

A grayscale, halftone-style photograph of a person in a white lab coat, likely a doctor, with their arms crossed. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

Finding Balance In A Medical Life

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Objective:

To encourage you to develop
balance in your medical life



Lee Lipsenthal, MD
Cardiologist with Dean Ornish
Director of the Preventive Medicine
Research Institute

Taught physician wellness for years
Died in 2011

Finding Balance in a Medical Life

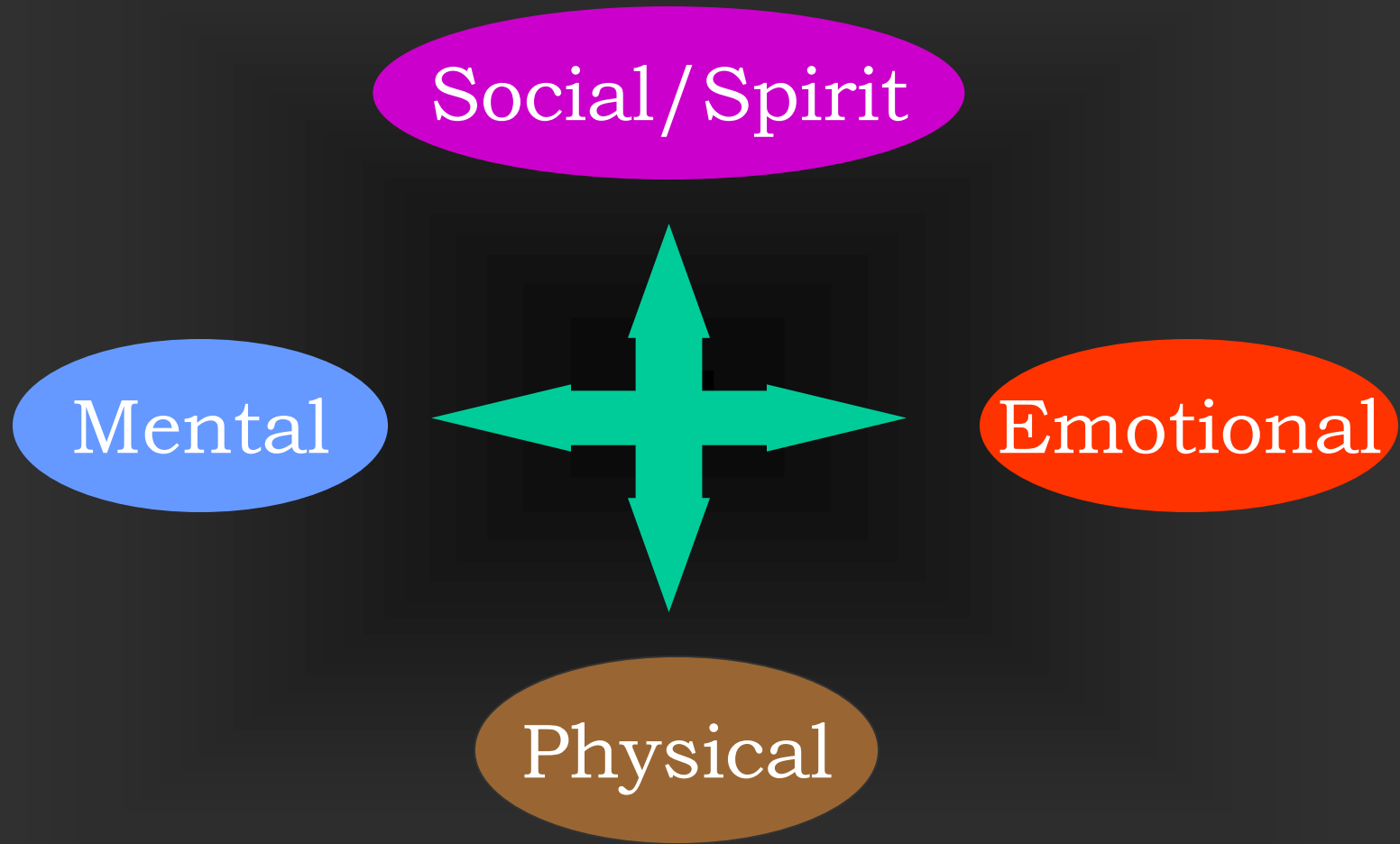
Enjoy Every Sandwich

A really good friend who
I miss very much...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UIFbOfWwYE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UIFbOfWwYE>

Balance



How Are We Doing?

Our health now

- Over all mortality is improving
- We now live roughly five years longer than other professionals.
- Physicians are still more likely to die from cerebrovascular disease, accidents, and suicide.
- 85% of physicians work >60 hrs/week
 - 8% of the normal population
- Thus suggesting a high stress life.

Survey of FL Medical Students

- 1144 students in 9 FL med schools
- 63% reported physical health had worsened in med school
- 61% reported their psychological health worsened
- 80% described their stress level as “significant” or “severe”
- 70% said they would benefit from psychological resources
 - 60% admitted they never used them
- Coping? – 70% binge drank, 50% used stimulants, 34% used opioids, 24% marijuana

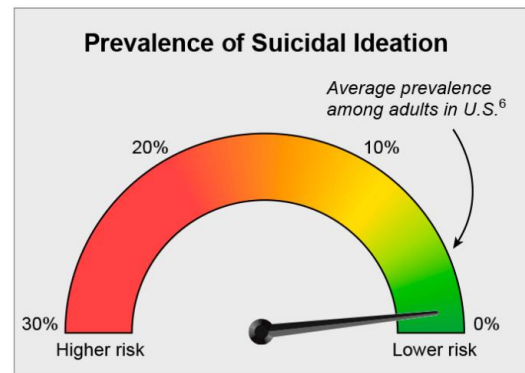
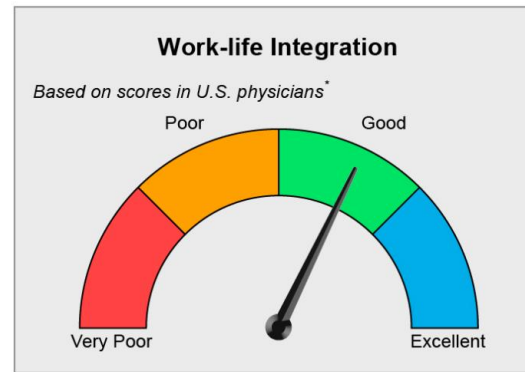
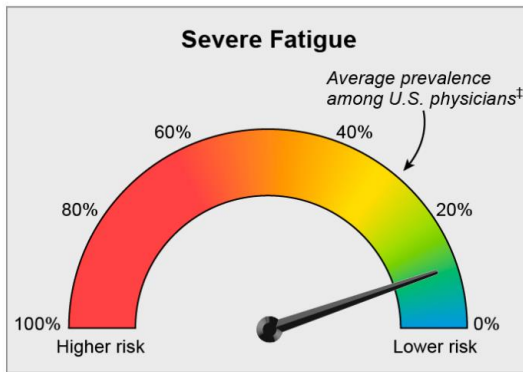
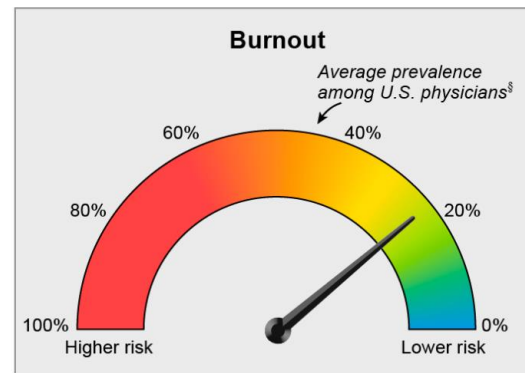
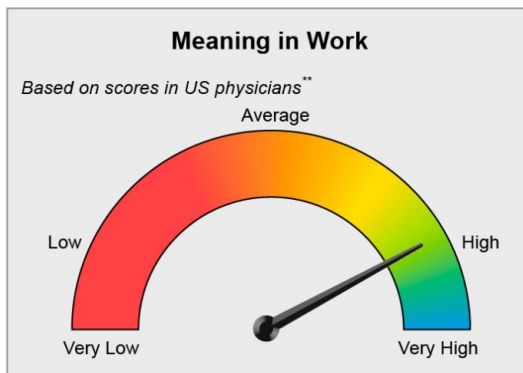
Origins of Burnout & Stress

- System level
 - Employed physicians, increased workload, reduced autonomy
- Impact of residency
 - Increased knowledge base, burden of EHR/clerical time, sleep loss, new regulations
- Vicious cycle
 - Increased stress leads to reduced quality time with patients, increased medical errors, turnover, higher mortality in patients

Burnout

- Students:
 - 50% of medical students report burnout
 - 10% experience suicidal ideation
- Residents
 - 52% report burnout
 - 15% rated QOL “as bad as it can be” or “somewhat bad”
- Physicians
 - 38% - 67% report burnout
 - 23% of matched general population

<https://www.mededwebs.com/well-being-index>



Physiological consequences of stress driven by catecholamines and cortisol

↑ Heart rate

↑ Blood pressure

↑ Blood flow to muscles

↑ Metabolic rate

↓ Digestion

↑ Blood clotting

↓ Immune response

↑ Blood sugar

↑ Respiratory rate

↑ Fluid retention

↓ Alertness

↑ Triglycerides and LDL cholesterol

↑ Inflammation

Sources of Resident Stress

- Heavy work load
- Volume of information to be learned
- Sleep deprivation
- Difficult patients
- Poor learning environment
- Social isolation
- Financial concerns
- Cultural issues and racism

The Speed of Change...

Straining emotional capacity

In 1940 there were only three medical journals! Today - hundreds!

How Did We Get This Way?

- We Are:
 - Intelligent
 - Caring
 - Sensitive
 - Inquisitive



We Are Also:



- Type A
- Competitive
- Perfectionist
- Safety Seeking
- Outside the “norm”

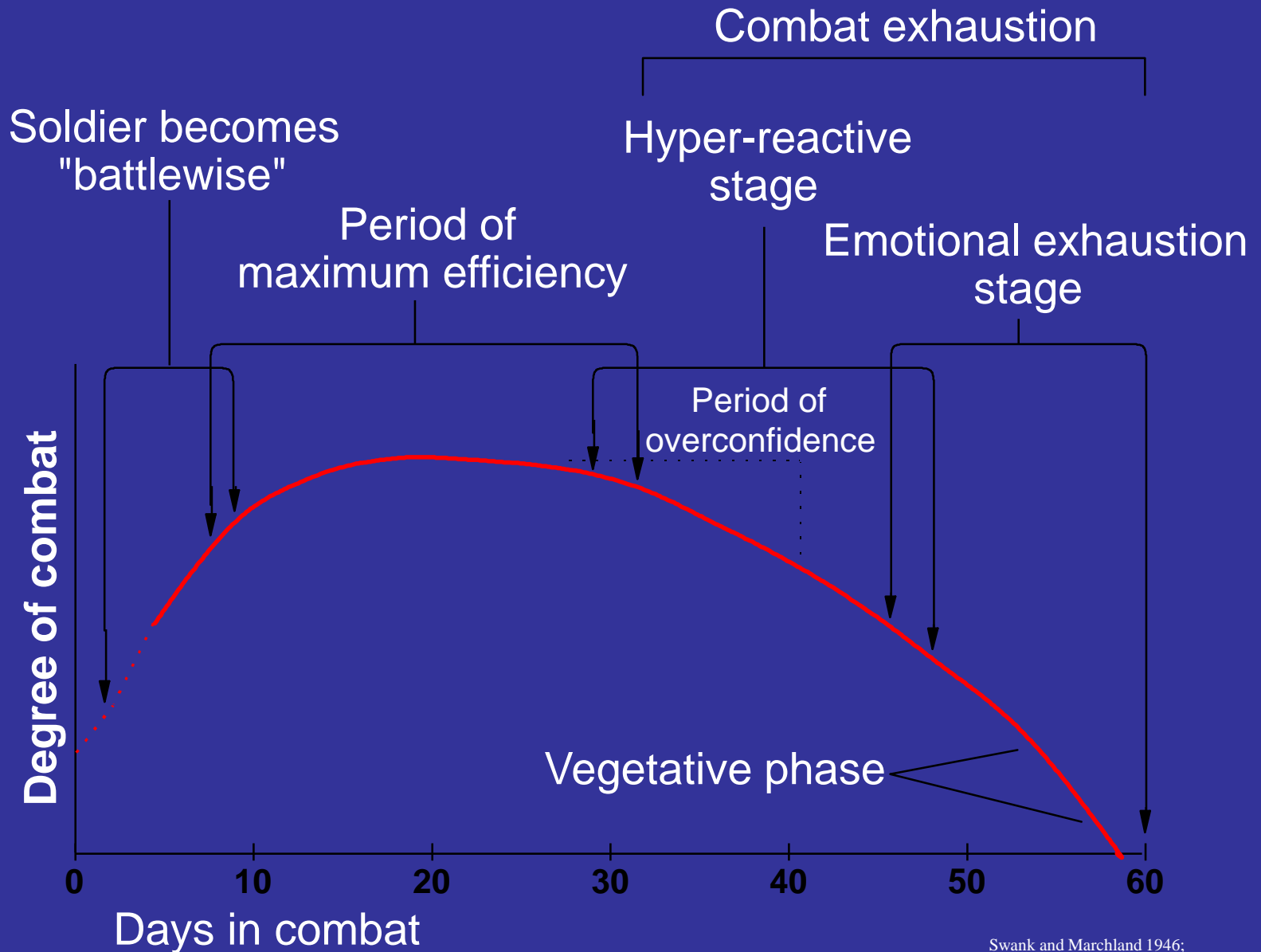
Type A

- Opinionated
- Judgmental of others
- Pressured to succeed
- Clipped pattern of speaking, forced smiles
- “Hurry sickness” – rushing against time
- Multi-tasking
- Aggressive beyond the need of the situation
- Not trusting others to do the job right
- Perfectionism
- Competitiveness
- The desire to be recognized for your accomplishments
- The need to prove self worth with performance

**“A physician in training sees
more trauma in one month
than most others see in a
lifetime”**

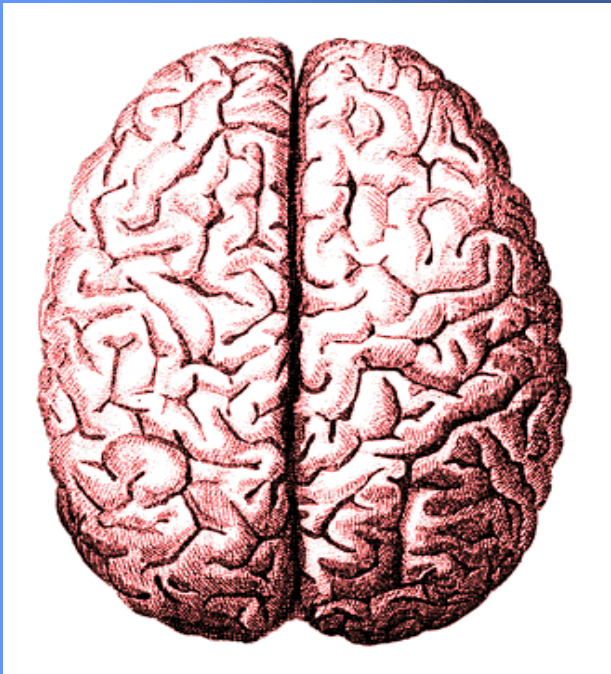


Battle Stress / Efficiency and Exhaustion



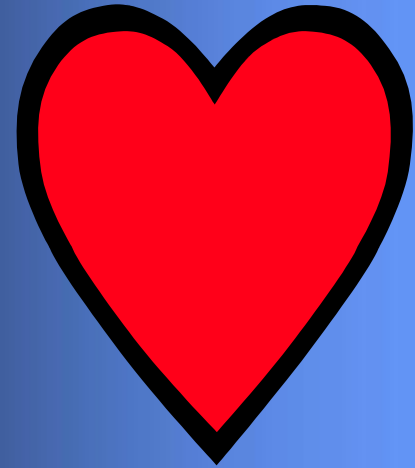
High catecholamine states
diminish cortical function

Brain - Heart Communication



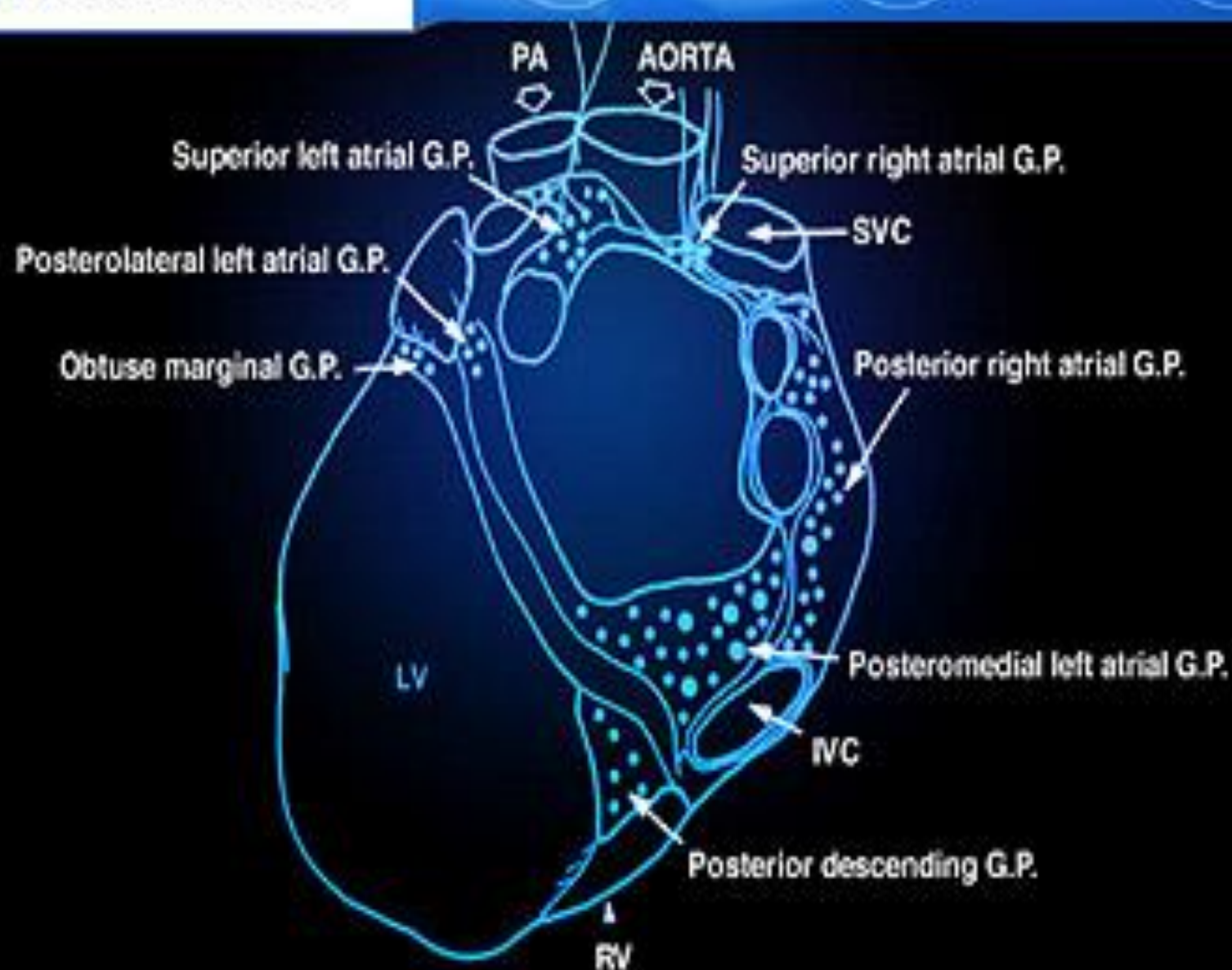
Sympathetic

Parasympathetic



The Neural Heart

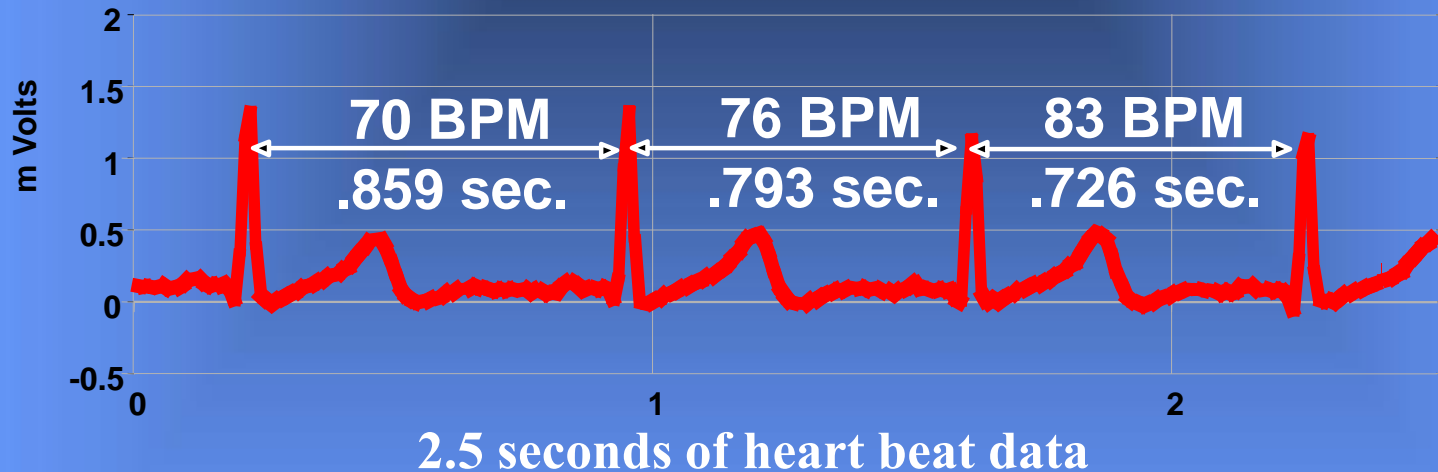
- The heart has a nervous system:
 - Afferent and efferent neurons
 - Ganglia
 - Local Circuit Neurons
- Neurocardiology, Armour, JA and J. Ardell Eds.. - NY,NY, Oxford University Press



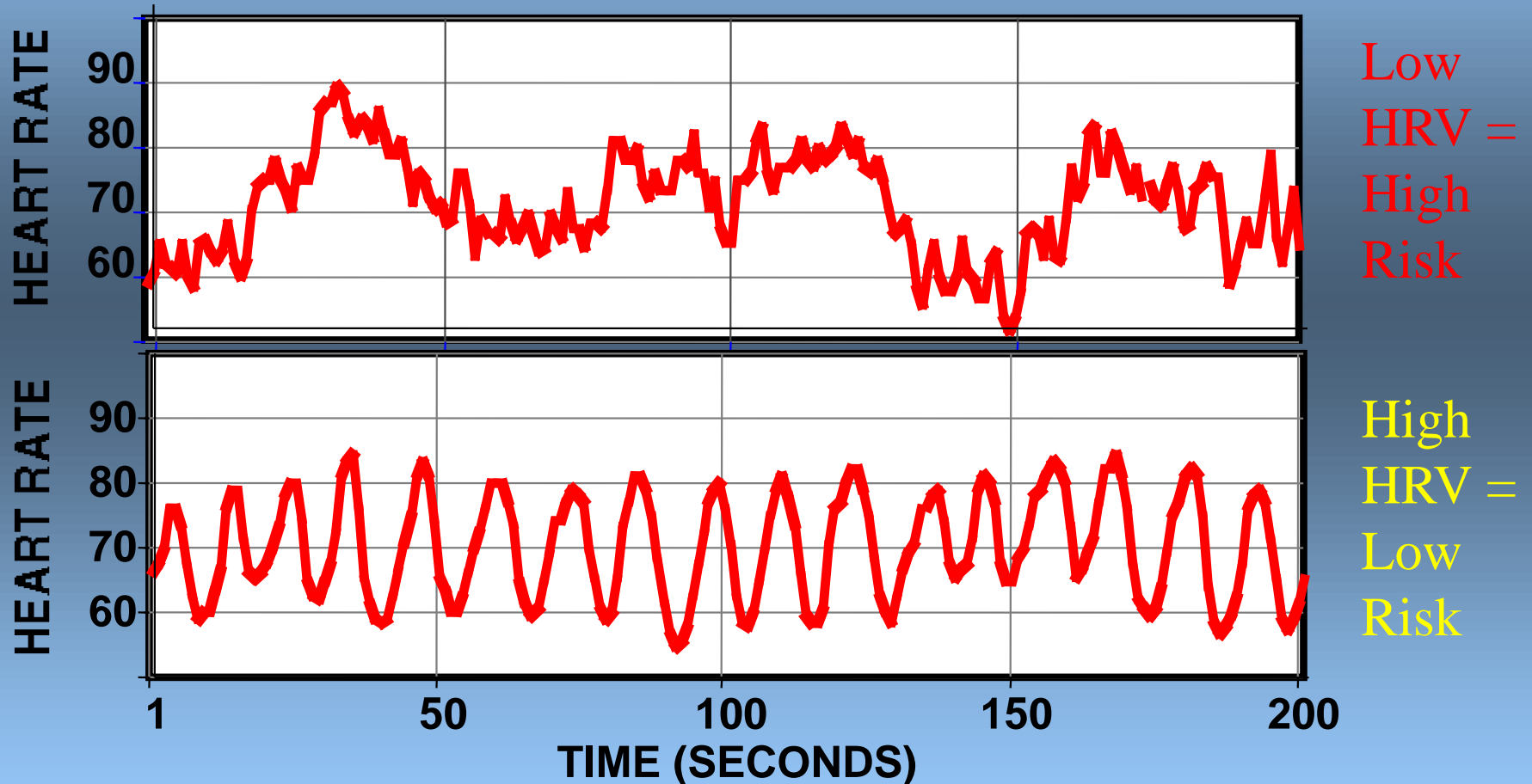
Location and Distribution of Intrinsic Cardiac Ganglia

An additional feedback loop;
Heart Rate Variability

Heart Rate Variability (HRV)



Low and High HRV



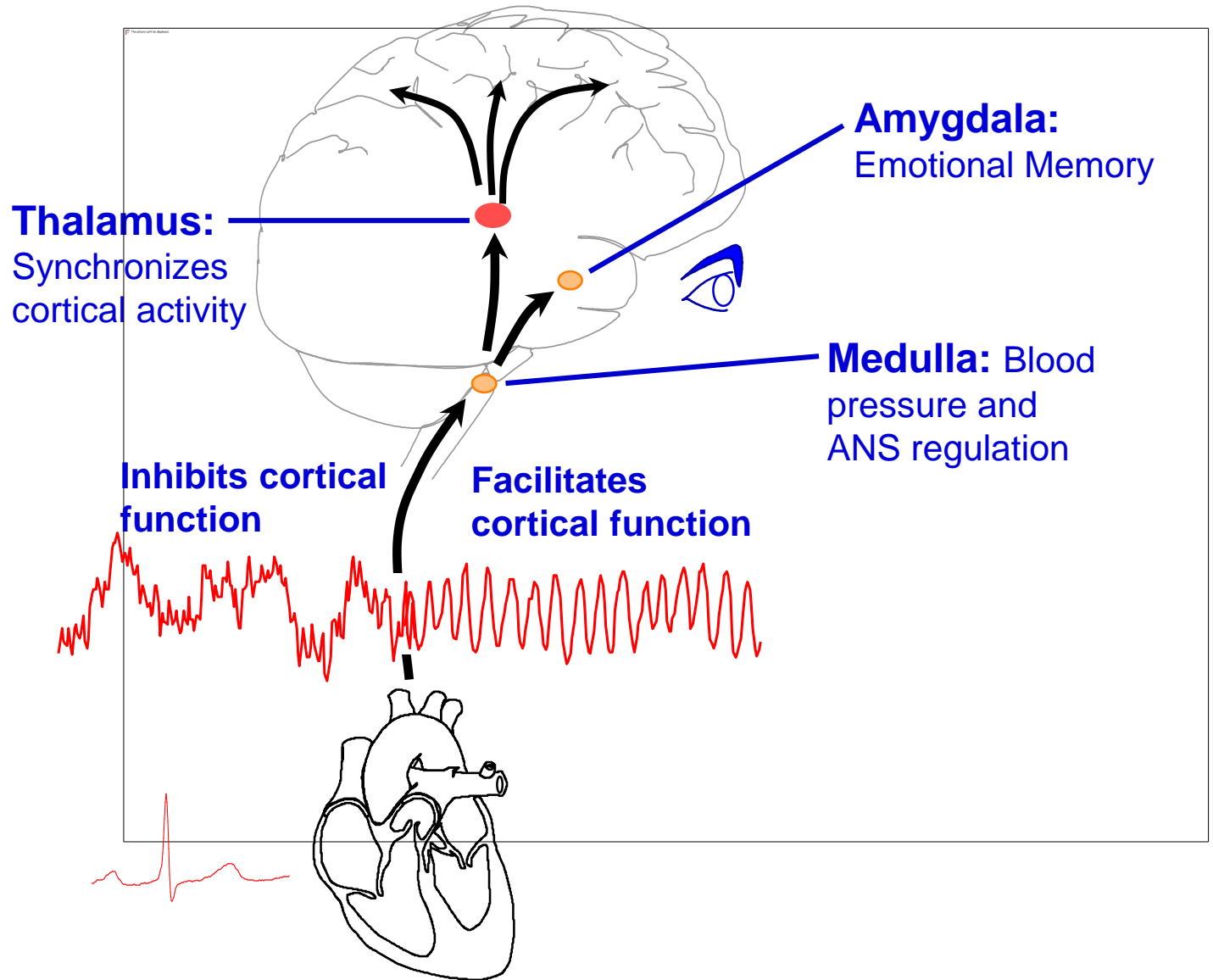
The background of the slide is a photograph of two surgeons in an operating room. They are wearing blue surgical scrubs, blue bouffant caps, and blue surgical masks. They are focused on a task, with their hands visible near the bottom of the frame. The lighting is dim, typical of an operating room.

HRV In Surgery

- Problem: Surgeons in Sweden have higher death rate from CAD than general practitioners
- Laparoscopic procedures are increasing and seem to be fatiguing to the surgeons
- HRV study of surgeons and assistants during open v. laparoscopic colo-rectal surgeries
- Sympathovagal balance was worse, by HRV, during laparoscopic procedures

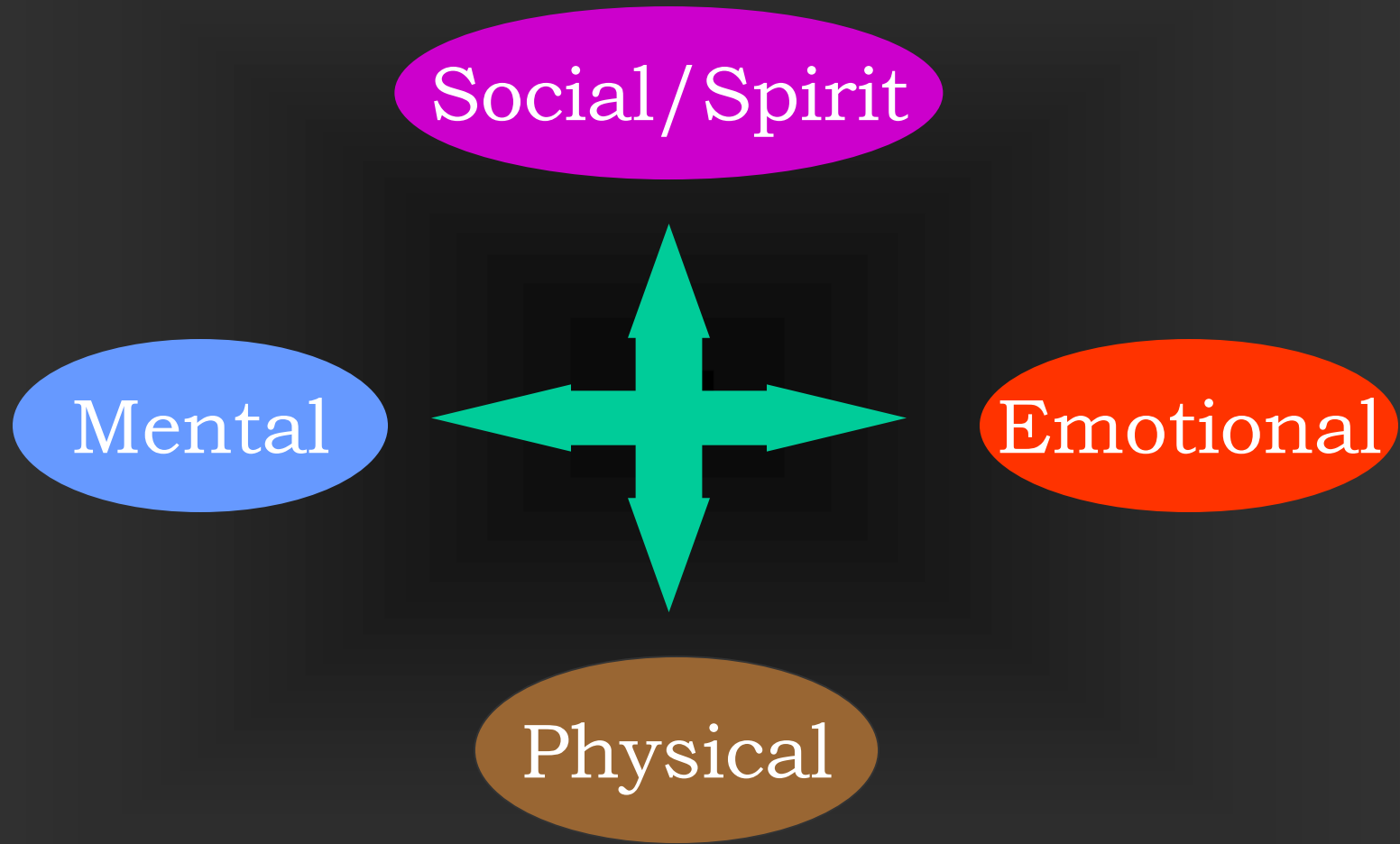
– Bohm, B et al; Arch Surg, vol 36 March 2001

Ascending Heart Signals



Heart Rate Variability Can Be Intentionally Modified

Create Balance



Staying on the Balance Beam

- Physical resiliency

- Exercise – goal: 150 minutes a week
- Healthful, mindful eating
- Sleep!!
- Get into nature

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bf5TgVRGND4>

- Mental

- Heart Math
- Mindfulness
- Diversity – reading, interests



Heart Math

- 3-step process
 - Heart focus – focus your attention on your heart
 - Heart breathing – breathe into your heart
 - Heart feeling – activate a positive emotion – gratitude or appreciation
- Can use a computer, emWave device or iPhone/Android app

HeartMath.com



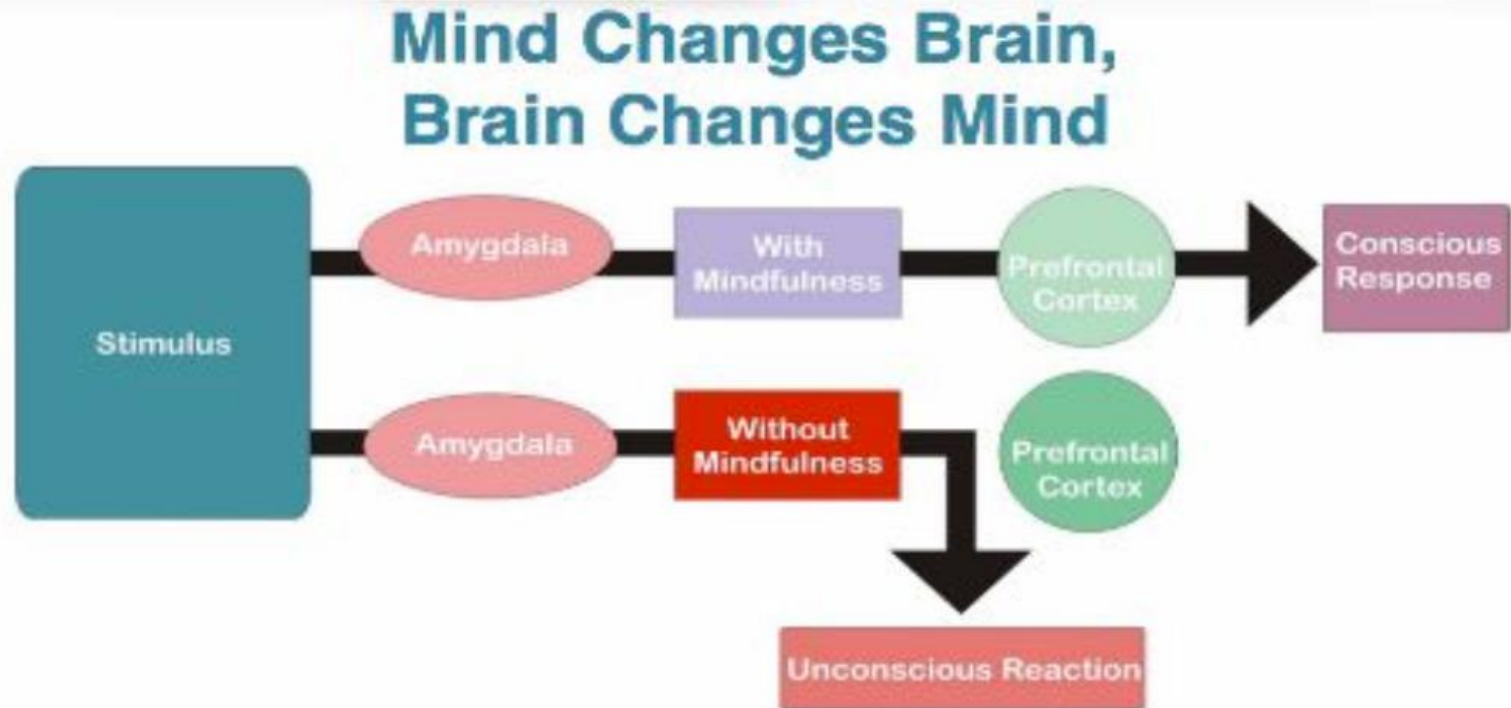
Staying on the Balance Beam



**The practice of paying attention - on purpose
- in the present moment - *without judgment.***

-Jon Kabat-Zinn

Staying on the Balance Beam



Mindfulness creates space, shifting brain activity from the reactive amygdala to the thoughtful prefrontal cortex.

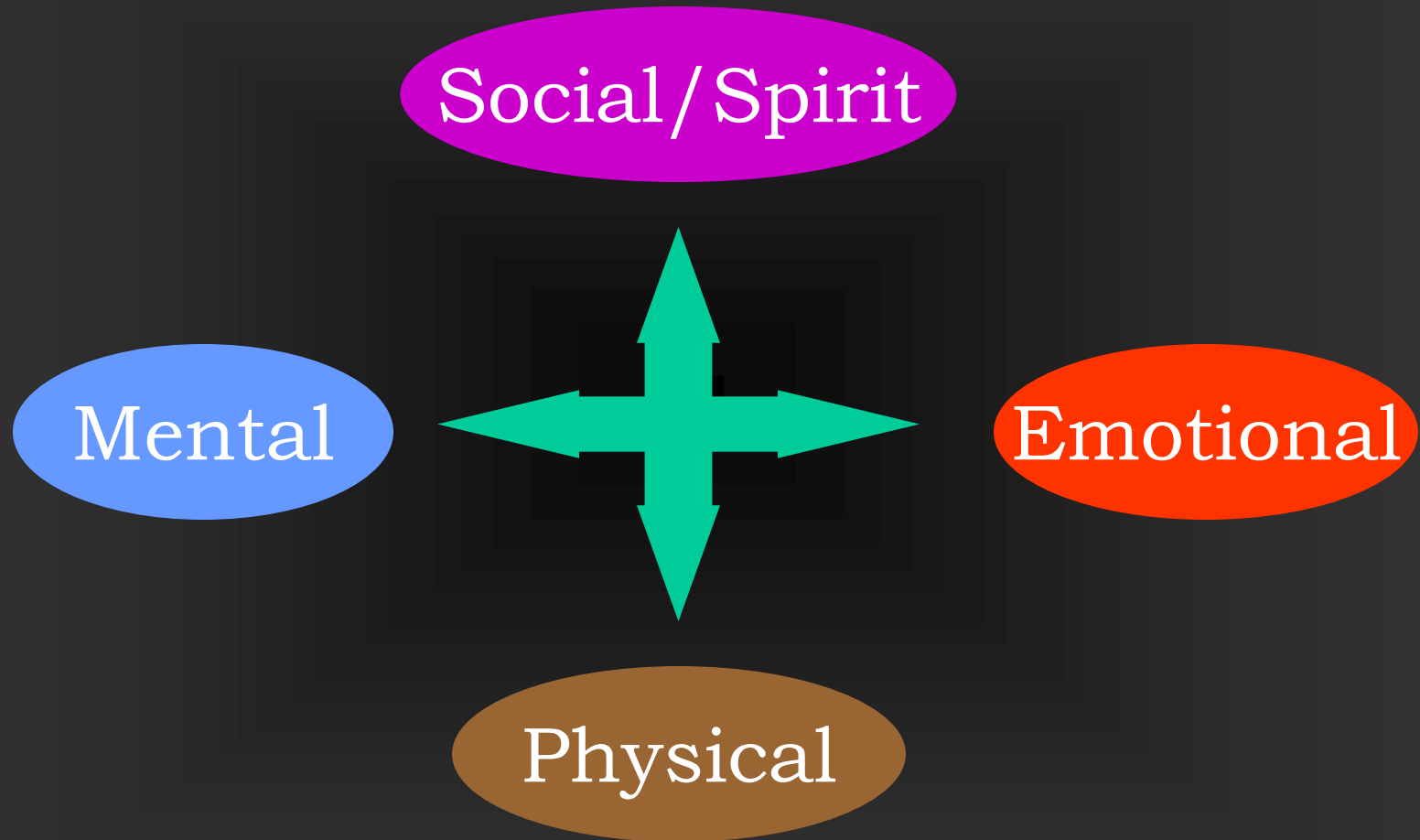
Staying on the Balance Beam

- Mindfulness practices
 - Mindfulness
 - Mindfulness Meditation
 - Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
 - Mindfulness Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Staying on the Balance Beam

- Mindfulness resources
 - University of California San Diego
 - <http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx>
 - University of Massachusetts
 - <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/mindfulness-based-programs/>
 - Mindful.org
 - <http://www.mindful.org>
 - Apps – Calm, Headspace, Insight, Mindfulness

Create Balance

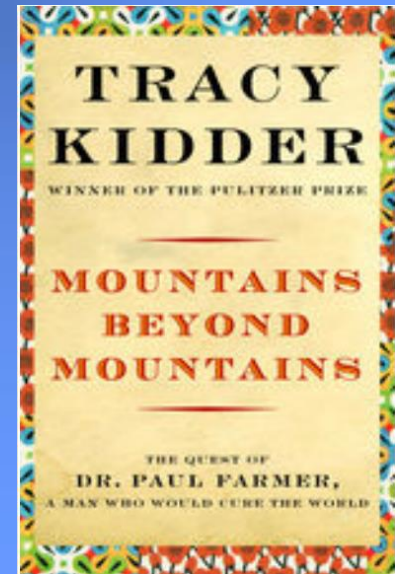


Staying on the Balance Beam

- Emotional
 - Connect with your patients – partnership leads to better outcomes and lower risk
 - **Use counseling resources!!!**
 - **Awareness of the “downward slope”**
 - Look for mentors
 - Journal
 - Some residencies have support groups
 - Balint groups

Staying on the Balance Beam

- Social & spiritual – find your path
 - Attend to your family (“First Things First”)
 - Church/religion
 - Physiological similarities of prayer, chanting and meditation
 - Volunteer
 - Hang out with “normal” (non-medical) people



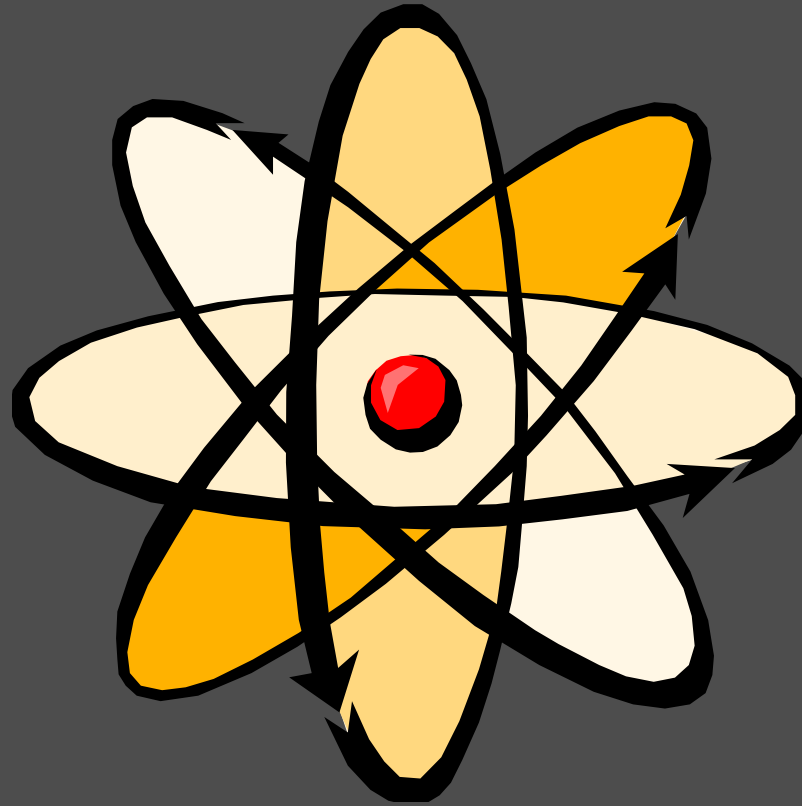
But I Don't Have Time!

- 10,080
- 4,800
- 2,940
- 2,340
- 150 (6%)
- 70 (3%)

But I Don't Have Time!

- 10,080 – number of minutes in a week
- 4,800 – number of minutes in an 80-hr work week
- 2,940 – number of minutes if sleep for 7 hrs/night
- 2,340 – number of minutes left over
- 150 – number of minutes of exercise in a week
- 70 - number of minutes in HeartMath, mindfulness meditation, etc. in a week

This will help you to
facilitate learning!

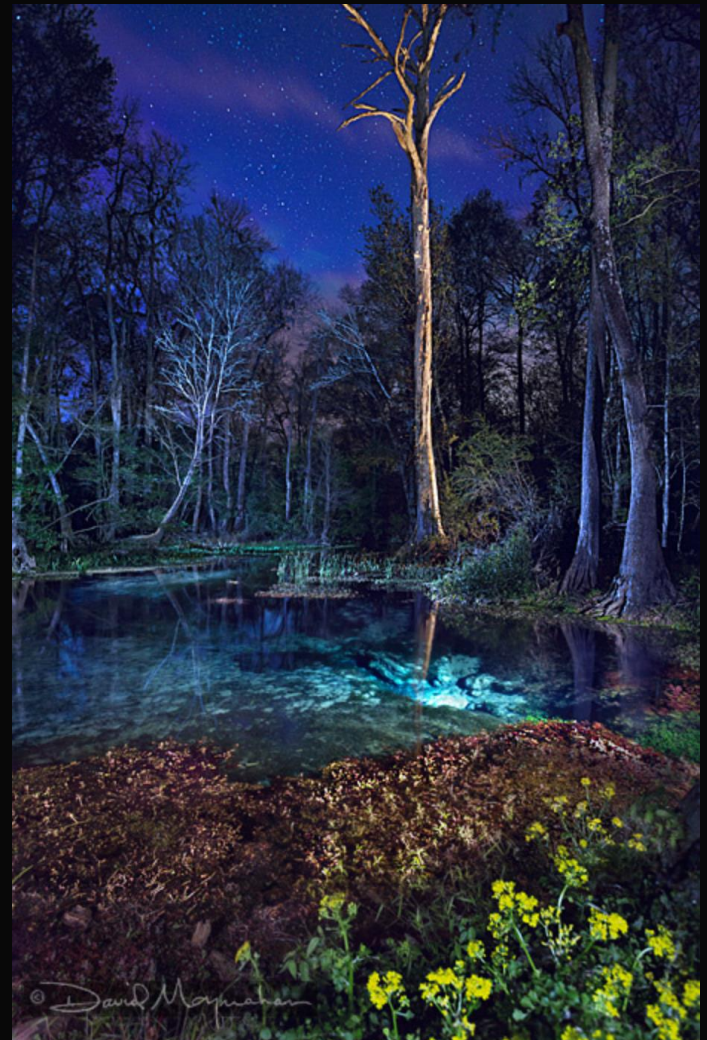


Next Steps?



BALANCE IN A MEDICAL LIFE

- Physical resilience
 - Builds endurance and promotes mental and physical recovery
- Emotional resilience
 - Creates the internal climate that drives performance
- Mental resilience
 - Focuses mental and emotional energy on the task at hand
- Social & spiritual resilience
 - Provides powerful source of motivation, determination and endurance



"Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You name them - work, family, health, friends, and spirit - and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls - family, health, friends, and spirit are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life."

-- Brian Dyson, CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises from 1959-1994

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- Paniagua M, 100 days of rain: A reflection on the limits of physician resilience, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC

Great Books

- **Finding Balance in a Medical Life**, Lee Lipsenthal, Finding Balance, Inc. San Anselmo, CA, 2007
- **Enjoy Every Sandwich**, Lee Lipsenthal, Crown Archetype, NY, 2011
 - You can read the book, but it's much better to get to audio book and hear Lee read it himself – incredibly powerful!
- **Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment**, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Sounds True, Boulder, CO, 2014
- **Heal Thyself: Lessons on Mindfulness in Medicine**, Saki Santorelli, Three Rivers Press, NY, 1999