

What's on Your Mind?

Mindfulness is not the solution to all your problems, but it can help.

When I heard Jay Winner, MD, speak last fall at the AAFP's annual meeting, FMX, on techniques for reducing frustration and increasing fulfillment, I hoped we would be able to bring his expertise to a larger audience in the pages of *FPM*. In this issue, we do, with the first of a two-part series describing the same methods – mindfulness and reframing – that Dr. Winner introduced to FMX crowds. Part 1 (page 28) describes mindfulness, a practice inspired by ancient Eastern teachings and popularized in the West by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, who founded the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts and went on to write best-selling books on the subject.

Dr. Winner isn't the first family physician to attest to the power of mindfulness for combatting stress and reinvigorating practice. C. Carolyn Thiedke, MD, introduced readers to mindfulness in a classic *FPM* article from 1996 called "Rediscovering the Joy of Family Practice."¹ In describing the benefits of mindfulness and other techniques, Dr. Thiedke

"While we may have little control over external forces, we do have the power to mold our thoughts."

wrote, "While we may have little control over external forces, we do have the power to mold our thoughts and shape our actions in ways that can greatly enrich our lives."

The idea that physicians can increase satisfaction and well-being by thinking differently will strike some readers as promising and others as a naively simple response to the practice complexities that are leading so many physicians to burnout. Of course eliminating the root causes of physician burnout, including the many bureaucratic burdens that contribute to inefficiency and detract from patient care, would be ideal. *FPM* exists to help with that too.

Our mission is to give you the tools and information you need to build a rewarding practice and improve patient care. If there are specific topics you want us to tackle in *FPM*, or topics you *need* us to tackle, I hope you will take a few minutes to email us at the address below.



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1. Thiedke CC. Rediscovering the joy of family practice. *Fam Pract Manag.* 1996;3(10):32-40.

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