



Putting Your Mask on First

Thriving in the Legal
Field Through the
Power of Self-Care

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America's Soweto

"Anyone who visits in the schools of East St. Louis, even for a short time, comes away profoundly shaken. These are innocent children, after all. They have done nothing wrong. They have committed no crime. They are too young to have offended us in any way at all. One searches for some way to understand why a society as rich and, frequently, as generous as ours would leave these children in their penury and squalor for so long -- and with so little public indignation."

Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Crown, 1991.



Gone Too Soon

Rita (Ladybug) Redd, 35, 2001
Edward Lewis Conrad, 68, 2001
Chandra (Tessa) Redd, 48, 2007
Ortega (Buster) Redd 57, 2019
Rita (Cutie) Conrad, 84, 2020
Jessica (Pooh) Redd, 65, 2023

**Regardless of
background,
people are not
taking care of
themselves!**

The Average Person

- is overweight (74%)
- has at least one chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes (60%)
- eats mostly processed foods (70% of diet)
- fails to get 30 minutes of exercise per day (53%)
- drinks more than 10 alcoholic beverages per week (64%)
- is addicted to their cell phones (56.9%)
- spends over 2 hours on social media every day (even though they admit it has an impact on their mental health)



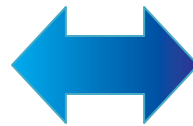
**We must be
honest about our
current health
crises.**

The Way We Live and Work is Unsustainable!

Life is Making us Less Effective at Work

Health, relationship, and financial stressors significantly contribute to **burnout** (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment), which **hinders performance** at work.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) (2020)

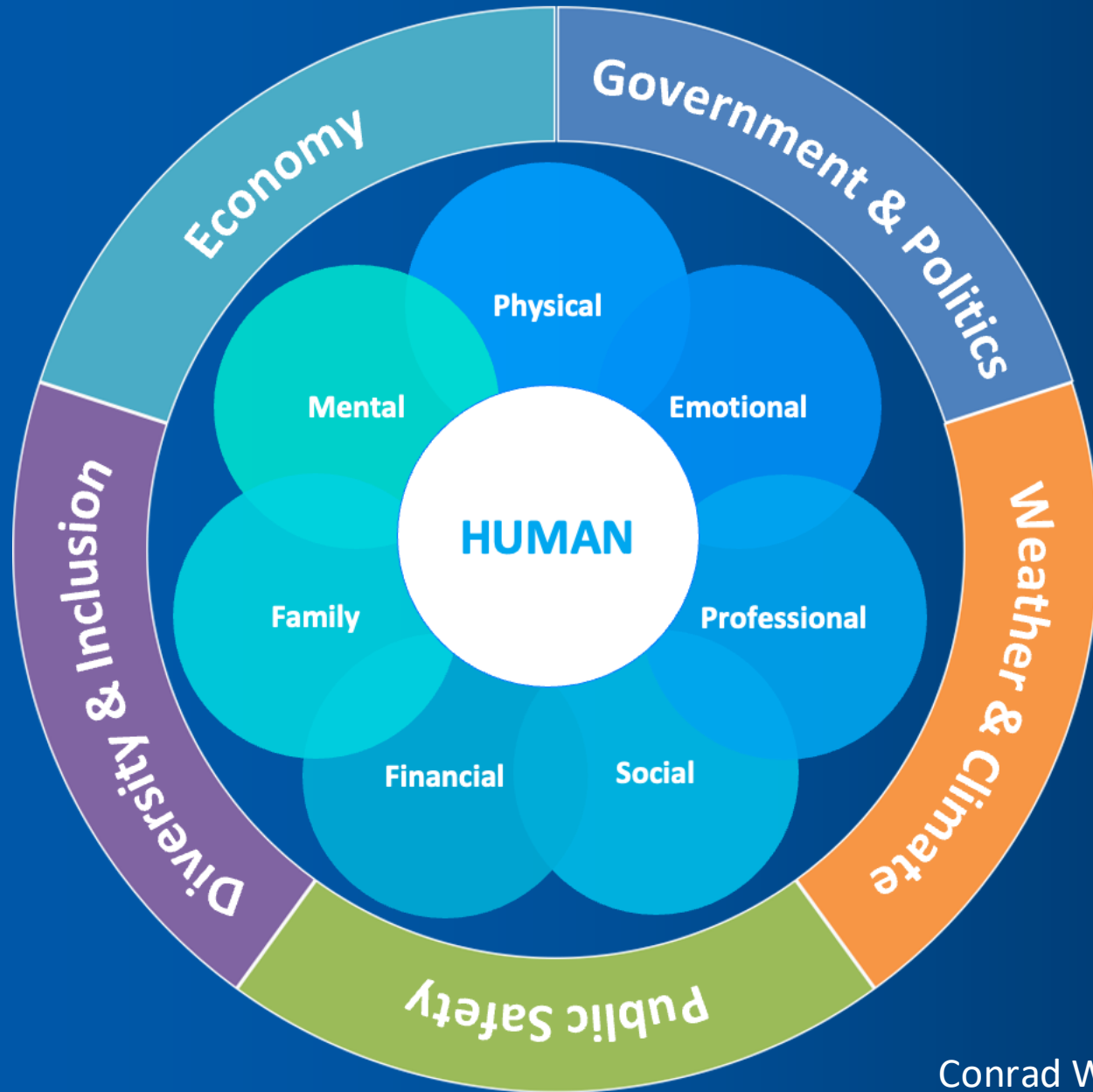


Work is Making us Less Effective in Life

89% of employees (and 82% of the C-Suite) experience work-related stress, with many reporting negative repercussions on their work (78%), personal life (71%), well-being (64%), and relationships (62%).

The Workforce Institute at UKG (WFI) (2022)


The Way We Live



**Societal factors
play a significant
role in impacting
our health.**

**Humans are at an
infection point!**





The Information Age is **Exploiting** Our Vulnerabilities.

Too Much

402.89 million
terabytes of data
are created,
captured, copied, or
consumed every
day.

Soax

Too Fast

News preferences
Digital - 58%
Television - 32%
Radio - 6%
Print - 4%

Pew Research

Too Fake

64 percent of adults
said “fake news”
caused confusion on
basic facts.

Pew Research

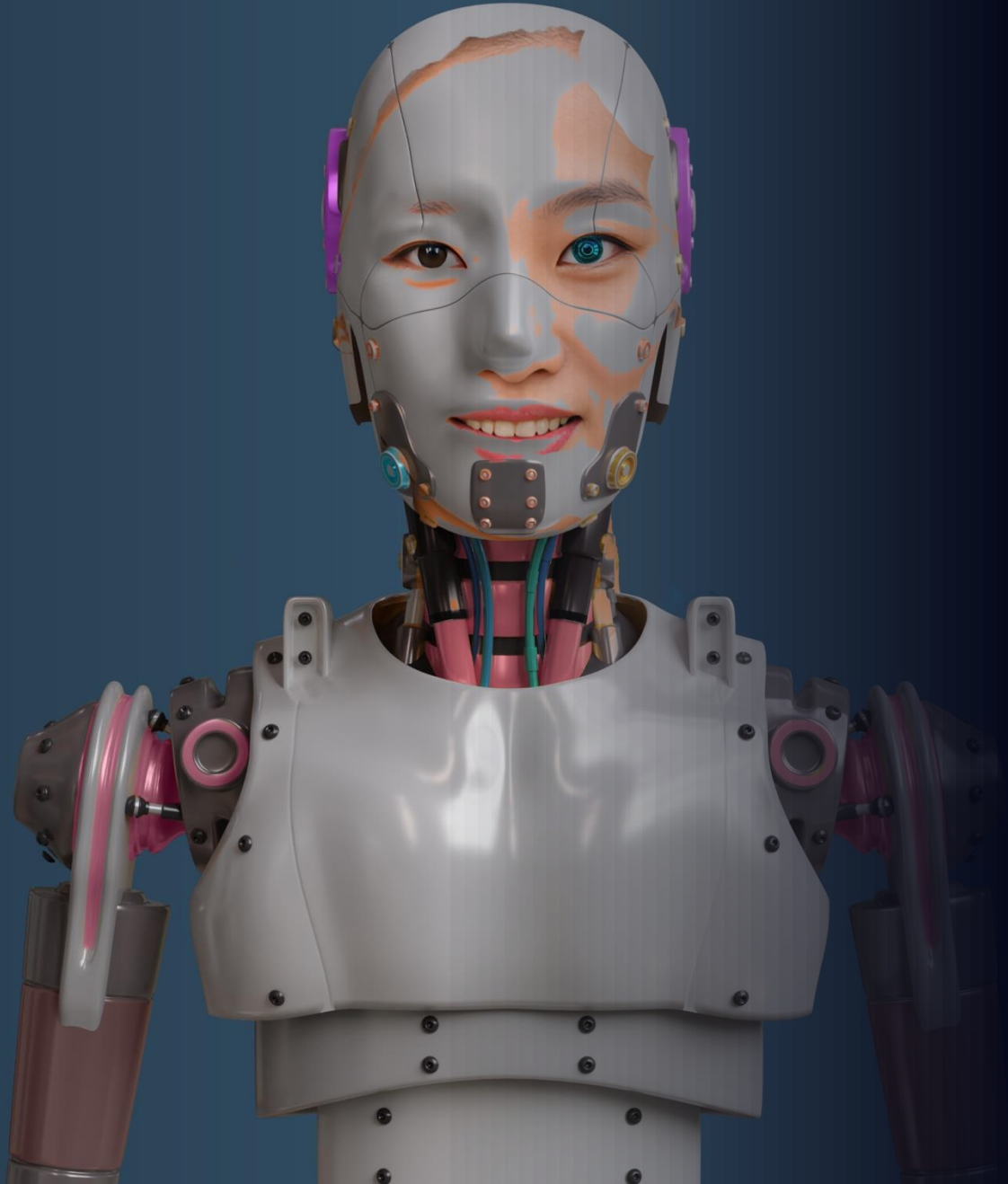
Fight

Flight

Freeze

Fawn

Our sympathetic nervous system response hasn't changed since the early days on the African savanna.



There is concern about robots becoming too much like people.

Maybe people are becoming too much like robots.

The Maturity Paradox™

People are “growing up” later, if at all, but
“getting old” sooner.

The frontal lobes are supposed to be fully formed by our late 20's.



The frontal lobes control:

- Logic, reasoning, judgment, decision-making.
- Understanding of social norms.
- Executive functions, including self-control and inhibitions, attention span and working memory.
- Ability to process and learn new information.
- Ability to retrieve information.

More people are “growing up” later...

	1980	2021
Full-time work	73%	66%
Financial independence	63%	60%
Home	84%	68%
Marriage	63%	22%
1st child	39%	17%

Pew Research Center





...but “getting old” sooner.

From 2013 – 2017, the number diagnosed with Early-onset dementia and Alzheimer’s increased:

- 373% among 30- to 44-year-olds
- 311% among 45- to 54-year-olds
- 143% among 55- to 64-year-olds

BlueCross BlueShield



Are we becoming a nation of Adolescent Adults?

- 45.7% of people can't distinguishing fact from opinion.
- Fake news can spread 10 times faster than legitimate news stories and may have 100 times the reach.
- There may be up to 10,000 cults in America.
- 82% of drivers admit to road rage or aggressive driving in the past year.
- Global scores are declining on every emotional intelligence competency.
- After rising nearly 30 points over the past century, IQ scores have fallen.

The Way We Work

Legal work is intensely stressful and demanding.

A 2023 Bloomberg Law survey found that over 50% of lawyers reported feeling burnout at least once a week.

Younger lawyers and women in law reported higher levels of burnout, often tied to work-life imbalance, billable hour pressure, and lack of support.

Bloomberg Law





Lawyers are struggling in silence.

28% of lawyers battle with depression compared to 8% of the general population.

American Bar Association

Alcohol abuse is a significant issue for legal professionals, particularly for women.

Professionals who experience problematic drinking:

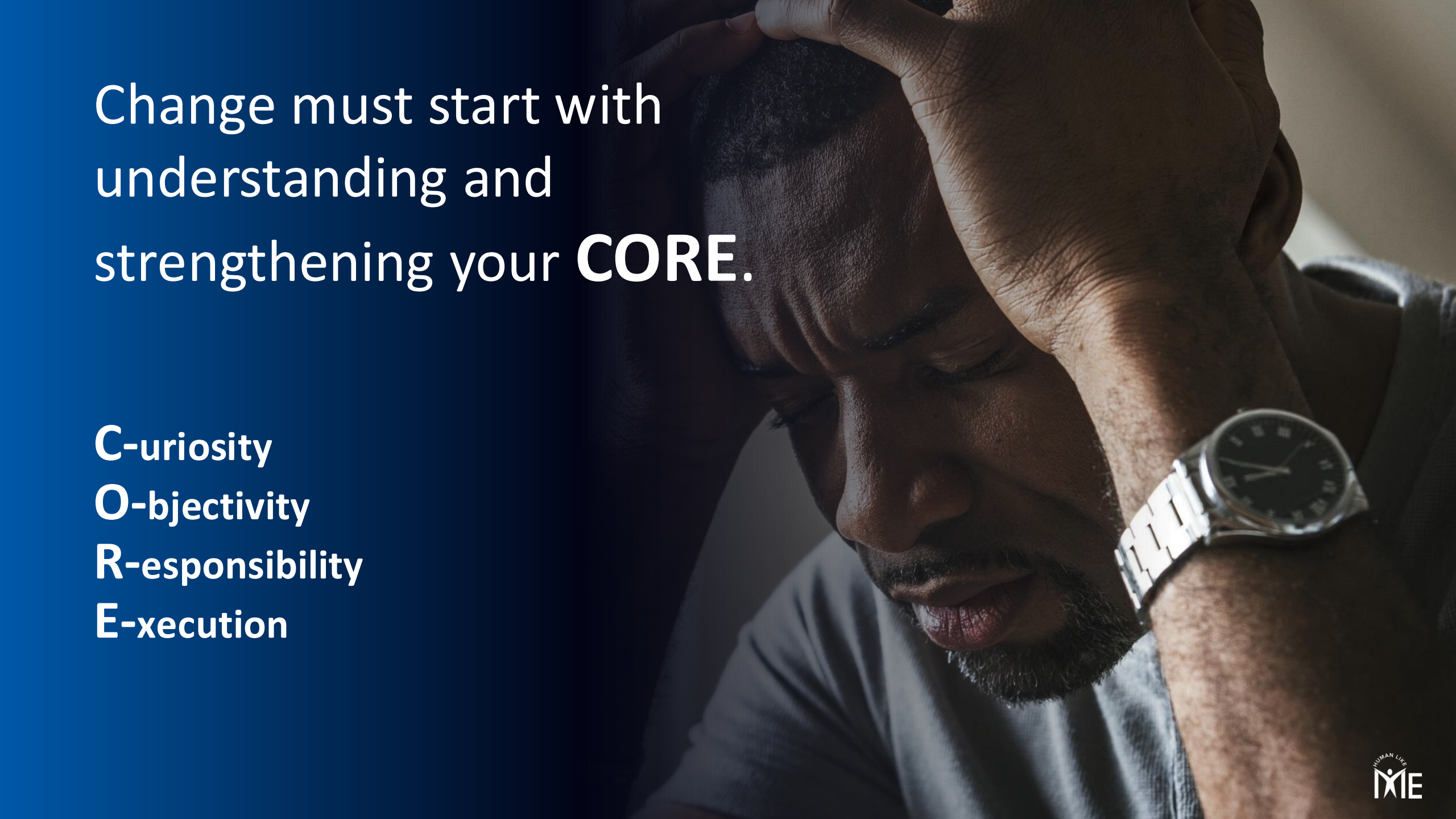
- 36.4% of legal professionals
- 32%-33% - men in legal professions and the general population
- 39.5% - women in legal professions compared to 19% of women in the general population

Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation



**How do we
break the
cycle?**





Change must start with
understanding and
strengthening your **CORE.**

C-uriosity

O-bjectivity

R-esponsibility

E-xecution

Curiosity

Ask even when you think
you know the answer.

Ask “**why**” at least 3 times.

Objectivity

Trust **data** over anecdotes.

Beware of drawing
conclusions from **outliers**.

Responsibility

When you know better,
you do better.

Responsibility

~~When you know better,
you do better.~~

When you know better,
you have the *responsibility*
to do better.

Execution

Changing the world must
start with changing you.

We need Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence bridges the gap between knowing and doing.



What is Emotional Intelligence?

The ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Peter Salovey and John Mayer

Self–Perception

Self-Regard, Emotional Self-Awareness, Self–Actualization

Self–Expression

Assertiveness , Independence, Emotional Expression

Interpersonal

Empathy, Social Responsibility, Interpersonal Relationships

Decision Making

Impulse Control, Reality Testing, Problem Solving

Stress Management

Optimism, Stress Tolerance, Flexibility

Emotional Intelligence is about mindfulness and intentionality

	Self	Others
Awareness	<p>Do you know why you feel the way you do at any given time?</p> <p>Can you gauge how your emotions influence your perception?</p> <p>Do you know your triggers?</p>	<p>Are you able to read and understand the body language, attitude, and tone of others?</p> <p>Do you understand how your behavior affects others?</p>
Action	<p>Can you control your disruptive impulses and negative self-talk?</p> <p>Have you identified productive outlets to release your emotions?</p>	<p>Do you adjust your behavior appropriately for the situation?</p> <p>Are you able to connect effectively with others?</p>

Exercise

1

**Impulse Control:
Knowing and managing
your triggers.**

Impulse Control: Knowing and managing your triggers.

1. Do you know what your triggers are that cause you to act on impulse?
2. What are those triggers?
3. Where did those triggers come from?
4. Looking back, how do you feel after making an impulsive decision or reacting on impulse?

We all know the formula.

- Sleep 7-9 hours a day.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise 30 minutes each day.
- Train your brain.



Adequate sleep is essential.

Why do we sleep?

Energy conservation and storage, self-repair and recovery, and brain maintenance.

Sleep Stages

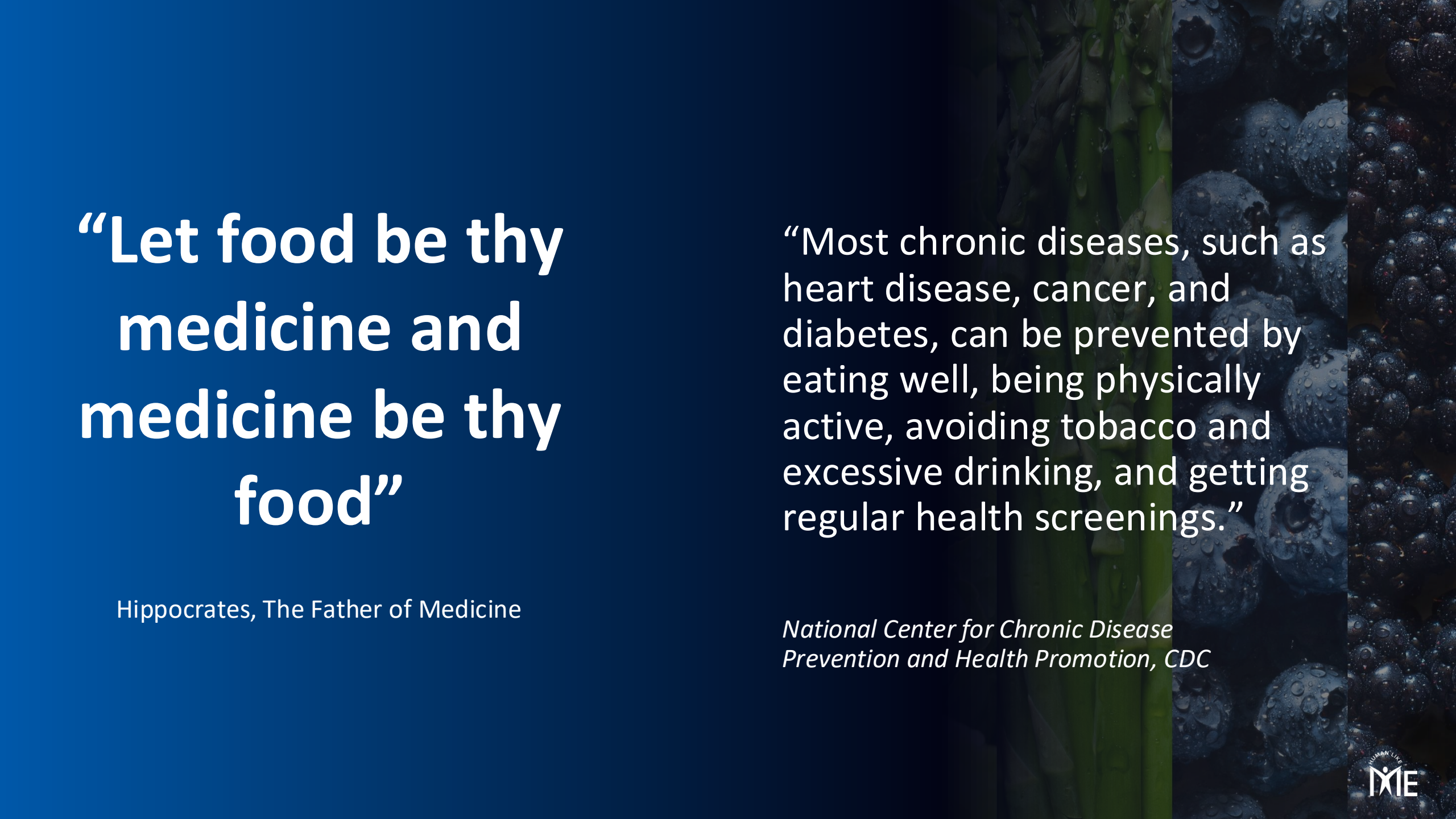
- Wake
- N1 (Stage 1) - Light Sleep (5%)
- N2 (Stage 2) - Deeper Sleep (45%)
- N3 (Stage 3) – Deepest Non-REM Sleep (25%)
- Rapid Eye Movement (REM) - Dreaming (25%)

Malik J, Lo YL, Wu HT. Sleep-wake classification via quantifying heart rate variability by convolutional neural network. *Physiol Meas*. 2018 Aug 20;39(8).



Tips for better sleep.

- Invest in a Better Mattress and Bedding
- Block Out Light
- Minimize Noise
- Set the Thermostat to 65 to 68 Degrees Fahrenheit
- Get at Least Seven Hours of Sleep
- Set Your Alarm for the Same Time Each Day
- Keep Naps Around 20 Minutes
- Relax for 30 Minutes Before Bed
- Disconnect Devices in the Hour Before Bed
- Get 30 Minutes of Natural Light Exposure
- Exercise for at Least 20 Minutes Each Day
- Limit Caffeine After 2 p.m.
- Be Mindful of Alcohol in the Hour Before Bedtime
- Eat Dinner a Few Hours Before Bed
- Limit Nicotine Use and Smoke Exposure
- Reserve Your Bed for Sleep and Sex Only
- Get Out of Bed After 20 Minutes
- Keep a Sleep Diary
- Consider Supplements
- Talk With a Doctor



**“Let food be thy
medicine and
medicine be thy
food”**

Hippocrates, The Father of Medicine

“Most chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, can be prevented by eating well, being physically active, avoiding tobacco and excessive drinking, and getting regular health screenings.”

*National Center for Chronic Disease
Prevention and Health Promotion, CDC*

Inflammation

When something foreign enters your body (like viruses, bacteria or toxic chemicals), or you're injured, your immune system activates.

Acute Inflammation

Your immune system sends out cells to trap bacteria and other offending agents or start healing injured tissue. Acute inflammation may last for a few hours to a few days, depending on your condition.

Chronic Inflammation

Your body continues sending inflammatory cells even when there's no outside danger. Chronic inflammation is long term — it lasts for months to years.

We are eating products instead of produce.

Processed foods have added salts, sugars and fats that are harmful and ingredients that have generally been stripped of any nutritional value.

Processed foods also contain a lot of harmful carbohydrates instead of unrefined carbohydrates that are in fruits and vegetables, as well as whole, rolled, stone-ground, or cracked grains.



A Plant-based Diet

“Switching to a plant-based diet can significantly improve overall health, prevent many chronic diseases, and in some cases even reverse established disease.”

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)

WFPBD - fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds - high in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.





Train your body to be resilient!

Stretch, push, pull, lift, squat,
lunge, twist, bend, and move
vigorously.

The benefits of exercise are incontrovertible.

Losing weight

Building muscle

Reducing stress

Improving
mobility and
flexibility

Stave off
cognitive
decline

Improving
thinking and
memory

Preventing
depression

Improving
mood

Increasing
stamina





Train your brain to be plastic!

- Get mental stimulation
- Get physical exercise
- Improve your diet
- Improve your blood pressure
- Improve your blood sugar
- Improve your cholesterol
- Consider low-dose aspirin
- Avoid tobacco
- Don't abuse alcohol
- Care for your emotions
- Protect your head
- Build social networks

Harvard Medical School

Exercise

2

**Red, Yellow, Green:
Avoiding the Moderation Trap**

Red, Yellow, Green: Avoiding the Moderation Trap

1. Make three columns on a sheet of paper. Mark one yellow, one green and one red.
2. In the **Green** column, list some fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, seeds and nuts you enjoy. Your goal is to incorporate more of these items in your diet in 2025.
3. In the **Yellow** column, list foods that you enjoy but understand they are not great for you. Your goal is to reduce your consumption of these foods in 2025.
4. In the **Red** column, list at least one thing that you know is terrible for you (and you really might not be crazy about it anyway). Your goal is to eliminate that food item from your diet in 2025.

A close-up photograph of a hand with light skin and manicured nails. The hand is positioned with fingers slightly curled. Each finger has a small, green, braided string loop tied around it. Several thin, green, braided strings hang vertically from the loops, creating a visual metaphor for being caught or stuck in a trap. The background is a solid, deep blue.

Don't get stuck in
the **CULTURE**,
COST, and
CONVENIENCE trap.



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