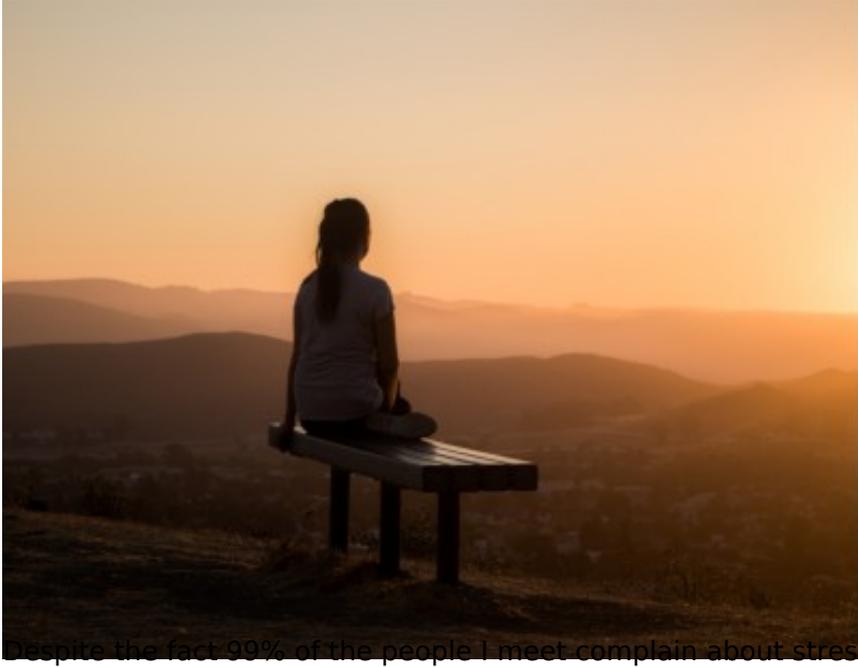


## Why isn't mental fitness a solid trend yet?



Despite the fact 99% of the people I meet complain about stress and about feeling often overwhelmed, the majority still focuses on physical fitness to reduce stress - which is great and does a lot in this direction yet not enough.

As we all know, the one big missing piece in the education system is the fact that it hasn't yet incorporated mind training in the curriculum despite solid research evidence showing its incredible benefits. and despite neuroscientists (and not only) having been writing tons of books about "mental fitness" being critical for a healthy life and better relationships - actually the ultimate goal for most of us.

When we go to the gym and train, after few weeks we don't go back home talking to family and friends that our muscles are already grown and that we are fit for life, right? This is something that takes a great deal of time to build and maintain and this is valid for the mental fitness too.

I've met too many stressed people around carrying a burden they don't have to and this is the reason I thought of sharing my 3 main experiences around the subject, hoping it will be of real help to you, the reader:

### **The first**

It was the summer of 2009 when I was having lunch with a dear person to me and a renowned international coach, Jim Bagnola. He had noticed I was pretty anxious, with the skin on my hands deteriorated and dry due to a... high recession related stress as far as I remember. During that lunch Jim, a meditator for more than 40 years, mentioned to me in detail about the **transcendental meditation** / TM and its benefits - increasing frontal (lobe) coherence among many others. ([www.tm.org](http://www.tm.org))

I have to admit I was very skeptical at first as my impression about meditation was related to what I heard and saw on TV about fake gurus and "spirals" and to a superficial understanding of the concept. But due to trusting him I decided to be open to explore and meet the instructor he mentioned about, a person whom I was told to be the apprentice of **Maharishi Yogi** (the one who developed the meditation technique).

I was more than surprised to see that many famous people (The Beatles, Ray Dalio, Mick Jagger, Oprah, David Linch, Clint Eastwood, Jim Carrey and “half of Hollywood”) have been doing it for years and thus part of my concern/fear of this type of unknown was diminished.

In time I felt its tremendous benefits and am still in close contact to my mentor in TM. I have to admit at one point I felt very different than I was used to: too calm and clear and... I simply got ...scared. I stopped for some months because of that and my conclusion today is that it was both stupid and positive. Stupid because stress hijacked me back pretty fast, positive because I realized how good it is for both mind and health.

### **The second**

In 2012 I entered contact with Mindfulness Meditation (MM) when hearing about MBSR of [Jon Kabat Zinn](#). A bit late for me in my opinion but better later than never].

Curious, I explored this technique too and tried to read as much as possible about the brain, neuroscience, brain waves, flow, meditation techniques, happiness etc: Victor Frankl, Srini Pillay, Chade Meng Tan, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Daniel Goleman, Jill Bolte Taylor, Steven Kotler, Daniel Pink, Leonard Mlodinov, Matthieu Ricard, Mario Beauregard, Dalai Lama, Edward Wilson, David Eagleman, Minguyr Rinpoche, Thich Nhat Hahn, Divia Chander and Robert Waldinger videos, Happy Movie, etc and doing research as well.

I have to admit it has been a deeply fascinating journey, contributing tremendously to health, self-awareness and EQ development as a whole.

One of my favorite and easy to read books about MM (mindfulness meditation) was Search Inside Yourself and after reading it I entered contact with the author ([Chade Meng Tan](#)) who further put me in contact with the right people from SIY Leadership Institute of google ([www.siyli.org](http://www.siyli.org)) as google had been the incubator for Meng's meditation project.

I have learned a great deal about attention and Meta -attention from this book, the research behind it and from practicing mindfulness meditation since.

### **The third**

Later on, over a lunch with a wonderful person called Dimitris, I was recommended a book that not only did inspire me (and others) but a book that had a high impact on my life: **Positive Intelligence**.

After reading & listening to it on Audible while running in the mornings for about... 7 times in 3 years J, I wrote to the author (Shirzad Chamine, Professor at Stanford Business School) and proposed to meet and explore how we could help others with his [technique](#).

Having planned a trip to Cupertino in Silicon Valley @Singularity University in March this year I went to San Francisco too, with the main purpose of meeting Shirzad. We met and I have to say he is a wonderful man with whom I am in close contact since. I am also in a comprehensive training with him already for the last 7 weeks, together with a small team of friends and business partners.

The training is guided by an exclusive App which is actually great in keeping your discipline and helps a lot in increasing your self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and empathy. It is so great as I embedded this training into the coaching program I am doing for the executives I am working with.

## **In conclusion:**

Our brain is a great and a vast world. And I have become addicted to learn more about. I still have Qi Gong and Yoga to explore further however it is unbelievable how many common things they all have.

One of the major meditation benefits I feel besides the EQ development and health (which are extremely important) is related to the quality of the time. Meditation helps you focus and stay calm in turbulent moments, helps you enjoy the moment. Being present for 5 minutes with your dear ones is much more important than a full day apparently there but with your mind at the office or on a future stress than doesn't yet exist.

If I wouldn't feel great and see the amazing benefits, both for me and for the ones that started meditating on the technique that suited each best, I wouldn't have written this article.

For me it is part of my mission to have a positive impact on people's lives and this is the reason for sharing these experiences hoping that one technique suits you too.

If I have managed to stir your interest, please do not hesitate to write me for more details.

Below, few links, books and definitions for clarity:

*"A family of mental training practices that are designed to familiarize the practitioner with specific types of mental processes" Julie Brefczynski - Lewis*

*In the Buddhist texts, the word used for meditation is "Bhavana" which means "to cultivate".*

*The many types of meditation are used to train different faculties of the mind.*

*It has not been seen as something magical or highly mysterious but as simple as mental fitness. See Search Inside Yourself by Chade Meng Tan for details.*

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation>
- <https://brainworksneurotherapy.com/what-are-brainwaves>
- <https://www.kmtrust.com/insights/neuroscience>
- <https://www.kmtrust.com/insights/emotional-intelligence-books>
- [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Davidson-Mindfulness\\_on\\_Brain\\_and\\_Immune\\_Functionpdf.pdf](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Davidson-Mindfulness_on_Brain_and_Immune_Functionpdf.pdf)
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/managing-worry-in-generalized-anxiety-disorder-201602179172>

