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Katie, a nurse manager, is sitting alone in the office replaying the events of a stressful 12-hour workday. She works in a short-staffed department. So she had to manage an overwhelming number of patients. On top of that, she had a difficult conversation with a fellow nurse that had made a medication error. And now her family is angry because she'll be late for dinner.

Stress is inherent in the role of a nurse. So it's important to be aware of effective ways of alleviating it. First of all, learning to practice mindfulness can be really helpful. This starts by setting the intention to be consciously present in what you're doing while you're doing it. Mindful breaks can be as short as one or two minutes when your mind stops wandering and returns to the present moment to pay close attention to your physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions.

You can even set mindfulness reminders on your phone. So every time it rings, you remember to practice mindfulness. This will train the brain to develop a sense of calm and focus that will help you become even more efficient at work.

Mindfulness can be combined with breathing exercises. The simplest one is just to be aware of your breath. This has been proven to assist in soothing the sympathetic nervous system, which arouses the body for physical activity and exertion, and boosts the parasympathetic nervous system, which governs the relaxation response.

Mindfulness and breathing exercises can be done anywhere. But finding a happy place where you can escape to destress can be very helpful. This might be an office or a bench in the hospital's front yard. But the good thing is that it doesn't even have to be real. It can be an imaginary place that exists only in your mind. And it can instantly lift your mood.

Another helpful technique is to take a couple of minutes to document every positive thing that has happened or that you've achieved at the end of each day. This will help foster a positive and grateful attitude in your mind. If things get too stressful, it may help to have a friend you can phone that will be there to listen to your thoughts and support you.

Finally, it's essential to make the most out of your time off. Exercise. Switch off electronic devices. And recharge yourself.

So Katie took some time to practice mindfulness and breathing. She then used her journal to focus on the positive things that happened that day and was surprised by how many she found. She then

headed back home with a positive attitude, disconnected from the internet, and enjoyed quality time with her family.