



**THE HOLISTIC APPROACH OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE AND HIS PLEA FOR
KOSHER THERAPEUTIC MEDITATION**



**Torah and Science Conference
Bal Harbour, December 13, 2015**



**Main Concepts and Guidelines
Have Been Extracted from
THE SICHO OF THE REBBE ON
THERAPEUTIC MEDITATION
(13 Tammuz, 5739 – 1978)**

**and the Rebbe's various communications, memoranda with
Dr. Yehuda Landes and others, as well personal contact with Dr. Avraham
Twerski and conversations with Rabbi Natan Ophir, Ph.D.,
his article from B'Or HaTorah, vol. 22, 5773 and
Rabbi Yehoshua Landes' article from B'Or HaTorah, vol. 23, 5775.**



**THE VERY FIRST WORDS OF THE REBBE IN
THE TALK OF 13 TAMMUZ, 1978:**

“There is an issue connected with the physical and psychological health of many Jews, that demands attention. It is quite possible that these words will have no effect. Nevertheless, the health of a Jew is such an important matter, that efforts should be made even when there is not a sure chance of success.”

THE REBBE'S REQUEST TO MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS – TO DEVELOP A “PAREVE” FORMAT THERAPEUTIC MEDITATION

- **February 1978 - private letter to Dr. Yehuda Landes**
- **Unsigned memorandum to +/-50 health and mental health professionals to develop a kosher meditation program**
- **July 1978 Sicho to develop and disseminate therapeutic meditation devoid of Jewish content**
- **Even earlier requests from the '60s - Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski**
- **Dr. Landes was strongly encouraged, but continued to use “JM” – Jewish Meditation**



MEDITATION IS NOT FOREIGN TO JUDAISM FROM PUBLIC SICHO, 13 TAMMUZ, 5739

- **The Avos (Patriarchs) were a “merkavah – perfect vehicle”**
- **Shepherds, not in city life, able to meditate on G-dliness.**
- **We also need to temporarily divorce ourselves from the tensions of day to day life (such as finances, health, marriage challenges, etc.).**



MEDITATION IS NOT FOREIGN TO JUDAISM
FROM PUBLIC SICHO, 13 TAMMUZ, 5739

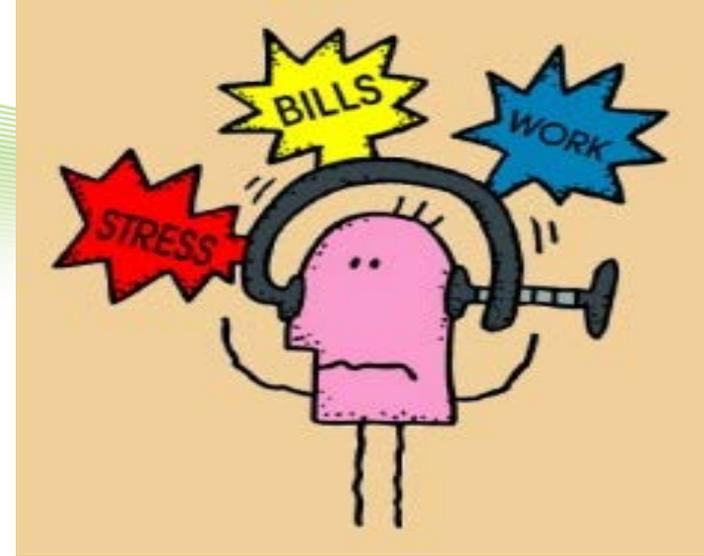
“The same holds true today. There are certain aspects of psychological health and tranquility that can be attained by taking oneself out of contact with the surrounding hullabaloo and tumult of life.”



THE REBBE'S CONCERN FOR PROVIDING A NON-IDOLATROUS "PAREVE" FORMAT FOR HEALING PURPOSES

- Meditation can be positive or destructive.
- Because some people use meditation with *a.z.* elements, the basic therapeutic elements of technique must be extracted.
- The technique must be stripped of all *a.z.* elements unnecessary for therapeutic benefit – such as bells, chimes, bowing, postures, removing one's shoes, incense, Hindu mantras, etc.
- Must speak to *mumchim* in *halacha*

FROM NATAN OPHIR'S ARTICLE *Letter to Dr. Landes, July 5, 1979*



- The Rebbe opposed methods of Rabbis Kaplan and Polit
- **“Exclusively teach meditation and mental concentration... to attain peace of mind, etc...”**
- *Help clients cope with “business, sholom bayis, health, and similar stresses.”*
- **“Your function is that of physicians (not Torah teachers) and an essential purpose is preventive therapy.”**

FROM JOSHUA LANDES' ARTICLE – B'OR HATORAH – 5775

In response to Dr. Landes' questions and comments about “normal” people who wish to meditate, but in a less formal setting than a clinic ***“...for attracting more people and achieving our two objectives — healing and the elimination of Avoda Zora [idolatry]...then, by all means, this method should be given due consideration.”***

THE REBBE WAS WAY AHEAD OF HIS TIME!!!

*“Divrei tzadikim kayamim lo’ad -
Words of the righteous are everlasting.”*

Today, therapeutic meditation is ubiquitous!

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CURRENT THERAPEUTIC SYSTEMS:

- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT),
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT),
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR),
- Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT),
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and others

***(Although these methods are scientifically proven,
many still contain elements from a.z.)`***

FROM JOSHUA LANDES' ARTICLE – B'OR HATORAH – 5775

“...My father was always concerned that the Rebbe would have much preferred a totally medical-psychological form of meditation without any Jewish content.²³ My father often worried that JM was given the go-ahead solely due to the expert advice he was given that it was the only practical way to accomplish the Rebbe’s goals.²⁴”

23. Letters from Dr. Yehuda Landes to the Rebbe, 13 Adar II (March 13, 1978), 3 Nissan and 15 Menaḥem Av, 5738 (April 10 and August 18, 1978).

24. In rabbinic terms, one could say it was bedieved rather than l’hatḥila .

WHY ME?

- **My practice - Toratherapeutics™ - serves a primarily observant Jewish population.**
- **My personal experience with meditation**
- **Trained in MBCT by Zindel Segal**
- **Aware of its strength and efficacy as well as the subtle halachic problems of “*avizrayhu d’avoda zara*”**
- **Many of my observant colleagues (some of whom are Rabbis) have fallen into “the snare – *pach yokshim*” that the Rebbe mentions, and need direction and kosher meditation formats.**
- **For these reasons and more I dedicate a significant amount of my work to developing these techniques and disseminating them.**



MY RESPONSE TO THE REBBE:

- I produced NOGA™ Sound Solutions professional quality CD and downloads
- I continue developing downloads, PDF worksheets and information
- My recordings and scripts are under Rabbinic supervision of Rabbi Yehoram Ulman, Av Beis Din, Sydney, Australia with additional support and encouragement of Rabbi Y.H. Greenberg, Raphael Aron, Rabbi Falik Schtroks and various Rabbis, Shluchim and orthodox mental health professionals.

With G-d's help, and the Rebbe's guidance, materials are being dispersed to finally fulfill the Rebbe's 37+ year old prophetic request.

Rus Devorah Wallen, LCSW, ACSW • Kislev, 5776 – December, 2015



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE MEDITATION

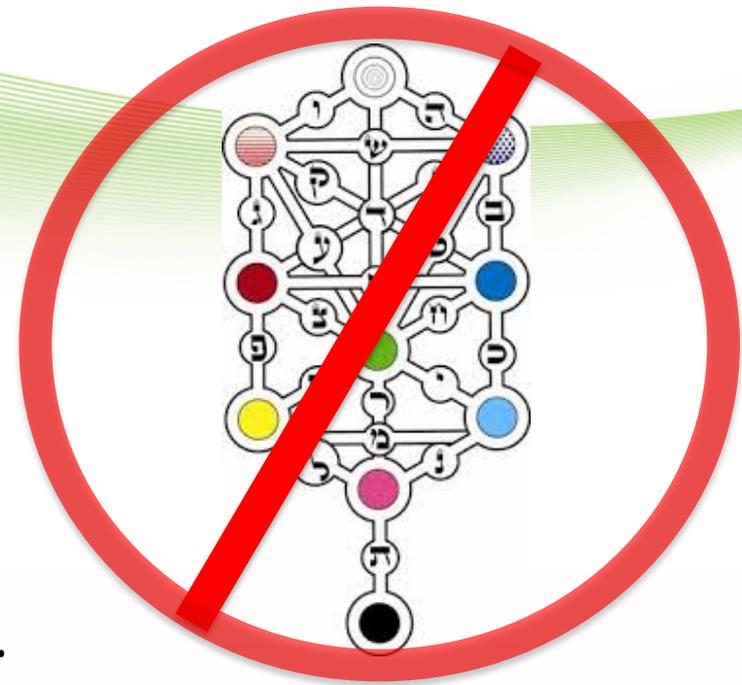
- **Active Meditation** - is not intentionally “therapeutic”
This includes contemplative Jewish or Kabbalistic meditation on holy subjects. Although this is encouraged by the Rebbe, it is not for this application (therapy).
- **Passive Meditation** – healing, for focus, grounding, centering
Here one intentionally disengages from the world by retreating into privacy and taking a “breather.” One focuses only on a **non**-themed: object, sensation, breath, sound, bodily sensation, image, aroma, etc., for a period of time.

ACTIVE FORMAT JEWISH MEDITATION

The Rebbe explained the value of this practice, but not for therapeutic purposes.

Ironically, according to the Rebbe however, **it may actually get in the way of healing and treatment** if a person is either:

- a) not interested in Judaism - A person's path to healing and relief may be protracted if Judaic concepts are introduced and the client is resistant to them. **OR**
- b) so anxious or distracted, s/he needs immediate healing before focusing on the theological and philosophical.



THE REBBE LIKENS THERAPEUTIC MEDITATION TO MEDICATION

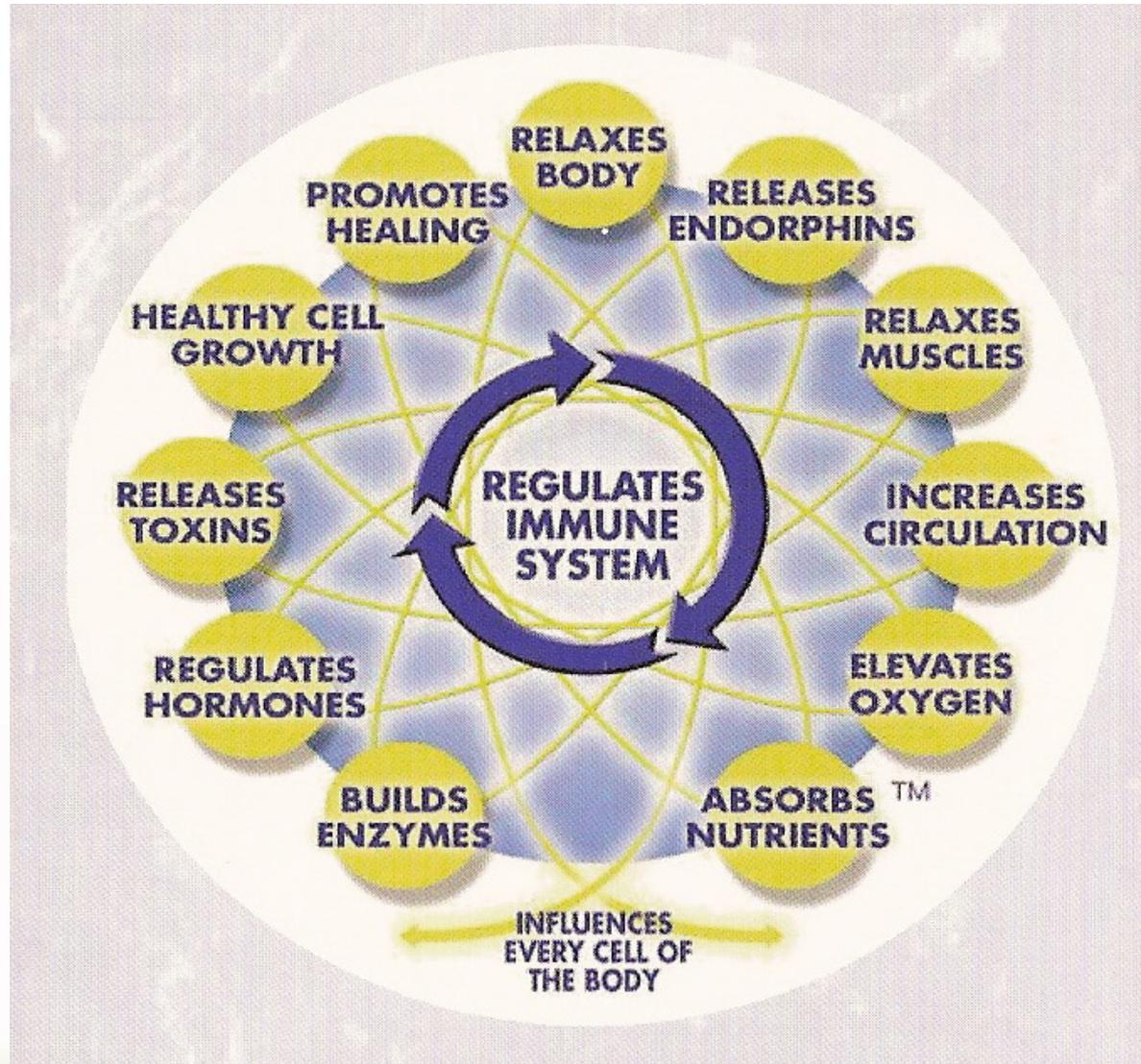
Meditation = Medication

- The Rebbe calls upon **mental health professionals to determine how much meditation (dosage) is appropriate based on their clients' needs.**
- **Not to recommend too much or too little for therapeutic benefit.**
- **Meditation should be “titrated” and stopped entirely when client is at balanced health.**



MAKE
MEDITATION
YOUR MEDICATION

THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS OF MEDITATION



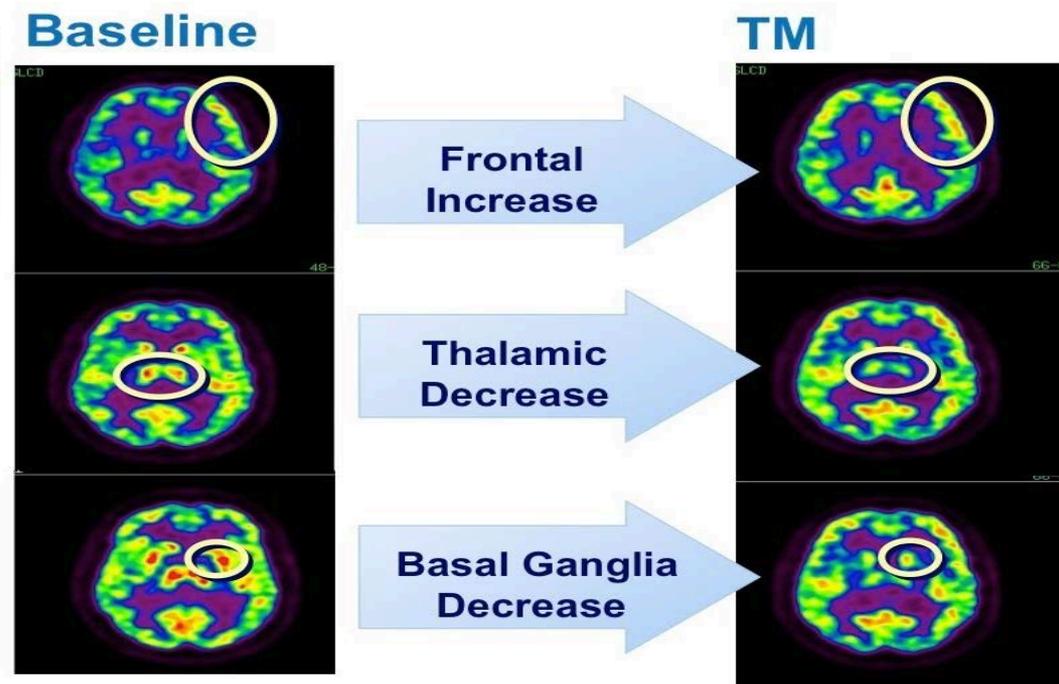


SOME MORE BENEFITS

OF MEDITATION (among over 100 other advantages)

- Calms the mind
- Lowers oxygen consumption
- Decreases respiratory rate
- Increases blood flow and slows the heart rate
- **Optimizes pre-frontal cortex**
- Calms overreaction and slows down or eliminates emotional response
- **Diminishes worry and anxiety**
- Leads to deeper levels of physical relaxation
- Can regulate high blood pressure
- **Improves mood by increasing serotonin levels**
- Decreases muscle tension and chronic aches and pains
- Improves chronic or stress related diseases
- Reduces pre-menstrual symptoms and perinatal disorders
- Improves the immune system
- **Enhances overall wellbeing**

MEDITATION CAN ENHANCE THE PFC (Prefrontal Cortex)



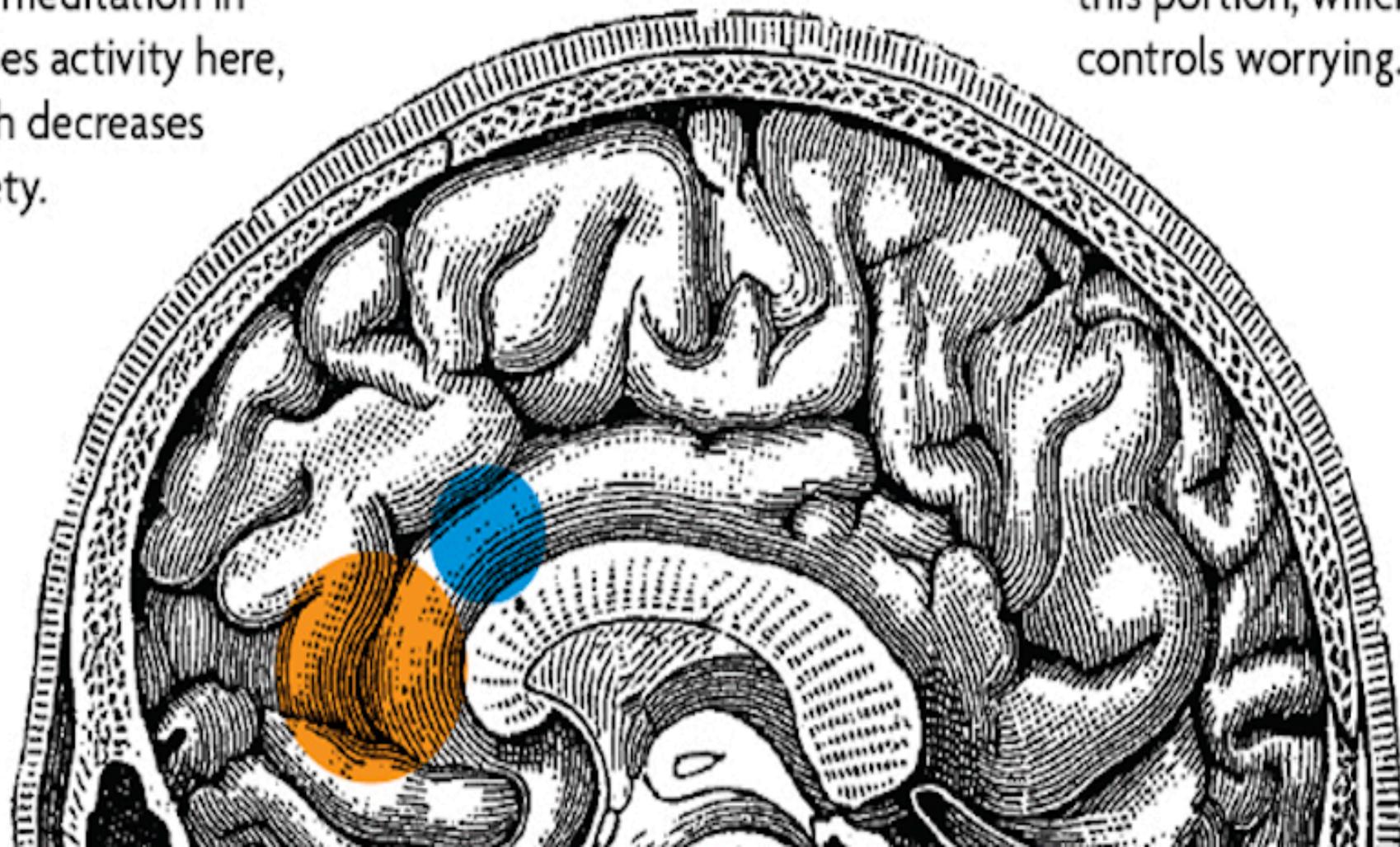
- FMRI studies have shown the effects of meditation (3-5 months) on the PFC and other areas of the brain.
- The **prefrontal cortex (PFC)** is the front part of the brain implicated in **planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making, moderating social behavior and impulse control.**

Anterior Cingulate Cortex

● This area governs thinking and emotion; meditation increases activity here, which decreases anxiety.

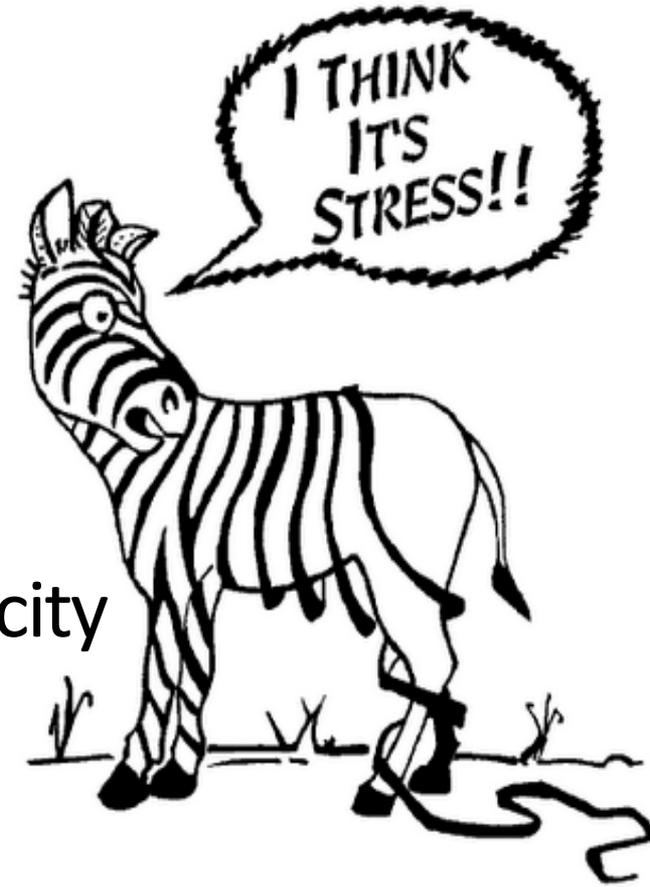
Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex

● Meditation also increases activity in this portion, which controls worrying.



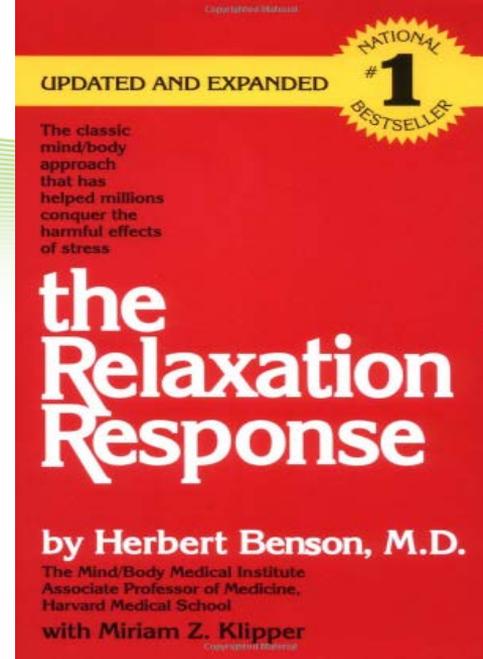
A DEVELOPED PFC CAN HELP

- Diminish “auto pilot” reactions
- Gain mature and “flexible” thinking
- Person move on after an upset
- With abstract problem solving capacity
- Assess various alternatives
- Push away unwanted thoughts
- Person come back to the moment
(and much, much more!)



THE STRESS RESPONSE VS. THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

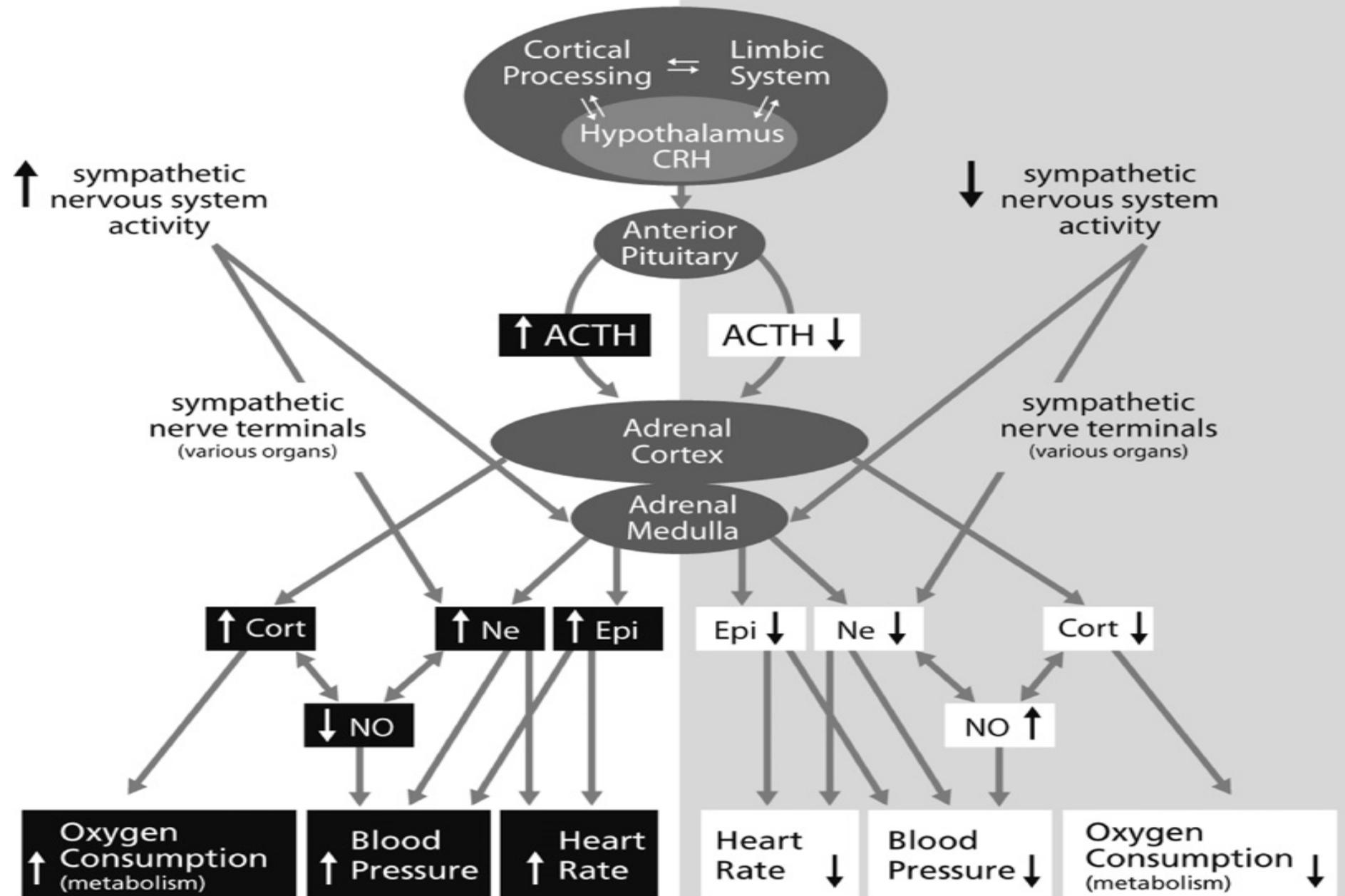
- “The Relaxation Response” – (RR)
coined by Harvard professor Herbert Benson
- The RR - physiological response to
counteract Cannon's “Stress Response” (SR)
- SR = Fight-or-Flight mechanism = sometimes called
“Flight, Flight or Freeze”
- RR decreases metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure
and rate of breathing, cortisol and adrenaline levels



STRESS RESPONSE VS. RELAXATION RESPONSE

(Involuntary/reflexive)

(Requires conscious elicitation and repeated practice)



BENSON POSITED FOUR ELEMENTS FOR MEDITATION TO ATTAIN THE “RELAXATION RESPONSE”:

- 1) a quiet environment
- 2) a passive attitude
- 3) a comfortable position
- 4) a mental device ("an object to dwell upon") to elicit relaxation: he suggested "one" as a focus of attention.





TWO BASIC EXERCISES TO ATTAIN THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

1) The Beginner's Meditation on the Breath™

Functions to assist the client in: staying grounded and focused on the present moment, diminishing escalation of thoughts. **Duration: 6 minutes.**

1) The Breathing Contest™

Functions as a time efficient means of optimizing breathing and relaxing the body. **Can be done in the moment of upset or crisis and at any time the person is not speaking or eating.**

MY PRACTICE CLIENTELE - POSTPARTUM DISORDERS

- **Postpartum is a specialty population.**
- **All my postpartum clients benefit from meditation and breathing techniques.**

POSTPARTUM IS:

- a) not considered a “mental illness.”**
- b) temporary, and can be eliminated the sooner the woman seeks appropriate help.**
- c) helped by self-care consisting of a healthy diet, sufficient sleep, CBT, *relaxation and meditation* techniques.**

***Often medications are not necessary if caught in time.
Remember, the Rebbe calls meditation “medication.”***

A FEW CASE EXAMPLES FROM MY CLIENTELE (All helped by “The Beginner’s Meditation on the Breath”)

- 1) The harried husband with compassion fatigue from helping deal with postpartum psychosis wife and new baby.**
- 2) Tourette’s tatty whose wife teased him, exacerbating symptoms.**
- 3) Jittery Jane with lactation problems.**
- 4) Postpartum PTSD client who thrashed around, screamed and threw things. Husband was ready to leave and take 3 children, including newborn.**
- 5) The nervous ‘pre-chosson.’**
- 6) The Rabbi jealous of (no longer) overwrought Rabbi friend he referred.**
- 7) The shy shaliach with fear of fundraising.**

POSTPARTUM ANXIETY CLIENT TESTIMONIAL



“I didn't know how I got there...I needed help fast! Rus Devorah's breathing techniques literally saved me. From a severely-anxious...mommy to a Real Mommy, who can actually manage life and make calm decisions.”

DLB

ANXIETY CLIENT WITH HEROIN ADDICTED DAUGHTER



“Wow!...I have learned to focus and control everyday stresses in my life. My thoughts, my anxiety and my stresses have become manageable to the point that my family and friends have noticed a big change in me. Thank you so much!”

C. Lennox

COUPLE WITH SHALOM BAYIS ISSUES



“I want to thank you for...your sound healing recordings. We have...seen incredible results...short and long term...After a few months of listening to your recordings, I am seeing major differences in how my husband handles stressful situations in general. The meditations have really had an effect on our overall quality of life. Thank you!”

Chana C.

WOMAN GOING THROUGH DIVORCE AND LOSS OF SON TO SUICIDE

“I have been listening...and my life is changing. I have become more mindful. The noise in my mind has decreased. I can concentrate and sleep better. My self-esteem is rising and I feel more relaxed and clear... I am grateful for finding you!”

Laura S.

“IT WILL SAVE COUNTLESS MANY LIVES!”

- The Rebbe calls this a ***“holy obligation” to disseminate.***
- The Rebbe states that ***once this Kosher format is disseminated, it will “save countless many lives.”***
- He also recommends that we ***“be proactive and seek out those who are in need.”***
- ***“With success, it will spread and have a very positive effect.”***

**THE REBBE'S PROPHECY IS FINALLY COMING TRUE...
"IT WILL SAVE COUNTLESS MANY LIVES!"**

- It has in my own as well as colleagues' practices
- Clients' and students' family members benefit from tools as well.
- To answer the Rebbe's request to disseminate, The Beginner's Meditation on the Breath™ is freely available.

(See: NOGA™ free meditation download card provided)



N OGA™ SOUND SOLUTIONS

A Collection of Simple, Audio Excursions and Relaxation Techniques

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These sound healing audios can help you respond calmly and stay more present when dealing with life's challenges. Spend just a few minutes a day to feel sharper, calmer and better all around! Give yourself the edge you need in today's busy world!

FREE DOWNLOADS



*Instruction To The
Beginner's Meditation &
The Beginner's
Meditation On The Breath*

<http://bit.do/beginnersmed>



In this introduction and in the beginner's meditation, all the basic instructions to be able to do an attention-based meditation are included. After mastering the Beginner's Meditation, one can expand to the NOGA "Stretch" meditations or choose to meditate on any object of focus such as a sound, sensation, image, etc.

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