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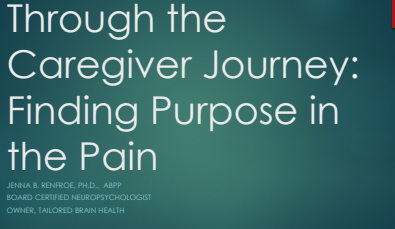
DUKE DEMENTIA FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Caregiver Connections
An Educational Webinar Series With The Experts

The presentation will begin shortly.
Thank you for your patience!

dukefamilysupport.org
919-660-7510

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Through the Caregiver Journey: Finding Purpose in the Pain

JERNA B. NEWICE, PH.D., AARP
BOARD CERTIFIED NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST
OWNER, TALCRED BRAIN HEALTH

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Outline

1. Caregiver burden
2. Origins of Finding Meaning in Suffering
3. Post Traumatic Growth
4. "The 5 S's" = Strategies for Coping through the Caregiver Journey
 1. STOP
 2. SOOTHE
 3. STAND
 4. SEEK
 5. SAVOR

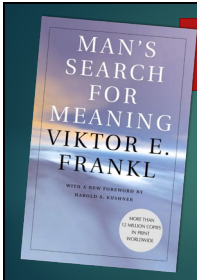
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Growth emerges from pain and suffering

- ▶ Buddhism emerged from Prince Siddhartha contemplating his own suffering
- ▶ "No mud, no lotus"

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Growth emerges from pain and suffering

- ▶ Victor Frankl, Jewish psychiatrist, WWII
- ▶ Those who lasted the longest in concentration camps were not the strongest or the fittest but those who were connected to a greater purpose in life.
- ▶ He channeled his values and natural talents to help his fellow prisoners and strengthen his will to survive

"When we are no longer able to change a situation—
we are challenged to change ourselves."
—VIKTOR E. FRANKL

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In this world
you will have trouble.
But take heart!
I have overcome the world.
-John 16:33

Growth emerges from pain and suffering

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POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH

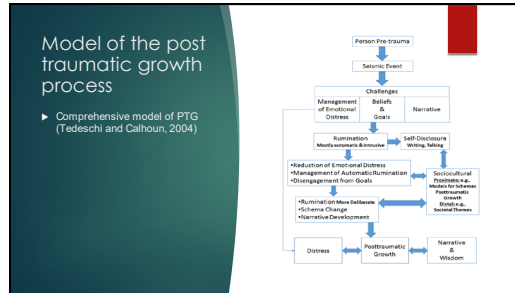
- #1) increased appreciation for life
- #2) more meaningful interpersonal relationships and greater sense of compassion for one another
- #3) increased sense of personal strength
- #4) changed priorities in life
- #5) richer existential and spiritual life.

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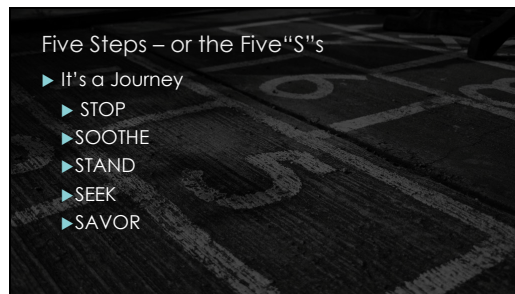
Post Traumatic Growth

- The MORE stressful the event is, the more likely posttraumatic growth is to occur
- Preexisting personal traits make people more prone to posttraumatic growth
- Resilience/hardiness, extraversion, and optimism +++ -> PTG
- PTG is a process... a journey.

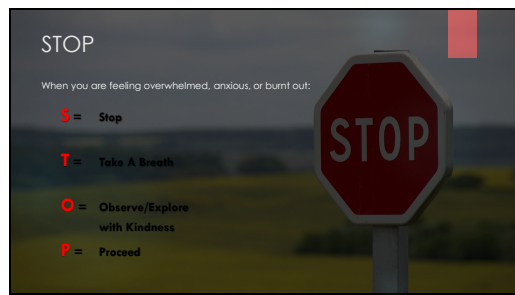
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STOP

Notice Your Struggle

"One Must Imagine Sisyphus Happy"
- Camus, Myth of Sisyphus



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**The Reality Slap
& The Reality Gap**

- ▶ THE REALITY SLAP – Caring for a loved one with dementia (no one expects this!)
- ▶ THE REALITY GAP – How you think about yourself and your life, how you expected your life to go OR how it was going prior to the onset of the illness

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**The Larger The Gap—
The More Pain,
The More Struggle**

With a small gap, you may feel:

- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Frustration
- ▶ Sadness


With a massive gap, you may feel:

- ▶ Anguish
- ▶ Despair
- ▶ Rage
- ▶ Resentment



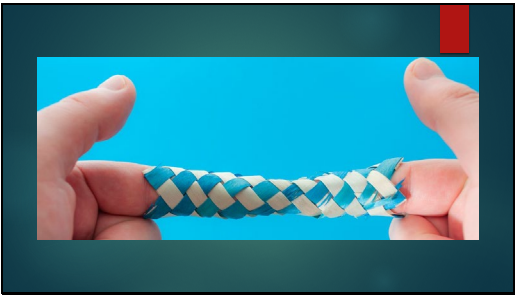
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The Struggle

A photograph showing two hands, one in a light blue sleeve and one in a dark grey sleeve, pulling on a thick, white, twisted rope. The rope is taut between the hands.

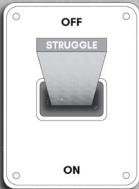
Whenever there is a gap between what we want or how we wish our life was, and how it actually is—the tendency is to struggle AGAINST THAT.

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Struggle Switch
=
an AMPLIFIER

A photograph of a white light switch plate mounted on a grey wall. The switch is in the 'ON' position. The word 'OFF' is at the top, 'ON' is at the bottom, and 'STRUGGLE' is printed on the switch lever.

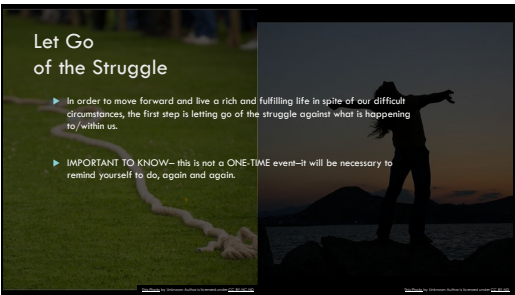
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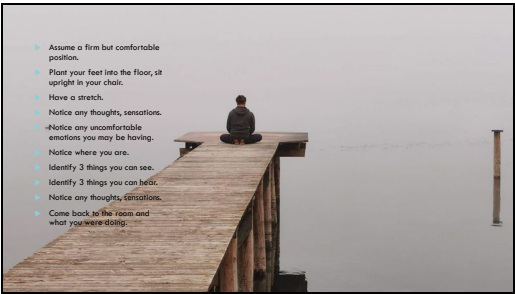
Dropping Anchor

- ▶ Drop Your Anchor (Come Into Your Body, The Present Moment.)
- ▶ Do this with me now...



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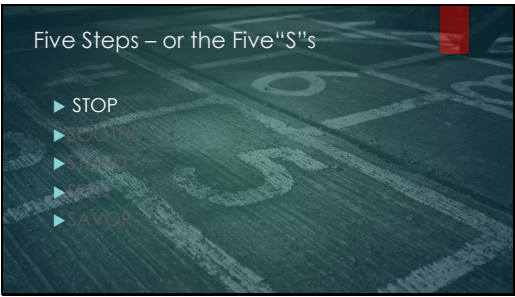
- ▶ Assume a firm but comfortable position.
- ▶ Plant your feet into the floor, sit upright in your chair.
- ▶ Have a stretch.
- ▶ Notice any thoughts, sensations.
- ▶ Notice any uncomfortable emotions you may be having.
- ▶ Notice where you are.
- ▶ Identify 3 things you can see.
- ▶ Identify 3 things you can hear.
- ▶ Notice any thoughts, sensations.
- ▶ Come back to the room and what you were doing.



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Five Steps – or the Five“S”s

- ▶ STOP
- ▶ NOTICE
- ▶ STAND
- ▶ FEEL
- ▶ SAVOR



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SOOTHE

► Acknowledge your struggle.... But let go of the struggle against it

► Acknowledge your pain associated with this situation

► Allow the pain

► Accommodate your stress and your pain

► Learn to be your own best friend

► Sounds cheesy, but...

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Who Is the One
Human Being In
Your Life Who Can:

► Always be there for you, in any moment, no matter what happens?

► Understand, validate and empathize with your pain better than anyone else on the planet?

► Truly know just how much you are suffering?


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You Are.

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Unfortunately, We often relate to ourselves in a highly critical manner.


- Inner Critic
- Trivializing/minimizing, critical, condescending, dismissive or unsupportive
- Counterproductive



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Self-compassion Involves Three Main Components:

1. **Mindfulness** (as opposed to suppression or magnification/over-identification)
2. **Common Humanity** (as opposed to isolation) (the reality that everyone suffers)
3. **Self-kindness** (as opposed to self-judgment/criticism)



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Self compassion

- Some ways to do this:
- Ask yourself: What is showing up for me? What do I need in this moment?
- Ask yourself: What would I say to a friend or a loved one in the same situation?
- Offer yourself a self-compassion statement or mantra: e.g. "This is very painful right now. This is a moment of suffering. I notice my pain and also my strength in this situation. What is it that I might need?"
- Self-compassion meditations:
 - Kristin Neff, Ph.D., is a leading researcher/teacher in this field
 - Check out www.self-compassion.org for a list of tools, resources, including guided meditations.

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Five Steps – or the Five “S”s

- ▶ STOP
- ▶ SOOTHE
- ▶ STAND
- ▶ SENSE
- ▶ SAYOK

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START WITH WHY

STAND

He who has a why to live for
**CAN BEAR
ALMOST ANY HOW.**

Friedrich Nietzsche

Tailored
Brain Health

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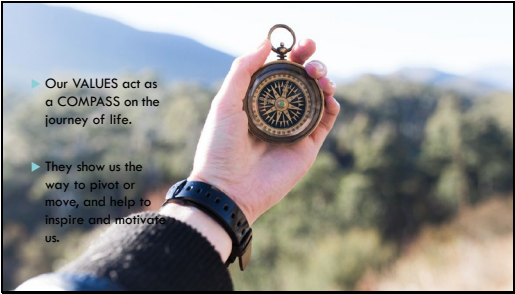
STANDING = COMMITTED ACTION

- ▶ A Roadmap for how you want to live
- ▶ STEP 1: Identify What Matters
- ▶ STEP 2: Live With Intention

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▶ Our **VALUES** act as a **COMPASS** on the journey of life.

▶ They show us the way to pivot or move, and help to inspire and motivate us.



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Do a little exercise...

- ▶ Imagine some time in the future, Looking Back ..
- ▶ Imagine that you have handled this "challenge" in the best possible way, behaving like the person you really want to be, deep in your heart. From that perspective, answer these questions:
- ▶ What did you stand for in the face of this? For example, did you stand for courage, kindness, compassion, persistence, caring, supportiveness, love?
- ▶ How did you treat yourself as you dealt with this?
- ▶ How did you treat others that you care about?



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The Choice Point

We are either making choices that move us **TOWARDS** the kind of person we want to be and what we want for our lives, or away.

When we are **"HOOKED"** (struggling/resisting), we can easily get pulled into doing **AWAY MOVES**, actions that move us away from what we want for our lives.

The goal is to develop coping skills to be less **"HOOKED"** by our circumstances/difficult thoughts and feelings, which will enable us to make more frequent **TOWARDS MOVES**.

Away Towards



Situations, Thoughts & Feelings

Choice Point 2.0 © Russ Harris, 2007 - adapted from The Choice Point by Bailey Glasser, Harris, 2013

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To Make Towards Moves

- ▶ We have to use coping skills to address the difficult emotions such as anger, fear, anxiety, depression, grief
- ▶ This might mean deep breathing, meditation, yoga, journaling, singing your thoughts or writing a list of them and naming the story, talking to a friend, meeting with a mental health professional.... etc.
- ▶ By properly addressing stress and underlying thoughts and emotions, we free up mental space to be able to make more conscious "towards moves" that are in alignment with our values

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Five Steps – or the Five“S”s

- ▶ STOP
- ▶ SOOTHE
- ▶ STAND
- ▶ SEEK
- ▶ SAVOR

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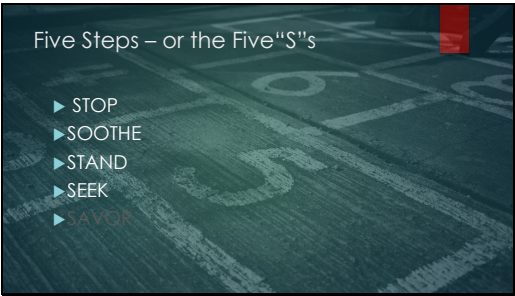
SEEK

- ▶ “Seek and you shall find....”
- ▶ Continue to seek your purpose
- ▶ Search for the meaning in the storm you are going through
- ▶ Ask yourself the following questions:
 - ▶ How can I learn or grow from this experience?
 - ▶ What personal qualities can I develop?
 - ▶ What practical skills might I learn or improve upon during this time?
- ▶ Spiritual seeking (remember how this was linked to post-traumatic growth)

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Five Steps – or the Five “S”s

- ▶ STOP
- ▶ SOOTHE
- ▶ STAND
- ▶ SEEK
- ▶ SAVOR



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Appreciate
and Savor

- ▶ As you begin to live with intention and in the moment, savor the fruits of your labor.
- ▶ Soak in a sense of loving-kindness towards yourself.
- ▶ Treasure the small, ordinary moments whenever you remember to do so.
- ▶ The more present we are, the more gratitude is born, and the greater our sense of privilege and fulfillment.

ENJOY THE
LITTLE
THINGS



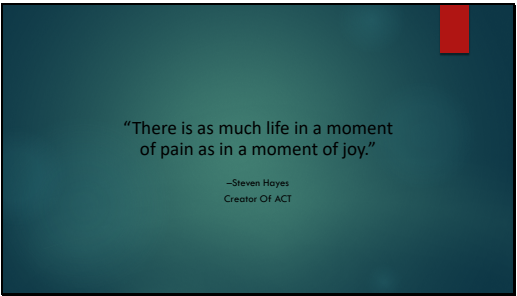
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SAVOR

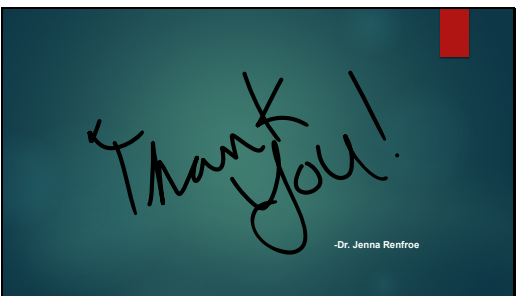
- ▶ CHOOSING TO BE PRESENT
- ▶ FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE
- ▶ STAYING GROUNDED
- ▶ DISCOVERING SMALL VICTORIES
- ▶ SHARING COMPASSION & CONNECTION
- ▶ FILLING YOUR SPIRIT
- ▶ FINDING PURPOSE IN THE PAIN



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Thank you for joining us today!

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