

The Resilient Heart Programme.



THE RESILIENT HEART
Trauma-Sensitive HeartMath®

**Building resilience and improving
the capacity for emotional regulation.**

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**Integrating Resilience, Moving Forward
with Confidence.**

Week One (1)



Introduction to The Resilient Heart.

Resilience: The Ability to Adapt and Recover from Challenges.

Resilience — The ability to adapt and bounce back from challenges.

Life is full of unexpected twists, from losing a job to dealing with personal setbacks. Resilience is what helps us get through these tough times and come out stronger.

Think of resilience like a rubber band. When stretched, it doesn't break it bounces back. That's what we do when life pulls us in different directions. Instead of snapping under pressure, we adjust and keep going.

Resilience doesn't mean we ignore problems or pretend they don't hurt. It means we face them head-on, learn from them, and keep moving forward.

Building resilience and learning to cope with stress effectively has numerous benefits for both mental and physical well-being.



Stress has a powerful effect on our bodies. According to The HeartMath Institute, just five minutes of anger or frustration can cause a spike in cortisol, the stress hormone, which can stay elevated for up to six hours. This keeps us feeling tense, drained, and even impacts our health.

On the flip side, if we spend just five minutes feeling positive emotions like gratitude, love, or joy it can trigger regenerative effects, helping balance our nervous system, lower stress, and improve overall well-being.

This shows how important it is to manage our emotions. By choosing to focus on calming, positive feelings, we can train our bodies to recover faster from stress and build resilience over time.

The HeartMath Technique that we are going to learn today will help reduce stress and support us in building our resilience.

The Heart-Focused Breathing Technique is science-based and backed by research from the HeartMath Institute.

It is not just a relaxation trick it actively influences your body's autonomic nervous system (ANS), helping regulate stress and improve resilience.

The Science Behind Heart-Focused Breathing.

- 1. Heart-Brain Connection** – The heart sends more signals to the brain than the brain sends to the heart. When you practise heart-focused breathing, you create a **coherent heart rhythm** (smooth, stable patterns), which improves brain function, emotional balance, and decision-making.
- 2. Heart Rate Variability (HRV)** – This technique improves HRV, a key indicator of resilience and overall health. High HRV means your body can adapt to stress more easily, while low HRV is linked to burnout and anxiety.

3. **Hormonal Balance** – Deep breathing reduces cortisol (stress hormone) and increases DHEA, a hormone that enhances mood, energy, and recovery. This shift helps you stay calm, focused, and more resilient in tough situations.
4. **Nervous System Regulation** – It shifts your body from fight-or-flight (sympathetic mode) to rest-and-recover (parasympathetic mode). This means you respond to stress with clarity instead of panic, making it easier to handle challenges.
5. **Improves Clarity and Decision Making** – When your heart and brain are in sync, you think more clearly and react with resilience instead of stress.

Proven Benefits of Heart-Focused Breathing on Stress.

- ✓ Reduces stress and anxiety
- ✓ Enhances emotional resilience
- ✓ Improves focus and decision-making
- ✓ Boosts overall well-being

By practising just 2-5 minutes daily, you can train your body and mind to handle challenges more effectively, making you stronger and more adaptable over time.

It's real science, and it works!

Heart Focused Breathing Technique!

Step 1:

Take a couple of deep breaths & focus your attention on the heart area.

Step 2:

Imagine breathing in and out through your heart.

Step 3:

Breathe slower and deeper than usual, finding a steady rhythm.

Step 4:

Notice any shifts in how you feel.

Question:

- How did the Breathing Technique Feel?

Question:

- When could you use this technique in daily life?

Week Two (2)

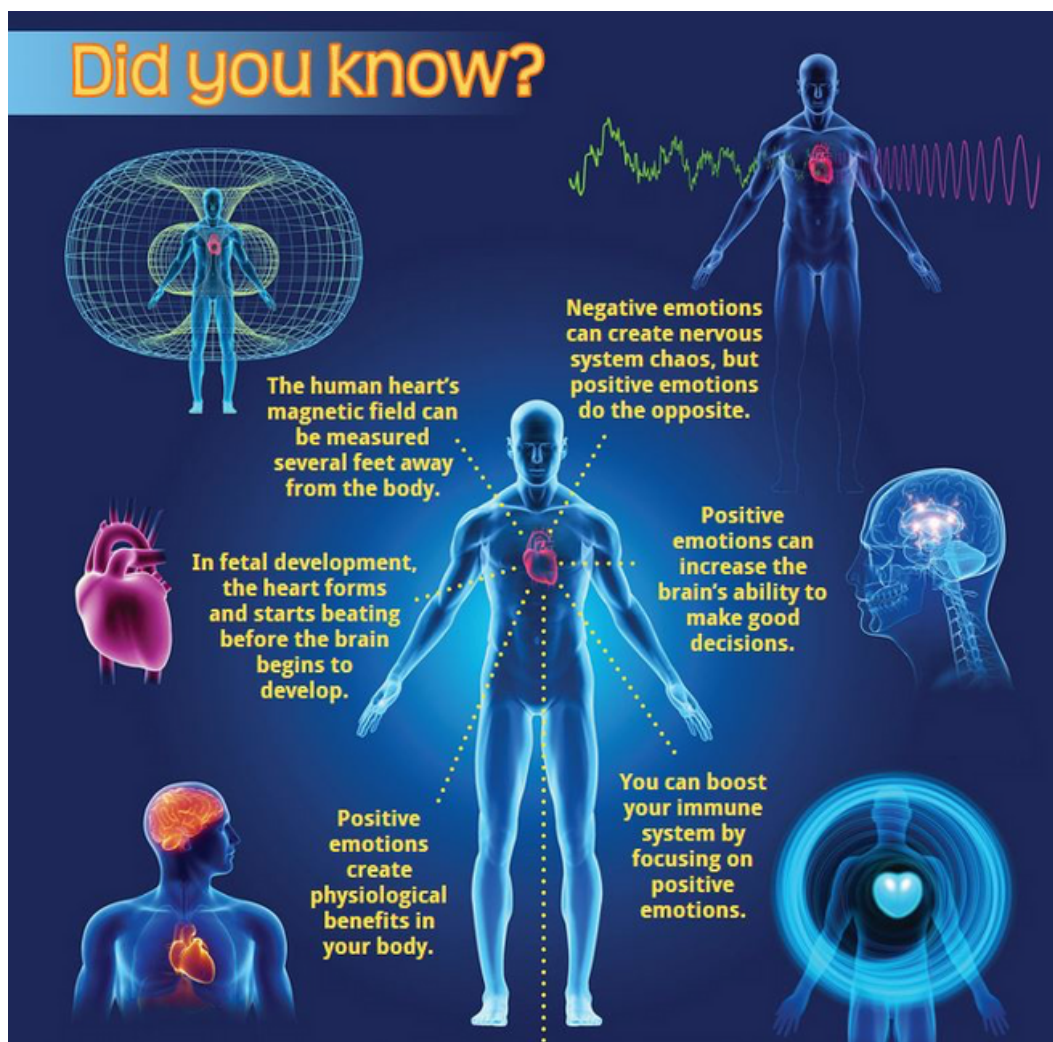


Managing Emotions and Building Inner Strength.

Have you ever noticed how your heart beats faster when you're stressed or scared, and how it feels more relaxed when you're calm?

Heart-Brain Communication.

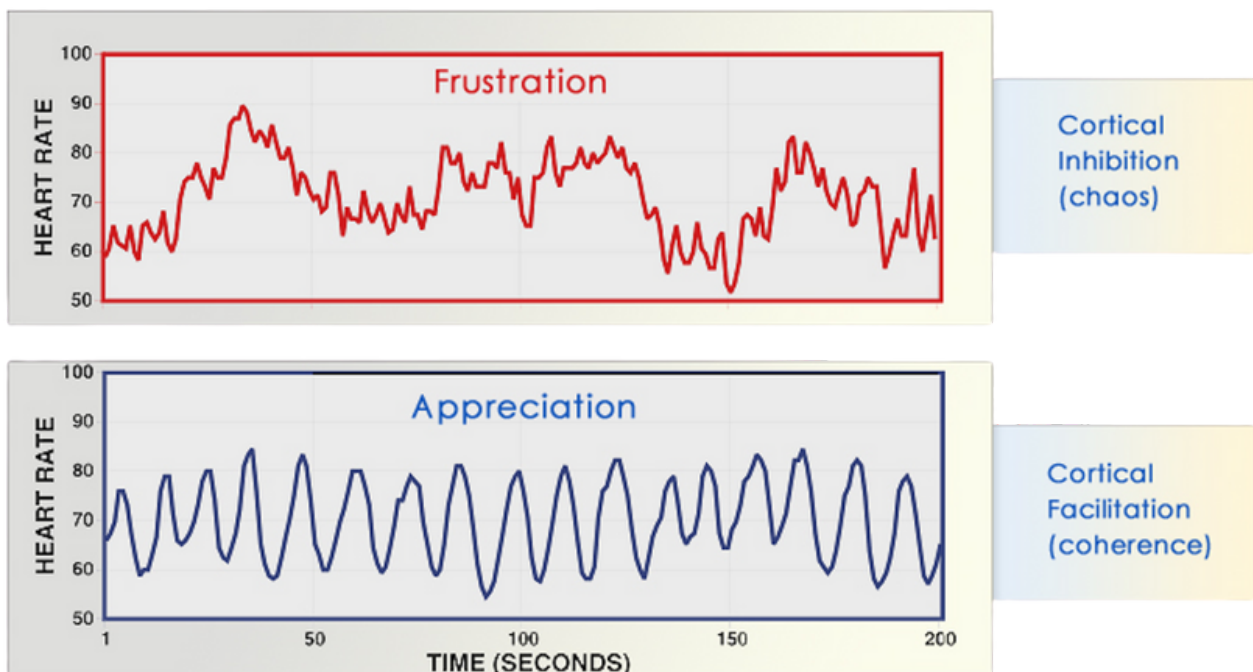
- The heart and brain are in constant communication through the nervous system.
- The heart sends more signals to the brain than the brain sends to the heart.
- These signals influence emotions, mental clarity, and decision-making.



Heart Rate Variability (HRV).

HRV is the variation in time between heartbeats. It reflects emotional and physiological states:

- When we're stressed or frustrated, HRV patterns are erratic and chaotic.
- When we feel calm, appreciative, or loving, HRV becomes smooth and rhythmic (a state called coherence).



Have you ever been stuck in a cycle of stress or frustration, where one bad thought or feeling seems to lead to another?

You may be in a Compulsion Loop!

How does the Compulsion Loop work?

1. **Triggering Emotion** – A stressful situation happens (e.g. a conflict at work, financial worries, or an unexpected problem).
2. **Heart Signals to the Brain** – The heart's erratic rhythm sends chaotic signals to the brain, reinforcing negative emotional states.
3. **Brain Reinforces the Emotion** – The brain sensing stress, activates the survival response, releasing cortisol and reinforcing negative thoughts.
4. **Body Reacts Physically** – Muscles tighten, breathing becomes shallow, digestion slows, and energy levels drop.
5. **More Negative Emotions** – These physical sensations feed back into the heart and brain, making you feel even more anxious, frustrated, or overwhelmed.
6. **Loop Repeats** – The brain and heart stay stuck in this cycle, making it harder to shift into a positive emotional state.

Your body becomes "addicted" to stress because this loop keeps reinforcing itself!

Tools to Break the Loop:

Interrupt the cycle by creating a new loop of coherence and resilience.

Step 1: Shift Awareness – Recognise when you're stuck in the loop & the patterns you turn to: Online shopping, food, scrolling on our phone.

Step 2: Heart-Focused Breathing – Breathe deeply and focus on your heart to change your heart rhythm.

Step 3: Activate a Positive Emotion – Recall a moment of gratitude, love, or appreciation to shift your brain signals.

Step 4: Reinforce the New Pattern – The heart starts sending coherent signals to the brain, which calms the body and stops the negative cycle.

Make a List of people, pets, places and accomplishments that generate an uplifting, positive feeling for you:

Example to Try:

- Think of a frustrating situation for a few seconds.
- Notice how your body reacts.
- Now, take slow, deep breaths and recall a happy memory or someone you appreciate.
- Notice how your body and emotions shift.

Heartmath Quick Coherence Technique.

Quick Coherence Technique:

Step 1: Heart-Focused Breathing.

- Shift your attention to your heart area.
- Breathe slowly and deeply.
- Imagine your breath flowing in and out through your heart.
- Take slower, deeper breaths (about 5-6 seconds in and 5-6 seconds out).

Step 2: Activate a Positive Emotion.

- Recall a positive experience, memory, or feeling.
- Focus on emotions like appreciation, gratitude, love, or compassion.
- Try to re-experience that emotion as if it's happening now.
- Allow this feeling to spread throughout your body.

Step 3: Sustain the Feeling.

- Stay in this state for a few minutes.
- Continue breathing through your heart while holding onto the positive emotion.
- Feel the shift in your body and mind as coherence increases.

Week Three (3)



Transforming Stress and Building Resilience.

Energy-Draining Situations and Events Exercise

This exercise is to help you gain more awareness about daily stressors. Include the stressors that are obvious and easy to see. Also, try to become more aware of the stressors that are subtle and not as obvious because they often add up and become big energy drains and impact us in ways we may not be aware of.

1. In the first column write down the situations, events or experiences (stressors) you encounter during the day that drain your inner battery and deplete your resilience.
2. In the second column, consider your emotional response(s) for each stressor. How do you react? Depleting emotional responses are typically what we experience as stress.
3. In the column labeled Impact, write down how your emotional response(s) affect you and how you respond.
4. In the fourth column write down what you do now, for each stressor, realising it may or may not be effective.

See an example of this spreadsheet on the next page.

Stressor	Emotion and Attitude Responses	Impact	What I Do Now
Mistake at work	Frustration Shame	Dislike my job	Apologize Feel guilty
Argue with family member	Blame Anger	Argument Resentment	Avoid Family member
Children fighting	Anxious Depressed	Headache Can't think clearly	Eat junk food Drink alcohol

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Unregulated emotions and attitudes lead to unwanted and ineffective behaviours that often create even more stress and rarely meaningful solutions.

The result is people often find their current solutions are not effective.

Ask yourself:

“Are my current solutions genuinely effective and aligned with what I want more of in my life?”

Energy-Draining Situations and Events Exercise

Stressor	Emotion and Attitude Responses	Impact	What I Do Now

Energy-Renewing Situations and Events Exercise

This exercise can help you notice and appreciate simple things around you. Often we are so busy, pre-occupied, overwhelmed, stuck in drama or distracted that we overlook the simple things that are all around us that can be regenerative.

A sense of renewal often comes from experiencing the emotions and attitudes we want more of in our lives. With practice we can learn to draw upon regenerative emotions and attitudes to positively impact our daily lives.

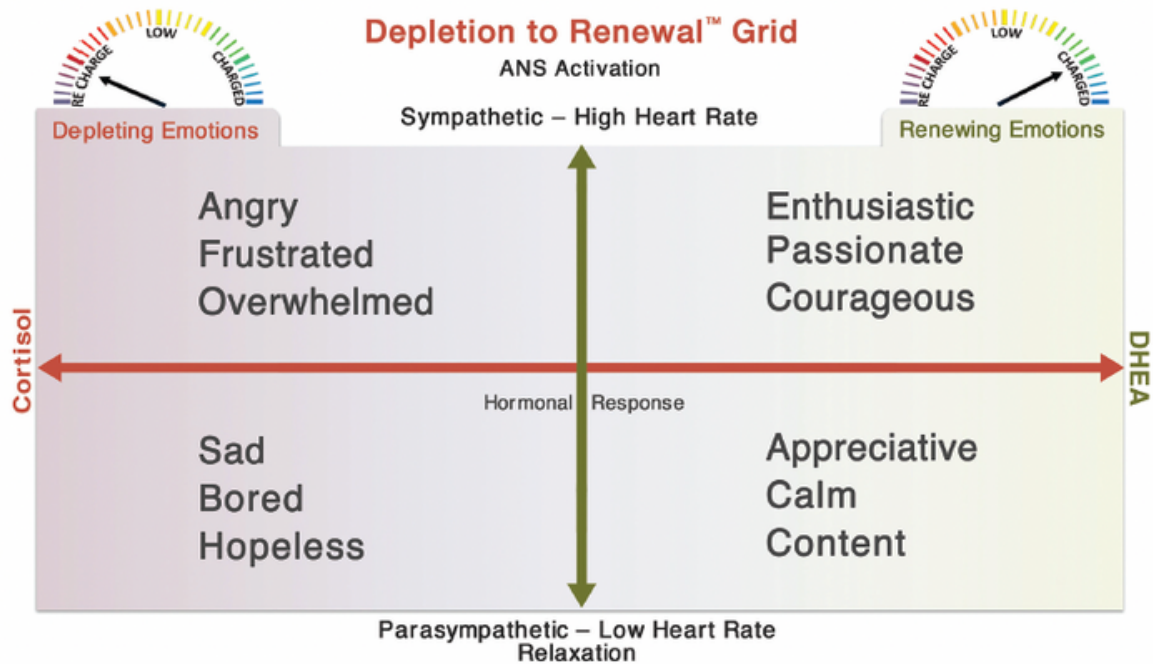
1. In the first column, identify situations or moments when you felt a sense of renewal, as though you were charging your inner battery. Write those in the first column.
2. In the second column write down the emotions or attitudes you experience in each situation you identified. You may find that you experience more than one emotion in each situation.
3. Next, consider how those situations impact you mentally, emotionally and physically. How do they impact your relationships, your communication, decisions you make or your resilience? Write your responses in the column labeled Impact.

Situations	Emotions and Attitudes	Impact
Family member asks if I need anything	Appreciation Felt cared for	Changed my attitude
Finished a project	Sense of accomplishment Proud of my effort	Relieved Refocus and help others
A good talk with my friend	Calm Peaceful	Feel more connected Recharged my energy

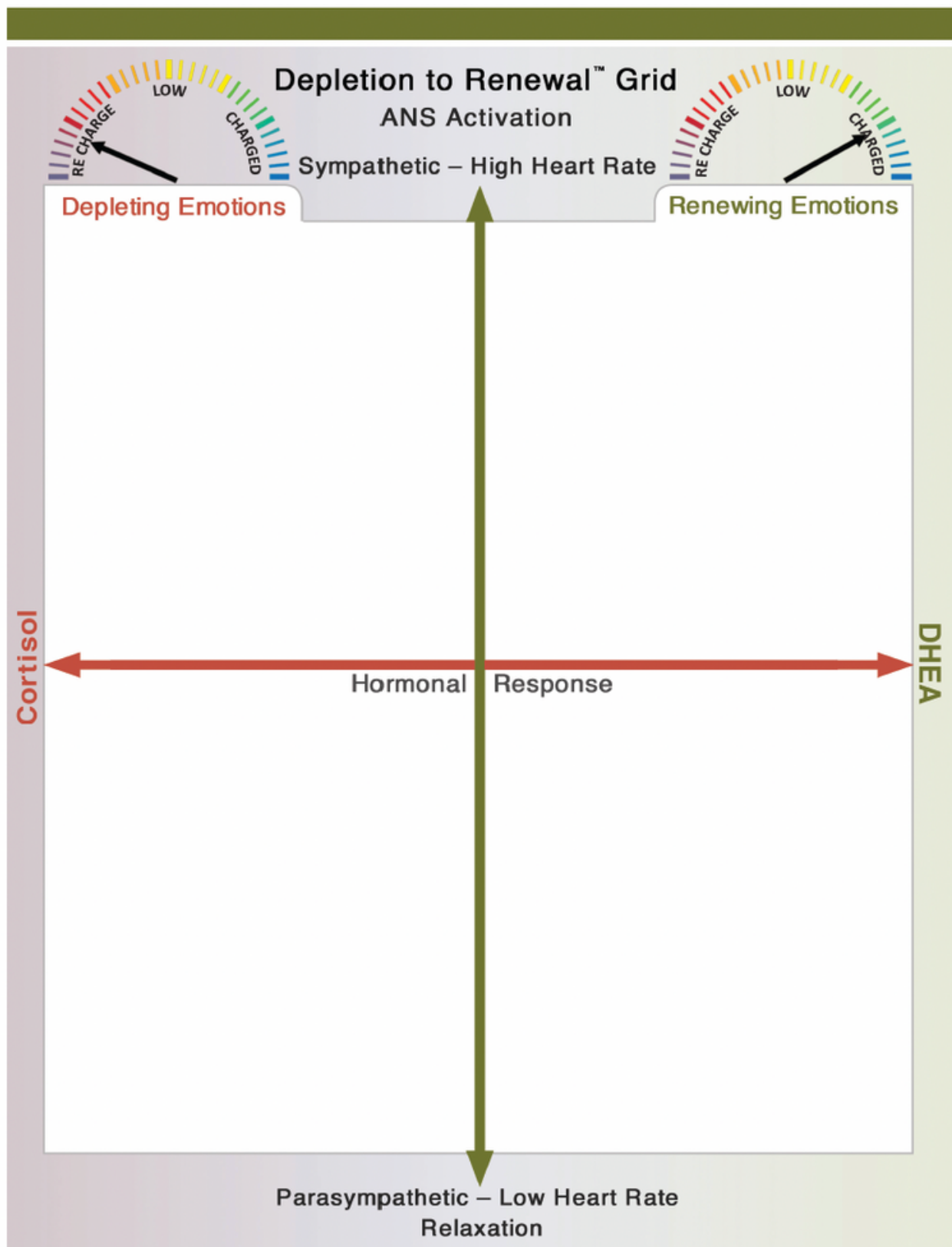
Energy-Renewing Situations and Events Exercise

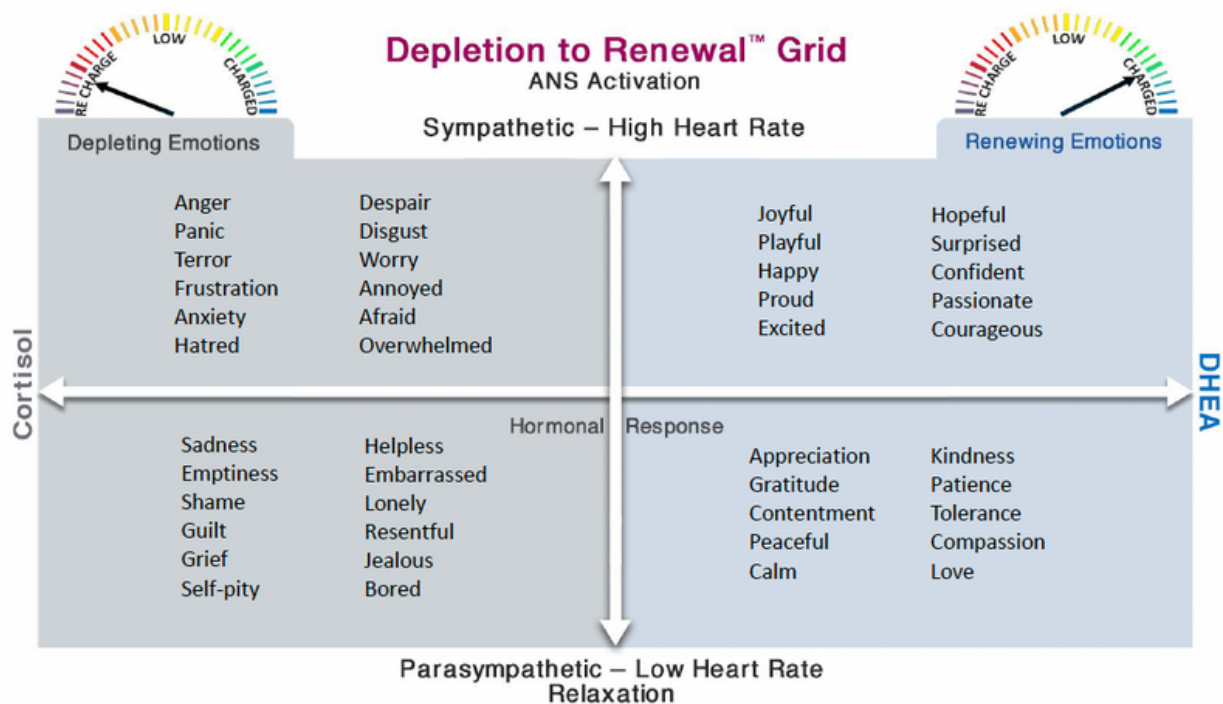
Situations	Emotions and Attitudes	Impact

Depletion to Renewal™ Grid



Every emotion you experience has an effect on your body and on your resilience, *whether or not you are aware of it*. Every emotion immediately causes changes in your body, affects your ability to build and sustain your energy and either renews or depletes your resilience. The two main physiological systems that control the cascade of these changes in your body are the hormonal system and the autonomic nervous system (ANS).





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The Heart lock in Technique.

Step 1: Heart-Focused Breathing

- Shift your attention to your heart area. Breathe slowly and deeply
- Imagine your breath flowing in and out through your heart
- Take slower, deeper breaths (about 5-6 seconds in and 5-6 seconds out)

Step 2: Activate Positive Emotion

- Active feelings such as appreciation, care or compassion
- Allow this feeling to spread throughout your body.

Step 3: Radiate

- Radiate that emotion to yourself and then send it out to someone who you think will benefit from it

Week Four (4)



Building Emotional Agility and Personal Power.

Understanding Emotional Agility.

Emotional agility is the ability to navigate our emotions with awareness and flexibility.

Allowing us to:

- Recognise our emotions without letting them control us.
- Shift our emotional state when needed.
- Choose how to respond rather than react impulsively.

Why is Emotional Agility important?

- **Improves relationships** - Helps us respond thoughtfully instead of lashing out or withdrawing.
- **Reduces stress** - Allows us to shift away from negative emotions more quickly.
- **Enhances decision making** - We make better choices when not clouded by reactive emotions.

Recognising Emotional Reactions.

Questions:

Ask yourself:

- What emotions do I experience most often?
(Look back at the Grids you completed in week 3 - pages 13 & 15)
- How do these emotions affect my thoughts and actions?
- Are my emotional responses automatic, or do I choose how I react?

**“You are not your emotions.
You are the awareness
that observes them.**

**The power to choose your response is
always in your hands”.**

Heartsoak Technique:

Step 1: Identify a negative emotion - Notice when you feel stressed, frustrated or anxious.

Step 2: Heart focused breathing - Slow your breath and focus on your heart.

Step 3: Choose a positive attitude - Shift to an attitude of courage, patience or gratitude.

Step 4: Breathe in the new attitude - Imagine filling your body with this positive feeling.



Week Five (5)



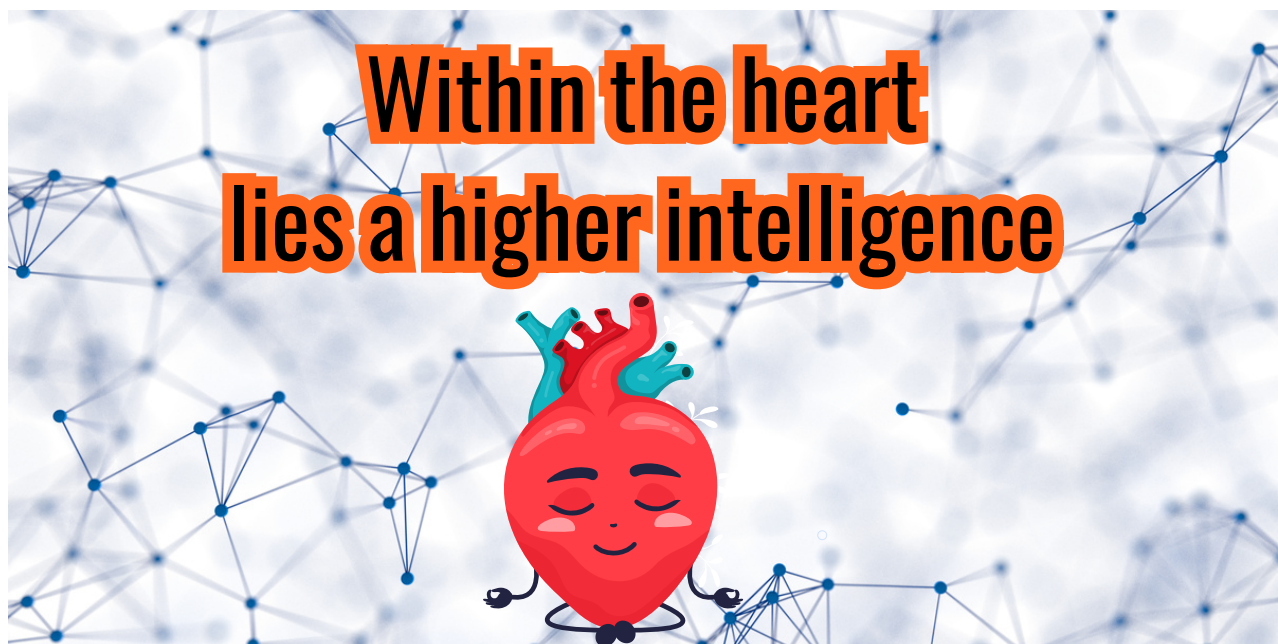
Strengthening Intuition and Decision Making.

Life is full of ups and downs and setbacks are a natural part of our journey. However, resilience is what allows us to bounce back from difficulties, learn from challenges and grow stronger.

Stress, as we have learnt, can cloud our judgement and disconnect us from our inner wisdom, making it harder to see the best way forward. Yet, deep within each of us is a source of intuition, a quiet, knowing voice that offers clarity, insight and guidance when we take the time to listen.

By pausing, shifting our focus inward and creating a sense of emotional balance, we can access this Heart Intelligence, allowing us to navigate life's challenges with greater confidence.

Whether it's making a tough decision, handling a conflict, or finding the strength to keep going, our intuition can provide answers that logic alone may not reveal.



**You may not control every situation, but
you always control how you respond.
Resilience grows when we take small
intentional steps forward.**

**This section is about a past set back that
you overcame.**

What did you learn?

Questions:

- What was the biggest challenge in that situation, and how did it make you feel at the time?
- What specific actions or choices did you make that contributed to overcoming the setback?
- What advice would you give to someone going through a similar situation?

Steps for Freeze frame:

Step 1:

Pause and acknowledge the challenge - Instead of reacting, take a moment to pause.

Step 2:

Heart focused breathing - Breathe deeply and focus on your heart.

Step 3:

Shift to a positive or neutral emotion - Recall a moment of appreciation, calm or courage.

Step 4:

Ask your heart for clarity - What's the best way to handle this?

Week Six (6)



Integrating resilience, moving forward with confidence.

Over the past 5 weeks, we have explored powerful tools and insights to strengthen resilience, regulate emotions and reconnect to our heart's intelligence.

We've learn't how stress impacts our wellbeing, how to shift from reaction to response and how to use HeartMath techniques like Heart Focused Breathing and Freeze Frame to navigate challenges with greater clarity.

Resilience is not about avoiding difficulties, it's about building the capacity to move through them with awareness, adaptability, and strength. By practising emotional agility, tuning into our intuition, and making heart-centred choices, we empower ourselves to handle life's ups and downs with greater ease and confidence.

**You already have everything within you to thrive.
Now it's about continuing to practise, trust yourself and
embrace the journey ahead with a resilient heart.**

**YOU'VE
GOT THIS**

Questions:

- What is the biggest insight or lesson you've gained from this programme?
- What HeartMath technique has been the most helpful for you, and how have you used it in your daily life?
- Have you noticed any changes in how you respond to stress or challenges, if so what's different?
- How has tuning into your heart's intelligence helped you make decisions or gain clarity?



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