**Be Mindful! Part 1**

**Stress** (*the silent killer)*: the non-specific response of the organism to any pressure or demand (Dr. Hans Selye)

**Stressors**: internal (thoughts) and external (*nearly getting hit by a bus*), your body responds the same way.

**Homeostasis:** **The ability of a living organism to adjust its internal environment to maintain balance or alignment.**

**Effects of Chronic Stress:**

**Chronic Stress Cycle**

***“Stress is a function – not of event, but our view of those events.”*** – Ellen Langer

Mindfulness (awareness) and Meditation (stillness) can create a new pattern and balance and healthy function.

***You can be mindful without meditating; but, you can’t meditate without being mindful!***

List your top 2 stressors:

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How do you currently handle stress?

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Practice this 5-minute Meditation:

*\*If you experience lightheadedness, allow your breathing to return to normal (without controlling it in any way).*

1. Find a quiet place where you can sit or lie down, undisturbed, for at least five minutes. Get comfortable and close your eyes.
2. Take a slow, deep breath. As you do so, imagine with your mind’s eye that you are actually *watching* your breath as you draw the air in through your nose, into your chest and down to your belly (for some, it is helpful to imagine that their breath has color).

Pause at the top of that breath with your lungs full. Then, slowly exhale, “watching” as you breathe out through your nose. Pause at the bottom of the breath. Repeat this several times. \*

1. Now, take a deep breath, and focus on the *feeling* of the air as it passes by the back of your throat and down into your belly. Feel the rib cage expand on the inhale and compress on the exhale. Continue to pause at the top and bottom of the breath. Repeat this several times.
2. If thoughts surface, observe them briefly, without judgment. Gently imagine them turning into clouds and watch them float by. If they re-surface, simply allow them to float by again. Then, return to your breath.
3. Slowly allow your breath to return to normal. And, when you are ready, open your eyes.