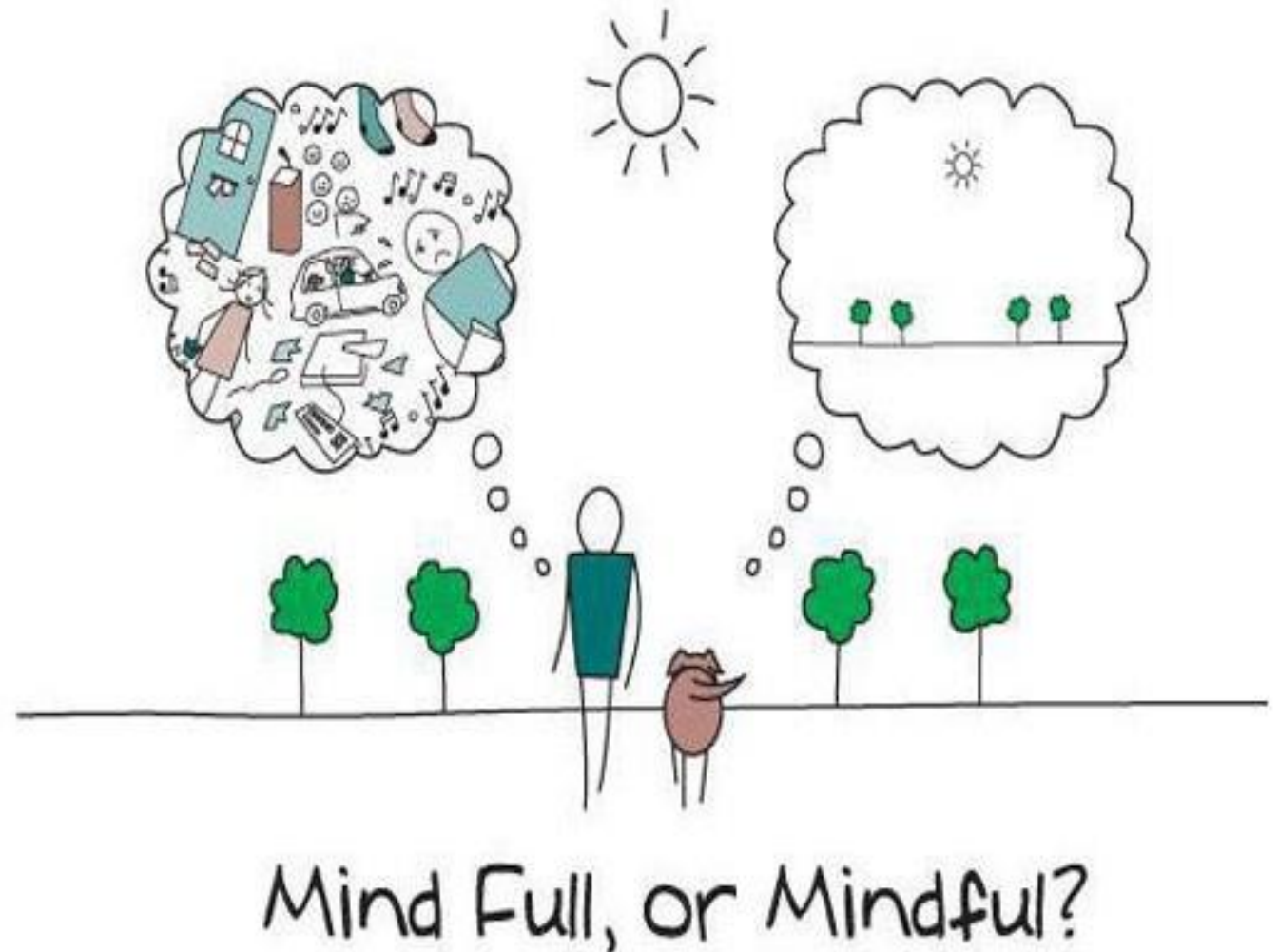


Building a Mindfulness Practice for Stress Relief

Alison Crowley (C-IAYT) (E-RYT 500) (TRE Certified)

Bolster & Bridge Yoga Therapy to support cancer treatment

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Defining Stress

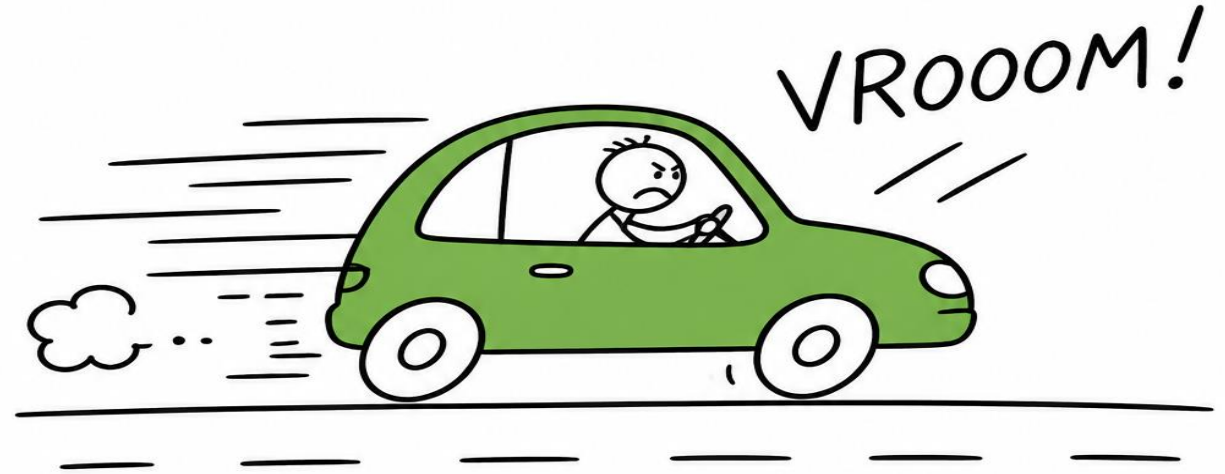
- A state of mental, emotional, and/or physical strain/tension caused by external or internal demands that exceed our coping abilities and resources. Causes a sense of overwhelm.
- “The research literature has identified three factors that universally lead to stress: uncertainty, the lack of information and the loss of control.”
— **Gabor Maté**, [When the Body Says No](#)
- Can be caused by a real or PERCEIVED threat.



Fight/Flight/Freeze

Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)

- Activates the fight, flight, or freeze response.
- Increases heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and alertness.
- Responds automatically to real or perceived danger.
- **Think of it as the body's "gas pedal."**



Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)

- Promotes rest, relaxation, and recovery.
- Helps the body return to a calmer, more balanced state.
- Slows heart rate and supports digestion.
- **Think of it as the body's "brake pedal."**



Mind/Body Connection

- *“The mind and body are not separate units, but one integrated system. How we act and what we think, eat, and feel are all related to our health.” — **Bernie Siegel, MD***
- The mind-body connection is the constant, two-way communication between our brains and bodies. Our thoughts and emotions can influence us physically and vice-versa.
- Healing the mind-body connection begins with regulating our nervous system. Breathwork, mindfulness, yoga, Tai Chi, and body scans help shift the body from fight/flight/freeze into rest, healing, and resilience.
- “The first step to healing is awareness.” – **Dean Ornish, MD**

Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor

Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor's **90-second rule** states that the physiological experience of a strong emotion, triggers a chemical response in the body, lasting only about 90 seconds. After this initial physical reaction subsides, if the emotion continues, it is due to thoughts that re-stimulate the emotional loop.

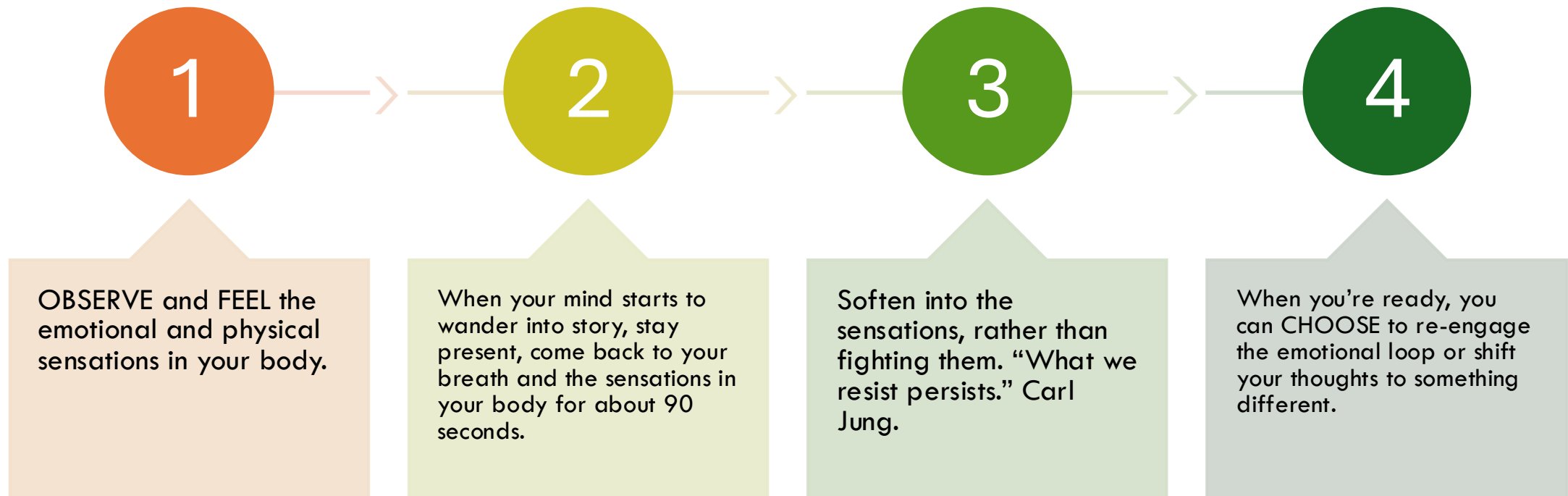
Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor is an American neuroanatomist, author, and public speaker. “My Stroke of Insight.”

How it works:

1. An external or internal trigger sparks a chemical cascade in the brain.
2. Hormones like adrenaline and cortisol flood the body, and this physiological reaction occurs for about 90 seconds.
3. After 90 seconds, the initial chemical flush has passed through the body. If the emotion continues, it's because our thoughts are re-stimulating the emotional circuitry, keeping the feeling alive.

How to...

(work with the feeling, rather than against it)





1. TAKE 3 BREATHS



2. GO FOR A WALK



3. MEDITATION



What is Mindfulness?

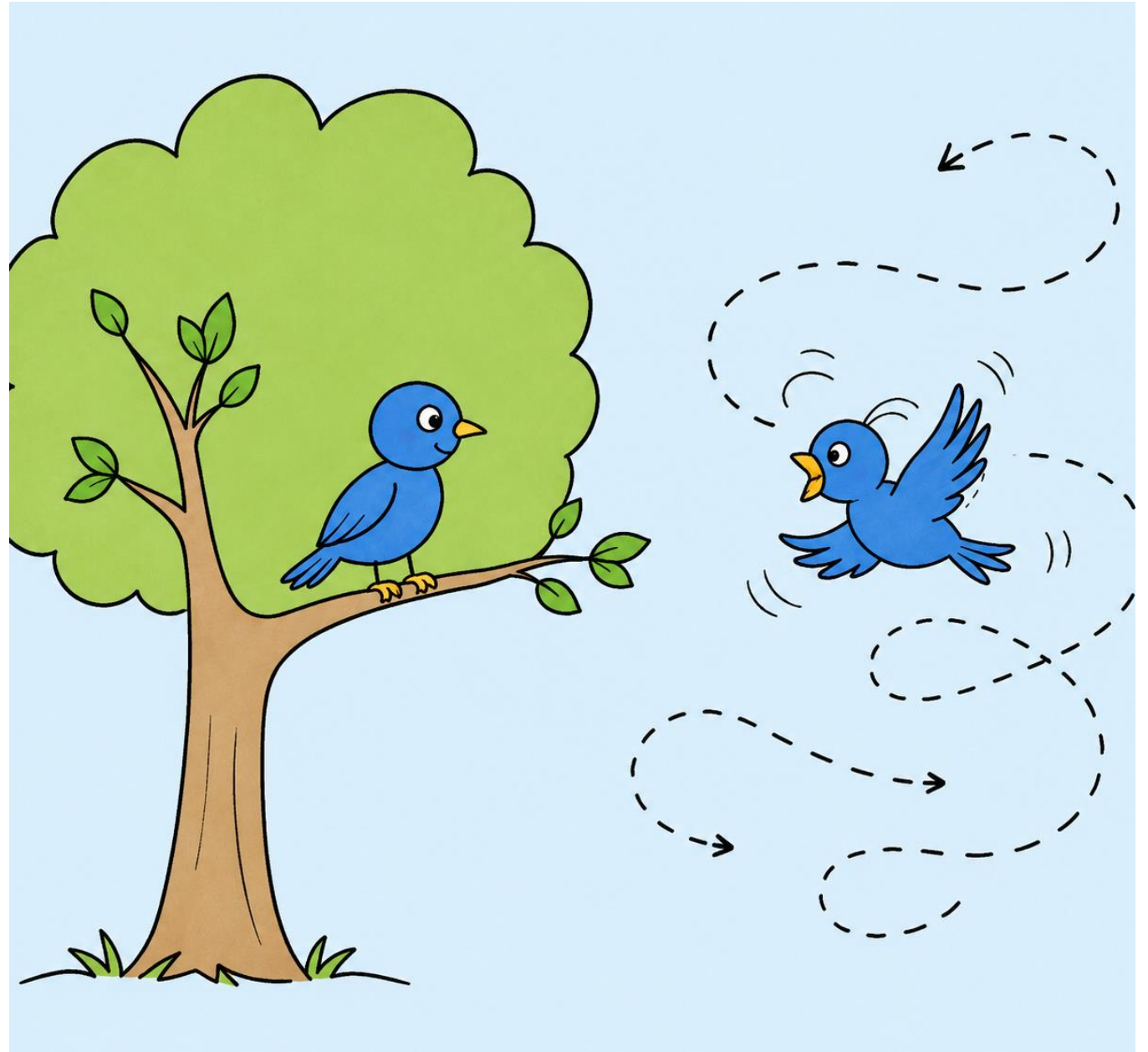
“Mindfulness is the awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.”

- Jon Kabat Zinn

American professor emeritus of medicine and the creator of the Stress Reduction Clinic (MBSR) and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

The 2 Bird Visualization

(The Observer and the
Observed)





An Irish saying...

The Irish expression for "I am sad" is

Tá brón orm.

This phrase translates to "sadness is on me."

It reflects the Irish language's perspective that emotions are transient experiences that don't define a person. Our emotions are not who we are, they come and go. (Like the 1st Bird)

Mindfulness Tools:

(Ways to pump the breaks
and practice the 90 second
rule)

The 4 Elements

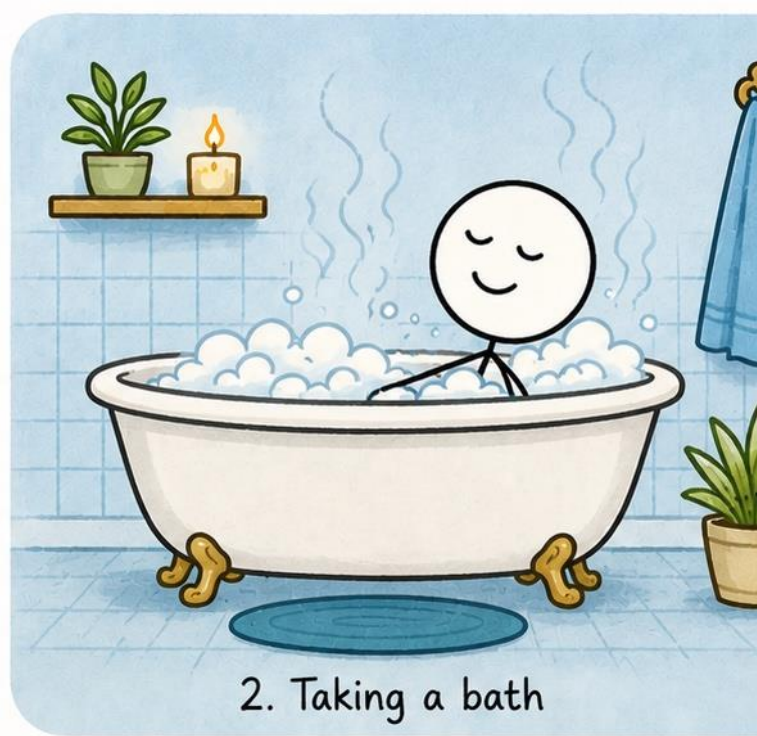
3 Breaths

Crossover Tools

OGRE (Orient, Ground, Resource,
Extending Exhalations)



1. Enjoying a warm cup of coffee



2. Taking a bath



3. Gardening



4. Feeling the wind on your face

The 4 Elements

Pay attention to fire, water, earth, and air during your daily activities. Notice the sensations. (repeat often).

Fire – cooking, morning coffee, the warmth of the sun.

Water – washing your hands, shower/bath, brushing your teeth.

Earth - walking, gardening, feeling your feet on the ground.

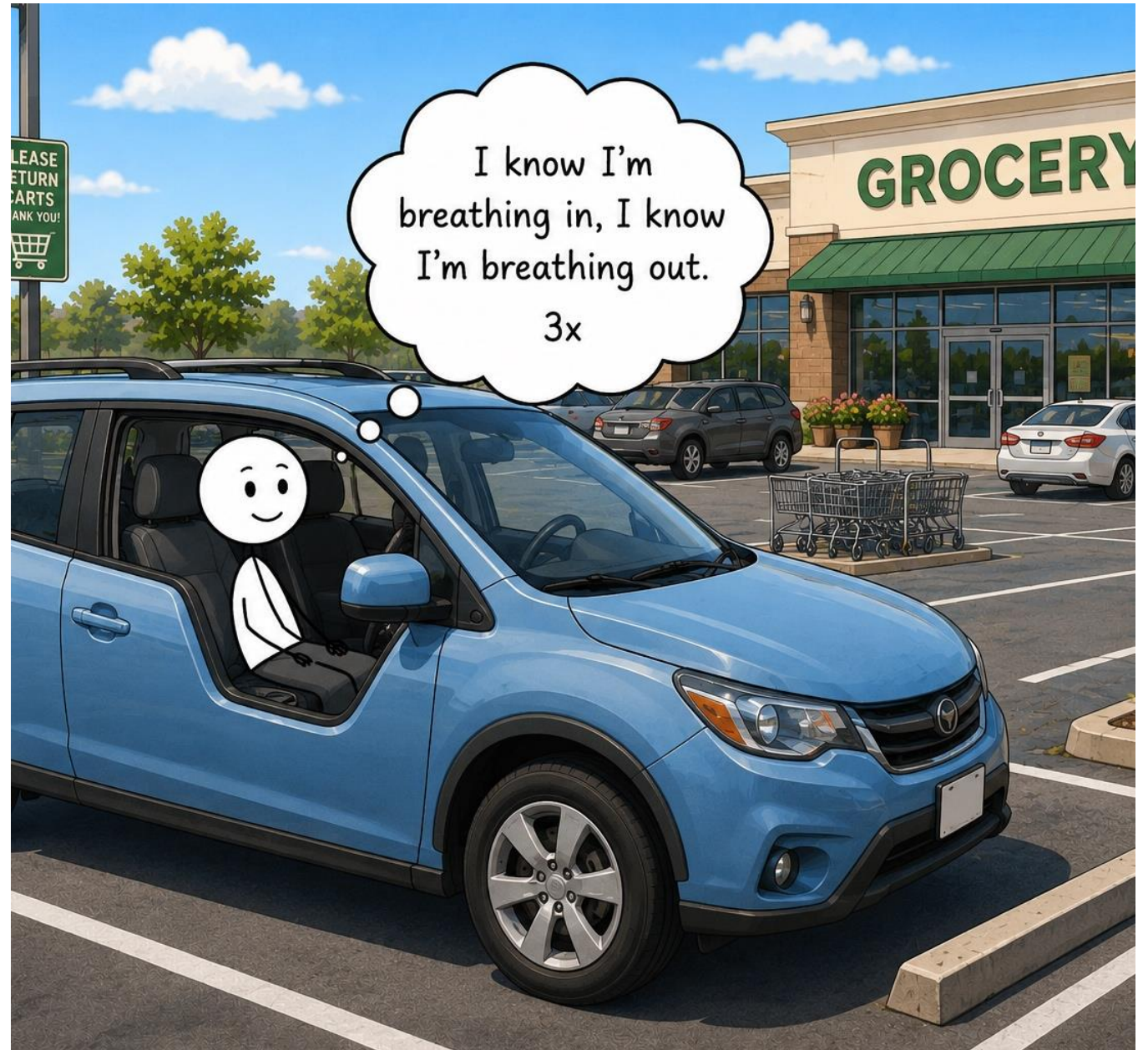
Air – wind on your skin, focusing on your breath.

3 Breaths

"I know I'm breathing in,
I know I'm breathing out."

- **Andrew Weiss**

(Author of "Beginning Mindfulness")



Crossover Tools: (Bilateral Stimulation)

A process of alternately stimulating the left and right hemispheres of the brain.
Bring us into the PNS.

- The Butterfly Hug
- Knee Tapping
- Arm Sweeps
- Imaginary Hula Hoop (Grounding)

OGRE:

Orienting
Grounding
Resourcing
Extended Exhalations

- **Orienting** – connecting to your physical space. Look around (turning your head) observe items, colors, shapes, textures. I am here.
- **Grounding** – connecting to myself. Body scan head to toes. Feeling sensations. I am in my body.
- **Resourcing** – connect your attention to a part of your body that feels good or neutral.
- **Extended Exhalations** – gently slow down your exhalations a tiny bit without force. “I know I’m breathing in, I know I’m breathing out.”



Akhilandeshwari

(She Who is Never Not Broken)

A Hindu Goddess, the supreme ruler of the universe, who teaches the power of growth and transformation through imperfection and life's challenges.

"Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering, there's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

- Leonard Cohen

(singer/songwriter/poet)

Thank you for the
privilege of your
time today!



BOLSTER™
& BRIDGE

gentle yoga therapy to complement
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Alison Crowley (C-IAYT)
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