

# ©The NOAH METHOD

## WHAT'S TRIGGERING YOU?

In times of stress, we want an immediate solution. If we have a headache, we can take a pill. If we're struggling with relationships, we can talk to someone, and get help. When we're on our own, and wondering where the next consolation prize is for all the stuff we have to put up with, where do we get help? The first place to go? Within. A mindfulness approach to managing our lives - especially our emotional selves - is a "number one best-seller" for learning how to be at peace - anywhere, any time, even under serious duress. I know this to be true, because I have experienced the transformation that mindfulness gives us when we adopt that mindset and practice it daily.

While teaching classes on mindfulness - especially during the lockdown months of the pandemic - I realized that people needed a "rabbit's foot" to grab when stressed, and thus was born the NOAH Method. Since I love acronyms, it was an easy way to explain the process of being in the present moment to get unhooked from whatever was grabbing us. It's an image of a safety net: one that's always there for you to hop into. Think of Noah's Ark: Noah invited everyone on to the Ark *before* the flood! The same is true for handling tough situations where anxiety, fear, anger, even terror - are grabbing us. We have tools to use, and like anything else that works really well, it takes practice. Figure 8 skating and jumps require constant practice. This is a piece of cake by comparison! Come along, and bring an open mind and heart. Here's the NOAH METHOD summed up for you.



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Introduction

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The first step is to

## N - NOTICE

Notice what is triggering a particular thought or feeling in the moment. Don't try to push it aside, but rather, become aware of it without judging yourself or the other person or situation.

Three keys: “Stop. Drop, and... (P)oll.”

When the Fire Department goes to a local grade school to teach the basics of fire safety, one of the first things they tell everyone is that if your clothing catches fire, don't run! Rather, STOP. DROP to the floor, and ROLL, to stop the flames from spreading to other parts of your clothing. Wrapping someone in a blanket is another measure to put out flames by smothering the fire and depriving it of oxygen. The NOAH METHOD is a similar strategy. The first thing to do when you are triggered by someone or something is to STOP. Whether you are experiencing anxiety, anger, or another powerful reaction, rather than fleeing to escape the discomfort of powerful emotions, PAUSE, AND POLL. Take a poll on what you are experiencing in the moment. That's the first step toward safety. Polling means noticing without judgment what is happening in and around you. In particular, notice what is happening in your body. Are your muscles tightening around your neck and shoulders? That's a typical (and often unnoticed) reaction by the brain that says “control”... and it can escalate to headaches and even migraines.

Notice



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The second step in restoring balance and calming yourself:

## O - OPTIONS

Options : Consider what your options are in the moment, and in the situation. (Walk away from it; assert yourself with kindness and non-judgement, etc.).

One of your options might be to leave the situation you're in. Walk away. Don't engage. If it's someone you live with, you might not have that choice. So what's another option? Speak up! Stating what you are thinking or feeling without attacking the other person is a good way to assert yourself. It can take courage, and practice, but it's still an option. "No more Mrs. Nice-Guy!" Set your boundaries. The main thing when considering options is to recognize that you are entitled to take care of yourself with kindness and compassion, and without the blame game.

Before you decide on what you want to do in that moment, pause, poll and take a deep breath. This is another time when noticing what's going on in your body is important. It's your nervous system's way of saying that you need to tweak things to stay safe.

Options



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Then, you can take the third step in the NOAH METHOD:

## A - ACTION

In the words of Teddy Roosevelt's father's advice to his son,

**“Get action!”**

In other words, nothing changes without taking action. In order to change how you are feeling, you can take an action that will move you in the direction of compassion and loving kindness - toward yourself first, and others.

One action that has immediate effect is movement. Posture impacts us, and when we move, stretch, walk briskly or do some yoga - or dance! - it changes the way our brains function. It generates endorphins, those feel-good hormones, and lowers cortisol - the stress hormone that's part of the fight/flight/freeze response. You have many more options than you thought!

Once you decide what action to take, notice again how your body feels. Check in with the voices that were triggered: are they quieter now? Often just this pause and reflection without judgment releases stress - it can lower blood pressure, too.

Action



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The final step is

## H - HOLDING

What are we holding? We are once again pausing to hold space for the nurturing self-care we just practiced. We are unaccustomed to creating space for our wounded places: we usually hide them. But acknowledging what comes up for us when we get triggered, and holding a sacred space for healing in that moment, is a primary key to releasing old hurts and even current ones, making room for your authentic self to be free and joyful.

When we hold that space, it is another way to acknowledge that we are worthy of the time and attention we take to honor our authentic selves. The next step is to resume activities, knowing that you have a set of tools to help you cope, to manage your emotional triggers, and to take yourself deeper into a state of inner peace. You're never without it, no matter where you are! It's your "pocket watch" that's always on time - and free.

holding



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