

## Mindful Marinade

Transcript of 8.5 minute recording

After decades of studying, practicing and even teaching mindfulness, meditation, yoga and stress management, I have come to the conclusion, that I am a slacker at self-care and so are most people.

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From my experience, I find, that the easier and more fun something is to do, and the less it feels like a poke in the eye, the more likely I will do it, the more likely it will become a habit, and the more likely I may gain small but significant benefits.

It's the same with my students many of whom are busy people doing great things: healers, educators, activists and leaders.

If your stress balloon is about to pop with a migraine, back ache, yelling, or worse, then whatever releases the pressure a tiny bit throughout the day, is small but significant.

Some of my students have lowered their blood pressure to normal after decades, come off of medications for stress-triggered ailments, eliminated decades of chronic pain, even eliminated prescribed back surgery by applying simple principles I have learned, some of which I will share in the next few minutes.

Perhaps you have said, "I'll relax when I can take a coffee break, when I'm finished with this deadline, at the end of the day, on the weekend, when my vacation comes, when I change jobs, or when I retire. Perhaps you have said, "I used to do yoga, I used to meditate."

We wait and wait and wait with our busy, non-stop lives, for the space, time and energy for self-care to come, all the time marinating in stress hormones. Joy? What's that?

You know you have waited too long if the break that finally comes involves a funeral home. Here is a way to start marinating yourself in relaxation hormones right now.

The following recipe for Mindful Marinade is a new model to use immediately, designed for slackers in self-care, or for people who feel too busy to sit down for meditation, who still want to train their minds to be here now and to reduce stress.

The best mindfulness practice is the kind you can and will do.

For ingredients, you will need:

- 1) a busy life, with many challenges, stress triggers and/or speedy habits
- 2) breath
- 3) body
- 4) a mind
- 5) desire to be free, peaceful, empowered, creative and joyful
- 6) sticky notes

Here are the directions:

Preparation:

- 1) Take a deep in-breath
- 2) Breathe out making a soft noise, like a sigh or a whisper from the

back of your throat, through relaxed smiling lips, and draw it out for as long as you can.

- 3) With the next in-breath, squeeze your shoulders up to your ears
- 4) With the next out-breath surrender them fully to gravity
- 5) expand your front body and the back of your neck
- 6) Bring your mind to your normal out-breath and the present moment.
- 7) Now dwell in the moment. Your body is a mountain, the true nature of your mind is the big blue sky, thoughts, emotions, to-do lists, anxieties, judgements are bubbles going by.

Mixing the marinade:

- 1) Take a daily stress trigger (e.g. rush hour commuting)
- 2) Write a sticky note reminder, perhaps "breathe and smile" or a smily face
- 3) Place the sticky note strategically, reminding you when you are triggered (e.g. if you have commuting stress, then put the sticky note on your dashboard)
- 4) When triggered or even in anticipation of the stress trigger, practice the above breathing several times, imagining all stress leaving your body and mind
- 5) Optional but wonderful: Smile softly at ourselves, to lighten up and counteract the intense seriousness of our efforts.

Here's how to leverage bad habits to create better habits using a common example with food cravings.

Say you want to eat more healthily, but you really have a sweet tooth. Whenever you crave chocolate, you could give yourself permission to have it, but insert a healthy snack first, like a piece of fruit or some

nuts. You may or may not still want the chocolate, either way is fine. You can start small and doable, instead of "I'll start my diet after the Christmas party and then never have chocolate again for the rest of my life!"

In order for your efforts to be sustainable, they need to be fun, doable, and most of all, forgiving, not like a poke in the eye every time.

Similarly, you can start your mindfulness practice immediately, seeing your life as it is as the field of your practice, leveraging the things in your life right now, to insert a new mindful moment that was not there before.

Before checking the smart phone, why not breath, relax and smile?

If you do that many times a day, think of all the new opportunities available for taking a conscious breath.

You can have a whole new relationship with stop lights! Instead of stressing about how you just missed the yellow light, leverage the pause to create a moment of space instead, take a breath, come to the present, and smile.

See? That road-rager didn't steal our peace, they just gave us an opportunity to take a breath and come to the present.

We might even start to notice how often we seem to be drowning in stress marinade and have compassion for ourselves. We can turn it around instantly by triggering our relaxation responses now that we know how simple and easy it is.

Here are a few examples of small but significant changes my clients have experienced from using Mindful Marinade.

One lawyer had his first normal blood pressure reading in twenty years by doing “a lot of that breathing stuff at work” at high stress trigger points. He effectively backed away from a health precipice.

An environmental activist breezed through high pressure meetings with high level officials that were years in the making, feeling stress free, joyful and confident for the first time in decades.

One civil rights activist found that she disarmed the hair-trigger of her own reactivity as well as those who opposed her, when they would try to trigger her anger. She had begun flexing her spaciousness muscle, by breathing, relaxing and centering, feeling newly empowered.

Your relaxation and positive mindset will build to a positive energy tsunami beyond you, folks will notice, and you will be unstoppable and irresistible.

Bit by bit, we will create new habits that will allow us to marinate ourselves in a positive relaxation response, and restore easy well-being, releasing our true creativity, brilliance, joy and vitality.

Sounds good?

Thank you for listening, and feel free to visit [stressburneryoga.com](http://stressburneryoga.com) or like Stress Burner Yoga on Facebook to stay in touch.

Have fun with it, and happy breathing!