

Reiki and PTSD

I have been researching alternative therapies to help with mental health. Reiki has been one I have found to have some exciting results and outcomes, especially when dealing with PTSD. However, before we proceed, let me recap some facts on PTSD.

NOTE: This article may be directed toward Veterans, but it can be used for everyone who experiences stress, anxiety, trauma, etc.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a debilitating anxiety disorder that occurs after experiencing a traumatic event involving a real threat of injury or death. This can include combat, a natural disaster, an assault, physical or sexual abuse, or other traumas.

People with PTSD have an amplified sense of danger and impending doom. Their ordinary “fight or flight response” is damaged, causing them to feel stressed in safe conditions. PTSD occurs due to chemical changes in the brain, not due to character flaws or weakness.

What is Reiki?

Reiki is a Japanese technique to help reduce stress and promote healing. It is managed by “laying on hands” and is based on the “life force of energy” that runs through us and causes us to be alive. If this energy becomes low, we get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we achieve happiness and good health. Reiki is a non-invasive, utterly gentle healing technique that is becoming more popular.

Reiki in Practice

Researchers have examined the effectiveness of Reiki, calling it the “Healing Touch.” Researchers observed a drop in PTSD symptoms by 14 points using the PTSD checklist, which is considered clinically and statistically significant.

Reiki benefits the military population and people with PTSD by eliciting a relaxation response. People who have experienced trauma and are anxious have difficulty reaching this healing state independently. The relaxation response is a form of peace that allows the body and mind to reset themselves and heal.

Reiki is growing for consideration by military medicine as a treatment for PTSD. Like so many therapy options, Reiki could be considered a core treatment for PTSD because of its holistic approach to combat symptoms of PTSD.

Complete article is on The Veteran Doctor Blog. Please go to <http://www.theveterandoctor.com> for this article and more.



How Meditation Increases Focus

Think of a well-known successful person. Who comes to mind? Whether you choose a famous actor, artist, athlete, or entrepreneur — they all share rare yet valuable traits. Two of these traits will likely be “**focus**” and “**motivation**.”

History is full of people who face adversity and distraction but stay focused through the course, achieving their dreams despite the obstacles in their path.

Like who? Before it became the children’s literary staple, Dr. Seuss and his book “Green Eggs & Ham” was turned down by 27 publishers. On his journey to creating the vacuum, Sir James Dyson spent his entire life savings and 5100+ prototypes. Before inspiring millions worldwide, Oprah Winfrey’s first producer found her “unfit for TV,” firing her on the spot.

Want more? Before becoming the world’s first billionaire author, J.K. Rowling wrote the Harry Potter series as a single mom on welfare. Before winning 6 NBA titles, Michael Jordan did not even make the cut to play on his high school varsity basketball team. Hollywood’s prolific movie maker, Steven Spielberg, was repeatedly rejected from film school.

Resistance: Distracting Us from Our Work

So, how do some of us remain focused and motivated while others cannot stay on task?

In his bestselling book “*The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle*,” the famous novelist Steven Pressfield describes the great struggle all creators, entrepreneurs, athletes, and artists face.

It is known that “resistance,” a universal yet metaphorical force throws hurdles in every maker’s path, whether writing a novel, creating a masterpiece, or building a business. Resistance serves one purpose; to maintain the status quo. Suppose we do not do our work; mission complete. Procrastination riles up fear and anxiety. From awakening the naysayer within to opening yet another browser tab, resistance shows its gnarly face in many ways.

Every “maker” and “doer” worldwide must battle resistance. No one is immune. We must fight resistance daily to do our work, realize our dreams, and grow.

The problem is that our world is a buffet of distractions. Because our digital devices are “always on,” and they shower us with enormous amounts of content, our brains seek something new every waking moment. Resistance is stronger than ever. Its fiery breath was hotter than ever.

How Meditation Slays Resistance, Restores Focus

So, what’s the solution to this issue?

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To win the resistance war, you must focus and drive. Luckily, meditation always keeps warriors on the battlefield.

So, when your brain needs to manage incoming stimuli, a region called the “thalamus” serves as the “gateway to consciousness,” ensuring only the important stuff gets passed to the deeper, “higher thinking” areas like the cerebral cortex and subcortical regions.

Our always-connected, overstimulated world has beaten our thalamus to a pulp. Broken thalamus disorders like anxiety and ADHD continue to bombard us with so much data before our overloaded brains raise the white flag.

Giving Our Overworked Brains Some R & R

Fortunately, meditation eases the burden. Like a river that down streams residents, agriculture, and industry with water to take showers, grow crops, and do business — a river dam lets through only what is needed. Likewise, meditation “upstream-filters” sensory data long before our “overworked thalamus” ever must deal with it.

Because meditation saves our “gateways to the conscious” thalamus, it finally has time to rest & recuperate. Several studies show meditation’s marked effect on the thalamic gray matter “density” and “thickness,” it appears that a bit of R & R is just what the brain doctor ordered.

The relaxed and fully functional thalamus allows the “core” of our brain (prefrontal cortex) to think more deeply, make more well-thought-out decisions, problem-solve more effectively, and do its job better. A well-organized brain is a highly focused brain.

By training your brain to be focused through failure, through diversion, and through our over-stimulated array of distractions, meditation can make anything possible.

Dream big and aim for the stars. Meditation can help you hit your targets.

Meditation Supercharges Self-Motivation Too

Meditation trains the brain to be laser-focused. But what about motivation? That’s just as important as focus.

While focusing on your goals is enough to spark you to do great things, if your inner fire needs more kindling, the ancient mind practice has you covered. Research shows that meditation strengthens the brain’s willpower, self-control, and “motivation” part: the “dorsolateral prefrontal cortex.” So, meditation covers both focus and motivation.

We all have something great to bring to the world. What awesome “thing” do you get? Make it happen with meditation.

The Loneliness Factor

Loneliness is feeling alone, regardless of the amount of social contact. Social isolation is a lack of social connections. Social isolation can lead to loneliness in some people, while others can feel lonely without being socially isolated.

Pros of Being Alone

Being Alone Allows Our Brains to Recharge: Our brains need balance. While social interactions are crucial to certain areas of brain activity, time alone is necessary for our brains to unwind and recharge. Dr. Sherrie Bourg Carter explains, "Constantly being 'on' doesn't give your brain a chance to rest and replenish itself. Being by yourself with no distractions gives you the chance to clear your mind, focus, and think more clearly. It's an opportunity to revitalize your mind and body at the same time."

Being Alone Increases Productivity: Let's face it, people can be pretty distracting. "When you remove as many distractions and interruptions as you can from your day," says Dr. Carter, "You are better able to concentrate, which will help you get more work done in a shorter amount of time." Small interruptions from coworkers or family members can disrupt our trains of thought and make it difficult to get back into a project. Even the ping of a text message or an email notification can throw off our concentration and reduce productivity.

Cons of Being Alone

Being Alone Makes Us Vulnerable to Our Inner Critics: Being alone with our thoughts isn't always a good thing. Isolation can be the perfect breeding ground for negative, self-critical thoughts. We all have an inner critic, a nasty coach that lives inside our heads and seeks any opportunity to criticize us. These "critical inner voices" tend to multiply when we are left alone with our thoughts. The "critical inner voices" tend to be at their worst when we are not only alone, but are also *feeling lonely*. At these times, the inner critic tells us that something is wrong with us and we don't belong around other people. In this sense, we are our own worst enemy.

Being Alone Can Lead to Painful Loneliness: It is important to distinguish between time spent happily alone and time spent feeling lonely. Neuroscientist John Cacioppo, who has made a career out of studying loneliness, defines loneliness as "perceived social isolation, or the discrepancy between what you want from your social relationships and your perception of those relationships." In this sense, loneliness is not defined by the amount of time we spend alone, but rather by how we *feel* about the time we spend alone. Feeling lonely can trigger feelings of being unloved or unlikeable, which can lead us to turn on ourselves. Feeling lonely is actually painful on a physical level, as well as emotional level.

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After studying the eight percent who accomplish their goals, some indicators about what these high achievers do differently.

These eight percent come from all walks of life. They can be single, married, or divorced; educated or high school dropouts; poor, middle class, or wealthy; a wide variety of ages and ethnicities; from everywhere in the world. No matter where you are in your life or where you came from, you can set big goals and achieve them.

The critical commonality among the top eight percent is a similar set of success-oriented mindsets that guide their thoughts and actions. You may have these mindsets or practice opposite mindsets without realizing it.

A definite way to determine whether you need a mindset overhaul is to answer this question: Are you accomplishing your goals regularly and living your dreams? If your answer is "yes," read on, and you will probably recognize why. If you answered "no," these steps could be game-changing for you.

Seven ideas on how to change your mindset:

1. Accept that your thinking needs to be adjusted – We have all had goals and dreams that did not evolve the way we hoped or expected. When this repeatedly happens, we start to wonder what we need to change. But rarely do we look internally at our thinking as the place to start making change.

We live in a skillset-motivated society that emphasizes learning new skills to improve your life. This often cultivates the belief that we need more education to achieve our goals. Many go back to school. Others take seminars, workshops, or read books, to find that desired skill set that will make everything fall into place.

The value of skillsets should never be downplayed; it is our *mindset statement*.

The great news is that it is a lot less expensive and much faster to change your mindsets than learn a new skill. Step one is simply to recognize that you are going to first work on your mindsets.

Mindset Change from Past to Future

So as Veterans, we are all guilty! We all reminisce about the good times when we were back in the military. We miss the structure, security, camaraderie, lifestyle, etc. Some veterans are almost obsessed with it that it controls their lives to the point that they cannot move forward. How do you move forward? That is a great question! You must change your mindset from living in the past to driving towards the future. You need to set goals!

Everyone has had goals and dreams that did not come true. Ninety-two percent of people say that the goals and resolutions they set for themselves every year never get achieved. This must mean that a common denominator is something holding them back.

2. Identify your counter-mindsets – Mindsets are developed from past experiences and emotional milestones. Mindsets that do not produce the desired results are called *counter-mindsets*. These include self-doubt, limiting beliefs, and any other negative thoughts that get in the way of reaching total fulfillment. Around 65,000 "Automatic Negative Thoughts" (ANTs) go through our minds each day. Unfortunately, many of these thoughts are harmful, and you are probably not even aware of them.

For example, that little voice points out irresponsible spending choices when looking at your monthly budget or makes critical comments while looking in the mirror! We all know that voice. It makes you hesitate before approaching someone you would like to meet. It makes you pause before changing a career or starting a business.

All of us have different ANTs, and subconsciously we habitually allow them to destroy our dreams. It is challenging to remain positive when that little voice is constantly spouting off negative things like, "I cannot talk to her," "I am not smart enough," "I am out of shape," "I am not qualified," and so on.

The best way to eliminate the ANTs in your head is by paying attention to them. You must hear that disparaging voice and recognize its frequency. You will likely find that your limiting thoughts can be narrowed down to a few key themes. Noting these themes is a significant step because we cannot change what we have not acknowledged.

3. Flip the switch – Once you have identified your top negative thoughts, you need to find a way to keep them from holding you back. The best technique is called "flip the switch," which moves thoughts from negative to positive. Instead of seeing flaws in the mirror, you need to flip the switch and force yourself to say, "You look good!" This will take time to adjust, but the reality is that positive thoughts and negative thoughts cannot occupy the same space, so I gave my ANTs an eviction notice.

Another effective technique is called the "if/then" approach. Once you identify your

ANTs and their frequency, apply a thought process that allows you to essentially *think yourself around them*. Here is an example: Say you plan to go for a walk after dinner for exercise, but when dinner is finished, your ANT begin to create voices in your head that say you are too tired, too full, or you will never lose the weight anyway, *then* walk immediately to the closet and put on your running shoes.

In many cases, just taking one positive step in the right direction is enough to shut down those ANTs. Prepare a list of "if/then" statements in advance.

4. Understand your "why" – Changing any destructive mindset takes time by breaking habits, primarily since many of these habits were formed in our childhoods.

Understanding your "why" is about deciding on one goal that will mean a transformational change when achieved—losing weight, being happier at work, and improving your relationship with your companion. Identify something that could make a significant impact on your life.

Once you identify your "why" is, handwrite it down and express why it matters. This is an integral part of motivation building.

5. Motivation and willpower are not the only factors in achieving goals– Most people incorrectly believe that motivation and willpower are only needed to achieve their goals.

Step 4 helped identify the big "why," which is where motivation begins.

However, we all know that motivation is hard to maintain, no matter the importance of the goal. This and when willpower takes over!

Research reveals that willpower can be compared to a gas tank. Your journey with a full tank and deplete it each time you use it. Here is an example:

Your after-work gym visit is challenged by staying late at work to handle a customer issue.

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VETERANS RESOURCE & TRANSITION GUIDE – CHAPTER 3 - MAKING THE TRANSITION DECISION

First of all, thank you for your service to our country and all your sacrifices. I do not think that can be said enough. However, every veteran in the military has asked themselves the same overarching question. While as simple as it may seem, it is one of the most challenging questions that will ever be faced by members of the armed forces. Whether you are a career military member or sign on for one term, the time comes as you whether you should re-enlist or transition back into the civilian world. Those people usually do not have an excellent plan for transition. For many others, the decision is difficult due to many factors that influence as to whether it would be beneficial or not. The following chapter asks several questions and talks about topics that may help make those decisions or at least give some information that will help make that decision a little easier.

How do I decide as to whether I should stay in or get out?

When deciding, especially a life-altering one, weighing out the pros and cons of each option and choosing the options that best align with your long-term goals is usually the best way to go. Logically, this decision is simple, but people do not make these types of decisions with logic; emotion interferes. That said, here is some simple framework of questions that can help with the examination of all sides of your decision:

1. What do I gain if I stay?
2. What do I lose if I stay?
3. What do I gain if I go?
4. What do I lose if I go?

Here is an example:

What do I gain if I stay?

Friendships: Some of the closest friends that you will ever have as a veteran will come from the military. These friends know more about you than your family in most cases, although you really wish they didn't. They have shared many memories and some not-so-great memories. Staying in would allow you to create even more memories with your second family.

Money: Let's face it, you never will get rich in the military. However, military benefits are no joke, especially medical, education, and retirement benefits. When you receive retirement money from the military, you receive payment until you die, which equates to some serious cash. To throw that away due to a few miserable months is reckless. However, there are far more essential things in life than money: your family, your friends, your health, etc.

Status: Like the friendships, every veteran would be lying if they said that the status did not matter at all to them. Being a military member, and especially being an officer or

senior NCO in any military service has its perks and is kind of awesome. They flash their ID card at the airport, and a special line opens just for them. They order lunch at a restaurant with their buddies and discover that Mr. Anonymous picked up the tab again. Most importantly, they hear "thank you" from people as they walk down the street.

Satisfaction: Does your job as a veteran give back in any way? It would feel good knowing that you helped someone, somewhere by giving back to society at some time in your career. Many veterans tend to marginalize the significance of their jobs as if their job doesn't matter in the big scheme on things. But, your service matters to someone, and there is value in that.

What do I lose if I stay?

Career: Many civilian careers will start out slow, but will eventually take off once they get moving. As a veteran, you just have to dedicate yourself and work my ass off to get to where you want to be. Did you join the Reserves? That being said, the Army Reserve will add additional stress to your life and will cost more energy but will end up being worth it.

Please go to www.theveteransdoctor.com for information on how to order the Veterans Resource and Transition Guide.

This Month's Q&A Veteran Tips

Q: MYTH: Veteran behavioral health challenges are specific to this generation.

A: FACT: Today's veterans are no more vulnerable to behavioral health challenges than previous generations; and have access to better diagnostic and treatment resources.

Q: MYTH: Most Veterans are not well educated.

A: FACT: The current generation of veterans exceeds, on average, national norms in education and intelligence; more veterans seek some post-secondary education than do their non-veteran peers.

Q: MYTH: Veterans are no more productive than any other candidate.

A: FACT: Veterans, on average, perform as well or better than their non-veteran peers.

Q: MYTH: Veterans and their families are insular and won't contribute in the community.

A: FACT: The majority of service members and their families live in civilian communities and participate in civic activities.

Q: MYTH: Enlisted vets are less skilled.

A: FACT: All men and women, especially our military's non-commissioned officers (NCOs), have the capacity for greatness. NCOs know how to problem-solve, operate under deadlines (often in the throes of crises) and manage large teams of varying ages and skills. Military skills come not from large lecture halls or specific degrees but from practical application. I'd stake my reputation on the opinion that enlisted soldiers are better educated and more skilled than the U.S. civilians they protect.

Q: MYTH: Military spouses don't need to work.

A: FACT: Rising cost of living, low service member pay, and the rising cost of benefits have led to a resurgence in military spouses seeking work. The Military Officers Association of America estimates that 90 percent of female military spouses are underemployed, meaning they possess more education and experience than needed for their jobs. By short-selling military spouses, employers overlook the assets that they bring to the table.

EYE ON IT

Forecasting Military Technology – The Next 20 Years

What changes are likely in military technology over the next 20 years? This question is fascinating on its own terms. More importantly, answering it is crucial for making appropriate changes in U.S. and allied weaponry, military operations, wartime preparations, and defense budget priorities. To be sure, technology is advancing fast in many realms. But it is not enough to wave one's arms exuberantly about futuristic military possibilities. The stakes are too high. Defense resource decisions need to be based on concrete analysis that breaks down the categories of major military technological invention and innovations one by one and examines each. Presumably, those areas where things are changing fastest may warrant the most investment, as well as the most creative thinking about how to modify tactics and operational plans to exploit new opportunities (and mitigate new vulnerabilities that adversaries may develop as a result of these same likely advances). Building on the methodology employed in my earlier 2000 book, *Technological Change and the Future of Warfare*, and refined further in my recent paper, "A Retrospective on the So-Called Revolution in Military Affairs, 2000-2020," this paper attempts to look two decades into the future to aid in this important task for American defense planners.

Please read the complete article at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/forecasting-change-in-military-technology-2020-2040/>
O'Hanlon, M. (Jan, 2023). *Forecasting Change in Military Technology, 2020-2040*. Brookings.edu



Resource Monthly Picks

SNVCC

www.snvcc.org

Our Vision: The Southern Nevada Veterans Chamber of Commerce is focused on supporting the development and training of businesses of varying stages in businesses, whether their current objective is startup oriented or if it is growth through veteran hiring. Our business membership base in the community is not limited to only veteran-owned businesses, but instead we welcome military-spouses, family members, and also businesses that are military-supporters in our community to join us. It is our shared belief that you don't need to be a veteran to support the veteran community. Instead, we want to promote the entire community to come together to support the well-being and stronger connection of our veterans in the community.

Enhancing the quality of life for veterans in 4 specific Mission Cornerstones:

1. Entrepreneurship
2. Employment
3. Education
4. Veteran Advocacy

The SNVCC is proud to partner with some of the most respected veteran programs across the country to support these four mission cornerstones.





Famous Quotes!

“The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.” — G.K. Chesterton

“Duty, honor, country: Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be.” — Douglas McArthur

“There is nothing nobler than risking your life for your country.” — Nick Lampson

“This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.” — Elmer Davis

“The brave die never, though they sleep in dust: Their courage nerves a thousand living men.” — Minot J. Savage

Upcoming Local Events

- Veteran Social Club - Super Sunday Watch Party - Mackenzie River Pizza, Grill & Pub Inside City National Arena, 1550 South Pavilion Center Drive, Las Vegas, NV, 89135 – Sunday, February 12, 2023 @ 2:30pm – 6:00pm
- SNVCC Happy Hour – The Leatherneck Club – 4360 W. Spring Mountain Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89102 - Monday, February 6, 2023 @ 6:00 PM
- SNVCC Veteran Coffee Connections – Royal Coffee/Spring Valley – 5608 S Rainbow Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89118, USA - Tuesday, February 7, 2023, @ 9:30am
- SNVCC Digital Marketing Workshop - 10845 Griffith Peak Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89135 – Wednesday, February 15, 2023, @ 12pm
- SNVCC Veteran Coffee Connections – Royal Coffee/Blue Diamond – 4835 Blue Diamond Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89139 – Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 9:30am

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