

WELLNESS

World
Media

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1 NOV 2025

TEACHING BEYOND WORDS **Mike Stone**

THE ENERGY
OF FLOW
PAUL MRACEK

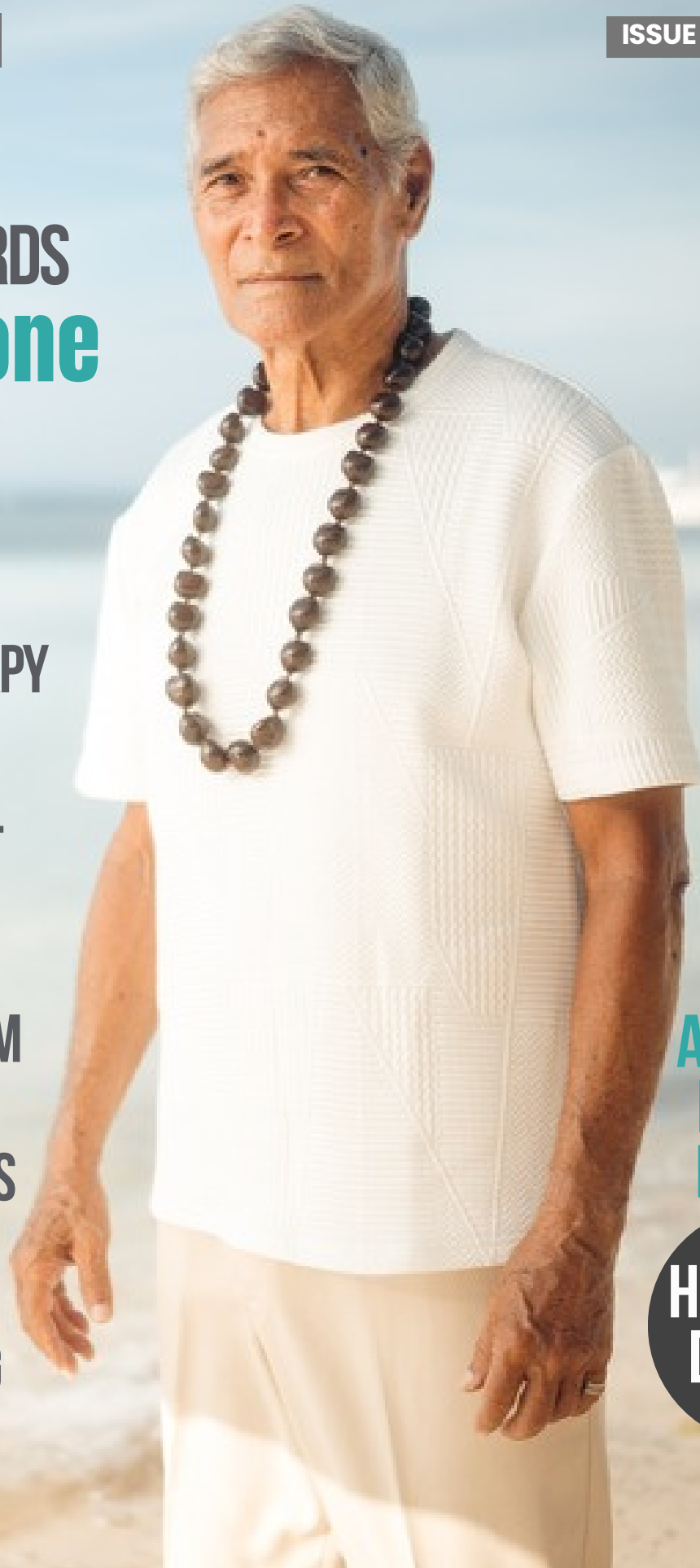
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FOR COLD THERAPY
MEGHAN JARVIS

HARD WAY TO
ENLIGHTENMENT
CHRISTIAN GRUBL

VALIDATING
ANCIENT WISDOM
GREG BRADY

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IS BEST?
ED CURTAIN



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READY
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Editor's Intro

WELLNESS WORLD MEDIA

The shift from what has been deemed "**Health & Fitness**" to "**Wellness**" is now much clearer



Welcome to Wellness World Media.

Thank you so much for being here. In our fast-paced world, time is our most precious gift, and I'm grateful you've chosen to spend some of it with us.

This first issue of **Wellness World Media** has been a long time in the making. In many ways, it's the culmination of a lifetime's passion. For over 52 years, I've been immersed in the world of martial arts, health, and fitness. With 35+ of those years of running clubs, gyms, and natural therapy centers, with the privilege of guiding and learning from thousands of people.

The biggest lesson I've learned?

We all thrive with a little help from our friends. This magazine is my way of introducing you to some of mine. We've brought together a circle of incredibly knowledgeable and generous writers to share their wisdom with you. If you have something to share we would certainly love to hear from you.

Inside these pages, we'll explore what it truly means to live a healthier and more purposefully driven life. We'll look at the complete picture, blending physical, mental, spiritual, and scientific perspectives to make it easier to become our best version. We will reach out to authorities from numerous modalities, disciplines and professions to bring you the insights, that will resonate with you. We encourage you to reach out to us and tell us what you liked or disliked, so we may continue to provide the stories that most interest you.

My hope is simple: that you'll find something of value in every issue, something that sparks a new idea, offers a fresh perspective, or helps you on your own unique path.

The term "**Wellness**" as many people will recognise, has overtaken "**Health & Fitness**" because it represents a broader more holistic and comprehensive approach to wellbeing.

Some of these aspect includes:

- o Mental Wellbeing: Stress reduction, mindfulness, and mental clarity.
- o Emotional Wellbeing: Resilience and a positive outlook.
- o Social Wellbeing: A sense of connection with community and career

So lets all explore the vast and emerging wellness world together.

Graham Slater

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**GET A
QUOTE**

A photograph of a person standing under a waterfall, performing a ritual. The person is wearing a white cloth around their waist and has their hands raised in a specific gesture. The waterfall is surrounded by lush green moss and rocks.

THE HARD WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

The Path of the Japanese Yamabushi Monks
By CHRISTIAN GRÜBL

The spiritual path is not one-size-fits-all. While many seek peace in comfort and quiet contemplation, others are drawn to a more arduous path, one that tests the very limits of human endurance. This is the vision of **"the hard way" to enlightenment**, a path embodied by the **Yamabushi**, the mountain monks of Japan.

This is not a gentle retreat. Imagine a twelve-hour march through the freezing mountains, pushing exhausted muscles over sharp stones and treacherous roots, soaked to the bone, and subsisting on handfuls of leftover rice. This is the reality of Shugendo, the syncretic religion practiced by the Yamabushi.

This is a path that forces a confrontation with the self, asking the core question: **"Why am I here?"**

This profound and difficult journey attracts a dedicated few, including Westerners like Austrian **Christian Gröbl**, who was drawn from an extensive background in martial arts to the mystical practices of the Yamabushi monks. Christian's journey to become one of the first European Yamabushi highlights the demand from people to search extensively, to find a deeper meaning of life, through ancient, rigorous discipline.

The Shugendo path is filled with fascinating, almost primal, methods for achieving spiritual clarity. For some this is the only way to achieve this state of mind.

Fire and Water: The Tools of Purity

The Yamabushi use nature as a tool for transformation, primarily through the elements of water and fire.

Takigyo – Meditation Under the Waterfall

This is far more than a cold shower; it is a profound ritual of purification. Rooted in Shinto mythology, Takigyo is a practice of total surrender. The ascetic, or Gyoja, stands beneath the crushing force of a natural waterfall, even in winter.

The goal is to move beyond the physical shock and enter a state of deep acceptance. By reciting the mantra of the deity Fudo Myoo (the Unshakable Wisdom King), forming a specific mudra (hand gesture), and visualizing a mandala, the practitioner symbolically absorbs the deity's fiery, determined energy. The waterfall becomes a cosmic connection, a direct line to the universe that "washes away" daily mental clutter and material attachments. It is, in essence, a preparation for death, a total release of the ego.

Goma – The Sacred Fire Ceremony In contrast to the descending water, the Goma ceremony uses rising fire. This is a meticulously detailed ritual where offerings and wooden sticks inscribed with wishes are consecrated in a sacred fire.

The monks, often chanting to the powerful beat of a taiko drum, create an intense vibration of energy that resonates through the entire temple. The vision here is one of transformation; the rising smoke is believed to carry the prayers and offerings directly to the deities in the universe.

It is a powerful, energetic communion that requires years of dedicated practice to master.

Continues next page

The reward of this path,
is a profound sense of
freedom and a clarity that
can only be earned the
Hard Way.

The spiritual paths of the Yamabushi and the warrior-monks and even the ninja clans who adapted their secret teachings for martial purposes, are famously grueling. These practices, like fire-walking or hanging from cliffs, were designed to forge a "superhuman" discipline and psychological strength.

Today, this path is fading. In Japan, as in the West, fewer successors are willing to submit to such dogmatic rules and physical hardship.

And yet, the "hard way" endures for a reason. While the specific rituals are unique, the common understanding is universal. Shugendo is not just a religion; it is a spiritual training to see the world from a different perspective.

The goal is to continually learn your personal limits and then, through intense focus and communion with nature, push just beyond them. For those who walk this path, the reward is not comfort, but a profound sense of freedom and a clarity that can only be earned the Hard Way.

Continues next page





Many people believe that Shugendo and the Yamabushi are connected to the ninja of the feudal era. However, this is only partially true, and today most Yamabushi are unwilling to discuss this connection.

In fact, the Sohei were **warrior monks** who used the skills they acquired through asceticism and meditation applied them to martial purposes.

The most famous of them was probably the monk Benkei in the 12th century. However, the ninja clans of various schools utilized the secret meditation system of Kuji-in and Kuji-kiri.

This form of channeling the body and magic is now only transmitted orally from priest to monk in "Kuden" and is considered secret teachings in many schools.



The ninja adapted the Kuji to use it for combat purposes, to gain strength, or to manipulate the opponent. Many densho of the various ninjutsu and samurai schools also mention that they repeatedly attended classes in esoteric Buddhist temples to learn these practices.

About the Author

Christian Grübl is an Austrian author and practitioner of Japanese spiritual traditions. His journey began in his early teens with dedicated training in martial arts, including Ninjutsu and Karate, in Japan. This path eventually led him to the esoteric Buddhist teachings of Shugendo.

After years of perseverance, he was invited to train with the Yamabushi (mountain monks) and became one of the first Europeans to undergo the Tokudo initiation. With over fifteen years of practice, Christian is a member of the Yamato Shugen school and is highly trained in traditional rituals such as the Goma fire ceremony and the Kaihogyo meditative hike. He writes about his unique experiences to share the profound, demanding path of Shugendo with a wider audience.



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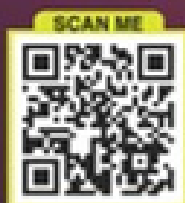
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THE SHIFT FROM SUCCESS TO SIGNIFICANCE

How Industry Leaders Can Build Impact That Outlasts Success

With Pele Ramdhani

The dynamic world of fitness, wellness, and human performance, success is often measured by tangible metrics

such as member growth, retention rates, social reach, and quarterly profit. Yet after decades designing, leading, and scaling fitness enterprises worldwide, I've learned that the greatest measure of leadership is not in numbers, but in the lives that are changed.

Legacy is not a chapter written at the end of life, it's a living manuscript, crafted moment by moment through purpose-driven action.

Legacy as the Highest Form of Leadership

As I look back on sixty years of life and more than forty shaping successes within the fitness and wellness sector, I'm filled with gratitude for those who came before us: the mentors, pioneers, and innovators who laid the groundwork for the thriving global wellness movement we now enjoy.

They built when there was no roadmap. They inspired when resources were scarce. Their resilience created the foundation for our collective progress.

To honour them is to lead with awareness, to recognize that we stand taller today because of the giants who came before us.

Our responsibility now is to continue what they began: to lead with vision, empower with purpose, and build legacies that outlast the brands we create.

A Movement of Remembrance

I call this process the Remembrance of



Wisdom, a deliberate act of gratitude that ensures experience doesn't fade with time but multiplies through mentorship. This is how leadership evolves, when what we've earned becomes the launchpad for the next generation. Leadership is not about innovation alone it's about continuity. It's about ensuring the heart that started the movement keeps beating in new hands."

After decades consulting with gym founders, wellness entrepreneurs, and corporate teams, I came to identify a mindset I call the **Success Legacy Zone (SLZ)**.

In this zone, leaders stop chasing success and start creating significance. They build businesses that serve people, not egos. They make decisions filtered through impact, not impulse.

Operating in the SLZ means every moment contributes to something enduring, a culture, a principle, a shared mission. It's where your daily choices align with the legacy you wish to leave.

Imagine an industry where every fitness professional and wellness leader filtered decisions through that lens. The ripple effect would redefine how we measure success, from revenue to relevance, from recognition to remembrance.

The Dash That Defines Us

Life gives us two dates: the day we're born and the day we depart. But it's the dash in between that defines our story.

That dash represents who we are, how we lead, and what we leave behind. It's the measure of every handshake, every innovation, every client who feels seen and inspired because of your work. For those of us in fitness and wellness, an industry built on transformation, our true impact isn't in the programs we design or the brands we grow, but in the people, we empower to believe in better.

The most powerful ROI is the ripple of impact you create in others. Legacy is the language of contribution.

Final Reflection: The Living Legacy

To every coach, business owner, and leader in our community, your legacy isn't waiting for you at the finish line. It's being written in real time. Every decision, every act of service, every story you share shapes the culture of this industry. So live intentionally. Lead with heart. Build something that matters, not just for today, but for the future of wellness itself. Because success fades, but significance echoes.

About the author - Pele Ramdhani

*Legacy Leader | Wellness Visionary |
Growth Catalyst*

Legacy
360

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Years of Impact

+2m
Members
Impacted

+\$2b
Revenue
Generated

+10,000
Staff Trained

1,000
Clubs Operated

A dynamic session that sparks actionable ideas & opportunities to enhance revenue, member engagement, and overall club performance.

I would love to offer you a complimentary 30-minute Discovery Session, where we'll explore strategies to enhance member engagement, drive revenue growth, and elevate the overall experience at your club. This is a no-obligation, value-packed session designed to provide actionable insights specific to your business.

Start growing today!

Contact Pele Ramdhani

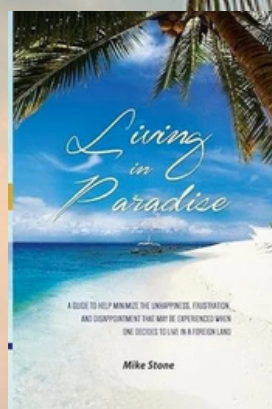
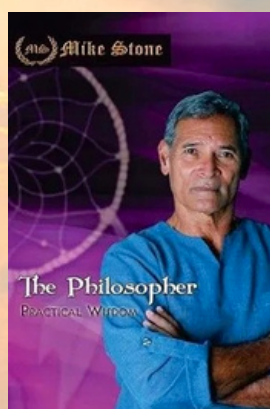
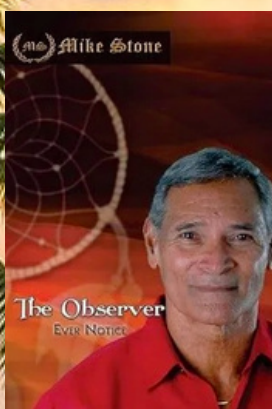
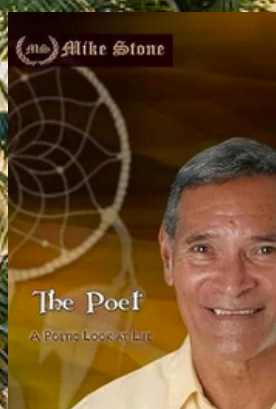
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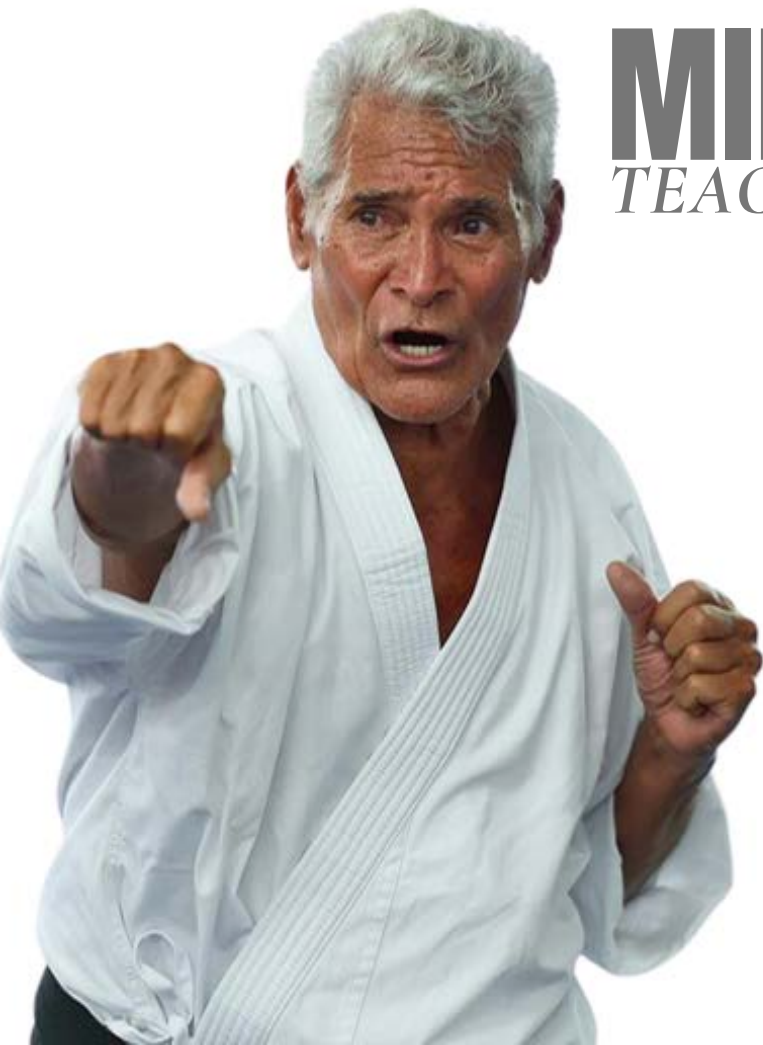
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MIKE STONE

TEACHING BEYOND WORDS

This is because everyone receives truth differently. Some learn best through hearing, absorbing the rhythm and cadence of instruction.

Others need to think it through, to analyze and connect each movement to a logical structure. Still others must feel it, through emotion, through instinct, through the unspoken resonance of the lesson. There are those who must experience it, physically. They need to feel the force of a technique.



MIKE STONE - ONE THE GREATEST KICKERS

Mike Stone has synthesized a lifetime of experience, from the brutal honesty of the tournament floor to the creative expression of filmmaking and the quiet contemplation of writing, into his role as a philosopher and wellness mentor. His teachings have evolved from mastering an opponent to mastering the self.

Through his courses, videos, and mentorship, he guides students to understand the deep connection between mind, body, and spirit. He challenges them to move beyond the physical and to cultivate the inner attributes that define a true master: **humility, compassion, courage, and an unwavering commitment to personal growth.**

Spiritual Intelligence: Teaching Beyond Words

After decades of walking the path, you come to understand one essential truth: proper communication goes far beyond words. Words can be helpful, yes, but in the pursuit of mastery, they are often the last to matter.

**The body already knows. The spirit is listening.
The intuition is leading.**

A true teacher doesn't just speak to a student; they feel them. You must learn to sense where their understanding truly lies, not from what they say, but in how they move, how they react, and how they absorb the energy in any given moment.



MIKE STONE - CHUCK NORRIS - BOB WALL

The Two Guardians: Instinct and Intuition

To walk this path, you must awaken the two guardians that already reside within you - ***Instinct and Intuition.***

Instinct is the body's first guardian. It is the body's natural language. Before the mind can even form a sentence, the body has already responded. In sparring, in conflict, or in moments of real-life danger, instinct is what protects. It reacts, it anticipates, it adjusts. You don't think about getting out of the way, you just move.

This is not learned. This is awakened.

Martial training does not give you instinct, it refines it. It strips away the hesitation, the doubt, and the mental clutter. It sharpens your natural capacity to sense danger, respond to subtle shifts in energy, and act without delay. This is why this practice is more than technique. It is the cultivation of pure awareness. **Presence. Readiness.**

Intuition is the soul's inner compass. If instinct is the body's guardian, intuition is the soul's guide. In teaching, you will see students suddenly "get it" before they could ever explain how or why. A movement flows through them with a natural grace.

A complex pattern clicks into place. A correction lands not in their ears, but deep in their body. That is intuition at work, when something feels right at a level deeper than conscious thought.

The Temple of Knowing

The dojo, the mat, the place of practice, this is not just a room. It is not a gym. It is a temple of awareness.

In this sacred space, we are not learning combat; we are relearning how to trust ourselves. We learn how to connect our raw instinct with disciplined action. We refine our intuition through repetition, but also through stillness.

In this space, communication becomes a holistic experience. Words may be spoken, but the real teaching occurs through the rhythm of breath, the quality of presence, and the subtle energy shifts in posture and gaze. The lesson happens in the pause before a strike. It happens in the sincerity of the bow. It happens in the silence between techniques.

This is a spiritual language, a language of respect, awareness, and internal mastery.

This is where you learn to return to your own inner authority. Too many people in this world have abandoned their inner knowing in favour of someone else's definition of truth.

As a martial artist, you learn quickly: what you know in your body, in your gut, in your spirit, is your truth.



MIKE - JAMES COBURN - CHUCK NORRIS - BRUCE LEE



THE AMERICAN NINJA MOVIE ERA



WITH PRISCILLA PRESLEY

As a mentor, you learn to rely on this every day. You don't follow a rigid method. You learn to read the room. You tune in to the subtle energy of each student. You let the lesson reveal itself, not just through a set curriculum, but through a living connection.

Intuition allows us to see beyond what is visible. To hear what isn't being said. To feel where the real teaching truly needs to happen.

Spiritual intelligence is not mystical fluff. It is the highest form of embodied awareness. It's trusting what your senses tell you long before your intellect has time to catch up. It's honouring your instincts, cultivating your intuition, and allowing experience to be your most outstanding teacher.

Words matter, yes certainly, but they only matter when they are backed by a lived, embodied truth. What we pass on to others is not just what we say, but how we move, how we carry ourselves, and who we are in every single moment.

Continues next page

The Essential Truth: Remembering Who You Are

This brings us to the great misconception of our journey. We are often taught that life is a school, a place where we are sent to learn life's lessons.

We are told that if we do not learn from our mistakes, our limited thinking, and our harmful habits, we are doomed to repeat them.

This is a noble idea, but it is not the essential truth. The truth is that there is nothing to learn, your soul already knows everything.

You are here not to acquire knowledge, but to remember it. You are here to experience who you are not, and from those very experiences, decide who you truly desire to be.

Through countless opportunities to choose what is not aligned with your true self, you are given a chance to remember who you indeed are: love and light.

This is not a passive journey. Every time you choose an aspect of yourself that does not resonate with your true nature, be it fear, anger, or doubt, you gain insight.

You are given a sharper contrast, a deeper understanding of your spiritual essence.

Your thoughts, your words, your expressions, and your actions are sacred. They are the tools by which you create your reality.

When you finally recognize who you are, your choices gain a profound meaning and purpose. Your life, your practice, and your every interaction become an act of service.

You are here to embody and share the love and light of your spiritual creation. By demonstrating this, by living this truth, you illuminate the path for others who are lost in the darkness, helping them, in turn, discover their own inner light.

The following five exercises are a practical means to develop and use this philosophy in daily life and the more you use it, the more aware of your abilities.

1. "The Language Beyond Words"

Practice: The Partner Sensitivity Drill

This exercise is designed to bypass verbal analysis and teach you to listen with your body.

- How to do it: Stand facing a partner in a relaxed, natural stance. One person (the "Receiver") closes their eyes. The other (the "Giver") places a hand very lightly on the Receiver's shoulder or upper back.
- The Giver's job is to think about a direction (a gentle push, a slight pull, a guide to the left) for a full three seconds before applying any physical pressure
- The Receiver's job is to quiet their mind and feel the intention from the Giver, the subtle shift in energy, the change in weight, the electrical "charge" that precedes the motion.
- After a moment, the Giver applies the gentle pressure.

Switch roles. This drill trains you to sense what isn't being said and to feel the "language beyond words"



MIKE - INDUCTED INTO THE PRESTIGIOUS **BLACK BELT** HALL OF FAME 2024

2. "The Two Guardians: Instinct"

Practice: The 'Soft Eyes' Scan (Awakening Instinct)

Instinct is sharpened by moving from "hard focus" to "total awareness." This is a classic martial concept often called Zanshin (remaining mind).

- **How to do it:** Stand or sit comfortably. Instead of focusing your eyes intensely on a single point (like reading this text), "soften" your gaze.
 - Allow your peripheral vision to expand. Your goal is not to look at everything in the room, but to sense everything.
 - Become aware of the furthest points to your left and right, and the floor and ceiling, all at the same time, without moving your eyes
 - Notice subtle movements, shifts in light, or changes in the "feel" of the room. This is your Instinct in its ready state, calm, expansive, and prepared, not tense and narrow.
- Practice this for 60 seconds.



3. "The Two Guardians: Intuition"

Practice: Intuitive Stillness (Honoring Intuition)

Intuition is the soul's guide, but it whispers. It cannot be heard over the noise of the conscious mind. This practice creates the silence for it to be heard.

- **How to do it:** At the end of a workout, a practice session, or a long day, sit in seiza (formal kneeling) or cross-legged. This is often called Mokuso (quiet contemplation).
- Close your eyes. First, simply observe the rhythm of your own breath (Kokyu). Don't try to change it; just notice it.
- After a minute, let go of the breath. Your only job is to sit in the stillness. Do not search for answers. Do not ask your intuition questions.

Your task is to simply create the empty space. By honoring the silence, you give your intuition the room it needs to "land" in your body, just as the article says. Do this for 2-3 minutes

4. "The Temple of Knowing"

Practice: The Threshold Bow (Creating Sacred Space)

This transforms a simple action into a powerful mindset ritual, turning any space into a "Temple of Knowing."

- **How to do it:** Every time you step onto your mat, into your gym, or even into your home office to do "deep work," pause at the threshold.
- Bring your feet together. Perform a deliberate, standing bow (Ritsurei).
- This bow is not for anyone else. It is a physical declaration to yourself. You are saying: "I am leaving the outside world behind. I am here, now. I am present. I am open. I am ready to trust what I feel."
- This simple act clears your mental clutter and respects the "sincerity of the bow," instantly connecting you to your purpose.



5. "The Essential Truth: Remembering Who You Are"

Practice: The 'Hara' Affirmation (The Act of Remembering)

This practice shifts your energy from a state of "learning" (implying lack) to "remembering" (implying wholeness).

- **How to do it:** Stand in a stable stance. Place one hand over your heart. Place your other hand over your hara (your center of gravity, about two inches below your navel).
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply into your hara.
- State aloud (or just in your mind, but with full intention): "I am not here to learn. I am here to remember."
- Feel the vibration of that statement in your center and in your heart. This is a verbal ritual that uses your own voice as a tool to realign your thoughts with your "inner authority" and "spiritual essence."





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How Modern Science is Validating Ancient Wisdom

The Proof is in the Practice

Greg Brady

In the world of holistic and supplementary health, we've always known it. We've known that practices passed down for millennia meditation, virtuous living, the cultivation of inner stillness, are profoundly healing. We've seen their transformative power in ourselves and in our clients. For decades, this "ancient wisdom" was often set in opposition to "modern science," as if they were two different languages.

But what if they aren't?

What if modern science is simply the last one to the party, bringing with it a new set of tools from MRI scanners, clinical trials, and bio-feedback, that are finally allowing us to measure what the ancient traditions have been teaching all along?

This isn't a story about science "discovering" wellness. This is a story about science validating it. The evidence is mounting, and it confirms our central, guiding idea: so much of what we consider "modern" psychology is just the scientific method finally proving what ancient wisdom has known for thousands of years.

1. Mindfulness: From Ancient Practice to Clinical Gold Standard

This is the most direct translation we have. The core of today's mindfulness movement is a direct, secular adaptation of Buddhist practices.

The Ancient Wisdom: At its heart are Vipassanā (insight meditation, or non-judgmental awareness) and Samatha (calm-abiding meditation, often using the breath as an anchor).

In their original context, these are tools within a complete philosophical system for alleviating suffering.

The Scientific "Proof":

The revolution began in the 1970s with Jon Kabat-Zinn. He didn't invent a new technique; he brilliantly standardized the ancient one.

He stripped the practices of their religious dogma and repackaged them into the 8-week, non-denominational program we now know as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

The Key Insight:

This act of standardizing was the key. It created something that could be tested in a controlled clinical trial. The results were undeniable. Researchers could now measure what practitioners always knew: this practice significantly reduces anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and stress. It gave the Western medical model the data it required to finally and formally accept the practice.

2. Positive Psychology:

The "Good Life" Hypothesis, Tested

For millennia, philosophers have been asking the big questions: What makes a life worth living? What is human flourishing?

The Ancient Wisdom: Aristotle gave us the concept of Eudaimonia a "good life" built not on fleeting pleasure, but on meaning, virtue, and fulfilling our potential.

The Stoics taught us to build emotional resilience and practice gratitude. These were, for centuries, simply philosophies.

The Scientific "Proof": In the 1990s, psychologist Martin Seligman looked at his field and noted it was almost entirely focused on pathology, what's wrong with people. He co-founded Positive Psychology, a new branch dedicated to the scientific study of what goes right. Instead of just philosophizing about "the good life," they began to test the ancient hypotheses.



How Science Caught Up To Practice

The Key Insight: Researchers ran experiments. They had one group perform a "gratitude visit" and another group just write about their day. They measured the results and found that the gratitude group reported a massive, lasting boost in well-being. They confirmed that the things philosophers have been saying for 2,000 years that meaning, connection, virtue, and gratitude are the pillars of a flourishing life are, in fact, evidence-based interventions.

3. Neuropsychology:

The "Smoking Gun" in the Brain

This is perhaps the most exciting part, as it provides the physical, biological proof. The ancient claim was always that you could fundamentally change your mind through purely mental training.

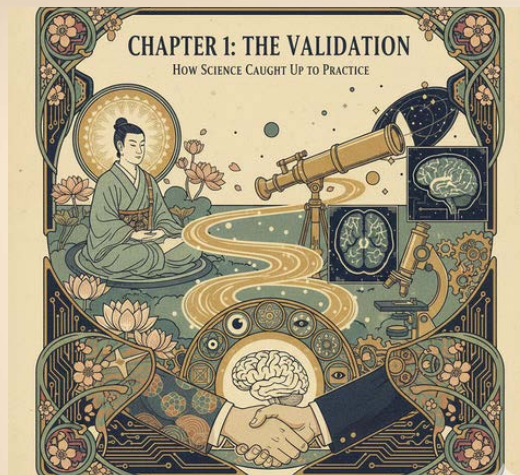
Neuropsychology shows us how. The Ancient Wisdom: "Train your mind, and you will change your reality." This was the core promise of contemplative practices.

The Scientific "Proof": The invention of the fMRI allowed scientists to look inside the brain in real-time. Researchers like Richard Davidson, often in collaboration with the Dalai Lama, brought long-term meditators into the lab to see what was happening.

The Key Insight: They found physical, structural changes.

- Emotional Regulation:

When meditators were exposed to distressing sounds, their amygdala (the brain's "panic button") lit up far less than in non-meditators.



'Train your mind, and you will change your reality'



'Gratitude brings a massive lasting boost in well-being'

Simultaneously, their prefrontal cortex (the "rational" brain) showed more activity. They had physically rewired their brains to be less reactive and more responsive.

- A Quieter Mind: They showed a quieter Default Mode Network (DMN) the part of the brain responsible for "mind-wandering," rumination, and self-referential thought.

- Brain Growth: Long-term meditators showed greater grey matter density in regions associated with self-awareness (insula) and emotional regulation.

This is the mechanism. The "inner work" prescribed by ancient traditions is a tangible form of mental training that creates measurable, biological changes in the brain.

What This Means For Us

We are living in a time of profound integration. This new wave of scientific evidence doesn't replace ancient wisdom; it honours it.

This evidence provides a powerful, secular language to explain the value of our holistic practices to a world that craves data. It builds trust. It confirms that the path to well-being isn't a battle between "ancient" and "modern," but a synthesis of both, using the best tools of modern science to validate the deepest truths of human wisdom.

About the author -

Gregory (Greg) J. Brady

B.Com, B.A. (Hons in Psych)

Integration Practitioner (& Martial Arts Practitioner; 50+ years) A senior practitioner blending deep experience in psychology, business and systems thinking. Dedicated to supporting purpose-driven organisations and professionals navigating complex or "wicked" social challenges.

My focus is on empowering teams to achieve consilient, evidence-based, and outcome-focused solutions. I do this by acting as an 'Integrator' a specialist facilitator who helps groups move from high-stress.

KEEPING FRIENDS AFTER DEATH

How much is too much to expect from your friends?



Grief makes you feel shaky, and cloudy, and lost, and unsure. Your world doesn't make sense anymore, and you can't imagine that things are ever going to be okay again. You need something steady to hold onto, and that's where your friends step in, for normality, for distraction, to hold space for you, or for a hug.

A number of studies show that receiving support from friends plays a large part in easing the symptoms of grief. But what is reasonable to expect from your mates? And what can you do about those that aren't measuring up?

What Do You Really Need When You're Grieving?

In the midst of your grief, your needs can change from day to day – or even hour to hour. Sometimes, you just want someone who'll listen and give you a shoulder to cry on, (without platitudes like 'time will heal', or 'it was for the best'). Other times, you might want a mate to hang out with, whether it's sitting together in front of the TV, having a laugh, or heading out for a drink. Or maybe it's a friend popping in, to make sure you're doing all right and to give you a hug.

Good friends stay with you even when it's not easy or fun, and they pick up the pieces when you're shattered, but also, they provide the comfort and stability of the past, when things were normal.

If you're worried about breaking down in front of your friends, or bringing them down with your sadness, or being a burden, stop worrying – that's what friends are for! Your inner circle needs to be there for you even when things are uncomfortable or difficult. And sharing vulnerability with each other is how friendships grow and deepen.

When Friends Fall Short

Unfortunately, not everyone steps up when you're grieving. Some mates might go quiet, not answering your calls or messages, or even looking away when they happen to see you. Others avoid talking about your loss, so it seems awkward to bring it up, leaving you feeling hurt and rejected. Some friends might not show up for important moments, like the funeral or wake, and that absence can really sting. If you've supported them during their hard times, it's an even bigger blow.

Why Friends Might Not Show Support

It's normal to feel hurt or even angry when friends let you down, but there

are reasons behind their behaviour. For some, your grief brings up their own pain or fears that they don't want to face.

Others might not know how to give support, or they worry that they'll say the wrong thing and make you feel worse. Some mates simply don't feel like they're up to the task, or – harsh as it is – they might not want to extend beyond the good times with you.

What Can You Do?

Before making the decision to wipe friends from your life, it's worth giving them a chance by telling them what you need. Let them know if you want some company, a chat, or even a distraction.

Sometimes, they just need a nudge to know how to help. Have a think about which friends are the best for each situation, then go ahead and ask. It doesn't have to be a dramatic conversation – keep it simple and casual:

–“Do you want to come over for a movie and a beer? I need a break from everything.”

Can just the three of us go out for dinner? I don't think I can cope with everyone at the moment.”

Continues next page

"I don't feel like being at home – do you have time for a coffee and a chat?"

"I feel a bit crappy today – I need some fun. Do you want to go and check out that new winery?"

Could you be at fault?

If you've had a light-bulb moment and realised that you weren't there for your friends when they were in a bad place, don't let that get in the way. Often, it takes personal experience to realise what grief and other hard times are about. If those friends are still around, it's a chance to ask them for support and also acknowledge that you weren't there for them. Explaining why can clear tension and lead to a closer friendship.

Deciding Who's in Your Corner – weird

Grief can be a lonely place because we all experience it so differently and our needs change so often. Ultimately, you can't expect your friends to meet all your needs when you're grieving, there are lots of times when you have to go it alone. But the times when they're around to support you are sweet, and it doesn't matter whether you have lots of friends or a few, it's the support you receive that matters.

Lean on your inner circle:

1. Work out what you need
2. Ask for it
3. Show appreciation when they step up

As for those who don't step up, try to understand what may be affecting them, and weigh it up against all the other factors in your friendship before making a decision. You may never know exactly why some friends aren't supportive when you need them most, but if it doesn't bother you and you still enjoy their company, there's nothing wrong with keeping things as they are.

However, if you want more from them and you've tried asking, it might be time to consider leaving those fair-weather friends behind. Being with people who stick around through both the difficult and the good times, will help you through the grieving process.

Find out more about Gail's book and programs

CLICK OR SCAN QR CODE



Grief, like all the emotional shake-ups in your life, causes you to re-evaluate what's important and see what's not working in your life. I parted ways with one friend and distanced myself from a couple of others after my dad died. At the same time, I cherished even more the friends who had shown up for me.

In the end, only you know what you need – so ponder, be compassionate, and step forward boldly with those friends who meet your newly-realised needs.



About the Author -

Gail Rodrigues is the owner of Eulogy Edge, an enterprise dedicated to supporting people as they navigate the voyage of loss, legacy, and reclamation of self. Gail began a quest in her teens, to empower herself and others to overcome life's challenges. She found answers through self-study and practical experience, leading to many years of education and therapeutic practise helping individuals via clinical hypnotherapy, kinesiology and counselling.

The desire to help a larger number of people and guide them to playing a more conscious role in improving their life, led to her founding Eulogy Edge. Gail has written "7 Steps to a Memorable Eulogy", a guidebook that not only creates a captivating and authentic eulogy, but helps the individual get closure and come to terms with their loss. Her continuing passion is in producing practical books, courses and other resources to support people through the creation of Life Stories and Eulogies, and in reclaiming their life after experiencing loss. Her work is underpinned by the ethos that developing a communication style which is thoughtful and respectful, yet authentic, is enmeshed with personal growth.

The Energy Of Flow

By Paul Mracek

INTRODUCTION -

Your brain is an extraordinary system of rhythm and energy. Every decision, reaction, or creative spark is shaped by electrical patterns called brain waves. These brain waves act like the gears of your mind, shifting you from deep rest to sharp focus, and into the extraordinary state of flow, where performance and awareness reach their peak.

Flow is that sweet spot where time seems to vanish, actions feel effortless, and outcomes are both powerful and precise. Athletes describe it as the zone, martial artists as mushin (no-mind), and creators as pure inspiration. While the experience feels mysterious, it is built on something very practical: the transitions of your brainwave states.

Understanding the **5 Brain Waves and Their Role**, gives you a repeatable path into flow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Master Coach | Energy Strategist |
9th Dan Black Belt | Founder of Kotan
Australia

Paul Mracek is an internationally recognised author, master trainer, and transformational coach who teaches practical tools to align brainwaves, boost clarity, and master personal energy. As the creator of the Black Belt Thinking philosophy and a 9th Dan Black Belt, Paul empowers individuals and organisations to lead with focus, resilience, and flow.

Mastering Brain Waves for Clarity and Performance

" Shifts in leadership don't start with more hours, but with a single moment of renewed energy."

1. Gamma Waves (40–100 Hz) –

Integration and Insight

- The fastest brain waves, linking information across the brain.
- Associated with learning, memory, and powerful “aha” insights.
- Optimal gamma supports problem-solving and breakthrough creativity.
- Too much = overstimulation, stress; too little = poor learning.

Application: Use gamma by reviewing new skills or reflecting after practice sessions, it helps consolidate learning and integrates your experiences.

2. Beta Waves (12–40 Hz) –

Alertness and Focus

- Your standard waking state, alert, logical, and analytical.
- Vital for problem-solving, planning, and decision-making.
- Too much = stress, overthinking; too little = lack of motivation.

Application: Stay in low-to-mid beta for focused work, but watch for the tipping point, when your mind races and performance drops, it's a sign you need to downshift into alpha.

3. Alpha Waves (8–12 Hz) – Relaxed Readiness

- The gateway to flow. Calm, focused, and centred.
- This is where awareness is sharp, but effort feels light.
- Balanced alpha produces emotional stability and clarity.

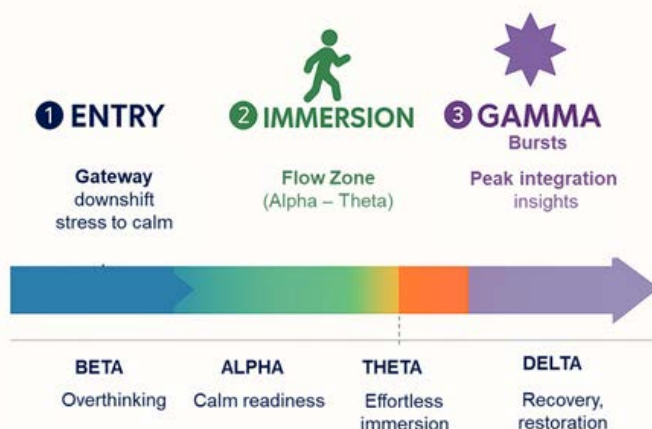
Application: Transition into alpha before high-pressure events with controlled breathing or centring rituals. Martial artists use this before stepping onto the mat; executives can use it before key presentations.

4. Theta Waves (4–8 Hz) – Creativity and Intuition

- Found in meditation, daydreaming, or creative immersion.
- Appears in flow when you're fully absorbed in an activity.
- Provides deep creativity, imagination, and intuitive problem solving.

Application: Activate theta by engaging in rhythmic movement (running, drumming, shadowboxing) or creative activities where your focus is internal.

Flow Journey



- 5. Delta Waves (0–4 Hz) – Rest and Regeneration**
- The slowest waves, dominant in deep sleep.
 - Vital for healing, recovery, and resetting the nervous system.
 - Without enough delta, your capacity to access flow diminishes.

Application: Protect deep sleep. No shortcuts, quality rest is non-negotiable if you want consistent flow and high performance.

Flow State and Brainwave Boundaries Understanding the Journey

When you look at the following “Flow Journey” diagram, it’s important to recognise that flow is not a single point you “switch on,” but a progressive process across different brainwave states. Each stage has its own role, and together they create the conditions where clarity, energy, and performance align.

- At first, you need to quiet the noise of stress and overthinking - moving out of high beta activity into the calm readiness of alpha.
- From there, flow deepens as alpha blends with theta, allowing effortless immersion, intuition, and creativity.
- At the peak, bursts of gamma energy integrate insights and sharpen awareness, creating those timeless breakthrough moments.
- Finally, recovery in delta sleep and rest ensures that you can repeat the cycle with energy and balance.

The following quick guide and perspectives will help you understand where each of these boundaries lies, how different researchers describe them, and most importantly how you can use this knowledge to reliably guide yourself or others into flow.

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- Quick Guide to flow journey diagram:**
- Entry (1) sits at the Beta → Alpha boundary - the gateway where you downshift stress to calm.

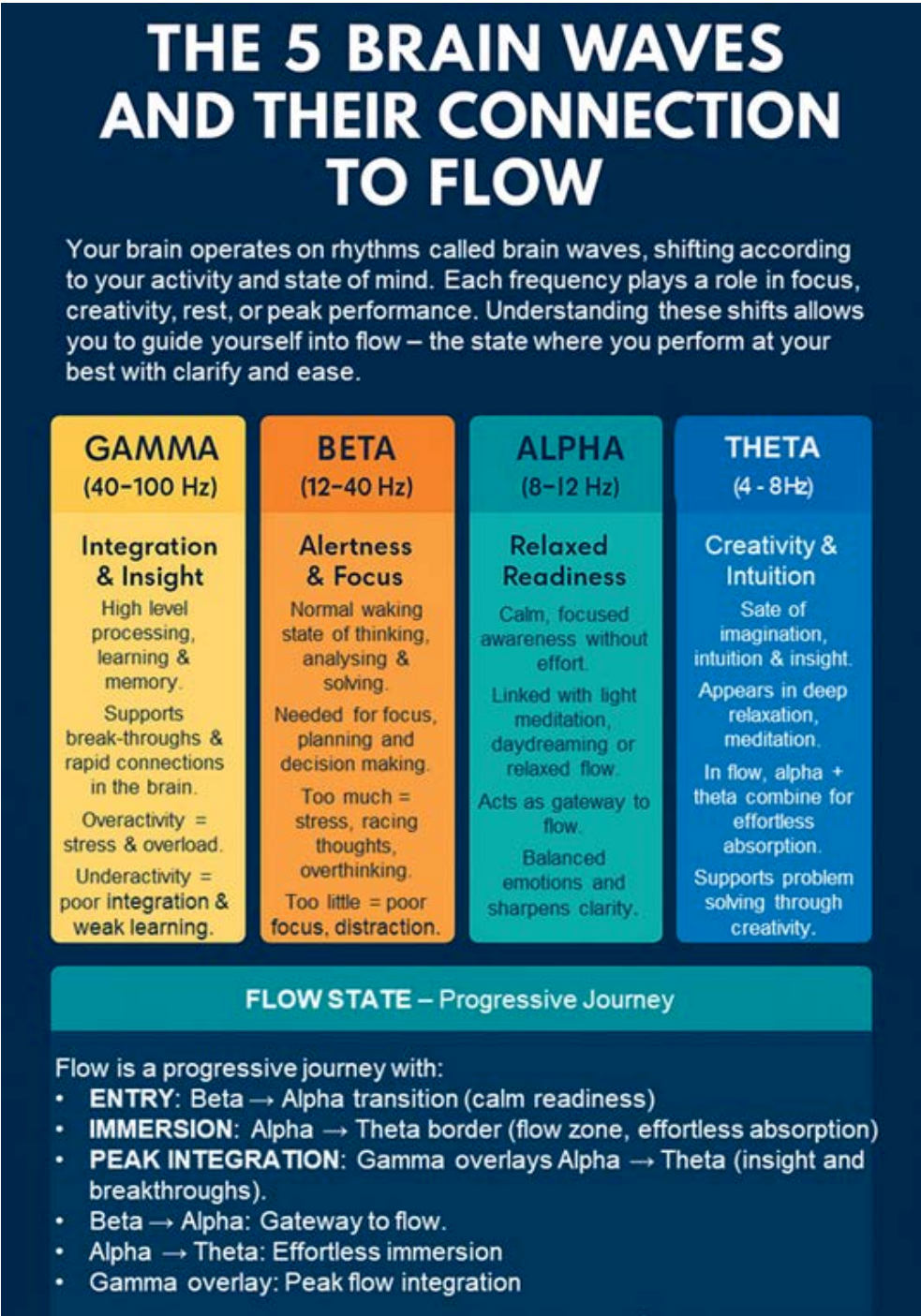
- Immersion (2) highlights the Alpha → Theta border (Flow Zone) - effortless absorption / creativity.
- Peak (3) shows Gamma bursts overlaying the Flow Zone - peak integration and insights.

- Delta - Recovery / restoration

1. Classical View (Beta → Alpha Transition)

- Many researchers (especially in sports psychology) describe flow as emerging when you downshift out of high-beta stress into calm alpha focus.
- Here, the key is reducing mental noise and stress, so your attention becomes centred and effortless.
- This is why breathwork, mindfulness, and pre-performance rituals are powerful: they help shift you from overthinking (beta) to calm readiness (alpha).

In this view: Flow begins at the boundary of Beta and Alpha, when stress dissolves into calm, clear focus.



2. Deeper View (Alpha–Theta Border)

- Neuroscience studies (EEG research, e.g. Arne Dietrich, Steven Kotler, Flow Genome Project) have found that sustained flow experiences - especially those involving creativity, sports, and martial arts - involve alpha-theta coupling.

- Alpha provides the calm awareness, while theta adds immersive absorption, intuition, and creativity.

- In peak flow moments, bursts of gamma also overlay, linking insights across brain regions.

In this view: Flow stabilises at the Alpha → Theta boundary, not just the Beta → Alpha shift. The Reality: Both Are True, But Different Stages

- Stage 1 (Gateway) → You enter flow by moving from Beta → Alpha (shifting out of stress into relaxed readiness).

- Stage 2 (Immersion) → You deepen flow at the Alpha–Theta border, where creativity and intuition join focused action.

- Stage 3 (Peak Integration) → You peak in flow when Gamma bursts overlay Alpha–Theta, creating breakthroughs and timeless performance.

Takeaway for You

- If you're training someone to access flow quickly (before a fight, meeting, or performance), focus on the Beta → Alpha shift.

- If you're exploring deeper, longer-lasting flow (creative work, martial arts kata, long runs, meditation), recognise the Alpha → Theta border as the sustaining zone.

So flow is not only Beta → Alpha or Alpha → Theta, it's a progression. You cross the Beta → Alpha boundary to enter, then stabilise at Alpha → Theta to fully experience it.

“With consistency, you'll discover that flow isn't something you stumble into, it's something you can create whenever you need it.

About the Author Paul Mracek

Master Strategist, Engineer, Author & Energy Mentor Paul, is a globally recognised leader in personal development, energy mastery, and strategic resilience and a 9th Dan Black Belt martial arts master.

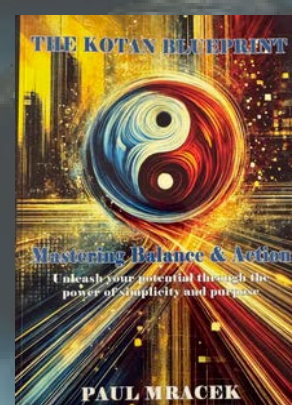
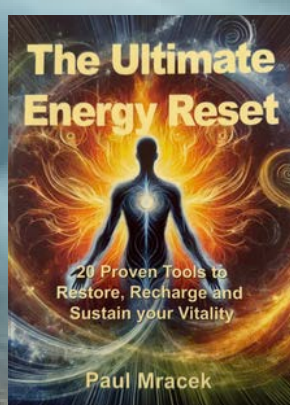
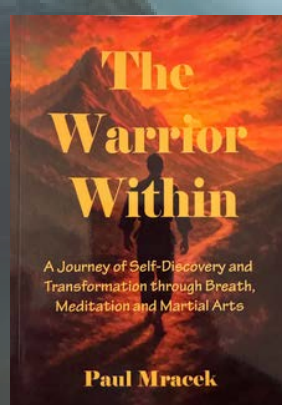
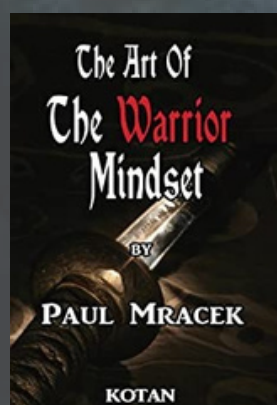
As the founder of Kotan Australia, he brings together over four decades of martial arts excellence, leadership coaching and business acumen to help people achieve clarity, confidence and control in every area of life.

With formal qualifications in engineering, NLP, coaching, hypnotherapy, and energy-based healing, Paul seamlessly integrates Eastern martial wisdom with Western leadership principles, offering practical pathways for personal and professional transformation.

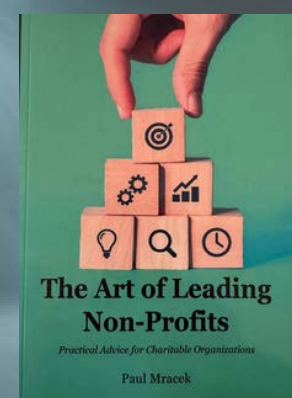
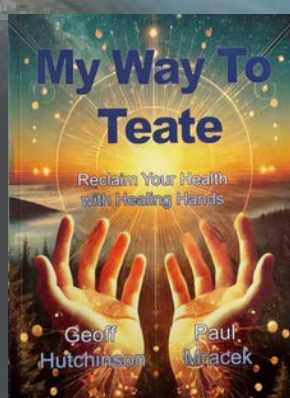
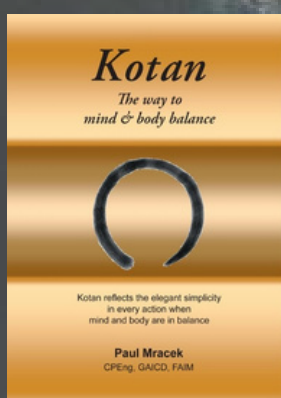


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SOME OF THE AUTHOR'S BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE BELOW



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**Where Is Your
Rejuvenating
Place?**

**What Is Your
Go To Therapy
Modality?**



**Share Where You Love To Go & What You Want To Experience
WWM WOULD LOVE TO TAKE YOU THERE!**



BREATHE TO HEAL



The Science and Spirit of Salt Therapy

For centuries, warriors have known that every breath is power.

Training the breath controls rhythm in movement. It focuses energy, calms the mind, and fuels endurance. Yet, in a world of pollution, stress, and constant digital exposure, our breath can become strained.

That's where salt therapy, also known as halotherapy, is finding a new following among modern warriors seeking recovery, relaxation, and respiratory strength.

Far from being a wellness fad, salt therapy merges ancient healing traditions with modern respiratory science, offering benefits that resonate deeply with the martial artist's pursuit of balance and inner clarity.

The Breath of the Warrior

In disciplines such as Yoga, Qi Gong and many other martial arts it is known as vital energy element that governs movement, focus, and emotion.

Training emphasizes breathing from the diaphragm, deep, slow inhalations that center the mind and nourish the body with oxygen.

However, when the air we breathe is filled with urban smog, allergens, and synthetic particles, the body's natural rhythm is disrupted. Studies show that air pollution can impair lung function and increase inflammation, leading to fatigue, slower recovery, and reduced focus. Salt therapy offers a natural counterbalance, an environment where every breath becomes an act of healing.

What Is Salt Therapy?

Salt therapy, or halotherapy, involves inhaling dry, microscopic salt particles in a controlled setting called a salt room or salt cave. The concept originated from 19th-century Eastern Europe, when physicians noticed that

salt miners had exceptional respiratory health compared to other workers.

In a halotherapy session, a medical grade device called a halogenerator grinds pharmaceutical-grade salt into fine aerosol particles and disperses them into the air.

These particles are small enough to travel deep into the lungs, where they can absorb irritants, reduce inflammation, and loosen mucus.

For any practitioner, the benefit goes beyond clearing lungs, it's about enhancing stamina, breath control, and recovery through improved oxygen efficiency.



The Science of Salt and the Body

When inhaled, dry salt behaves like a gentle natural scrub for the respiratory tract. Its anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and mucolytic (mucus-loosening) properties help cleanse the airways, reduce congestion, and support lung capacity.

A 2019 systematic review published in the *Journal of Medicine and Life* found that halotherapy improved respiratory function in patients with asthma and chronic bronchitis by lowering inflammation and easing airway obstruction.

While most of us typically don't face chronic respiratory diseases, we often endure heavy breathing, sweat exposure, and dry air from indoor training. Over time, these can irritate the respiratory system and reduce endurance. Salt therapy may help restore natural respiratory balance by supporting mucosal hydration and reducing microscopic inflammation in the lungs.

Why Salt? A Mineral of Balance

Salt has long been a symbol of purity and preservation in both Eastern and Western traditions. In Japanese Shinto practice, salt purifies sacred spaces and wards off negative energy. In traditional Chinese medicine, salt represents balance, the duality of yin and yang within the body.

From a physiological perspective, salt maintains fluid balance, nerve transmission, and muscle contraction, three elements crucial to a martial artist's performance.

The difference lies in dosage: too much dietary salt can raise blood pressure, but controlled exposure to dry salt particles has been shown to have the opposite effect on inflammation and stress response.

Breathing in mineral-rich salt is like tuning the body's internal instrument, subtle yet powerful.

Inside a Salt Room

A salt room is typically a quiet, dimly lit space lined with Himalayan or rock salt crystals. The air feels crisp yet soothing, mimicking the microclimate of a seaside cave.

Sessions usually last 30–45 minutes, and clients are encouraged to relax, meditate, or practice controlled breathing.

For athletes, this can be a form of active meditation a chance to connect with the breath without the intensity of training. Each inhalation becomes intentional; each exhalation, a release of tension.

Because halotherapy naturally clears airborne pollutants and allergens, many practitioners describe the sensation afterward as "breathing through new lungs." That clarity doesn't just feel good, it can translate to sharper focus during any technical exercise routine.

1. Improved Lung Function and Endurance

Enhanced lung efficiency means better oxygenation during intense bouts. Inhaling dry salt particles stimulates micro-circulation in lung tissues and helps maintain open airways, improving aerobic performance.

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2. Faster Recovery After Training

Intense training sessions produce lactic acid and oxidative stress. Salt's negative ions can neutralize free radicals, promoting faster recovery and reduced muscle soreness. Many athletes report improved sleep quality after halotherapy, an essential part of the body's repair cycle.

3. Stress Reduction and Mental Clarity

The negative ions released by salt particles have been linked to serotonin regulation and improved mood. For those seeking better emotional control, a cornerstone of discipline both in and out of training, this could be the answer.

4. Skin Health and Detoxification

Sweating is one of the body's natural detox pathways. Salt therapy supports this by balancing skin pH and enhancing microcirculation. This helps combat inflammation, acne, and other stress-related skin conditions that can affect athletes exposed to gym environments.

Performance and Recovery Benefits

Breathing as a Cleansing Practice
In traditional modalities breath is more than an exchange of gases, it's the bridge between body and mind. Many disciplines integrate pranayama (breath control) or kokyū (breathing techniques) to cultivate inner energy and calm.

Combining breathwork with salt therapy enhances both practices. The clean, mineral-rich air deepens inhalation and sharpens awareness of internal movement. Slow nasal breathing during halotherapy can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, the body's "rest and repair" mode lowering heart rate and cortisol levels.

This harmony between breath, environment, and consciousness transforms a 45-minute session into a meditative ritual, a cleansing from the inside out.

Building a Focused Salt Routine

To maximize the benefits, consistency matters more than intensity. Just as muscles strengthen with regular training, the respiratory system improves with routine care.

1. Pre-Training Preparation

A brief salt therapy session before training can open airways and prime the lungs for deeper breathing. This supports endurance and reduces fatigue during high-intensity drills.

2. Post-Training Recovery

After intense workouts, halotherapy helps clear sweat-borne bacteria and fine particles from the respiratory system. It also aids in calming the nervous system and promoting faster muscular recovery.

3. Weekly Balance

For optimal results, practitioners can schedule one to two halotherapy sessions per week, paired with hydration and light stretching. Over time, this rhythm reinforces respiratory resilience and overall balance.

Safety and Considerations

Halotherapy is generally considered safe for most people. However, those with severe respiratory conditions such as tuberculosis, active infections, or uncontrolled asthma should consult a healthcare provider before beginning sessions.

It's also important to differentiate between dry salt therapy (halotherapy) and wet salt therapy (such as saline sprays or salt baths). While both have benefits, dry inhalation in a controlled environment provides deeper respiratory cleansing without moisture-related irritation.

At-Home Alternatives

If access to a salt room isn't possible, several alternatives can still deliver mild benefits:

- **Himalayan Salt Lamps:** Although research is limited, these can help maintain air freshness and provide calming ambient light for meditation spaces.
- **Salt Inhalers:** Portable ceramic inhalers use natural salt crystals to create a similar micro-climate. They're best for short daily use.
- **Epsom or Sea Salt Baths:** Ideal for muscle recovery, these draw out impurities and replenish magnesium levels after strenuous training.

While these home methods may not replicate the full halotherapy effect, they serve as complementary tools in a broader recovery strategy.

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The Athlete's Anchor

Using Daily Rituals for Peak Performance and Inner Balance

There's a quiet moment before every game or training session. It might be the feel of the turf or the court beneath your feet, the sound of your own breathing in the quiet of the locker room, or the calm before the whistle blows. For many athletes, this pause is sacred. It's not just preparation; it's a ritual.

What we do in those small, consistent moments defines not just how strong we become, but how centered we remain. In a world that demands constant motion and peak performance, rituals remind us to slow down, breathe, and reconnect with our purpose.

Discipline Beyond the Drills

It's easy to think discipline is something only practiced on the field or in the gym, a matter of repetition, endurance, and control. But the true test of discipline begins outside of training.

It's in how we start our mornings, how we treat our bodies after long sessions, and how we manage the quiet spaces between activity and rest. Those little daily habits are small acts of grounding. They may seem insignificant, but together they shape who we are.

Rituals transform repetition into purpose. They remind us that mastery is built not on sporadic intensity but on daily consistency.

Here's a difference between a routine and a ritual. A routine is something you do out of habit; a ritual is something you do with meaning and full intention.

The Science: Why Rituals Work

Modern neuroscience supports what high-performers have known for centuries: repetition rewires the brain.

Consistent, intentional behavior creates new neural pathways, reinforcing focus, emotional regulation, and resilience. This concept, known as neuroplasticity, shows that even small daily actions can reshape how we think and respond.

When you create rituals that align with your goals, whether that's strength, calmness, or discipline, you're training your brain as much as your body.

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“
**Determination
Defines Every
Runner's Path**
”



How to Build Your Own Rituals

- **Choose One Ritual at a Time:** Don't try to overhaul your life. Start small, perhaps just with the 3-Minute Anchor in the morning.
- **Anchor It:** Link your new ritual to a habit you already have. For example, take three mindful breaths while waiting for your coffee to brew.
- **Keep It Sacred:** Even if it's short, treat your ritual as non-negotiable—a promise to yourself.
- **Be Patient:** Rituals are not quick fixes. They are investments in awareness. The reward comes not from instant results but from gradual, profound transformation.
- **Daily rituals are the quiet architecture of a balanced life.** They remind us that the path to mastery is not about doing more, but about doing what matters with awareness.
- **Tomorrow morning, before the world begins to rush you, just take a deep breath.** Feel your feet on the ground. That's your first ritual. That's where balance begins.

An Athlete's Action Plan for Inner Balance

Here are practical rituals you can adopt to set the tone for your day, enhance performance, and improve recovery.



1. Morning Ritual: The 3-Minute Anchor

Before checking your phone or letting the day's demands rush in, sit for two to three minutes in silence. Just listen to your breath. The world is already moving fast, but in that silence, you find your balance.

This pause sets the tone for the day. Research shows morning mindfulness can lower cortisol (the stress hormone) and improve focus.

- **Try This:** Combine the mental with the physical.
 - a. **Hydrate:** Drink a glass of water immediately upon waking.
 - b. **Breathe:** Sit tall and take ten deep, slow breaths.
 - c. **Move:** Do five slow squats or a simple spinal stretch. This ritual tells your body and mind that you are starting the day in harmony.

2. Nourishment Ritual: Mindful Fueling

Food is a critical tool for any athlete, but how you fuel your body determines how well it performs. It's easy to eat in a hurry, thinking nutrition is just about calories and macros.

Slowing down and treating eating as a ritual can change everything. When you eat mindfully, without a screen, you appreciate each bite and notice how food makes you feel. Digestion improves, and studies note that mindful eating enhances satiety and reduces overeating. For an athlete, that translates to sustained energy and sharper focus.

- **Try This:**
 - a. **Pause:** Before your next meal, take three deep breaths.
 - b. **Observe:** Look at your food and feel gratitude for the energy it will provide.
 - c. **Chew:** Put your fork down between bites. Each meal becomes an act of respect for your body.

3. Transition Ritual: Movement as a Reset

Some people meditate by sitting still; athletes can meditate by moving. Every drill, every stretch, and every repetition can be a dialogue between body and mind.

Rituals don't have to be long. A few minutes of slow-flow movements or breathing drills can serve as a powerful transition between the noise of daily life and the quiet focus of training. Repetitive, mindful movements trigger the parasympathetic nervous system, our body's natural calming response.

- **Try This:**
 - a. **The Threshold:** Before you step onto the field, court, or gym floor, pause at the threshold.
 - b. **Breathe:** Take one deep breath and set a single intention for the session (e.g., "focus," "effort," "flow").
 - c. **Step:** Step across the threshold, leaving mental clutter behind. This ritual creates a mental "switch" that turns on your performance mindset.



4. Evening Ritual: The Daily Debrief

If mornings are about awakening, evenings are about release and recovery. After a full day, your body and mind hold tension from training, work, and life.

Ending the day with intention, even in the smallest way, teaches the body and mind how to rest, recover, and renew.

- **Try This:**
 - a. **Disconnect:** Put your phone away 30 minutes before bed.
 - b. **Release:** Perform ten minutes of light stretching for your tightest areas.
 - c. **Reflect:** Write one line in a journal: What did you learn? What are you grateful for? What do you need to let go of (like a bad play or a missed goal)? This ritual acknowledges your growth and prepares you for deep, restorative sleep.



HOLISTIC DETOX

In the world of fitness, strength is not defined by muscle alone, it is measured by balance, discipline, and clarity of mind. Every movement, from a powerful kick to a controlled breath, flows from the harmony between body and spirit. Yet even the most dedicated athlete can struggle to maintain this balance in today's fast-paced, toxin-filled world.

Processed foods, stress, and environmental pollutants can cloud focus, slow recovery, and weaken the internal systems that fuel performance.

That's why modern warriors are turning to a smarter approach to detoxification, one that honors ancient wisdom while embracing modern science.

A true detox isn't about deprivation or extreme cleanses; it's about recalibrating the body's natural ability to heal, restore, and perform at its peak

The True Meaning of Detox

The term "detox" is often misused in wellness circles. Many assume it involves juice fasts, supplements, or restrictive diets that promise to flush out toxins overnight. In reality, the human body already possesses an incredibly efficient detoxification system, primarily managed by the liver, kidneys, lungs, and skin.

According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH, 2022), there is limited scientific evidence supporting the need for commercial detox diets.

However, there is strong support for lifestyle habits that support the body's natural cleansing processes, such as hydration, balanced nutrition, physical activity, and adequate sleep.

For the health conscious this means detoxing is less about radical interventions and more about enhancing what the body is already designed to do, efficiently remove waste, maintain cellular health, and sustain energy through mindful daily practices.

Cleansing the body has deep roots in ancient traditional modalities and philosophies. In many Eastern systems, purification is seen as essential to cultivating prana, chi or ki, the life force that sustains movement and focus.

Ancient Japanese samurai practiced fasting and meditation before battles, while Chinese martial traditions included herbal tonics and breathing exercises to clear internal stagnation.

Modern science echoes these principles. Detoxification isn't a single event but a continuous cycle that depends on proper nutrition, movement, and rest. The liver, for instance, processes toxins into harmless compounds that can be excreted.

Exercise and controlled breathing improve circulation and oxygen delivery, enhancing cellular metabolism and toxin removal through sweat and respiration

By blending ancient disciplines with evidence-based wellness strategies, practitioners can maintain clarity, agility, and vitality both inside and outside the body.

Continues next page



Rebalancing Through Nutrition

Food is one of the most powerful tools for natural detoxification.

The body requires specific nutrients, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and amino acids, to support liver function and cellular repair.

Hydration as a Foundation

Water is the simplest and most effective detox aid. It supports kidney filtration, transports nutrients, and helps flush metabolic waste. For those who train rigorously, hydration also prevents muscle cramps and maintains joint lubrication. Experts recommend consuming at least 2 to 3 liters of water daily, with adjustments for activity level and climate

Nutrient-Dense Whole Foods

A smart detox plan centers around foods that naturally support liver enzymes and antioxidant activity. Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, kale, and cabbage contain compounds such as sulforaphane, which enhance phase II liver detoxification.

The Hidden Impact of Toxins on Performance

In any athlete, even a slight imbalance in the body can affect precision, speed, and endurance.

When the body's natural detox systems are overloaded, subtle symptoms often emerge, fatigue, brain fog, muscle stiffness, poor digestion, and slow recovery.

Research published in *Frontiers in Physiology* (Burchfield & Soto, 2022) highlights how chronic exposure to low-level environmental toxins, combined with poor diet and stress, can lead to oxidative stress, a condition in which free radicals damage cells and tissues.

This oxidative stress not only impairs physical recovery, but also disrupts focus and emotional stability, both crucial elements in physical performance.

Continues next page

For athletes, maintaining a “clean system” isn’t about vanity or weight loss.

It’s about creating the internal environment where strength, endurance, and mindfulness can coexist.

Fresh fruits rich in vitamin C, such as citrus and berries, combat oxidative stress, while fiber from oats, flaxseeds, and legumes promotes bowel regularity, another key elimination pathway.



Avoiding the Overload

Processed foods, refined sugars, alcohol, and excessive caffeine can hinder detox function. They create additional metabolic waste, overwork the liver, and contribute to inflammation.

By replacing these with nutrient-dense alternatives, martial artists can sustain energy levels and reduce recovery time after training.

The principle is simple: eat clean, train clean, live clean.
Cleansing the Mind

True detoxification extends beyond the physical body. For the fitness conscious mental clarity and emotional balance are just as vital as physical conditioning. A distracted mind can weaken form, slow reaction time, and disrupt the meditative flow that defines mastery.

Practices such as mindfulness meditation, controlled breathing (pranayama), and visualization not only reduce stress hormones, but also enhance neural connectivity associated with focus and decision-making.

Detoxing the mind means consciously reducing the “mental toxins” of overstimulation, negativity, and emotional clutter. Turning off screens before sleep, spending time in silence, or engaging in nature walks can recalibrate the nervous system, restoring the sense of centeredness essential in training and physical disciplines.

Creating Your Personal Detox Routine and adding movement of medicine is a powerful path to cleansing and rebalancing that doesn’t require drastic change. Instead, it thrives on consistency, small, meaningful habits that compound into long-term transformation.

Follow the rituals on the next page



1. Morning Hydration Ritual

Begin your day with a glass of warm water infused with lemon. It jumpstarts digestion, hydrates cells, and stimulates gentle detox activity.

2. Balanced Meals

Include a colorful mix of vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains in each meal. Use herbs like turmeric, ginger, and garlic for their anti-inflammatory and cleansing properties.

3. Breathwork and Meditation

Spend 5–10 minutes daily in mindful breathing. Deep diaphragmatic breaths enhance oxygen exchange and calm the nervous system.

4. Active Recovery

Incorporate stretching, yoga, or light martial flow sessions on rest days to keep lymph and blood moving.

5. Sleep Hygiene

Turn off screens an hour before bed, keep the room cool, and set a consistent sleep schedule.

6. Digital Detox

Designate one day per week to unplug from social media and technology, a mental reset that mirrors physical cleansing.

The Science of Sustainable Cleansing

Fad detoxes can lead to nutrient deficiencies, fatigue, and rebound cravings. Sustainable detoxification, however, emphasizes moderation, balance, and long-term vitality.

According to a review in *Nutrition Journal* (Klein & Kiat, 2015), while extreme detox diets lack strong evidence, adopting a plant-based, high-fiber, low-processed food diet supports liver enzyme efficiency and reduces systemic inflammation.

When combined with adequate hydration, regular exercise, and stress management, these lifestyle practices create a holistic internal environment that continuously self-cleanses, no supplements required.

For athletes, this means more consistent energy, faster muscle recovery, sharper focus, and emotional stability, the true foundations of peak performance.

Conclusion: The Path to Renewal

Detoxification, in its truest sense, is not a temporary cleanse, but a lifelong commitment to alignment. It's the art of tuning the mind and body so you move in perfect rhythm, just as every healthy conscious person strives for balance and stillness.

By honoring the body's natural processes, choosing mindful nutrition, and cultivating clarity through rest and movement, practitioners can sustain their internal strength while remaining grounded in purpose.

The smarter way to detox isn't about restriction, it's about restoration. It's about letting go of what no longer serves you, physically and mentally, so that what remains is pure focus, resilience, and vitality.

In life, the cleanest energy comes not from what we add, but from what we allow ourselves to release.



Movement as Medicine

The physical act of training is itself a form of detoxification. When the body moves, blood circulates faster, lymphatic drainage increases, and the body eliminates waste more efficiently through sweat and respiration.

Dynamic forms of training activate every muscle group, supporting cardiovascular health and metabolic balance.

A 2021 study in the *Journal of Exercise Rehabilitation* found that moderate-intensity exercise significantly enhances lymphatic flow and immune function, both of which are crucial in natural detoxification.

Movement also has a cleansing effect on the mind. The repetitive, rhythmic nature of drills mirrors meditative patterns, helping practitioners release tension and maintain presence. This physical and mental synergy represents detoxification in its purest form, purification through motion.

Rest and Recovery: The Overlooked Detox System

While athletes often focus on training harder, the body's most effective detox work happens during rest. Sleep is when the brain's "glymphatic system" clears metabolic waste and regenerates neural connections.

A study from the *Science Translational Medicine Journal* (Xie et al., 2019) demonstrated that cerebrospinal fluid actively flushes out toxins during deep sleep, including beta-amyloid, a compound linked to cognitive decline.

Inadequate sleep disrupts hormonal balance, weakens immunity, and slows muscle repair. For most of us, prioritizing 7–9 hours of restful sleep isn't indulgence, it's a core part of training recovery and mental sharpness.



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Maximizing Your Gym Experience:

Solo Training, Group Classes & Personal Training

Which is Best?

Ed Curtain



INTRODUCTION:

Step into any gym or wellness centre, and you'll see the full spectrum of fitness journeys: the lone runner pounding the treadmill, the dynamic group sweating through a HIIT class, the focused duo of trainer and client fine-tuning technique.

Each path promises results, but each comes with its own set of challenges and rewards.

With decades spent designing fitness solutions for everyone from elite athletes to everyday wellness seekers, I've seen firsthand that the "best" approach isn't about choosing one path, it's about understanding how each method fits your needs, your goals, and your life.

In this article, I'll break down the real costs and benefits of solo training, group classes, and personal training, then show you how a smart hybrid strategy can deliver the results you want, without breaking the bank or burning you out.

The Three Training Modes: What You Gain, What You Risk

1. Solo Training: Freedom and Self-Mastery

What it is: Training independently, whether lifting weights, running, or stretching—no coach, no group, just you and your goals.

Benefits:

- Complete flexibility: Train anytime, focus on what matters most to you, and adjust your plan as life demands.
- Cost savings: Most memberships include unlimited access, so you're only paying your base fee.
- Self-reliance: You build discipline, resilience, and the confidence that comes from mastering your own routine.
- Mental escape: Many find solo workouts meditative, a chance to clear the mind and recharge.

Drawbacks:

- Motivation dips: When no one's watching, it's easy to skip sessions or cut corners.
- Plateau risk: Without guidance, routines can get stale, and progress may stall.
- Technique risks: Small form errors can lead to injury or inefficiency over time.
- Social isolation: For some, solo training lacks the energy and camaraderie that makes fitness fun.

Real-life scenario: Anna, a busy professional, loves solo morning runs for stress relief but noticed her strength plateaued after a few months. Without feedback, her squat form faltered, leading to knee pain.

2. Group Classes: Motivation and Community

What it is: Structured classes led by a coach or instructor, yoga, spin, bootcamp, dance, and more usually with 5–30 participants.

Benefits:

- Built-in accountability: A set schedule and group energy make it harder to bail.
- Expert programming: Professional instructors keep routines fresh and safe.
- Variety and fun: Classes introduce new moves, music, and formats, fighting workout boredom.
- Social connection: Friendships, friendly competition, and a sense of belonging boost mental wellness.
-

Drawbacks:

- Less personalization: Instructors must cater to the group, so individual needs may be overlooked.
- Fixed timing: Classes may not fit every schedule.
- Pace mismatch: Fast classes can overwhelm beginners; slower ones may bore advanced members.

Real-life scenario: Sam thrived in group cycling classes, pushing harder than he ever did alone. But when his schedule changed, he struggled to find classes that fit, and his attendance dropped.

3. Personal Training: Precision and Progress

What it is: One-on-one sessions with a certified coach who tailors every aspect of your program to your goals, history, and preferences.

Benefits:

- Maximum personalization: Every rep, set, and stretch is designed for you.
- Expert feedback: Coaches correct form, prevent injuries, and adjust plans on the fly.
- Motivation and accountability: Regular sessions keep you honest and driven.
- Faster results: Targeted programming means less wasted effort and more progress.

Drawbacks:

- Higher cost: Personal training is a premium service, often \$30–\$100+ per session.
- Scheduling: Matching calendars with your trainer can be tricky.
- Dependency risk: Some clients struggle to train alone after relying on a coach.



Real-life scenario: Mei, new to strength training, invested in weekly personal training. Her confidence soared, and she learned proper form—but she couldn't afford more than a few sessions per month.

The Hidden Costs and Benefits:

It's not just about money when weighing your options, remember, cost isn't just financial. Consider your time, energy, and the emotional investment you're making.

Group classes may cost less per session than personal training, but if you're not engaged or progressing, are you really saving?

Solo training is cheapest, but if you get injured or bored, you might quit altogether.

Pro tip: Many gyms offer free or discounted intro sessions for classes and PT, use these to explore what fits your personality and goals



Hybrid Training: The Smartest Strategy

Here's what decades in the industry (and countless client success stories) have taught me: The most successful, consistent members combine all three approaches.

Why Hybrid Works:

- Technique and growth: Use personal training to master new skills, set benchmarks, and troubleshoot obstacles.
- Community and energy: Group classes keep you motivated, accountable, and excited to show up.
- Discipline and momentum: Solo sessions let you fit fitness into your schedule and reinforce habits.

Sample Hybrid Week:

- Monday: Group HIIT class, get inspired, sweat with friends.
- Tuesday: Solo cardio, run or cycle at your own pace.
- Wednesday: Personal training, fine-tune form, set new goals.
- Thursday: Solo strength, apply what you've learned.
- Saturday: Group yoga or mobility, recover, connect, and reset.

Cost Management Tips:

- Book PT sessions monthly or quarterly for check-ins, not every week.
- Use group classes for variety and social support—often included in memberships.
- Fill in with solo workouts to maintain consistency and discipline.

Making It Work for You: Practical Steps

1. Assess your goals and schedule: Are you seeking weight loss, strength, stress relief, or community?
2. Try everything: Sample each mode for at least two weeks. Notice what energizes you and what feels like a chore.
3. Mix and match: Build your calendar around your lifestyle. Busy week? More solo sessions. Need a push? Book a class or trainer.
4. Track your progress: Use a journal or app to record workouts, mood, and results.
5. Stay flexible: Your needs will change, be willing to adjust your mix every few months.

About the Author

Edward Curtain is a globally recognized, award-winning executive and wellness business strategist with 30+ years of success in health, wellness, and fitness worldwide.

He's led projects for Nike Sports Camps®, Anytime Fitness®, and Technogym®, specializing in integrating Eastern wisdom with Western science to drive sustainable growth. Connect with Edward to unlock your full wellness potential



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The TURN of the TIDE: How Artists Are Rewriting The Rules Of Recovery

By Meghan Jarvis - Wellness Expert to the World's Elite Performers and Athletes

For as long as there's been live music, there's been a rhythm behind the curtain the pounding adrenaline, sleepless nights, high-pressure performances, and the myth that you had to "burn out to shine".

Something remarkable is happening. A quiet revolution. Across stages, stadiums, and tour buses, I'm seeing a new generation of artists and crew members trading stimulants for stillness, burnout for breathwork, and hangovers for hydration. The culture is changing and it's changing fast.

The Rise of Conscious Recovery

As someone who's spent years supporting the world's top performers from Olympic athletes to chart-topping musicians I've watched the pendulum swing.

Where once the green room was fueled by late nights and liquid courage, now it's filled with ice baths, compression boots, and herbal teas. The after-party is being replaced with recovery.

These artists aren't doing it because it's trendy, they're doing it because it's survival.

Touring is an endurance sport. Long flights, constant time zones, irregular sleep, and back-to-back shows take a real toll on the body. Without proper recovery, energy dips, creativity suffers, and the very thing that drives the art, passion, starts to fade.

That's why you'll now find portable infrared devices like those from Lumaflex (see lumaflex.com.au) and neuro-entertainment systems like BrainTap (see braintap.com) backstage on world tours.

Portable Wellness Is the New Backstage Pass
Technology has become the unsung hero of this wellness evolution.

I remember setting up a recovery zone on tour recently and watching a guitarist, still sweating from a set, slip into compression boots while his tour manager relaxed under a portable infrared mat. Meanwhile, the drummer sat in silence using the BrainTap headset a device that uses light and sound frequency to guide the brain into deep relaxation. Within 15 minutes they looked like they'd slept eight hours. That's the power of modern recovery.

Continues next page

Devices like Lumaflex deliver red and near-infrared light therapy through a portable wrap, allowing performers to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and accelerate muscle repair on the go. Pair that with IV hydration protocols, magnesium support, and breathwork techniques, and you have a crew that's not just surviving tour life they're thriving in it.

Swapping Cocaine for Cold Therapy

The conversations are changing too. What used to be whispered about the pressure, the exhaustion, the mental toll is now being met with openness and action.

Today, we're literally swapping cocaine for cold plunges and alcohol for Hydralytes or natural electrolyte solutions. The dopamine hits are coming not from chaos, but from calm.

The results? Better energy, sharper focus, faster recovery, and a collective sense of grounded joy. Artists are discovering that feeling good is the ultimate performance enhancer.

This isn't about perfection. It's about creating balance a space where wellbeing is not a luxury, but a professional necessity

The Shift Has Only Just Begun

I believe we're witnessing the beginning of a global movement one that redefines what it means to be a performer, a leader, or a creative human being.

The same tools transforming the touring world PEMF mats, infrared light, breathwork, sound therapy are making their way into boardrooms, film sets, and everyday homes.

We're realising that wellness isn't a destination it's a daily rhythm. A practice. A choice.

For the artists leading this shift, it's no longer about escaping pain. It's about embodying presence.

So as the lights go down and the encore fades, a new soundtrack begins backstage one of **recovery, reflection,** and **renewal.**

'The turn of the tide is here.
And trust me, this is just the beginning.'

About the Author

Meghan Jarvis is a pro-athlete, Ninja Warrior, entrepreneur, businesswoman, published writer, stunt woman and radio personality.

Her passion for fitness, wellness and entrepreneurialism led her to found WellCorp, a corporate wellness company blending onsite gyms/fitness facilities, technology, healthy aging, performance, and mindset coaching.

*A former World Class BMX bicycle racer, Meghan came to Australia to play professional basketball. With six gyms across Australia and NZ, she is now a 7-figure business owner who also oversees the wellness of the entertainment industry as **Director of Wellness at the Hemisphere Group**, a medical company caring for some of the world's most iconic touring musicians and artists, most recently including Kylie Minogue and Pearl Jam.*

*She has appeared as an actor and stunt woman in the blockbusters *Elvis*, *The Portable Door*, and the series *Apples Never Fall*, and has also competed as a Ninja on Channel Nine's *Australian Ninja Warrior*. Meghan supports Olympic athletes and is the co-founder of the **Million Women Movement**, championing women in business and sport ahead of the 2032 Olympics.*

Her academic portfolio (Master of Education in Coaching Science, Exercise Physiologist, Kinesiologist, Epigenetics), elite sport background, and bold entrepreneurial journey have shaped her into a formidable leader in the health and wealth space.

*Meghan is a Health-Led Wealth Coach committed to helping high-performing women calibrate their biology, business, and bank accounts Meghan Jarvis is a global wellness strategist, performance coach, and founder of **WellCorp Health & Wellness**.*

She works with some of the world's most recognisable entertainers, elite athletes, and corporate leaders pioneering the integration of science-based recovery, mindset mastery, and biohacking for optimal performance.

Below: Meghan loves beach running and coaching her clients.



Reset - Release- Recharge - Detox - Breathe - Glow



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Whether on a Paramount film set, a multi-city world tour, or a luxury brand activation at a beach club, this concept keeps entertainers, teams, and production crews motivated, healthy, and creatively engaged: redefining wellness as a cornerstone of performance excellence.

Why You Need us?

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