



# The Language of Resilience in Study Abroad

*WISE 2017*

*Janice Abarbanel, PhD*



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**Earth rising....**





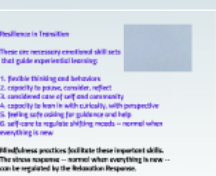
**Resilience -- why it matters.**







- **Resilience is the language of emotional health in which we all have a responsibility to be fluent.**
- **The important shift away from a 'one path' clinical/emergency focus.**
- **Engage a "wellness conversation".**



# The Emotional Language of Resilience in Study Abroad

## *Clinical Language*

1. *"Culture Shock"*
2. *Diagnoses*
3. *Mental Health*
4. *Mental Health problems*
5. *Black and White Thinking*  
*(either 'fine' or 'ill')*
6. *Students "should be" adults*
7. *Focus on academics as primary*
8. *Single path to adulthood*
9. *One set of rules*

## *Resilient Language*

1. Culture Shift
2. Emotional Health
3. Feeling overwhelmed requires support.
4. Perspective, staff self-care, consultation.
5. Students are emerging into adulthood.
6. Focus on student development in context academic programming.
7. Winding road into adulthood.
8. "You never know when stuff might come in handy." (Asking for help is a skill.)

## Resilience in Transition

These are necessary emotional skill sets that guide experiential learning:



1. flexible thinking and behaviors
2. capacity to pause, consider, reflect
3. considered care of self and community
4. capacity to lean in with curiosity, with perspective
5. feeling safe asking for guidance and help
6. self-care to regulate shifting moods – normal when everything is new

**Mindfulness practices facilitate these important skills. The stress response -- normal when everything is new -- can be regulated by the Relaxation Response.**

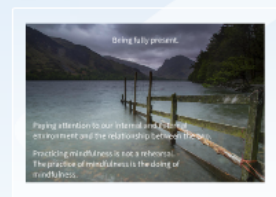
everything is now  
Mindfulness practices facilitate these important skills.  
The stress response — normal when everything is now —  
can be regulated by the Relaxation Response.

## Capacity to pause and take perspective.



Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.

Jon Kabat-Zinn



Mindfulness  
The practice of mindfulness is the doing of  
mindfulness.





A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, a wooden fence with a netting structure extending into the water, and a range of mountains in the background under a cloudy sky. The scene is captured in a slightly desaturated, moody tone.

Being fully present.

Paying attention to our internal and external environment and the relationship between the two.

Practicing mindfulness is not a rehearsal.  
The practice of mindfulness is the doing of  
mindfulness.

# Mindfulness as Noticing

“Becoming more mindful does not involve achieving some altered state of consciousness through years of meditation. It requires, rather, learning to switch modes of thinking about ourselves and the world. It is very easy to learn to be mindful, which makes doing so appealing to those unwilling to sit for twenty minutes twice a day. Mindfulness is simply the process of noticing new things.”

Ellen Langer, PhD



- 
- Advice from a tree:**
- stand tall
  - be strong
  - go out on a limb
  - remember your roots
  - enjoy the view

**Ilan Shamir**





YouTube



YouTube

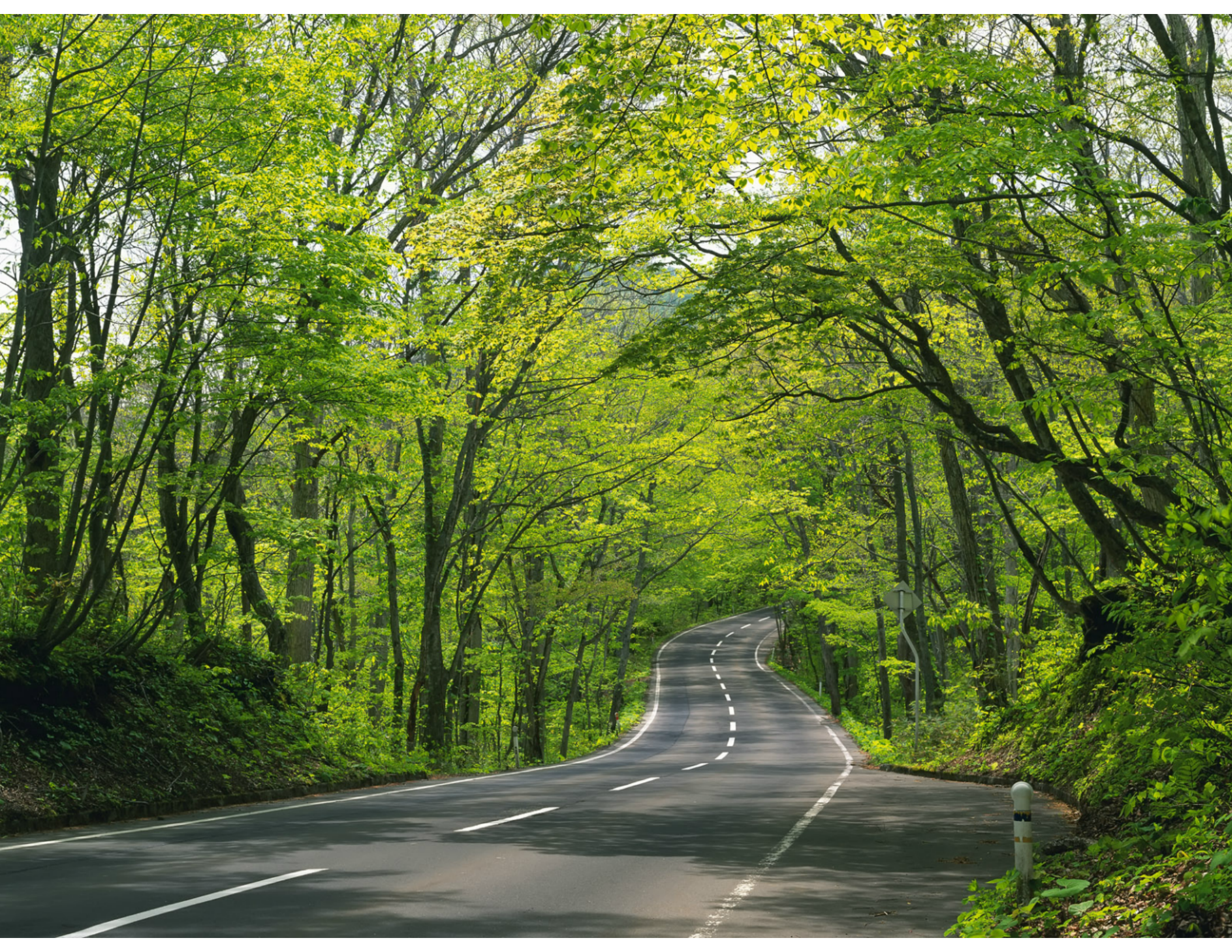
**It's a complex landscape --**

- **What are we noticing?**
- **What are we mindful of as we guide our students at home and abroad?**
- **Does our own mindfulness to the language of resilience influence the way we are making a difference to our students' emotional health?**















# *Who are our students?*



The language  
brings staff,  
and student

Fe  
is  
a



# Emerging Adults

Jeffrey Arnett PhD



## What clicks



Non verbal  
Emotions  
Anger



*Feeling in-between*







## *Uncertainty and Vulnerability*

### The age instabil

Conflicting social expectations for maintaining connections and achieving personal goals.

Role transitions in family, culture, and relationships

Multiple opportunities and provocation to behaviors.

# The age of instability

Conflicting social expectations for maintaining connections and achieving personal goals.

Loss of implicit self-regulators: school, family, friends

Role transitions in family, culture, and relationships

Multiple opportunities for exposure to and provocation to engage in risk taking behaviors.

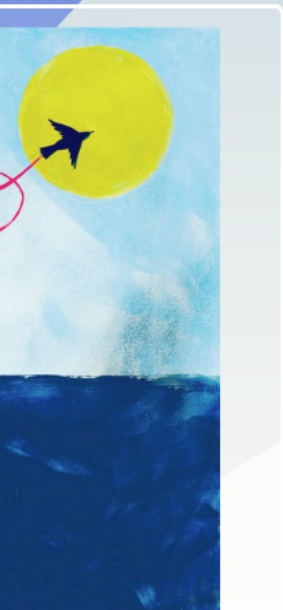


*Self-focused*





# What clicks!

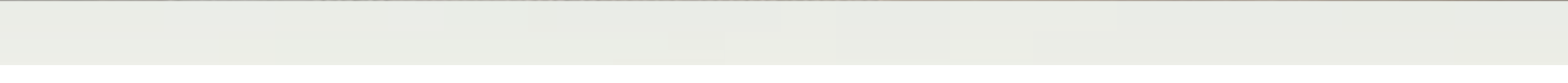
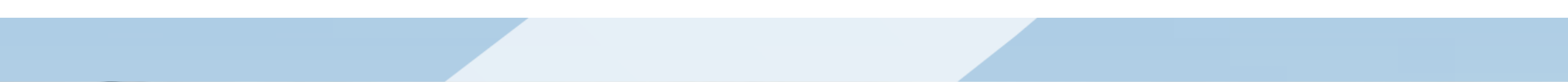


*An age of possibilities  
to create their future.*

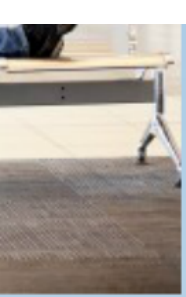
Optimism











Right

- Non verbal
- Emotions
- Anger
- Confusion
- Disappointment
- Irritability
- Joy/excitement
- Art/music



Easily overwhelmed, out of balance

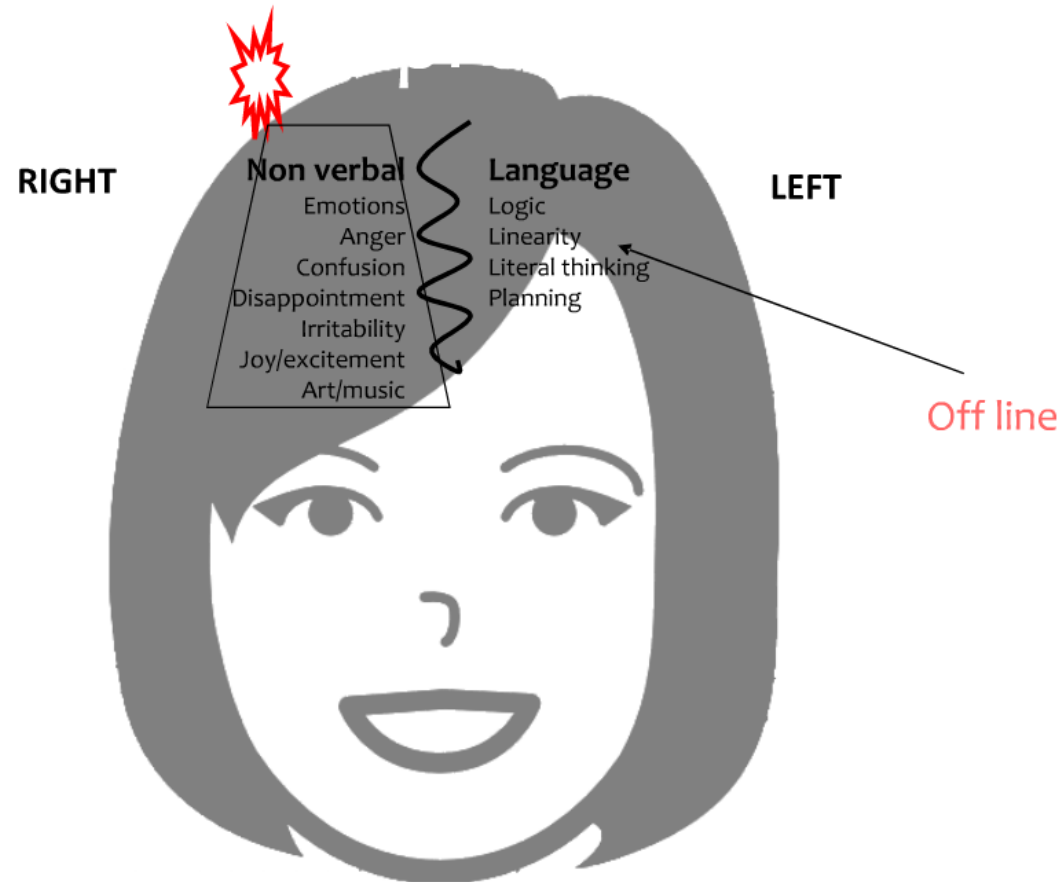
Left

- Language
- Logic
- Linearity
- Literal thinking
- Planning

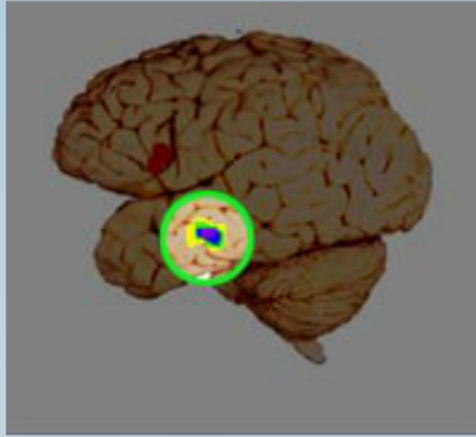
*Off line*



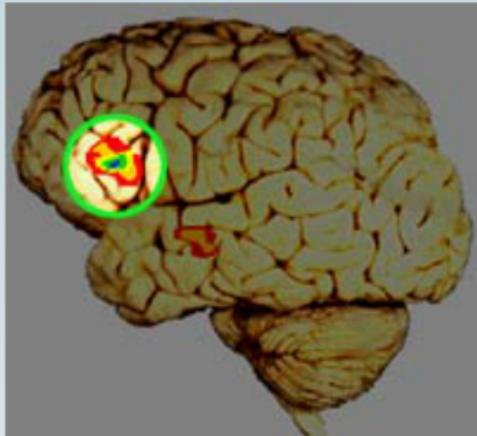
Intense emotions inhibit left hemisphere  
“linear” problem solving.







Teens and emerging adults use a different part of their brain when discerning emotion. (more emotional or 'gut' responses)  
Reading cues and relating to others: important competencies to support as these competencies develop during this stage of life.



Adult brain: executive function  
(planning, judgment, insight)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/interviews/todd.html>  
Interview with Deborah Yurgelun-Todd, Frontline

# Exploring

Traveling, wandering, engaging others



# Homework



# Self-care Other-care

- Establishing a routine
- Exercising
- Eating, sleeping
- Practicing alone time
- Managing money
- Substance use



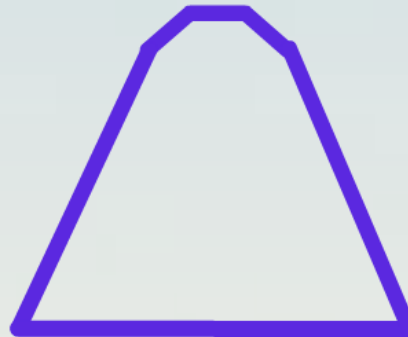
# Relationships

At home and abroad  
Family and friends  
Social media



# Work and Internships

Thinking about  
Worrying about





**Feeling overwhelmed  
is normative for emerging  
adults.**

# *The Wellness Conversation*

Supporting the emotional health of *all* of our students abroad. Especially when instability in all areas is normative for the life stage. The emotional charge to "head out" and take risks leads the way.

The importance of *positive and engaging language* -- asking for help is a skill.

**The language of resilience  
brings staff, faculty,  
and students together.**



#### It's a skill to ask for help.

##### Why?

- A need to present as perfect? A stigma?
- Fear of appearing weak or confused?
- Fear of "having a mental health problem"?
- Fear of being sent home?



## **It's a skill to ask for help.**

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## **Inquiry into Resilience**

- Check in with students during the application phase and at Pre-Departure.
- Help them access and translate the skills they already have.
- Help them build a bridge to the challenges you offer.



# THE EMOTIONAL PASSPORT

*Moods can shift when cultures shift.*

emotional time.

Moods can shift when cultures shift.



**Mentoring skills for regulating intense moods.**

- Settling into routines.
- Food, alcohol, exercise
- Social media
- Self-care and other care



*Emerging Adulthood coincides with significant neurobiological changes.*

Heading out...



*How are you using your energy?*

Feeling overwhelmed.

the "wellness conversation"



Relationships

and health

*Studying abroad is an  
emotional time.*

Moods can shift when cultures shift.





*Emerging Adulthood  
coincides with significant  
neurobiological changes.*

Heading out...



*How are you using  
your energy?*

Feeling overwhelmed.



the "wellness  
conversation"



# *Mentoring skills for regulating intense moods.*

- **Settling into routines.**
- **Food, alcohol, exercise**
- **Social media**
- **Self-care and other care**



## **The Emotional Passport is a *mind set* and a *skill set*.**

- Can you notice mood shifts, rising intensities, and use strategies to refocus?
- What helps you click into awareness, gratitude, attention to the present?
- How do you balance your energy?



# The C

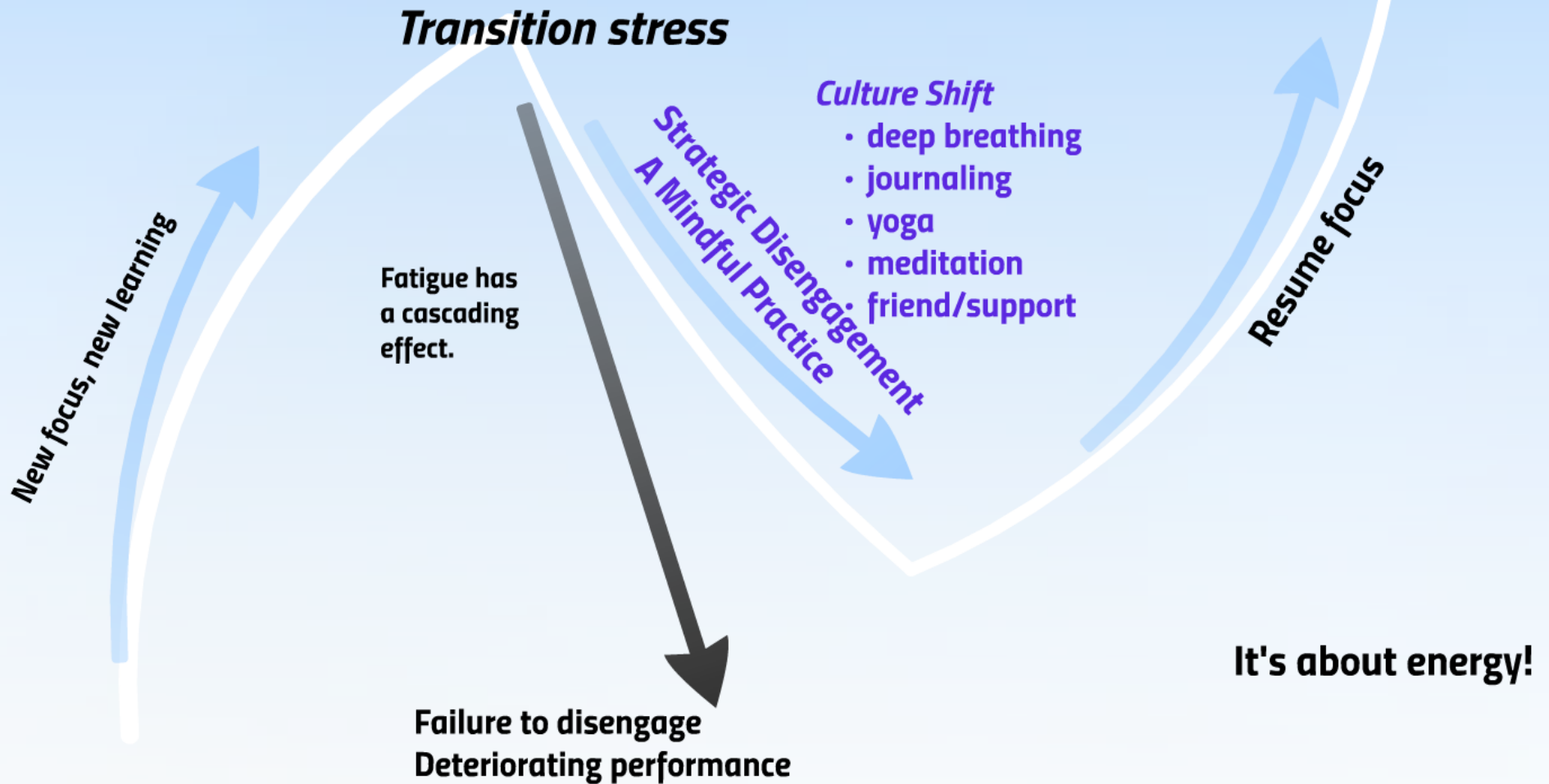
Tran

Fatigue h  
a cascadi  
effect.

Fallu  
Defen

New focus, new learning

# The Oscillating Brain



Adapted from Jim Loehr, The Power of Full Engagement



Show

Saturday, March 26, 2016 06:54

Position

0°00.42' S

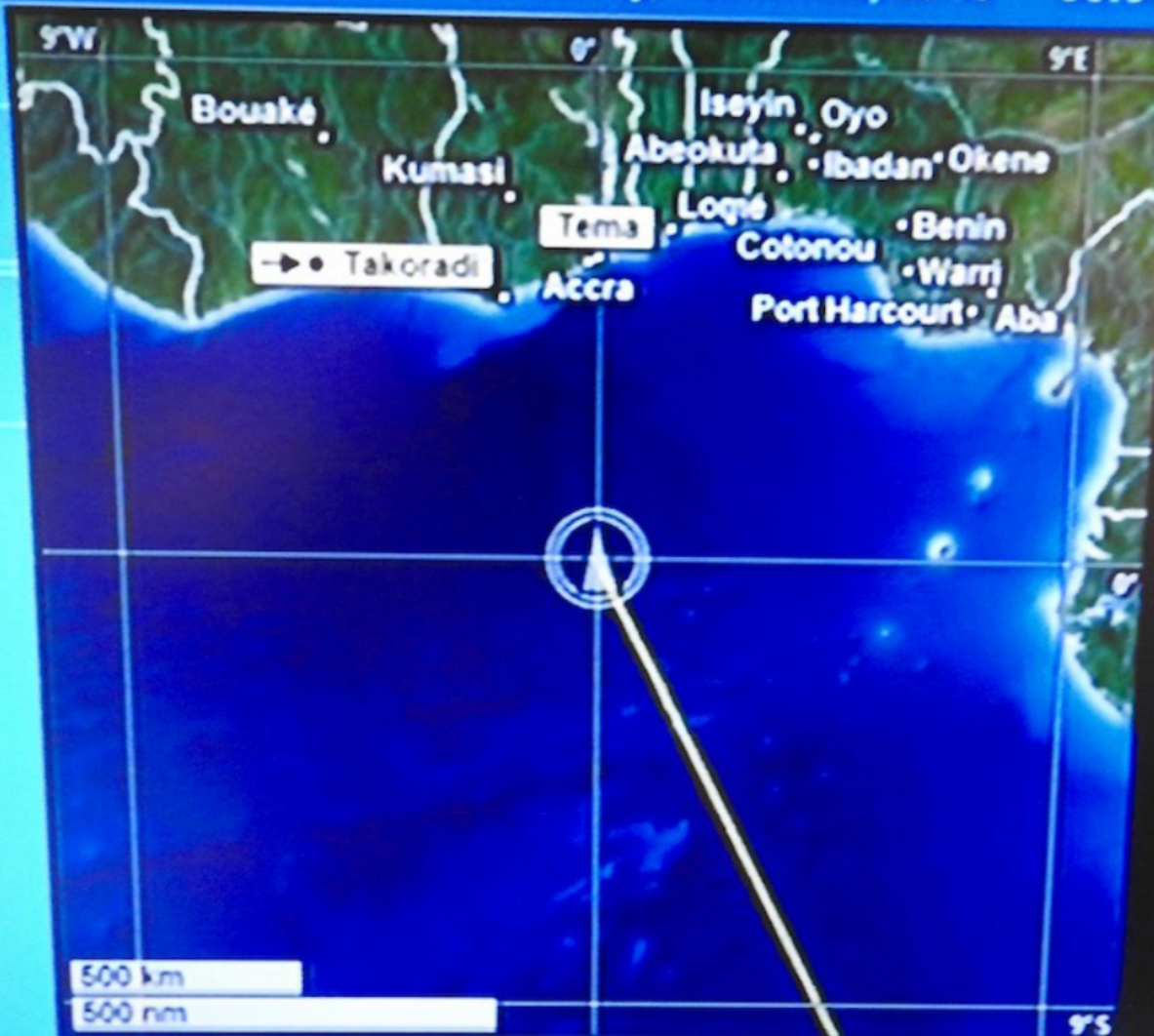
0°00.01' E

Course: 355°

Speed: 10.9 kts

Apparent wind

4 kts



Present air humidity: 87 %

SAMSUNG



