MIND YOUR WORLDVIEW

Program Summary and Resources

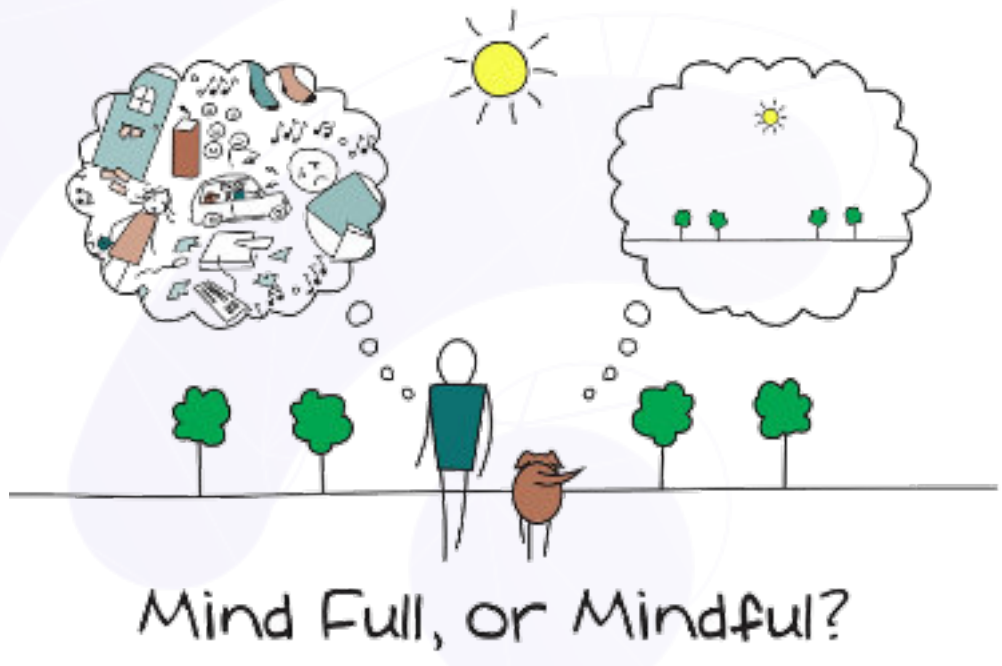
Chapter 4: Presence

Minfulness is more than just stress reduction. It 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.

While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice this on a daily basis. Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses, or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful.

There's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodelling the physical structure of your brain.

Stress reduction is often an effect of mindfulness practice, but the ultimate goal isn't meant to be stress reduction. The goal of mindfulness is to wake up to the inner workings of our mental, emotional, and physical processes.



Mindfulness trains your body to thrive: Athletes use mindfulness to foster peak performance—from university basketball players practicing acceptance of negative thoughts before games, to BMX champions learning to follow their breath, and big-wave surfers transforming their fears. Seattle Seahawks Coach Pete Carroll, assisted by sports psychologist Michael Gervais, talks about coaching the "whole person." As writer Delehanty shows, players learn a blend of mindfulness, which Gervais calls tactical breathing, and cognitive behavioural training to foster "full presence in the moment."

Mindfulness boosts creativity: Whether it's writing, drawing, or colouring, they all have accompanying meditative practices. We can also apply mindfulness to the creative process.

Mindfulness strengthens neural connections: By training our brains in mindfulness and related practices, we can build new neural pathways and networks in the brain, boosting concentration, flexibility, and awareness. Well-being is a skill that can be learned.

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Chapter 4: Presence Continued

The foundation of **meditation** lies in the practice of **paying attention to the present moment** with an accepting, nonjudgmental disposition

It's a deceptively simple exercise — just be right here, right now, without daydreaming. But with practice it can yield profound results, giving us greater control of our actions, and making room for more kindness and equanimity, even in difficult situations.

Meditation isn't about letting your thoughts wander. But it isn't about trying to empty your mind, either. Instead, the practice involves paying close attention to the present moment — especially our own thoughts, emotions and sensations — whatever it is that's happening.

It's inevitable: During meditation, your mind will roam. You may notice other sensations in the body, things happening around you, or just get lost in thought, daydreaming about the past or present, possibly judging yourself or others.

When this happens, simply notice what it is you were thinking about, or what was distracting you, then take a moment and pause.

Mindfulness vs. Meditation

Though the words are sometimes used interchangeably, it's useful to draw a distinction between mindfulness and meditation.

Mindfulness is a quality of being — the experience of being open and aware in the present moment, without reflexive judgment, automatic criticism or mind wandering. Mindfulness meditation is the practice of actually being present in the moment, which in turn trains us to become more mindful throughout the day, particularly during difficult situations.

Just like any habit, meditation gets easier to do if it's part of your routine. **Choose a time to do it each day and stick with it!**

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Chapter 4: Presence Continued

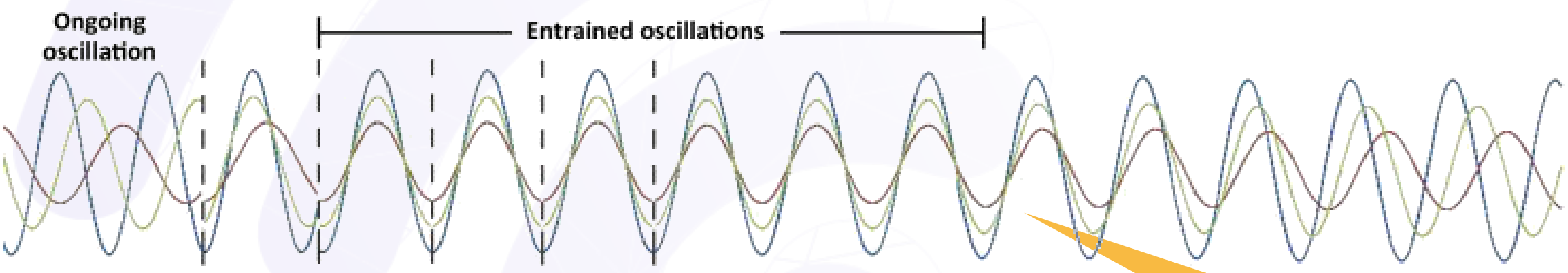
Coherence

An important point is, that the state of coherence is both **psychologically and physiologically distinct** from the state achieved through meditation or other techniques for relaxation.

At the physiological level, relaxation is characterized by an overall reduction in autonomic outflow (resulting in lower HRV, and a shift in ANS balance towards increased parasympathetic activity.

Coherence is also associated with a relative increase in parasympathetic activity, thus encompassing a key element of the relaxation response, but is physiologically distinct from relaxation in that the system oscillates at its natural resonant frequency, and there is **increased harmony and synchronization in nervous system and heart–brain dynamics**.

In other words – unlike meditation, the coherence state does not necessarily involve a lowering of heart rate, or a change in the amount of HRV, but rather is primarily marked by a **change in the heart rhythm** pattern.



Physiological Coherence is a state characterized by:

- High heart-rhythm coherence (sine-wavelike rhythmic pattern)
  Increased parasympathetic activity.
- Increased entrainment and synchronization between physiological systems.
- Efficient and harmonious functioning of the cardiovascular, nervous, hormonal, and immune systems.

Vimeo Channel

We asked several people: "What does Coherence mean to you?" Check it out at Vimeo/coherencehotspot

Entrainment

Entrainment is a process through which independent systems interact with each other. When two signals are close to each other in frequency, they fall into a single frequency.

Heart Rate Variability (HRV) has come under intense study to determine cardiac response during stress. It is possible to observe sympathetic and parasympathetic activities when we record HRV and its time and frequency domain transforms. **Entrainment of HRV and respiratory rhythm is reported during "pleasant and loving thoughts."**

This illustrates ways through which we could intentionally entrain two signals in the body.

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Chapter 4: Presence Continued

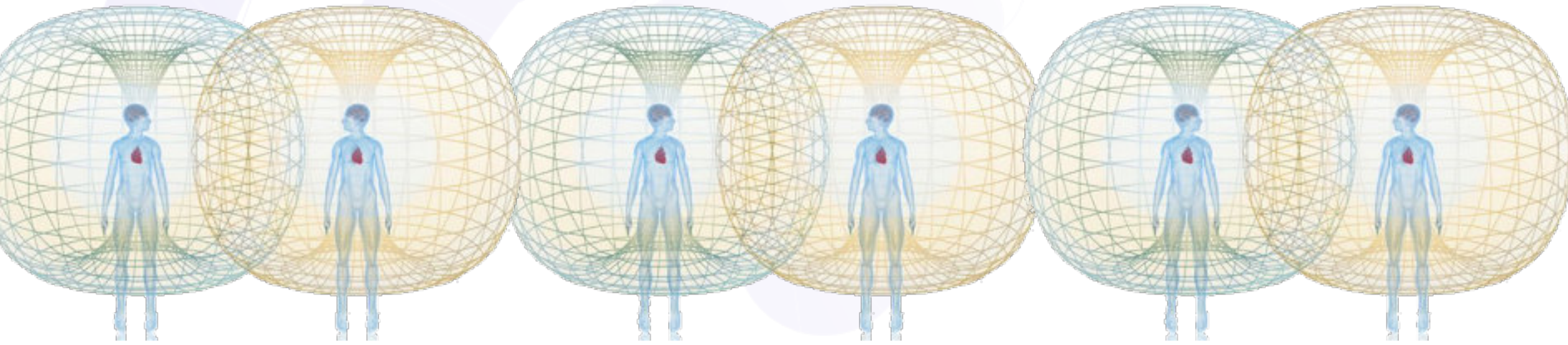
Impact of Coherence on Physiology

Research shows that the heart sends more messages and information to the brain, then the brain does to the heart.

By **consciously shifting our awareness to our breath and heart centre**, while drawing in a positive emotion, we can begin to interrupt unhelpful super highways that have been created in our brain, and send a new message to our entire system. Thus, creating a new connection that sends healthy hormones cascading through our bodies, putting us into a restorative state.

Physiologically, coherence is marked by a smooth, sine-wave-like pattern in the heart rate variability trace. We call this **heart rhythm coherence** – the primary indicator of the psychophysiological coherence state.

The two branches of the **ANS** (autonomic nervous system) synchronize with one another, and there is an overall shift in autonomic balance toward increased parasympathetic activity. There is also **increased physiological entrainment**—a number of different bodily systems synchronize to the rhythm generated by the heart. This increases the synchronization between the activity of the heart and brain.



Impact of Coherence on the Field

Our personal field sends information to those surrounding us, and in turn we are receiving their field information, many times, giving us a picture of what they are feeling without words even being spoken.

Your personal field is measurable, is mainly generated by your heart, and **sends out messages based on your emotions, feelings, and state of coherence**.

When we consciously choose to become coherent on a personal level, grow it to a larger group of people, communities, countries, and feed the field on a universal level, the **field around our planet will also shift into a more coherent state**.

This is exactly why **Coherence Hotspot** was created – we **help educate** each individual about their capacity to create personal coherence, understand that it affects their health, and know that feeding the field, is the way we can support and create peace and coherence within all levels – personal, social and global. We are a worldwide network, where people gather and practice *exactly* this.

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Personal Notes

What did you take away from this chapter? Was there anything that surprised you?

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