

HELP for
HEROES

RECOVERY COLLEGE:
SELF-HELP GUIDES
TO RECOVERY

BODY
IN ACTION



A FIELD GUIDE
TO SELF-CARE:

BODY IN ACTION

HELP for
HEROES

Stress is the body's reaction to what it perceives to be harmful situations and our bodies react to it in different ways.

Much of what happens in our minds in response to stress is unconscious. While it can creep up on us, and we may not choose to feel its symptoms, the way in which we respond to it is in our control.

By understanding how our brains prepare to process stressful situations, and then acknowledging and treating these signs of stress, we can begin to minimise its effects on our body.

This three-step guide breaks the symptoms of stress down.

LEARNING TO MANAGE YOUR ANXIETIES

There are lots of small things you can do to help manage feelings of anxiety. If you find that you are experiencing regular feelings of unease, try incorporating a few of these into your daily routine.

KEEP ACTIVE

Keeping yourself active is known to decrease stress and tension and elevate your mood. Try to incorporate being active into your daily routine – a twenty-minute walk in the fresh air can boost your mood and relax your mind.

HELP for
HEROES





**BODY
EMOTION
MIND
IN ACTION**

PREPARE

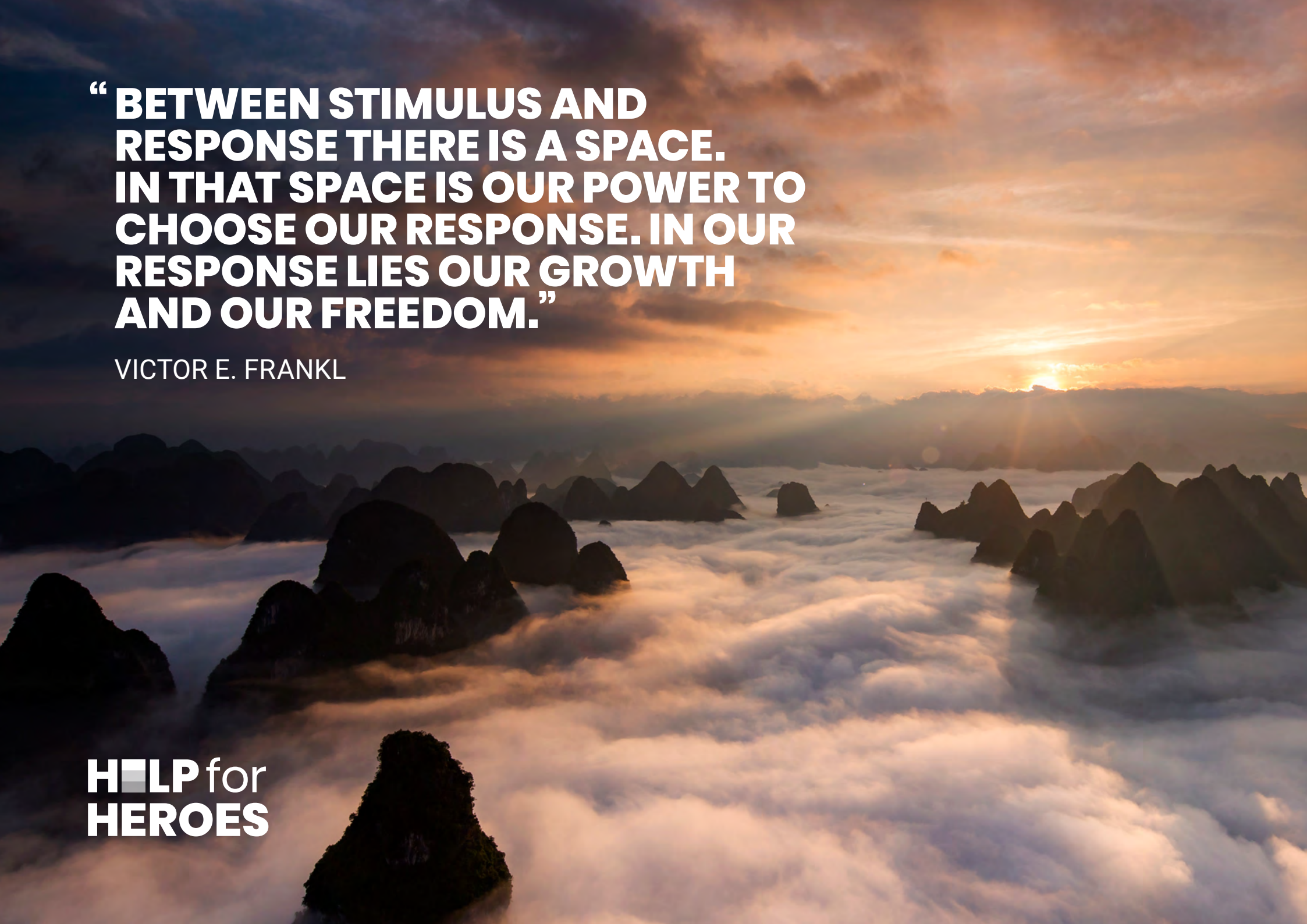
**HELP for
HEROES**

BEING HUMAN

- + WE ALL JUST FIND OURSELVES HERE
- + LIFE IS DIFFICULT AND WE ALL DO THE BEST WE CAN
- + MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENS IN OUR MINDS IS UNCONSCIOUS
- + WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
- + WHILE WE MAY NOT CHOOSE DIFFICULTY, HOW WE RESPOND TO IT IS OUR CHOICE



HELP for
HEROES



**“ BETWEEN STIMULUS AND
RESPONSE THERE IS A SPACE.
IN THAT SPACE IS OUR POWER TO
CHOOSE OUR RESPONSE. IN OUR
RESPONSE LIES OUR GROWTH
AND OUR FREEDOM.”**

VICTOR E. FRANKL

H  **LP** for
HEROES

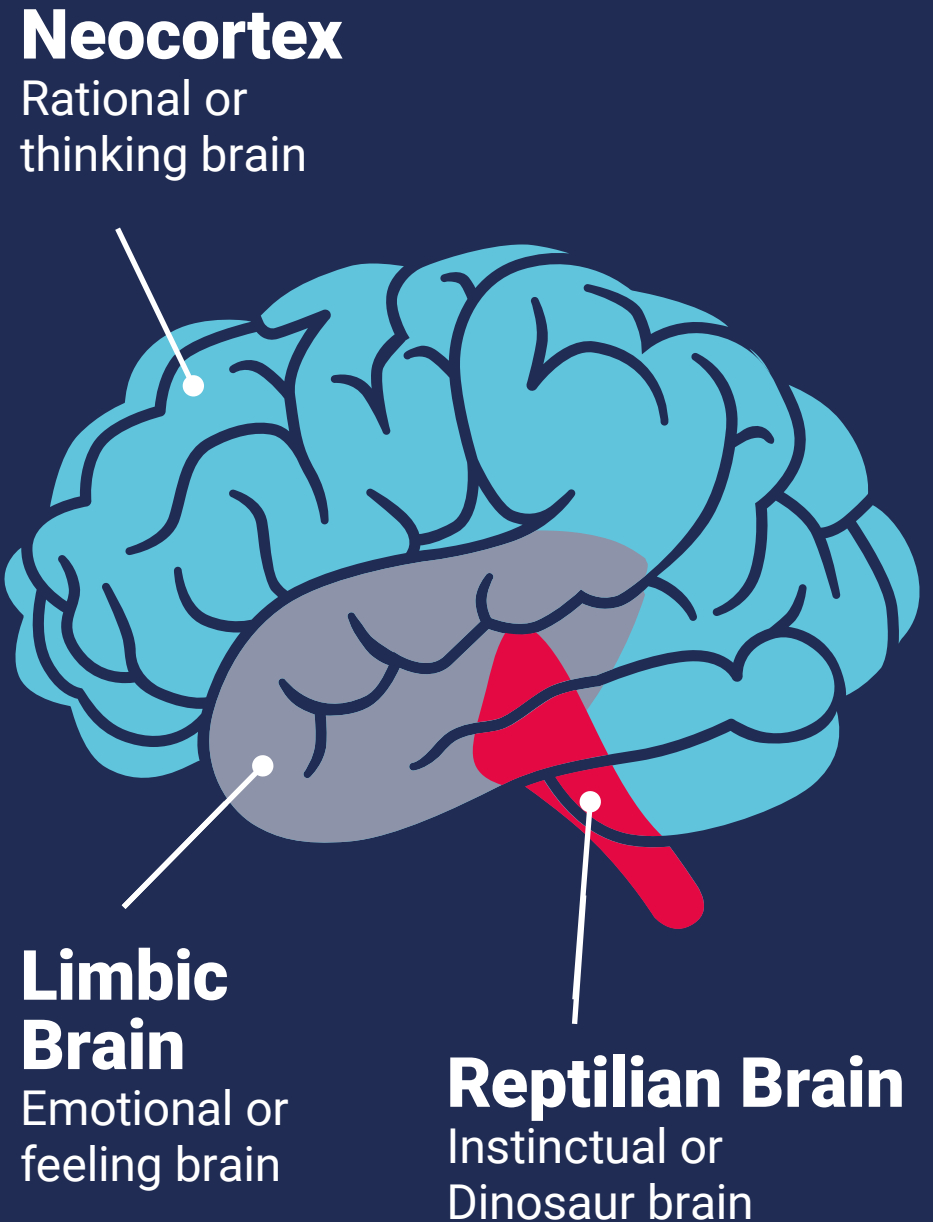
'TRICKY BRAIN'

(PROF. PAUL GILBERT)

Our brains are wired for safety and respond automatically to threats.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Our response to a threat, whether physical or emotional, is the same.



FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Any perceived threat ignites our 'reptilian brain', the part of the brain that processes instinctive behaviour, and we respond according to past experiences.

'FIGHT' OR 'FLIGHT'

And sometimes:

'APPEASE' OR 'FREEZE'



Our brain goes into 'fight or flight' mode, a mechanism that has evolved from our ancient ancestors who could either choose to fight danger or flee from it.

A man with a shaved head, wearing a green ribbed sweater, is sitting on the edge of a bed with white linens. He is looking out a large window with a view of trees. The room is bright and airy.

**BODY
EMOTION
MIND
IN ACTION**

ACKNOWLEDGE

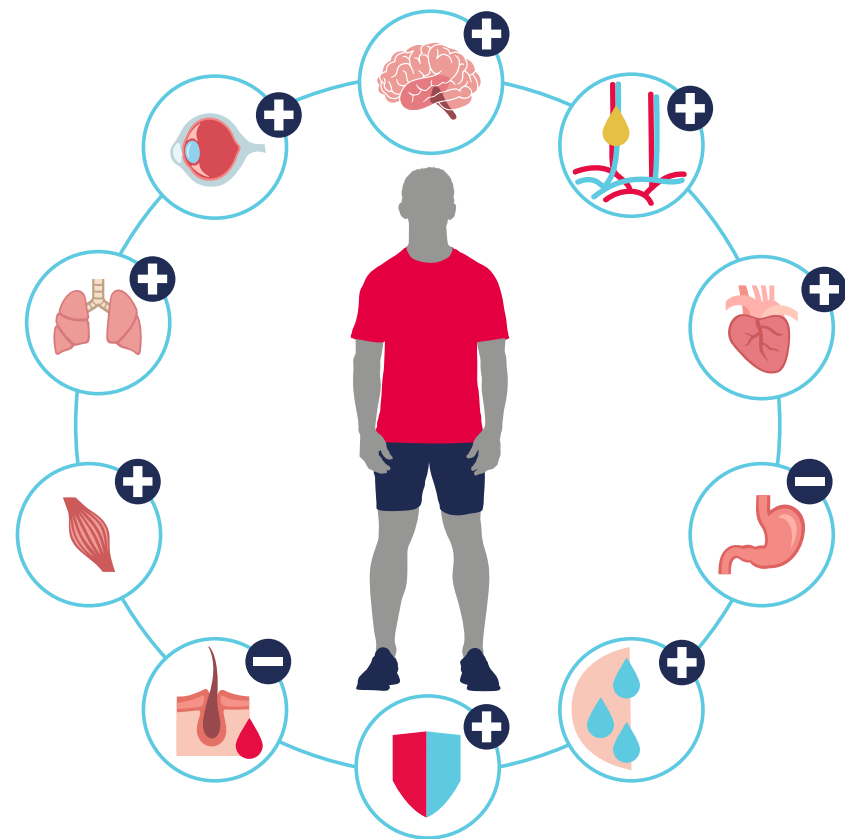
**HELP for
HEROES**

Think of what happens in your body when you feel threatened or stressed. You may feel physical sensations such as an increase in heart rate, muscles tensing, blood pressure increasing, an increase in saliva rate or pupil dilation.

Other sensations may include:

- + Heart Rate increases
- + Breathing quickens
- + Muscles Tense
- + Blood directed to major muscle groups, away from:
 - Digestive system
 - Rational part of your brain
 - Extremities (fingers & toes)

- + Sweating
- + Feeling light headed
- + Changes to vision
- + Feeling Shaky/unstable
- + Loss of motor control
- + Finding it hard to think clearly

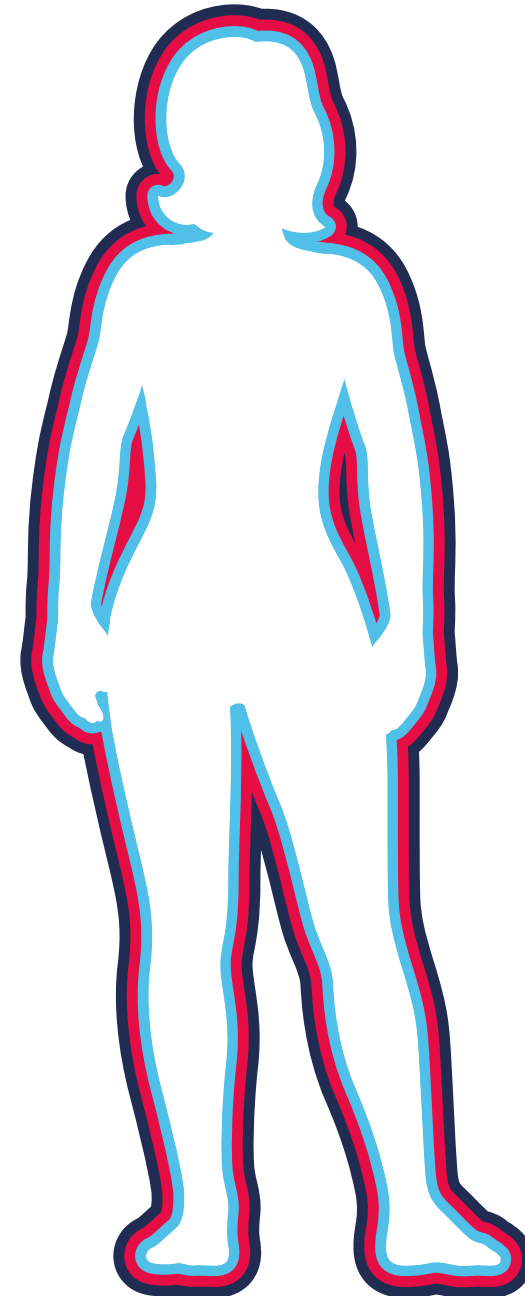


EXERCISE

To help you acknowledge some of these symptoms, try drawing yourself as an image.

Note the following on your drawing:

- + **HOW YOU FEEL STRESS**
- + **WHERE YOU FEEL STRESS**
- + **WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE STRESS**





BODY
EMOTION
MIND
IN ACTION

TREAT

H  **LP for**
HEROES

WHAT IS HELPFUL?

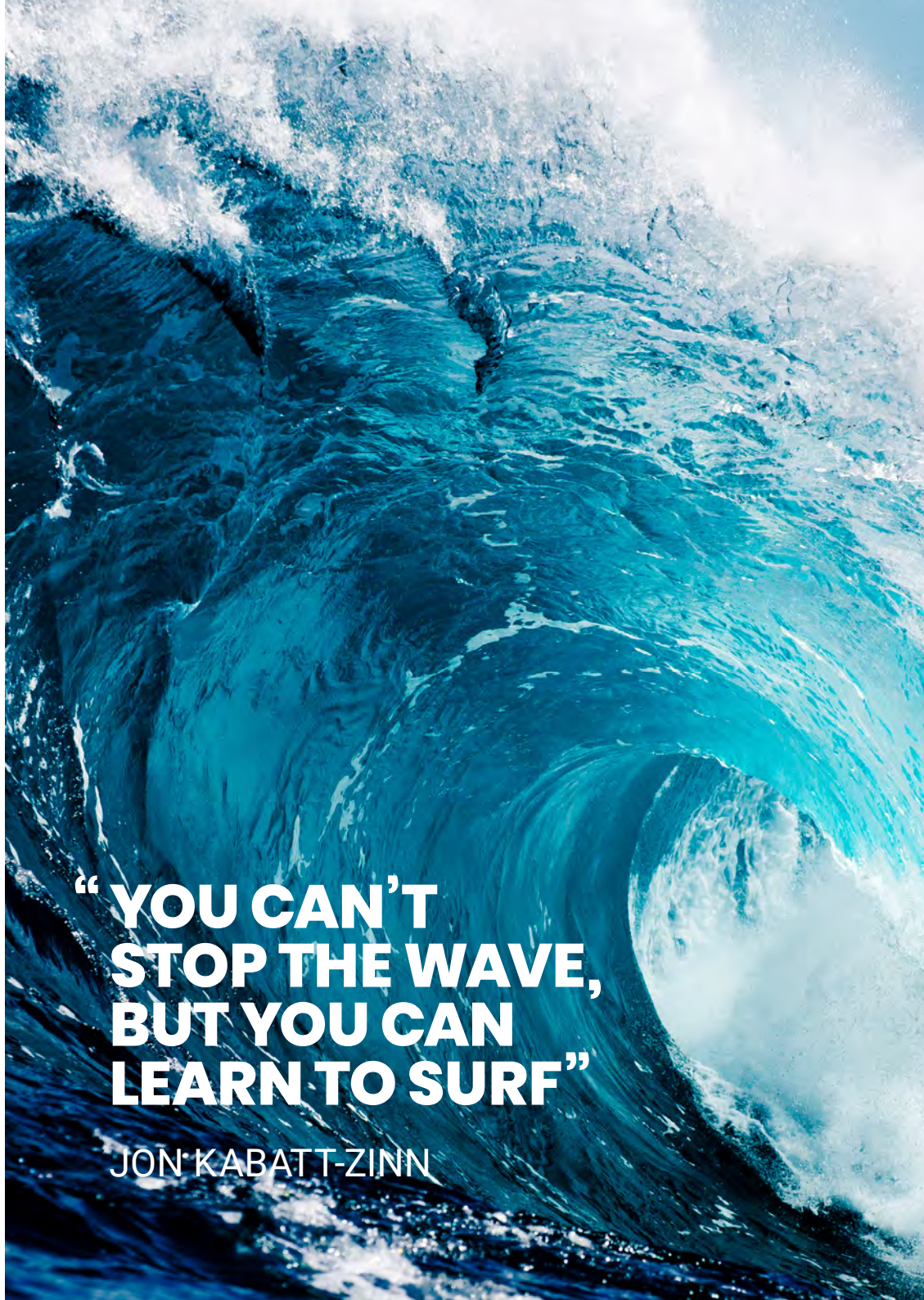
As we learn what happens to our body, emotions and mind when we are stressed, what can we do about it?

Stress is an everyday part of life, it's how you manage it that matters.

There are many ways to manage stress healthily. Breathing exercises are one way. Explore your own ways of managing and reducing stress in your daily routine.

Find something that works for you.

HELP for
HEROES



**“YOU CAN'T
STOP THE WAVE,
BUT YOU CAN
LEARN TO SURF”**

JON KABATT-ZINN

SOOTHING RHYTHM BREATHING

Try these breathing exercises to calm your body from the effects of stress:

Watch the breathing video

HELP for
HEROES



AND FINALLY...

If you have any questions at all, take positive action by contacting a member of our Recovery team:

getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk