In search of equanimity: Lessons on sustainable health and high performance for physicians
Faculty: Jason Brooks
In search of equanimity...
Prophylaxis
“START WITH BEING HUMAN AND WORK BACKWARDS”
—DR. CURT TRIBBLE

Why important?

We are fighting for life...
Room for efficiencies
Choice: habits and reactions
Inner and outer game
Challenge vs threat
Consciousness

Intentional Action

Discipline
Awareness exercise

• What do you want?
• What value would that bring?
• What currently interferes (from skin to bone deep)?
• Where is your control?
• What habits/behaviours/narratives keep us stuck?
• Who do I need to be, to experience what I want?
• What are you willing to work for?
“To not waste time and energy wishing our circumstances to be better but rather direct our time and energy into making them so”
Professional Bubble exercise

What can hijack our energy/focus?

What fuels energy/focus?

What can I bring/leave to improve the environment?
How do you eat an elephant?
Negative visualisation
Rehearsing an activity can activate neuropathways and cause neurochemical release similar to actual performance of the activity (Lauria, 2016; Weisinger & Pawliw-Fry, 2015)
Hebbs Law

Conscious of our inner voice

Tactical advantage

Well groomed pathways

Positive is great, accurate will do

Beacon, not barrier
HOW TO HEAL INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

**UNCONSCIOUS THINKING**

THOUGHT

↓

EMOTION

↓

HABITUAL REACTION

**CONSCIOUS THINKING**

THOUGHT

↓

QUESTION THOUGHT

1. Does this thought serve who I want to become?

2. If I don’t believe this thought what new choice can I make in this moment

↓

CHOICE IN BEHAVIOR
Conscious thinking

How does the way you think of yourself in this role, impact on you?

Does the inner narrative help or hinder you in experiencing what you want?

***What you think about expands***
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
Challenge 1

Identify a situation that you’d like to develop a better response to

1. *Play it through and collect the data*
2. *Identify what interferes*
3. *Identify and playback what you want to experience*
4. *Mental reps matter*
Self-limiting beliefs

Fighter checklist (Fact over fear)

1. “I am struggling to stay motivated, feel confident, happy etc., because..."

2. "The reason I am stressed about this is because..."

3. Counter possibilities: Facts, attributes, strength, supports, capabilities...

4. New narrative: “Although I sometimes/currently feel....I know I can course correct because of the following facts...I am statements..."
Challenge 2

Identify a self-limiting belief that you hold, that we could work to shape and improve.
Performance State

What we can influence most in the moment
Intense moments...

High uncertainty and low control
High stakes, high cost of failure
Self-distraction theory
Disruptive thoughts and reactions
Spike in arousal that hijacks our attention
YERKES-DODSON LAW (IPS)

Why important?
EMOTION can help or hinder

The metaphor of safety: A basic principle of our nervous system

- Environment
  - Outside the body
  - Inside the body

- Nervous System
  - Neuroception

- Safety
  - Spontaneously engages others
  - Eye contact, facial expression, prosody supports visceral homeostasis

- Danger
- Life threat
  - Defense strategies
    - Death feigning, shutdown (immobilization)

- Defensive strategies
  - Fight/flight behaviors (mobilization)
    - Fight
    - Appease
    - Freeze
    - Flight

From: Stephen W. Porges, 2007  sporges@utc.edu
1. **AWARENESS** Fear is *NEED* announced

2. **CONSCIOUS** who’s the story running in my head? Where is my attention? What’s happening in my body?

3. **CHALLENGE** your fears by holding them up against the *TRUTH*. The *TRUTH* is always *STRONGER* than your fear

4. **ACCEPT** and **OWN** your fear--elimination might be difficult--talk to it, get comfy with it, negotiate boundaries
Recalibration
Tools

Breathwork
An ethical framework

“START WITH BEING HUMAN AND WORK BACKWARDS”
—DR. CURT TRIBBLE
“There will be no death by inches”

—Vic Fangio
Adopting healthy habits for success
Challenge 3: Stop or start one

• 1 new habit that would add value to your life

• 1 current habit that gets in the way of things

• Identify the cue, routine, reward and where you can intervene

• Answer the key “cue” questions
Boundaries

- **Time**: Create more or optimize what you have
- Time suckers and strategies
- **Balance**: Personalized conception, intention, transition
- Consciousness + purpose + discipline
- ***What’s a boundary we can set?***
Purpose

- Synonymous with “why”
- Source of energy and fuel
- What’s your purpose each and every day, in this role?
- What virtues are most important for you to be and bring in your role?
Thermostat or Thermometer?

—JOEL MARION