

imagine mindfulness



WEEK FIVE

Halfway point of the program

Review of Session 4: Stress & Reactivity

Stress: “When *perceived* demands exceed *perceived* resources!”

When feeling overwhelmed, we often use maladaptive coping methods to deal with it.

Automatic Habitual Stress Reactions (Reacting): Autopilot that leads to Fight, Flight, Freeze.

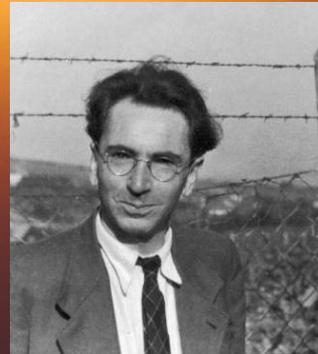
Mindfulness:

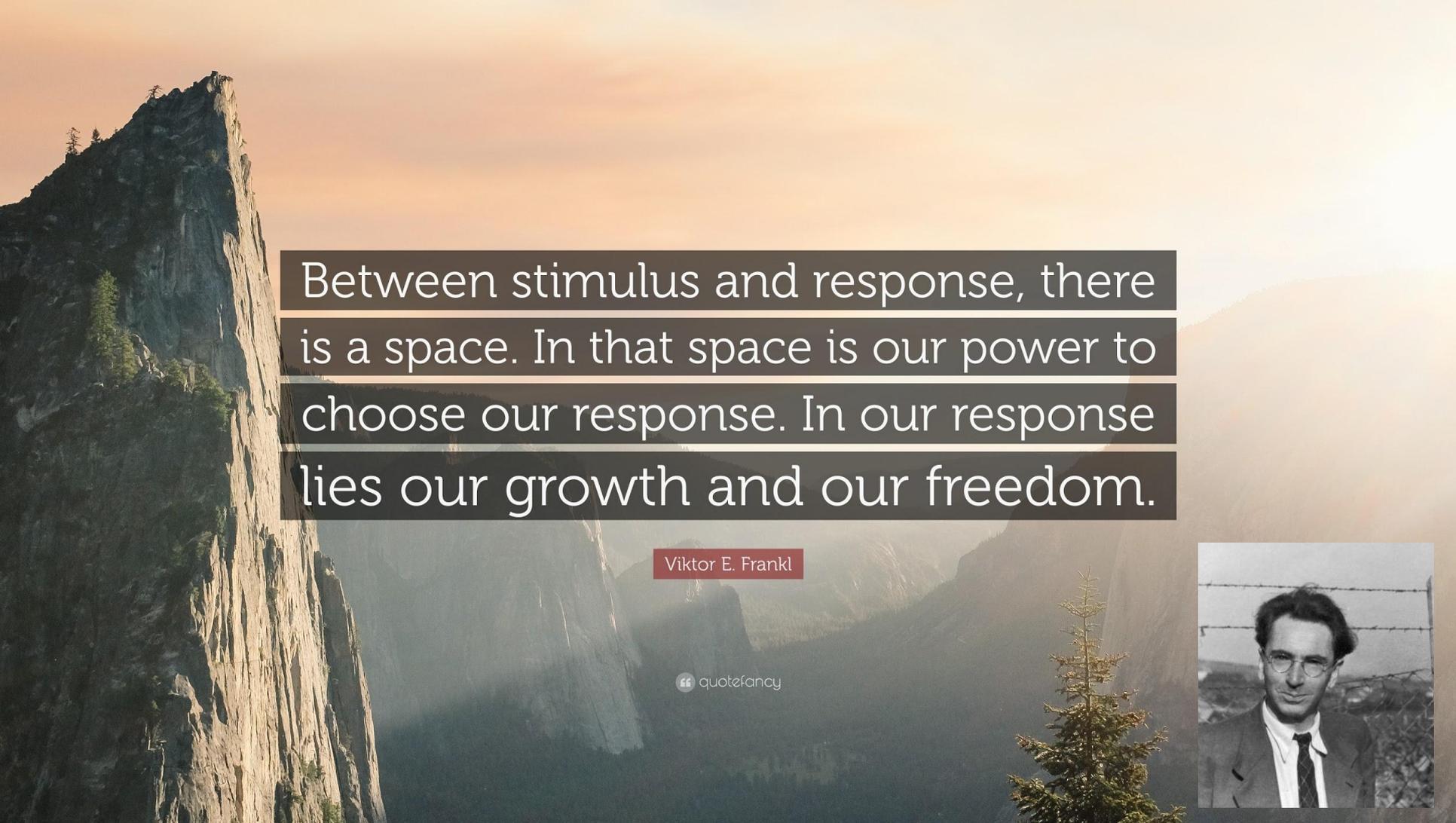
- Helps us recognize our reactions.
- Creates the opportunity and possibility for healthy outcomes (freedom).

When we are no longer able to
change a situation – we are
challenged to change ourselves.

Viktor E. Frankl

“ quotefancy

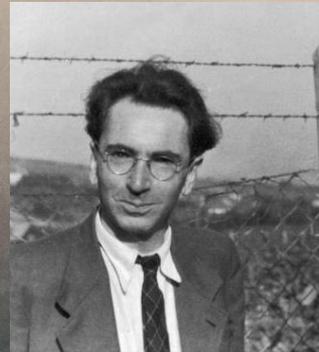




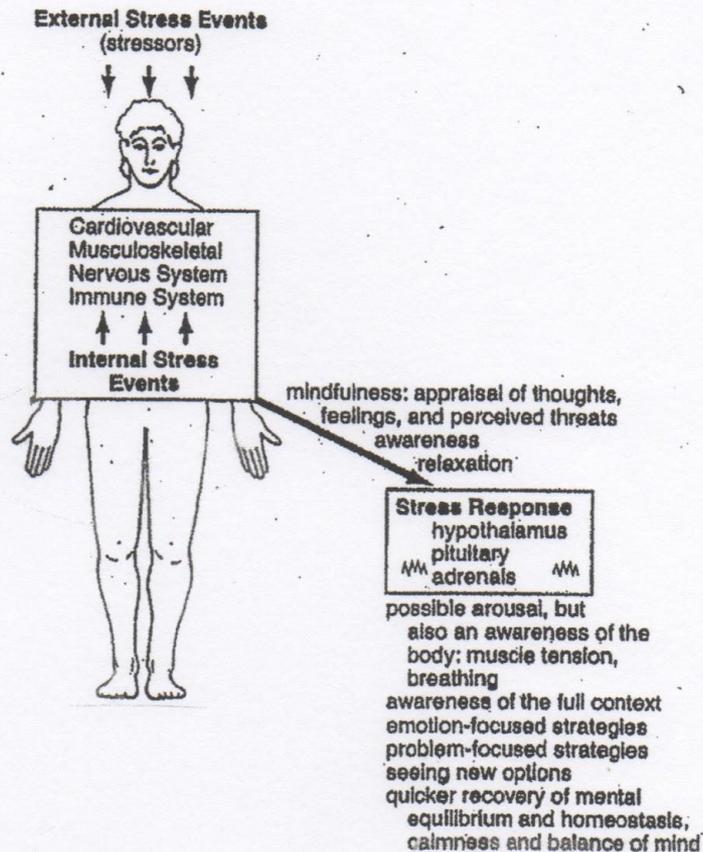
Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Viktor E. Frankl

“ quote fancy



COPING WITH STRESS: RESPONDING VS. REACTING



The Role of Perception in Reaction and Response

The Role of Perception

- Feeling threatened (Reaction) has as much to do with *your state of mind or the context you're in (Perception)* rather than the triggering action itself.
- Response is marked by clarity, control, and calm.
- We *feel* the effects of reactivity for about 90 seconds unless....

Staying in the moment

- Allows you *to respond* and *be present for yourself*.
- *Focused breathing* calms and creates awareness to come back to the *present moment*.
- Taking each moment as it comes and *not running ahead* can sustain this balance.
- This allows time to be *creative* and *discover* new solutions.

Intentional, nonjudgmental, awareness through attention, right here, right now with *curiosity* and *compassion*.

The Nature of Responding

Stop.

Step back.

Allow time.

Make an informed choice.

STOP - Stop - Take a break (breath) – Observe – Proceed

Response feels balanced emotionally, bodily, and mentally. Reacting does not.

Responding creatively begins with an interior shift to awareness that creates space and opportunity.

Intentional, nonjudgmental, awareness through attention, right here, right now with curiosity and compassion.

The Process of Responding

Interior Shift

- Awareness of “Aha, something is going on here!”. It may only be a feeling.
- We recognize the moment *and* the impulse to react.
- Catching yourself before or in the middle of reacting and taking a moment to pause.
- Now you have a choice to respond rather than react in this space that you’ve created for yourself.
- If you react, practicing self-compassion and a re-centering breath to help return to balance.

Both the formal and the informal practice helps us in creating this interior shift.

In *Formal Practice*, the mind wanders and we Realize and Return.

In *Informal Practice*, there’s reaction and we Realize and Respond.

- Provides the space to explore a different way in the moment.
- Allows us to acknowledge and explore the full range of emotional responses.
- Also gives insight into your conditioned behavior patterns, allowing creative options for responding long term.
- Finding balance and freedom in each response.

Intentional, nonjudgmental, awareness through attention, right here, right now with curiosity and compassion.

Learning How to Respond

Labeling

The first step in breaking away from stress reactivity is to be **aware** of the situation when it's happening **moment by moment** and **acknowledging** it. *Labeling it.*

Labeling that a stressful situation is **present in this moment** can pull you out of reactivity and buy time.

Labeling pain can be effective as well. Determining its nature and degree can help lowering resistance.

Intentional, **nonjudgmental**, **awareness through attention**, **right here, right now** with **curiosity** and **compassion**.

Learning How to Respond

Locating

Becoming **aware** of the tension in the BODY when feeling threatened, fearful, angry, or hurt. Being in touch with what's **unfolding moment by moment**. *Locating it!*

Locating where stress manifests itself in the body is an effective way to identify potential reactive situations. *Feeling it* before knowing it!

Locating pain can help us pinpoint the specific location of challenge. Understand that the location and intensity can change and is often more limited than we first thought.

Intentional, **nonjudgmental**, **awareness through attention**, **right here, right now** with **curiosity** and **compassion**.

Recovering

Recovering

Creating this space is not easy. We all can react AND we all have options every single time.

Mindfulness provides the capacity to bounce back more quickly from stressful situations.

Extending kindness to yourself after reacting allows for a quicker return to balance. Remember 90 seconds.

Self-compassion is central to every step of this process that creates the opportunity to learn and grow.

Intentional, **nonjudgmental**, **awareness through attention**, **right here, right now** with **curiosity** and **compassion**.

ReaCtive

Creative

The difference is how you C it!

"I have been through some terrible things in my life,
some of which actually happened."

Mark Twain