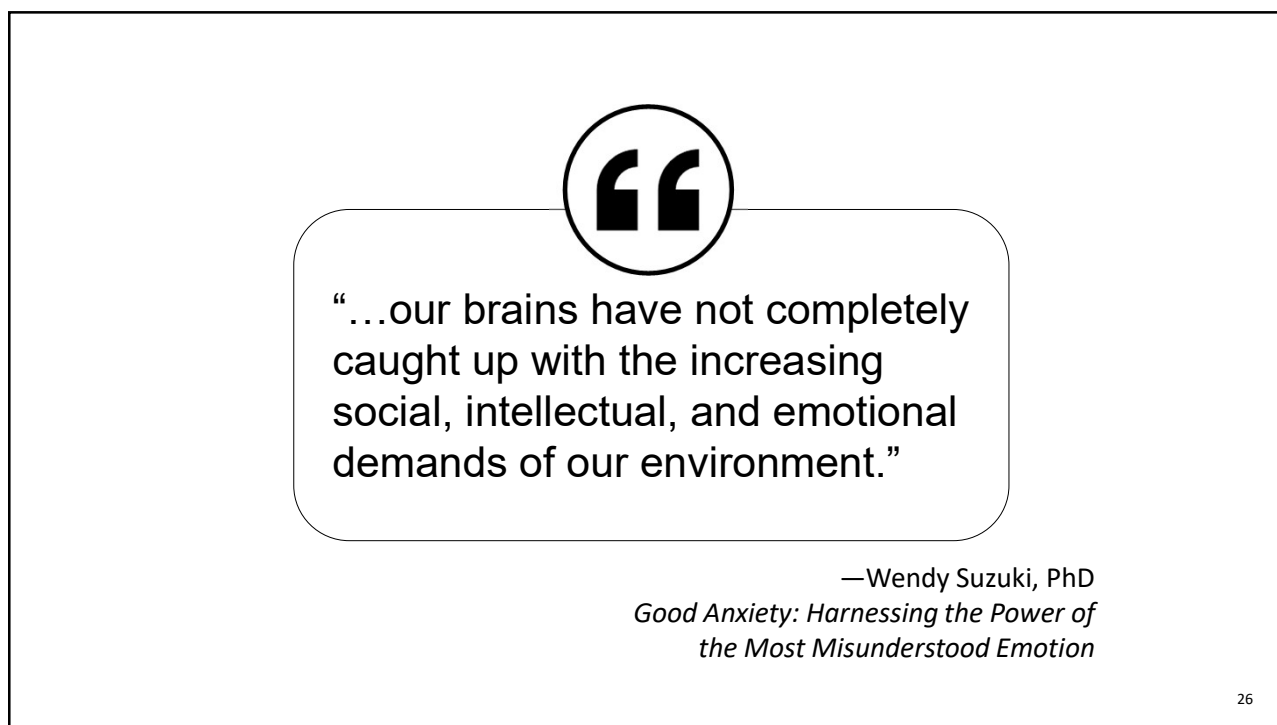
*Images source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.*



We are hardwired  
to be part  
of a “tribe”


*Image source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.*

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“...the mind often tries to save our lives even when our lives aren’t really at stake.”

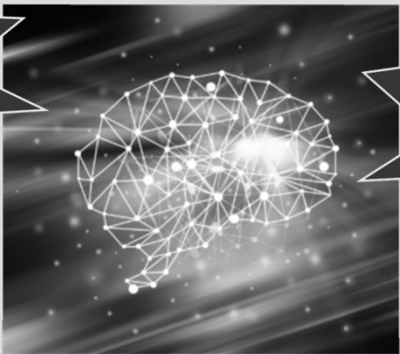

—Shawn T. Smith, PsyD  
*The User’s Guide to the Human Mind*



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Most threats are **psychological**, not physical



Threats to sense of safety

Threats to social status

Images source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.

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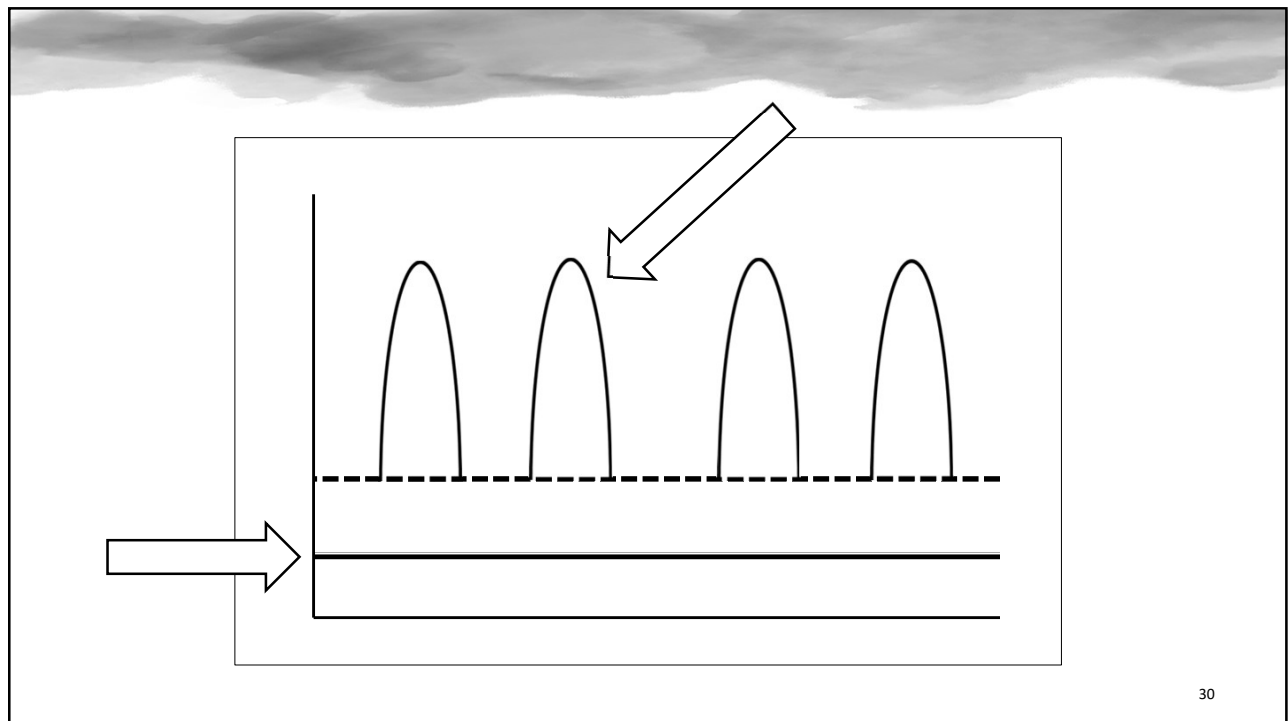
## Paper tigers everywhere

**Overestimate**

**Focus on  
the negative**

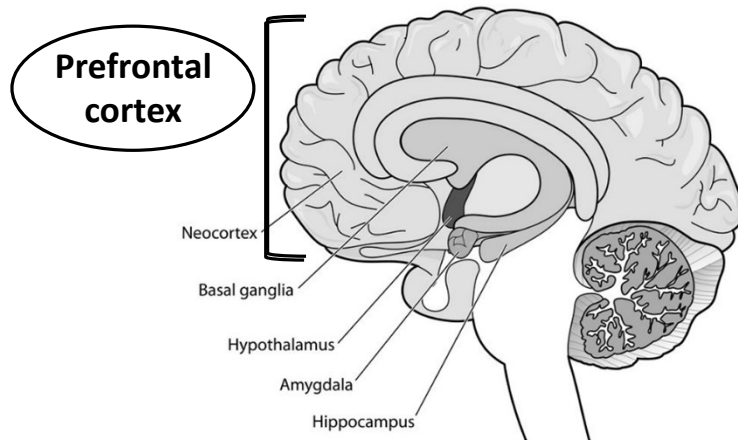
**Overreact**

29



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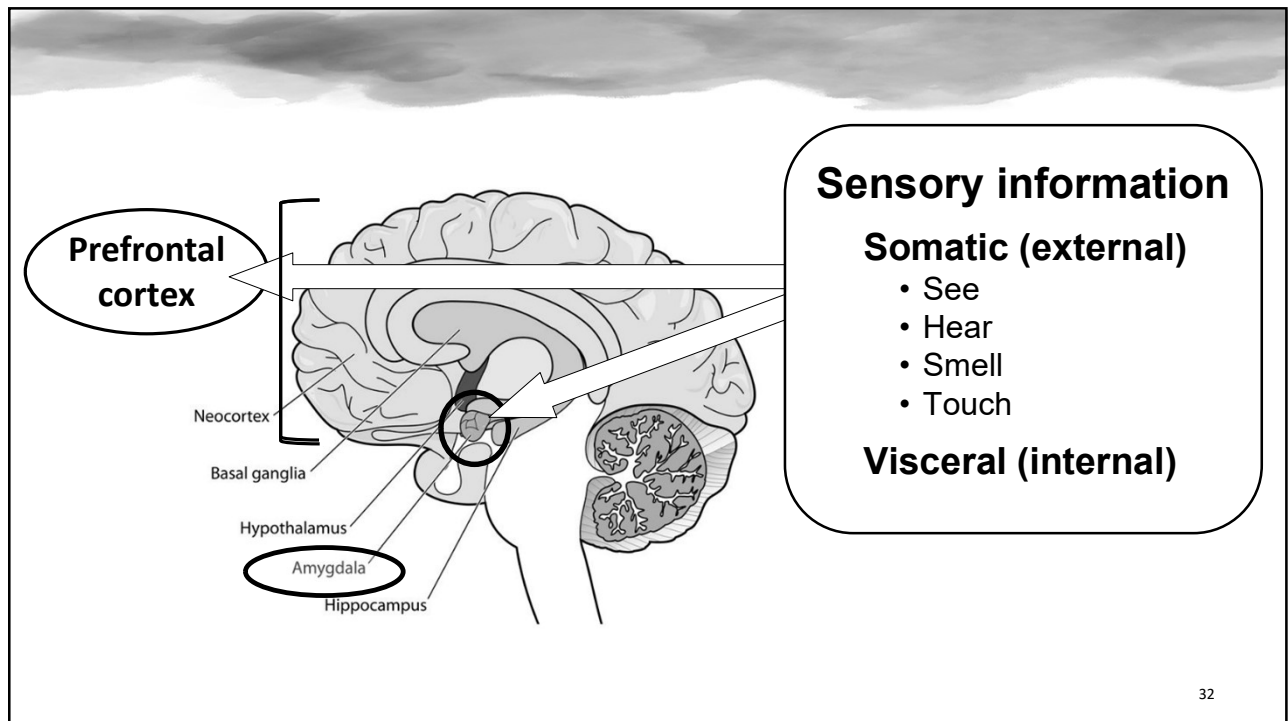
## Thinking brain



### Executive function

- Perceiving and thinking
- Planning
- Decision-making
- Logical reasoning
- Anticipation
- Interpretation

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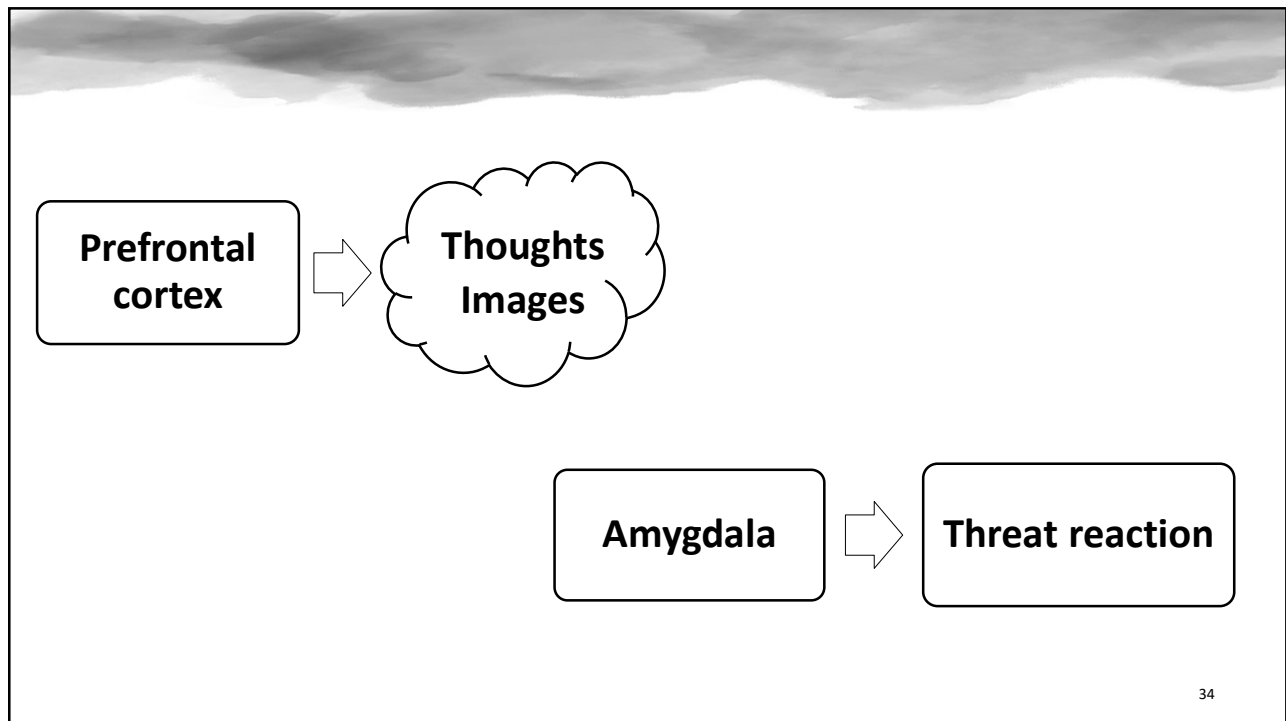
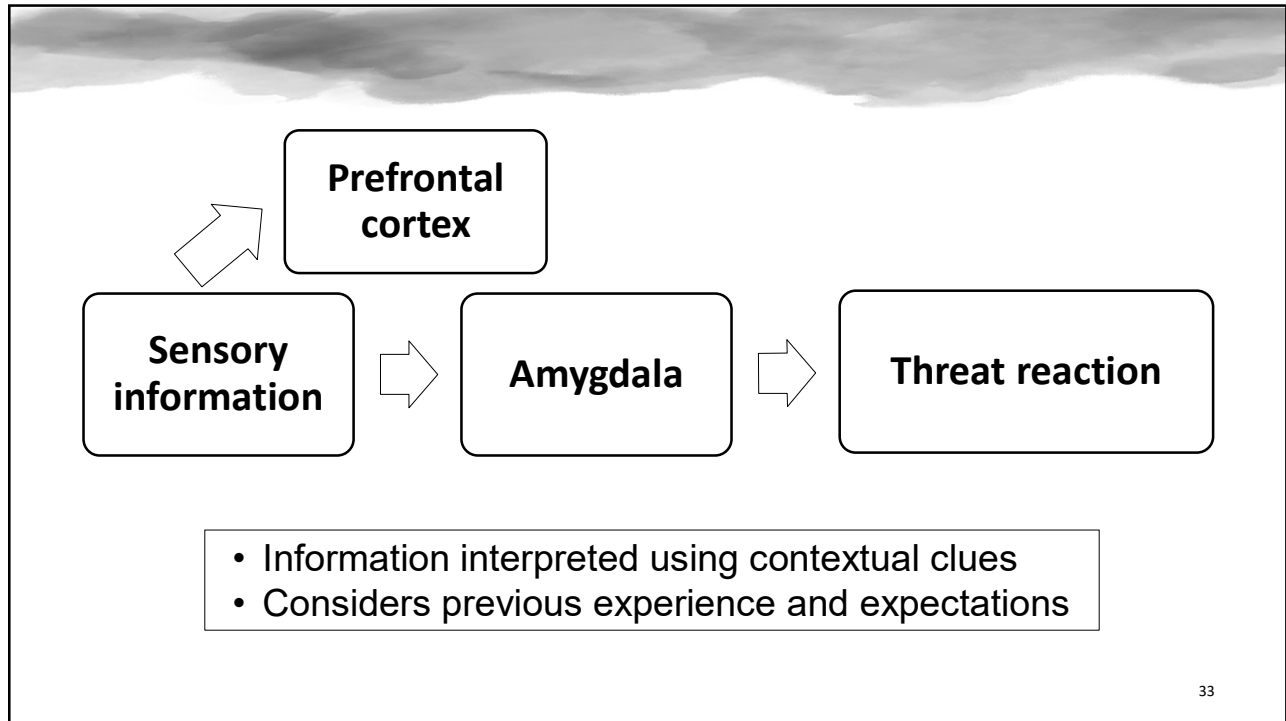
### Sensory information

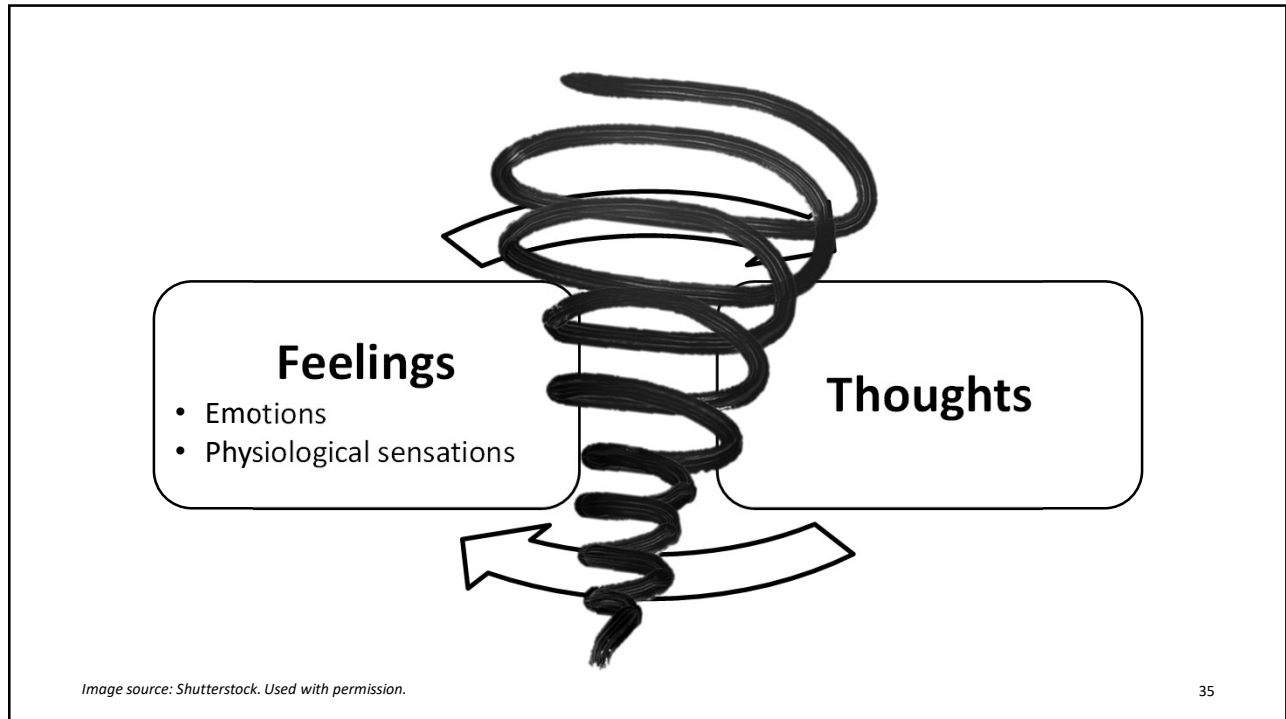
#### Somatic (external)

- See
- Hear
- Smell
- Touch

#### Visceral (internal)

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# The Role of Mindfulness

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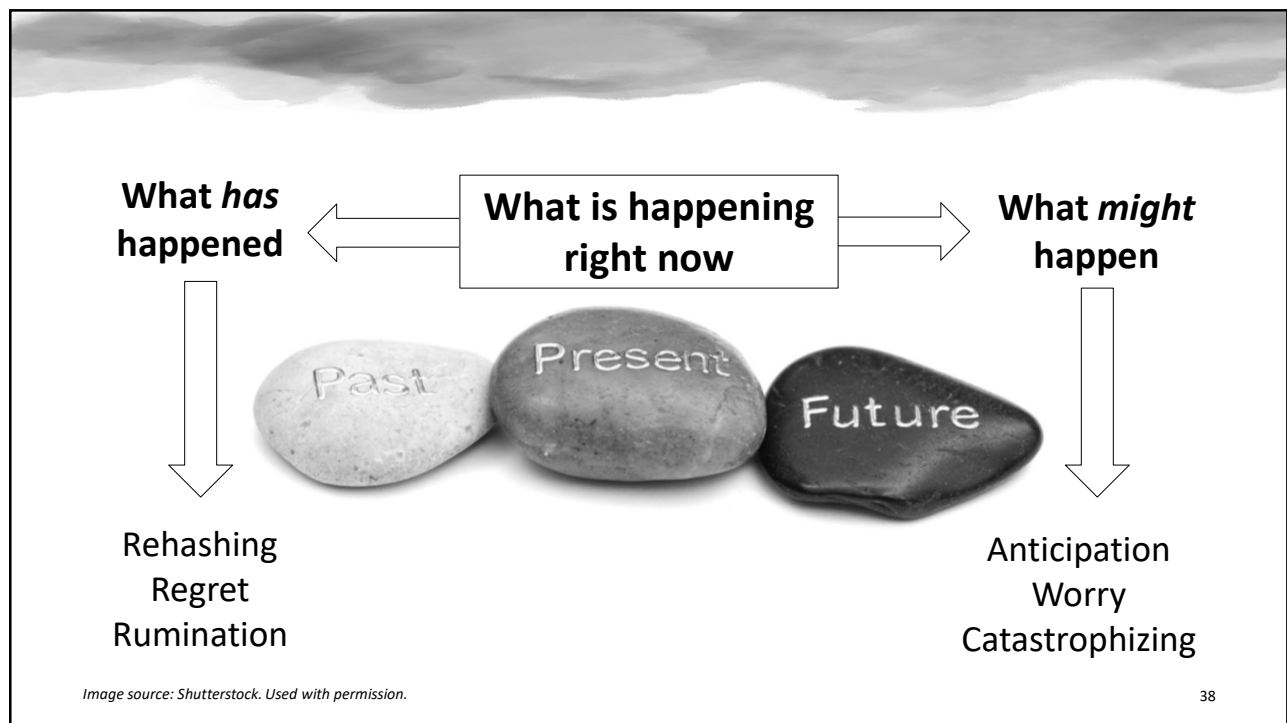


“Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us.”

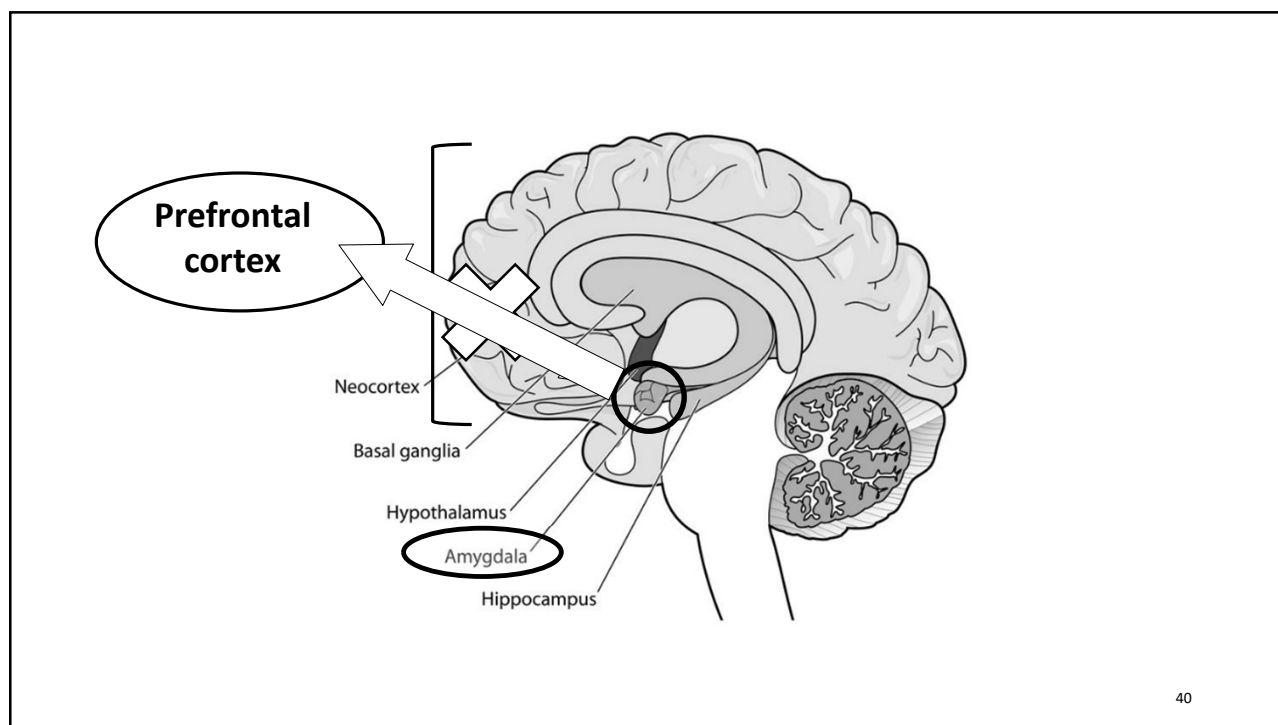
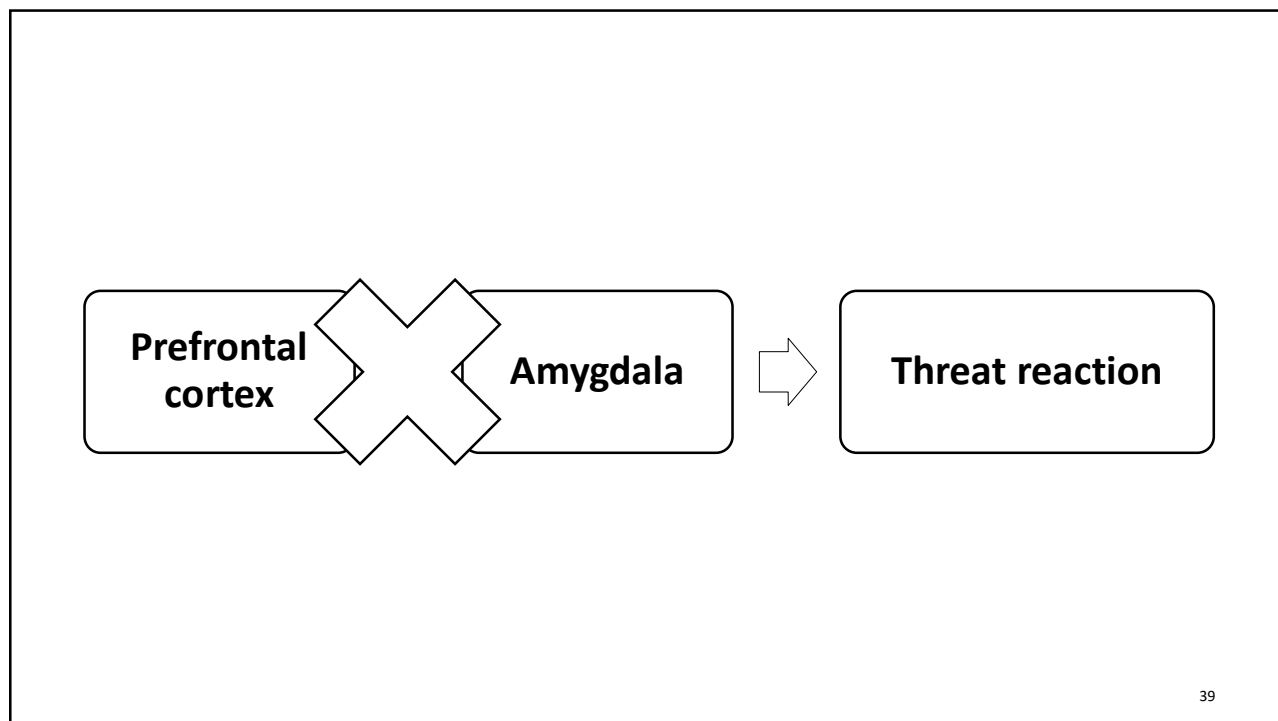
—Mindful.org

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>


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**The present moment offers the space...**



**...to shift from reacting to responding**

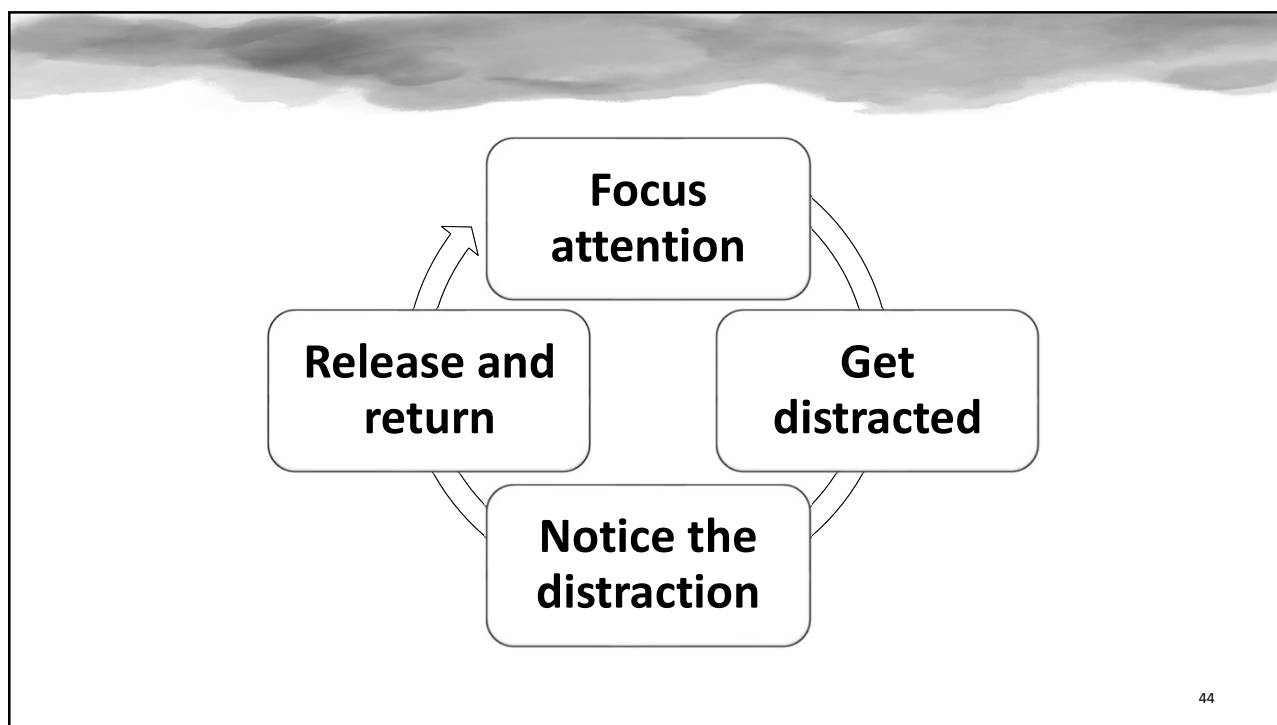
Donald JN et al. *J Res Pers.* 2016;65:30-7 doi: 10.1016/j.jrp.2016.09.002.  
Image source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.

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## **Right here, right now**

<b>1</b>	<b>Reclaim your attention</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Breathe for calm</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Notice you're all right</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Shake it out</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Reset the thoughts</b>

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Breathe for calm

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Relaxation Response breathing

Inhalation

Oxygen intake

Lungs

Diaphragm

Diaphragm pulls downward, helping lungs expand with oxygen

Exhalation

Carbon dioxide

Diaphragm returns upward, forcing lungs to expel carbon dioxide

“There is no threat – return to homeostasis”

Image source: Stress Management (Harvard Medical School Special Health Report).

Ashhad S et al. *Annu Rev Neurosci.* 2022; 45:223–47. doi: 10.1146/annurev-neuro-090121-014424.

Komori T. *Ment Illn.* 2018 May 16;10(1):7669. doi: 10.4081/mi.2018.7669.

Ma X et al. *Front Psychol.* 2017 Jun 6;8:874. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00874

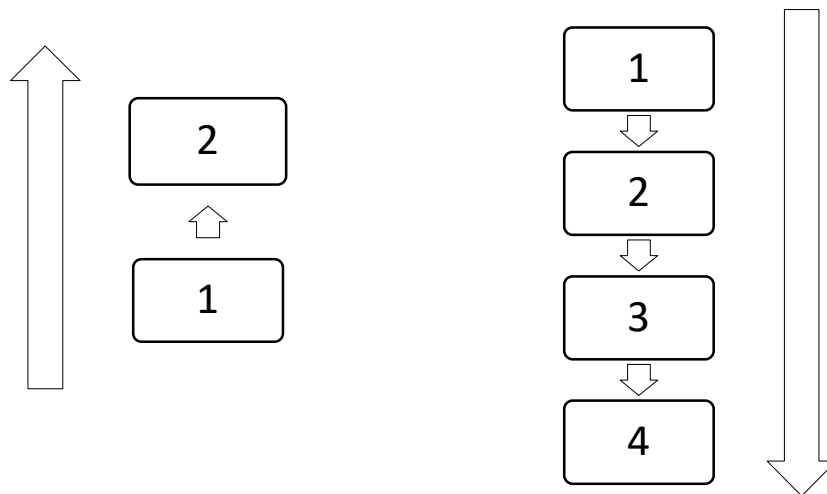
Zaccaro A et al. *Front Hum Neurosci.* 2018 Sep 7;12:353. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2018.00353

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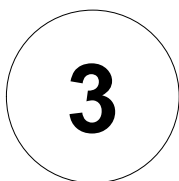
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**Make the exhalations twice as long**



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**Notice you're all right**

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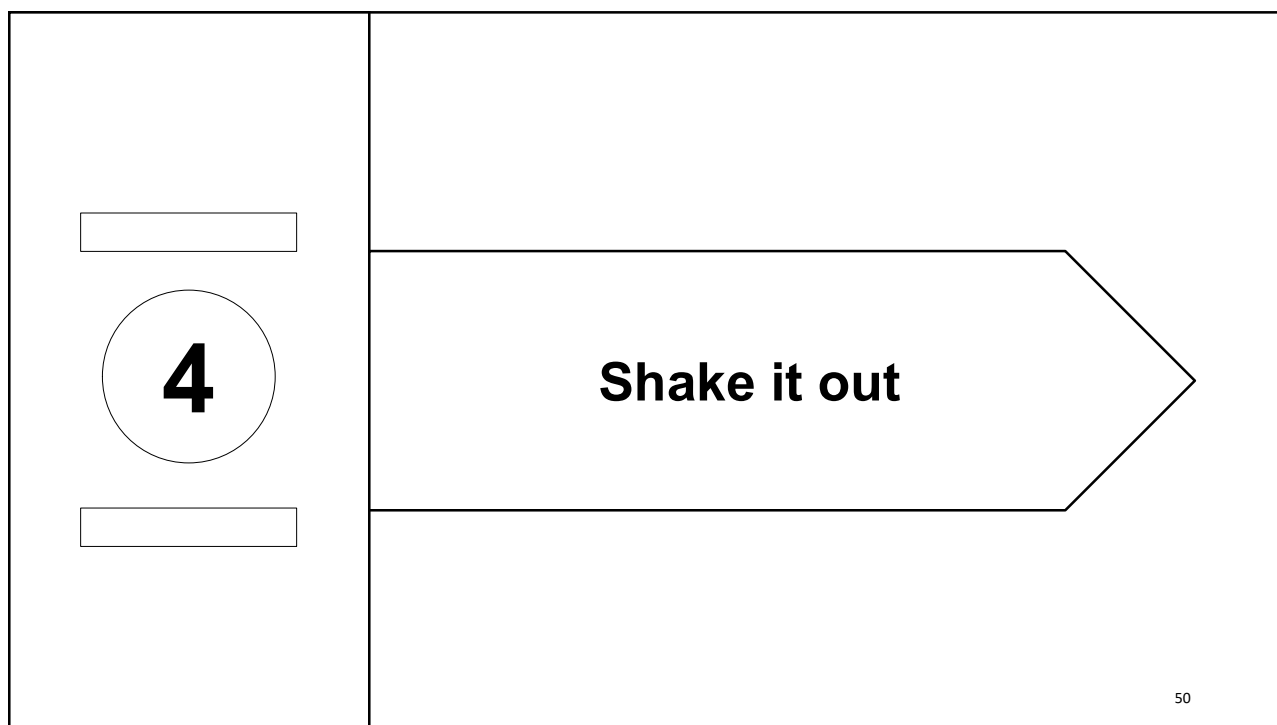
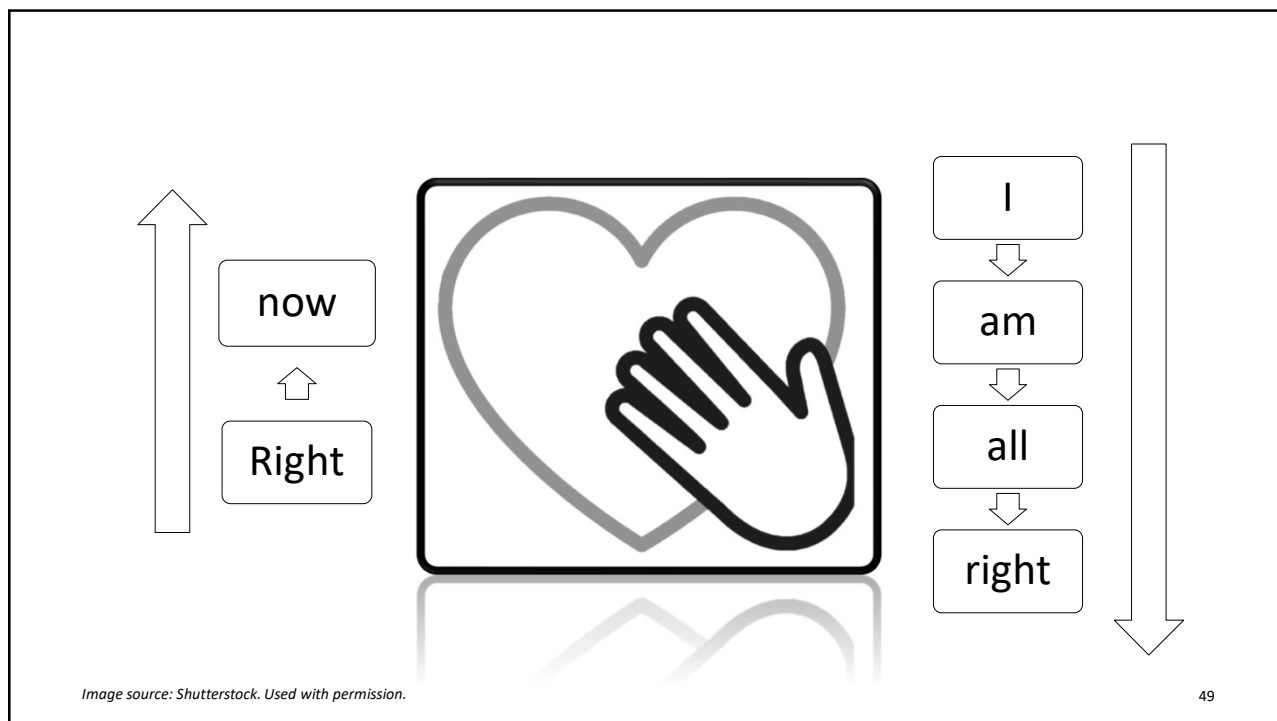




Image source: Shutterstock. Used with permission.

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**Reset the thoughts**

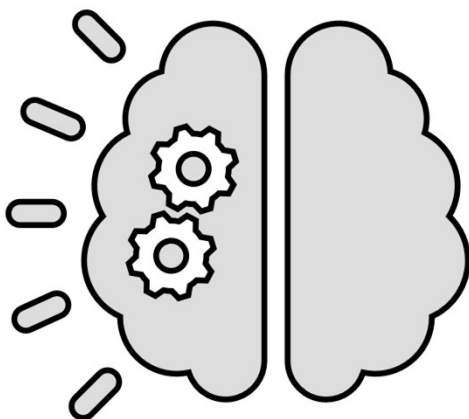
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A thought is a  
mental event

53



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Thoughts are  
**not** facts

If they were,  
they would be true  
100% of the time

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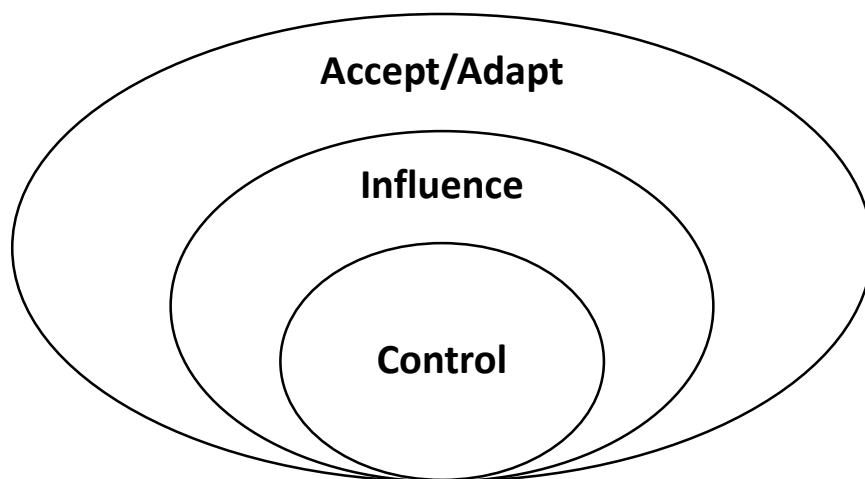
## Change your perception

Is it true?

“I am experiencing the thought that...”

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## Work with control



Thompson S, Thompson N. *The Critically Reflective Practitioner*. 3rd ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic; 2023.

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## Work with control

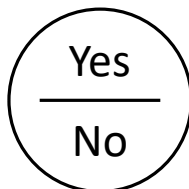
What is within my control?

How can I change this situation?

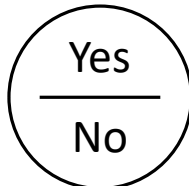
*[Why do I think this should be different?]*

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## Work with “what if...?”



Does the problem exist now,  
in the world around me —  
the world outside my mind  
and imagination?



If it does, is there anything  
I can do to change it now?

Carbonell DA. *Outsmart Your Anxious Brain*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.; 2020.

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## Work with “what if?...”

What if...*[it doesn't]*?

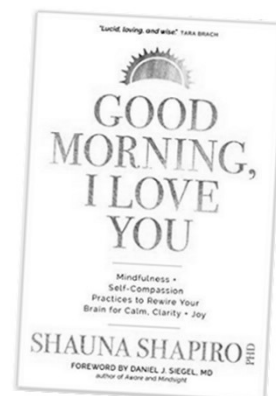
“I am experiencing the thought that...”

“I am choosing to live with uncertainty”

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## Yes or no?

- ❖ In rush hour traffic, can you remain perfectly calm?
- ❖ Can you see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy?
- ❖ Can you love everyone around you unconditionally?
- ❖ Can you always find contentment just where you are?



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## References

### Websites

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>  
<https://www.rickhanson.net/take-in-the-good>

### Articles

Ashhad S et al. *Annu Rev Neurosci*. 2022; 45:223-47. doi: 10.1146/annurev-neuro-090121-014424.  
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Komori T. *Ment Illn*. 2018 May 16;10(1):7669. doi: 10.4081/mi.2018.7669.  
Ma X et al. *Front Psychol*. 2017 Jun 6;8:874. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00874.  
Thompson S, Thompson N. *The Critically Reflective Practitioner*. 3rd ed. Bloomsbury Academic; 2023.  
Zaccaro A et al. *Front Hum Neurosci*. 2018 Sep 7;12:353. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2018.00353



## Want More Information?



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Ohio Pharmacists Association

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April 5-7, 2024





## Right Here, Right Now: Managing Stress and Anxiety in the Moment

### Recommended Reading

- ❖ Elissa Epel, PhD. *The Stress Prescription: 7 Days to More Ease and Joy*. Penguin Random House; 2022.
- ❖ Matthew McKay, PhD; Martha Davis, PhD; and Patrick Fanning. *Super Simple CBT: 6 Skills to Improve Your Mood in Minutes*. New Harbinger Publications; 2022.
- ❖ Catherine M. Pittman, PhD, and Elizabeth M. Karle, MLIS. *Rewire Your Anxious Brain: How to Use the Neuroscience of Fear to End Anxiety, Panic, & Worry*. New Harbinger Publications; 2016.
- ❖ Jennifer Shannon, LMFT. *Don't Feed the Monkey Mind: How to Stop the Cycle of Anxiety, Fear, & Worry*. New Harbinger Publications; 2017.
- ❖ Jennifer Shannon, LMFT. *The Monkey Mind Workout for Uncertainty: Break Free from Anxiety and Build Resilience in 30 Days!* New Harbinger Publications; 2022.
- ❖ Shawn T. Smith, PsyD. *The User's Guide to the Human Mind: Why Our Brains Make Us Unhappy, Anxious, and Neurotic and What We Can Do about It*. New Harbinger Publications; 2011.
- ❖ Jennifer L. Taitz, PsyD, ABPP. *Stress Resets: How to Soothe Your Body and Mind in Minutes*. Workman Publishing; 2023.

### Websites

- ❖ Greater Good Science Center  
<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>
- ❖ Mindful  
[www.mindful.org](http://www.mindful.org)