A person is swimming in turbulent, dark blue water under a cloudy sky. The water is choppy with white foam from the swimmer's strokes. The sky is overcast with grey and white clouds. The overall mood is somber and challenging.

Staying well in turbulent times

Dr. Joanna Humphreys
Ethics and Resilience Rounds
December 16th 2025



We are privileged to provide care on lands that Indigenous peoples have called home for thousands of years.



Webinar Housekeeping

- Everyone will be muted except the host, moderator and panelists
- Ask questions through the Teams chat box
- All webinars will be recorded and posted on the internal PEaCE Hub page and on the Regional Ethics Network Website
- Please take a moment to scan the QR code to complete the evaluation
- Next month's speaker

Objectives

To consider practical ways to support our well being as we navigate the turbulent times in our personal environment, health care system and our world

To take time to reflect on your own wellness

Contemplate 1% changes to support yourself

Outline

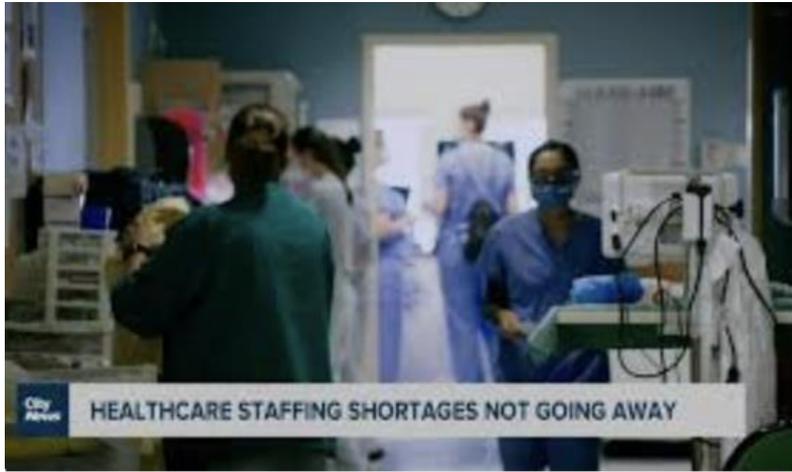
Our current reality

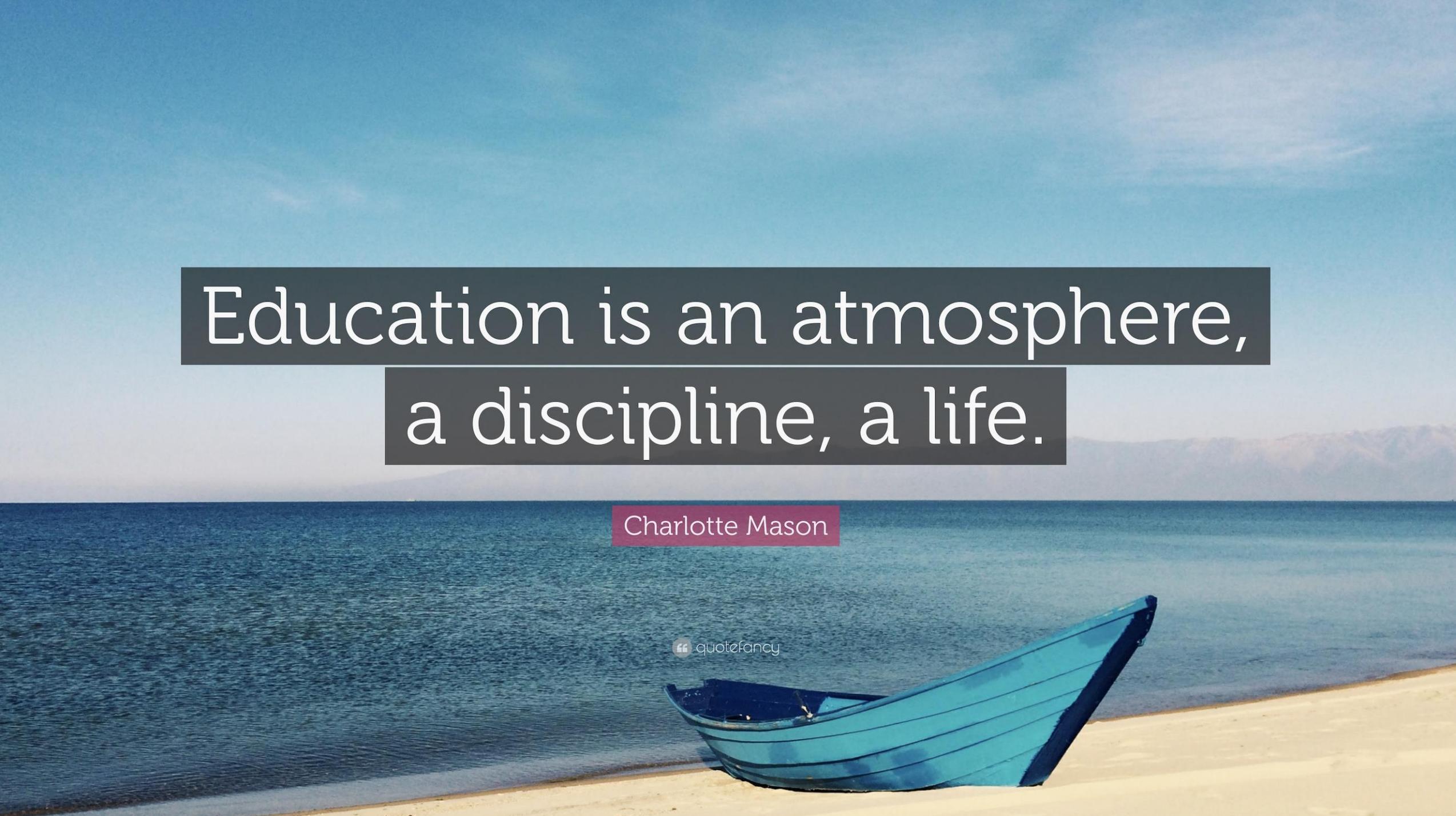
Standing our ground and finding our core

5 practical tips to support us in standing our ground

1. Compassion and self compassion - What I know I need every day
2. Boundaries - And how to keep to them
3. What is your Edge? - Understanding edge states
4. Secondary Vicarious Trauma - Not causing it and reducing our intake
5. Cognitive Load - Be aware

Our current reality



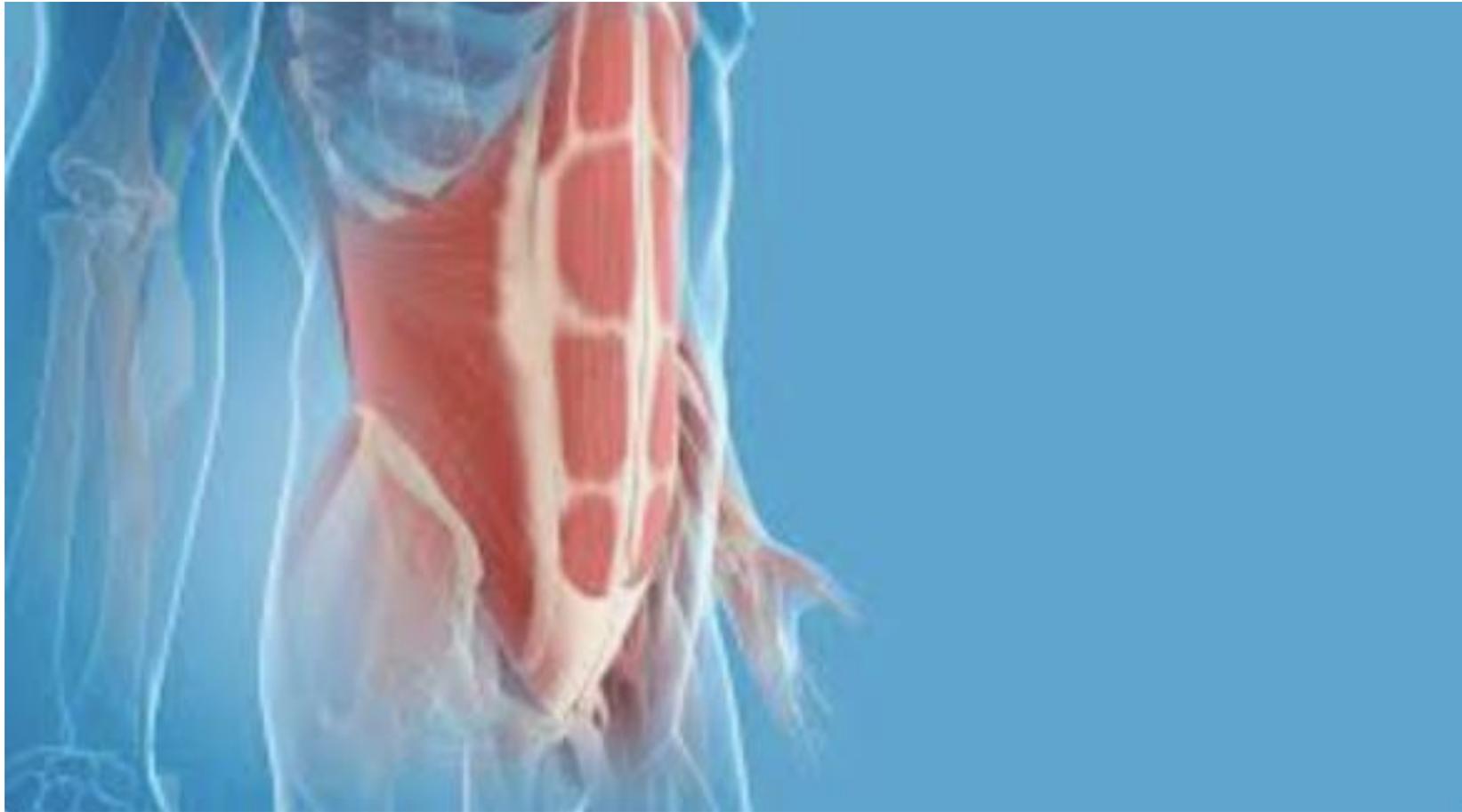
A serene coastal scene featuring a small, bright blue wooden boat resting on a sandy beach. The boat is positioned in the lower right foreground, angled towards the left. The ocean extends to the horizon under a clear, light blue sky. In the distance, faint mountain ranges are visible. The overall atmosphere is calm and peaceful.

Education is an atmosphere,
a discipline, a life.

Charlotte Mason

quote fancy

Strong ground – Find your core



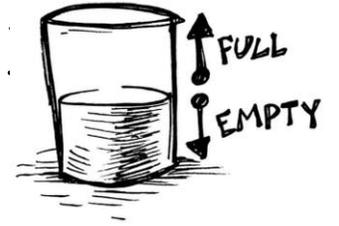
Practical Strategies

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Compassion and Empathy broke down...



Compassion

Witnessing suffering and working to reduce suffering with action

Cognitive Empathy

The ability to understand another person's perspective, thoughts, and feelings without necessarily experiencing the emotion oneself

Affective Empathy

"Feeling into"—vicariously sharing the same feeling with another.

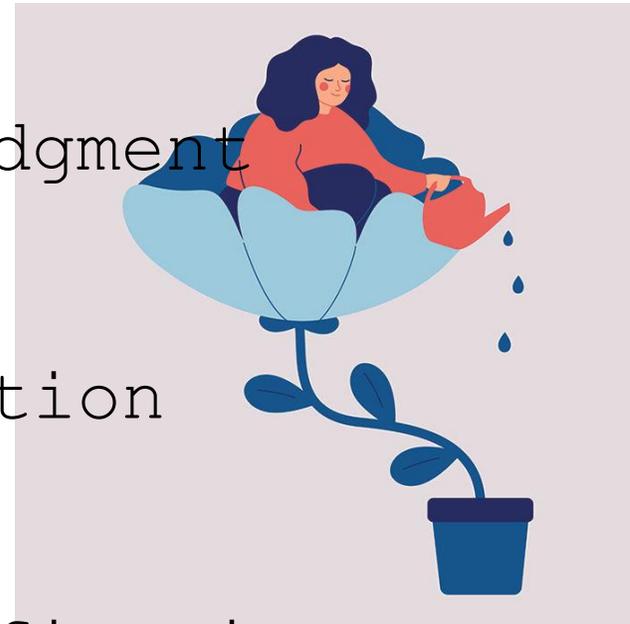
Self Compassion

When relating to a painful experience, the practice of;

Self kindness vs. Self judgment

Common humanity vs. isolation

Mindfulness vs Overidentification



FIERCE SELF-COMPASSION

DR. KRISTIN NEFF
self-compassion.org

TENDER SELF-COMPASSION

ACCEPTING OURSELVES
TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING



FIERCE SELF-COMPASSION

TAKING ACTION
TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING



BALANCE
OF BOTH
ENERGIES FOR
WHOLENESS

INNER HEALING

TENDER

OUTER CHANGE

FIERCE

together

CREATES A

CARING FORCE



ALLOWING US TO

THRIVE

PROTECTING

DRAWING
BOUNDARIES

AND
SAYING

NO

PROVIDING

AND
SAYING

YES

TO OUR NEEDS

MOTIVATING

TO LEARN,
GROW AND
CHANGE
THE WORLD



OUR

AUTHENTIC SELF

CLAIMS BOTH OUR
TENDER & FIERCE SIDES

COUNTERING THE
GENDER ROLE
SOCIALIZATION
WE HAVE ALL BEEN
STEEPED IN



Practical Strategies

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Consider...

What impact have your unrealistic self-expectations had on your well-being?

What has the impact been of others' unrealistic expectations of your capacity?

How do you assess if expectations are set at a helpful, aspirational level?

Boundaries

Getting clear on what behaviours are **okay**, and what is **not okay**.

You'll know this because you feel it.

Those times when someone says or does something to you and you start to feel **Angry? Resentful?**

Emotions are cues that your boundaries may have been crossed.

Live **BIG**

B - Boundaries

Hard when you are a people pleaser

Compassionate people ask for what they need

Keeps you OUT of resentment

I - Integrity

“Integrity is choosing courage over comfort;

it’s doing what is right over what is fun, fast or easy;

it’s choosing to practice our values rather than simply professing them”

G - Generosity

Everyone is doing the best they can

“ Assumption of positive intent”

Brene Brown, Rising
Strong

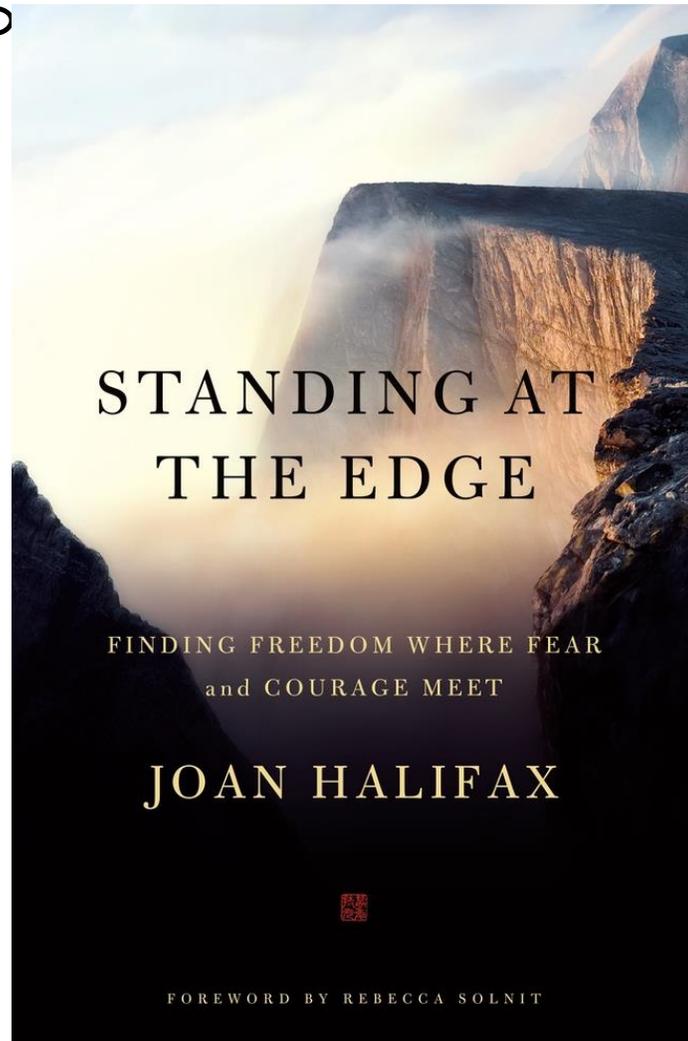
Boundaries

1. Be proactive.
2. Just say it! Use simple and direct language
3. Reinforce by pointing out the violations IN THE MOMENT
4. Give explanations that are specific
5. Back up your boundary with action

Practical Strategies

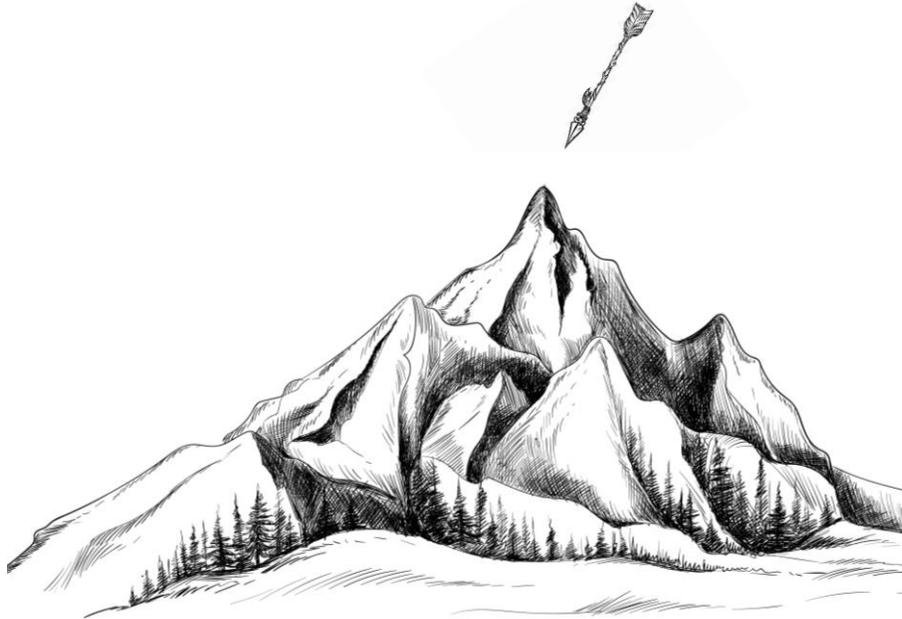
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Edge States



Standing at the Edge: Finding Freedom where Fear and Courage Meet by Roshi Joan Halifax

Edge States



Altruism	Pathological Altruism
Empathy	Empathic Distress
Integrity	Moral Suffering
Respect	Disrespect
Engagement	Burnout

Standing at the Edge: Finding Freedom where Fear and Courage Meet by Roshi Joan Halifax

Integrity and Moral Suffering

Moral Distress: We can see a pathway,
but we cannot actualize it

Moral Injury: We feel complicit in
causing suffering or we witness
others

Moral Outrage: We express the shame and
blame we feel outwardly

Moral Apathy: We avoid witnessing
suffering

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Unburdening



What we take in



Practical Strategies

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Cognitive Load



At work = (Acute + Chronic) + Emotional

Unpaid work = (Physical + Cognitive) + Emotional

High cognitive load or multitasking is associated with:

- Reduced capacity to exercise willpower
- Reduced capacity to make long-term decisions
- Reduce capacity to learn and store long term memories
- Increased anxiety and stress

Reactions to Cognitive Overload

Paralysis

Inability to attend to a topic or issue, due to high complexity (AT THAT TIME!)

Anger and Frustration

Get upset with difficulty learning or attending to something

Passivity

Going along with others and not forming your own opinion

Understanding

Gathering information in a certain format or trusted source

How to combat high cognitive load?

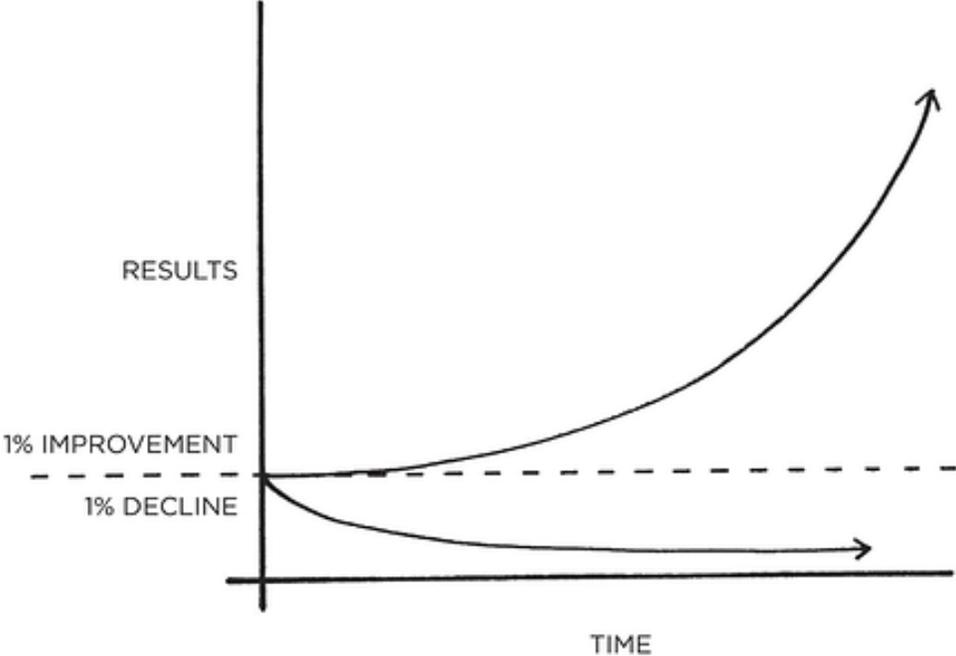
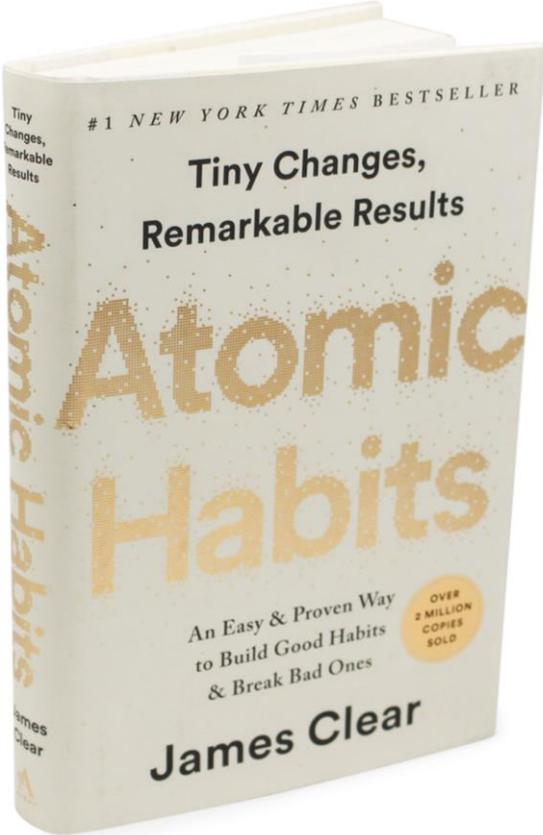
Listen to your Body... Watch for cues!

- Increased stress, fatigue, and frustration
 - With normal daily tasks
 - With more complex tasks that you can normally attend to
 - Difficulty retaining information you have learnt

How to combat?

- Make lists
- Delegate
- Set boundaries
- Take real breaks
- Simplify tasks into steps
- Combat decision fatigue
- **Kindness** (Dishwasher story)

Make wellness a discipline



Wellness is an atmosphere, a discipline, an education and

Jo

 quote fancy

HHS Ethics Rounds & Community
Education Sessions



Reflections?
Comments?
Questions?

humphj9@mcmaster.ca

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