

# Mindfulness and Resilience



Helen Cotter

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# What is mindfulness?

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally.”

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn

“Awareness of present experience with acceptance.”

~ Ron Siegal

“Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different; enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes (which it will); being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way (which it won't).”

~ James Baraz

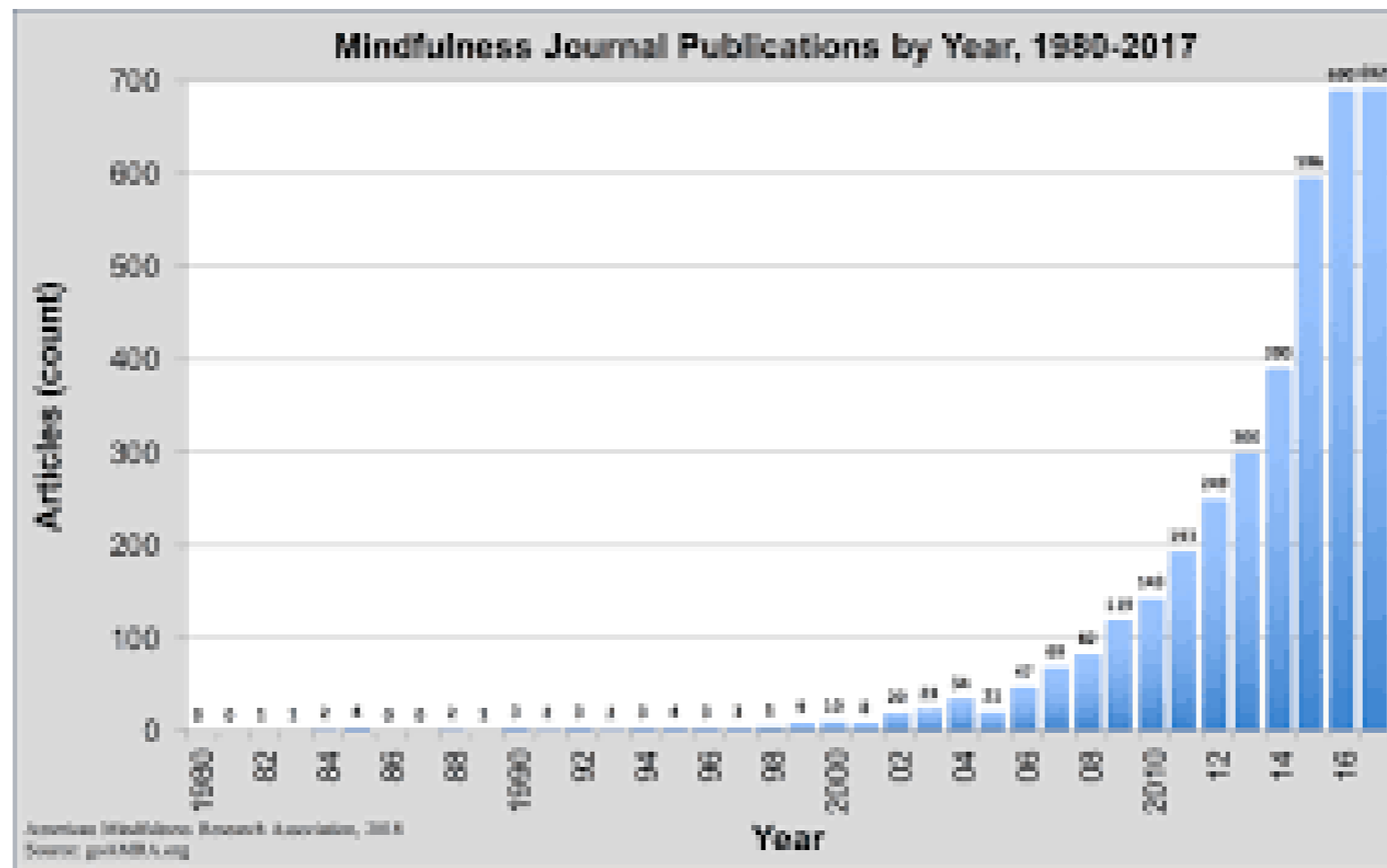


# Why practice mindfulness?

Research shows that a regular mindfulness practice can:

- reduce stress, anxiety and depression
- improve memory and sleep
- increase mental and physical stamina
- increase capacity to cope with chronic pain
- increase resilience

# Research Publications



Source: American Mindfulness Research Association (AMRA)



# The practice of mindfulness

## **Formal practice**

- sitting meditation
- walking meditation
- body scan

## **Informal practice**

- awareness of present moment experience during daily activities



## Mindfulness is *not*

- positive thinking
- just a relaxation technique
- trying to empty your mind
- going into a trance or 'zoning out'
- a quick fix



# Breath awareness practice



# Establishing a practice

*“Mindfulness isn't difficult, we just need to remember to do it.”  
~ Sharon Salzberg*

## **Formal practice**

Choose a regular time and place to meditate  
Let others know you don't want to be disturbed  
Turn off your phone!  
Meditate with others  
Attend a class or a course

## **Informal practice**

Choose a daily activity to practise mindfully e.g. drinking a cup of tea, washing up, brushing your teeth, having a shower, eating lunch, going for a walk.

Identify 'mindfulness bells' or reminders to practice in your day e.g. phone ringing or buzzer call, sitting down at your desk, walking through the doorway of a patient's room, red traffic lights on the drive to and from work.





MIND FULL, OR MINDFUL ?



Can you just be here now?

# The Tricky Brain by Dr James Kirby Compassionate Mind Foundation

## The Tricky Brain

### Flow of life

Like all living beings we just happen to find ourselves here, now, part of the flow of life.



STEP  
**01**



### Human brain

And we have a brain we did not design, but which was developed through thousands of years of evolution.

STEP  
**02**

### New brain capacity

Our brains have the capacity to imagine, have complex language, and be creative. But also the ability to ruminate and worry.

STEP  
**03**



### Shaped

We are shaped by the family we are born into, which we did not choose. Ask yourself this, "Would the same version of me exist if I was kidnapped by the mafia as a 3 day old baby?"

STEP  
**04**



### Not your fault

So it is not our fault that our brains get caught up in anxious or depressive loops. The brain is a tricky thing. But we can take responsibility for it using wisdom and compassion.

STEP  
**05**

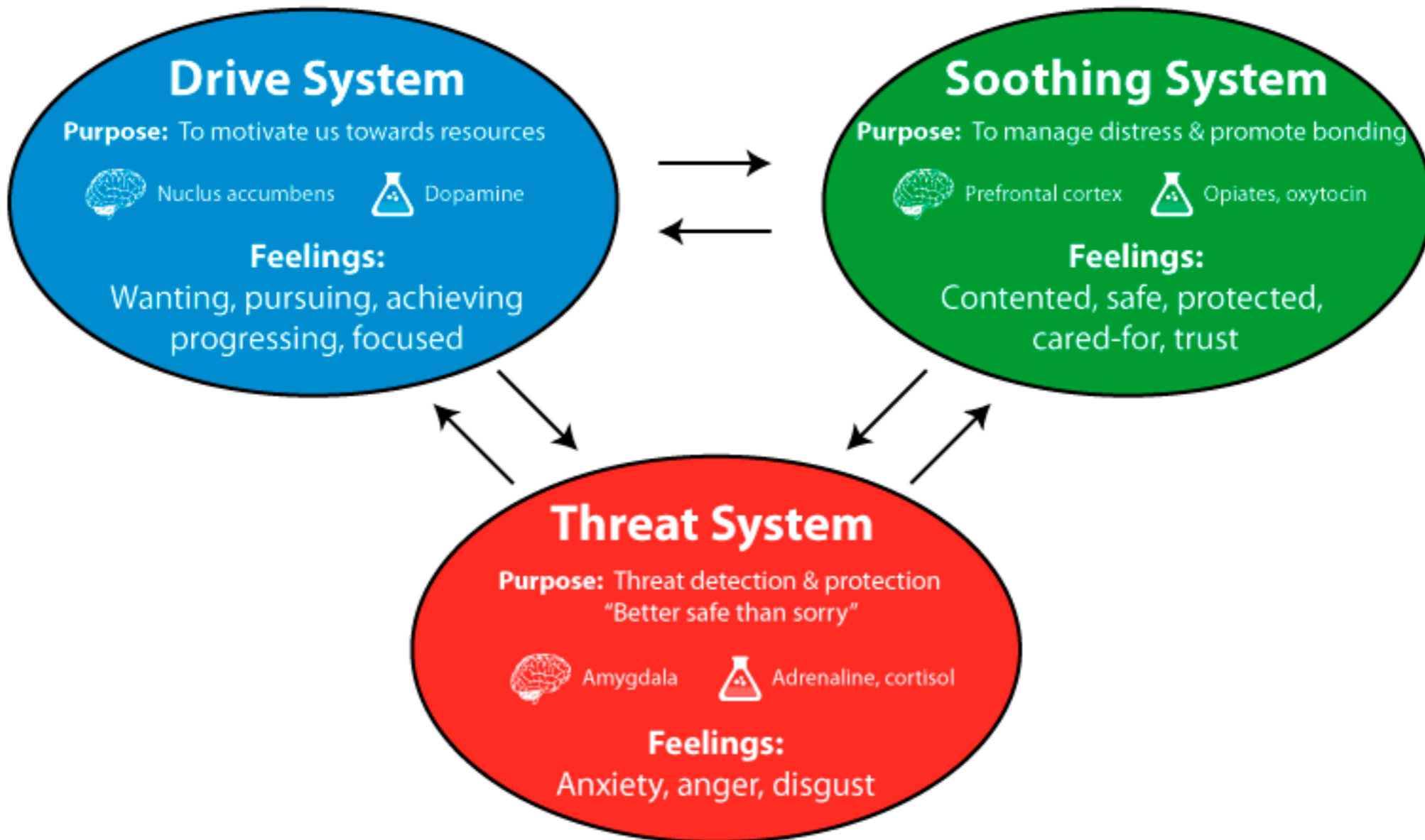


# Emotional Regulation Systems by Professor Paul Gilbert Compassionate Mind Foundation

## Emotional Regulation Systems

Paul Gilbert's evolutionary model proposes that human beings switch between three systems to manage their emotions. Each system is associated with different brain regions and different brain chemistry.

Distress is caused by imbalance between the systems, often associated with under-development of the soothing system.





“It is remarkable how liberating it feels to be able to see that your thoughts are just thoughts and that they are not 'you' or 'reality.' For instance, if you have the thought that you have to get a certain number of things done today and you don't recognize it as a thought but act as if it's the 'the truth,' then you have created a reality in that moment in which you really believe that those things must all be done today.”

~ [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#)



Between stimulus and response  
is the freedom to choose.

Viktor E. Frankl

 quotefancy



In effect, *the brain is like Velcro for negative experiences, but Teflon for positive ones.* That shades “implicit memory” – your underlying expectations, beliefs, action strategies, and mood – in an increasingly negative direction.

*Rick Hanson - Hardwiring Happiness*



“Neurons that fire together wire together. Mental states become neural traits. Day after day, your mind is building your brain. This is what scientists call experience-dependent neuroplasticity.”

“By taking just a few extra seconds to stay with a positive experience—even the comfort in a single breath—you’ll help turn a passing mental state into lasting neural structure.”

*Rick Hanson - Hardwiring Happiness*





# Taking in the good

*A practice by Rick Hanson*

- Look for positive facts, and let them become positive experiences
- Savour the positive experience
  - sustain it for 10-20 seconds
  - feel it in your body and emotions
  - intensify it
- Sense and intend that the positive experience is soaking into your brain and body registering deeply in emotional memory



“Taking in the good is not about putting a happy shiny face on everything, nor is it about turning away from the hard things in life. It's about nourishing well-being, contentment, and peace inside that are refuges you can always come from and return to.”

*Rick Hanson - Buddha's Brain*



# Resources for Mindfulness and Resilience

## **Books**

*Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World* by Mark Williams and Danny Penman

*Mindfulness for Health: A Practical Guide to Relieving Pain, Reducing Stress and Restoring Well-Being* by Vidyamala Burch and Danny Penman

*The Mindful Way Through Depression* by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn

*The Mindful Way Through Anxiety* by Susan M. Orsilly and Lizabeth Roemer

*Mindful Eating* by Jan Chozen Bays

*The Sleep Book* by Guy Meadows

*Hardwiring Happiness* by Rick Hanson

*Resilient* by Rick Hanson

*Mindful Compassion* by Paul Gilbert and Choden

## **Apps**

Headspace (for daily led meditations)

Gratitude



**Questions and enquiries welcome**

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You can't stop the waves,  
but you can learn to surf.

~Jon Kabat-Zinn

