Weston Bishop

Professor Edwards

SWU 250

March 26, 2020

Module 2: Critical Thinking Workbook Discussion

**Tools For Mindful Living Question:**

**Chapter 3:**What happens in the body physically and psychologically (emotions) when it is in **sympathetic vs parasympathetic.** Please be detailed and use complete sentences.

**Chapter 4:**Chapter 4 talks about 3 different types of breath work - **what was your favorite and why**?  Please use complete sentences.

Chapter 3:

In chapter three we learn about our different body systems and what our bodily reaction is to stress and therefor fight or flight. There are two systems I will be discussing below.

The sympathetic nervous system controls the body and helps it react to a fight or flight scenario. It is a part of the autonomic nervous system as well as the parasympathetic nervous system and enteric nervous system. When we are experiencing stress due to either a perceived or real threat it is the job of the SNS to maintain the body through homeostasis and make available the body’s resources in order for us to respond correctly, whether it be a fight or flight reaction. There are certain physiological functions that the SNS triggers as a result of stress such as increased heart rate, hormone release and heightened senses. It deems those as vital functions to survival and decreases non-vital functions such as digestion and the immune system. Being stressed all the time will make ones immune system compromised and will make them get sick much easier. Even if we are reacting to something that doesn’t truly threaten the organic body, such as job loss, it will still signal to our SNS system to react in a survival mode. If we respond to these experiences instead of react we can limit the negative effects of stress on our body.

The parasympathetic nervous system regulates rest and digestion. Making sure we are at full capacity to make sure we absorb the nutrients in our food, allow us to get restful sleep and protect us against disease. The PNS is in charge of keeping equilibrium in our bodies while making changes when it needs to be balanced. If there is chronic stress, the PNS system has a hard time checking in for balance due to an increase of hormones in the body such as cortisol. Chronic stress can render the immune system almost useless leaving us vulnerable to disease. If we try to respond instead of blindly react to the thing that is causing us stress we will more quickly be able to balance the SNS and PNS systems allowing us to keep our body balanced.

Chapter 4:

Although it is a subconscious process, breathing is absolutely vital to the body. It brings oxygen to our organs and blood and allows us to keep pumping blood through the heart. This chapter goes into the different types of breath work we can practice and highlights three main ways we can use breath work. Our autonomic nervous system is in charge of breathing that’s why we don’t think about it. Everyone always says take a deep breath to calm down and this is in part because it stimulate the PNS system and decreases the SNS system in our body, it helps to balance the two systems.

There are three different types of breathing exercise in this chapter: Energy Breath, Ocean Breath and three part belly breath. To be honest, it was kind of hard to pick a favorite because I like the differences in each type and I think they can be used in different situations to help us remain calm and keep our body systems balanced. The three part belly breath focuses on the analogy of filling and pouring out a glass of water. Making the comparison between out lungs and how air can get stale and trapped in the lungs at times. The ocean breath focus on being at peace and trying to hear the ocean with each breath. This not only allows us to breathe deeply and balance our body systems, it allows us to remove ourselves from the present moment and go away to out own beach. The energy breath focuses on revitalizing or helping us awake when we are tired or drowsy. It makes us inhale like regular but force the breath out of our lungs by putting pressure on our belly. I can see this being very useful to help me wake up in the mornings or getting less drowsy when I am starting to get complacent when working or doing homework. Out of all these however, my favorite is the ocean breath. When I did this one I thought back to being on a beach I’ve been to as a kid and it allowed me to truly hear the waves crash and it took me away from where I am right now. It was very refreshing and helped me to calm down and focus. I like that it is almost going to my happy place and allowing myself a few moments of relaxation and helps me re-center myself. I feel this will be the one that I use the most in the future to help with stress.

**Life By Personal Design Question:**

**Chapter 3: What body type/types do you identify with**? What type/types of exercises do you currently participate in or want to incorporate into your life?  Please explain how you believe exercise helps both our physical and emotional health.  Please use complete sentences when answering the **3 questions posed above**.

**Chapter 4:**Chapter 4 provides numerous tools and concepts to help with your balance of rest and relaxation.  Please choose 3 concepts from the chapter and share how you will incorporate them into your life. Please use complete sentences and reference the chapter.

Chapter 3: In today’s society body image is so crucial to how we see ourselves and the self-esteem we have. There is so much judgement for different lifestyles and body types it can make people feel ashamed of themselves and uncomfortable in their own skin. This has been pushed on us by the media and everyone’s idea of what is beautiful. Although this idea of being in shape and fit dates back centuries, today with social media it makes it so much more in the forefront of what we see every day. It makes it so hard for us not to compare ourselves to each other and this has a detrimental effect on peoples’ sense of self-esteem.

The body type I identify with is Endomorph. The chapter describes it as a large rounder body with higher levels of fat and more muscle density. It is harder to lose weight and easier to gain weight and muscle. I have a beer belly but am not necessarily that overweight for my height. However, I feel more overweight because belly fat is a large part of the reason I am, and it is more visible so it makes me judge myself more. Especially when looking at all these fit social media accounts. However, I can’t use excuses because there are so many people who put in the work and make serious changes and I have trouble staying focused and maintaining a healthy active lifestyle. With coronavirus and the gym at my apartment complex currently being closed I have been trying to do some pushups and sit-ups around my apartment. It is just hard to have motivation to workout at home when I can be lazy and my TV is right there. I have been trying to work out when I'm watching tv and making sure that while I am not doing much as far as leaving my apartment, that I put more emphasis on eating clean during the quarantine. My favorite type of exercise is strength training. I feel as a guy it boosts your self-esteem when you can see your progression to being able to lift heavier things and become stronger and have more muscle definition. I would like to go back to incorporating a schedule of strength training into my life not only as a way to get healthy and lose weight, but as a way to feel better about myself. I think exercising helps both our mental and physical health in different ways. It helps us physically because it keeps our body fat low, increases our endurance and breathing and keeps us from getting diabetes or a number of diseases that are related to being overweight. I think it helps us mentally because it is such a positive way to relieve stress and gives us an outlet to manage our emotions and feelings in a healthy way. It boosts our levels of testosterone and endorphins which make us feel amazing after a good workout. It can help us think clear and manage our time more wisely because we have to schedule around the gym.

Chapter 4: This chapter provides us a few concepts to help us maintain balance in our lives between rest and relaxation. Although there are many concepts that the chapter discusses to help us deal with these, I had three that stuck out to me more than the others. This is partially because I have crippling insomnia and usually cannot sleep until its light outside, so I chose not to do sleep because I really don’t know what else to do with it. I have tried everything to combat this but at this point I view it as a lost cause. For example I didn’t fall asleep until 9am this morning and woke up at 4pm and couldn’t fall back asleep. I want to focus on the concepts that I think will help me and maybe in turn they can help me sleep.

The first of these concepts I chose is my favorite. I absolutely love to laugh and make others laugh, it is easily one of my favorite things and I loves memes and stand-up comedy and funny youtubers because of this. I spend a lot of my time doing or watching things that make me laugh or watching serious shows or things that make me think deeply. When I am with friends its easy to laugh because we feed off each other and make each other laugh. When I am on my own I like to watch things that amuse me and make me forget about things that stress me out. I have already incorporated this concept in my life from an early stage and I do see it as being very helpful to me.

The next concept I want to start incorporate more in my life is the power of breath. In her other book I was very interested in and enjoyed the ocean breath. I felt it could not only help me relax but give me a break to go to a ‘happy place’ and listen to the ocean for a few moments. When I did this way of breathing I was immediately relaxed and bale to focus on happy memories that I have with my family at the beach and it really changed my mood. I could actually feel the stress going away and felt more relaxed after just a couple breaths. I have an overactive mind and it is extremely hard for me to sit in silence or try to sleep because I cannot get my mind to stop racing for more than a minute. I feel that this way of breathing will give me more control over my mind and allow me to control myself and my emotions better.

The final concept that I am truly excited to incorporate into my life is mindful meditiation. Since we started the class I have been following guided meditations and have seen a difference in my outlook on things once I complete a session. The only problem I have had with this so far is that I cannot get my mind to relax for most of it, so I need to keep practicing. It just gets frustrating though and makes it hard to want to keep trying but I know it is having a positive effect on me. I am looking forward to a point when I can meditate effectively and with ease.