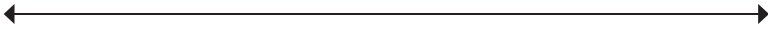




STRESS
LESS,
ACCOMPLISH
MORE



MEDITATION FOR
EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE



EMILY
FLETCHER

For audio exercises from the book and additional bonuses, visit www.zivameditation.com/bookbonus.

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Are you ready for your first homework assignment? Write down your intention for picking up this book, no matter how vague, silly, or ambiguous it may feel right now. You could write something general, like “I want to enjoy my life more.” Or you could be much more specific, like “I want to get a promotion within the next six months.” You could even be more subjective, such as “I want my family to find common ground about politics” or “I want to be a better parent” or “I want to be a stronger force for good in the world.” Even if you have to say “I don’t know why I feel compelled to try meditation, but I’m out of other ideas,” that’s fine, too. There is absolutely no judgment here. (Remember, I got into meditating in part for the noble goal of not wanting gray hair in my twenties.)

I am reading *Stress Less, Accomplish More* because . . .

This is how stress is affecting my performance today:

On a scale of 1–10 (1 being the worst, 10 being the best),
this is how I rate my:

Sleep:

Work Performance:

Relationships:

Stress:

Intuition:

Creativity:

Health:

Don't skip this assignment. It can be tough to take an honest look at your relationship with stress. But seriously, don't skip it. This will help you to gauge your success as you start a daily practice. It will also be fun to revisit this once you finish the book and have some meditation under your belt.

Eyes-Closed Exercise

The 2x Breath

This simple but powerful breathing technique can keep you from spiraling into a cesspool of stress and help you become more present in the current moment.

You can't negotiate with your stress. When you are in fight-or-flight mode, the amygdala takes over. The amygdala is an ancient, preverbal part of the brain. This is why it doesn't work when you simply tell yourself to relax (or worse, when someone *else* tells you to relax). The part of you that is stressed doesn't understand language. Instead, we have to shift the body physically or chemically. That is what the 2x Breath technique will do.

The magic is in doubling the length of the exhale. This calms the vagus nerve, one of the main connections between the brain and the body. As you relax it, information can start to flow from your brain to your body and vice versa, opening you up to solutions from Nature as they present themselves.

1. Start by inhaling through your nose for 2 counts. Then exhale through your mouth for 4 counts. You can even start with your eyes open, walking around the room if you're really amped.
2. Again, inhale through your nose for 2, then exhale through your mouth for 4.
3. Repeat. Inhale for 2, exhale for 4. If you're calmer now,

you can move to a seated position and close your eyes. Continue for about 3 minutes or 15 breaths.

4. Once you're back in your body and in the right now, think of three things you're most grateful for in this moment. No, really. List them. It's impossible to be afraid and grateful at the same time. One emotion makes the other more acute, then evaporates it.

Take note of how you feel before and after this exercise. It is simple on purpose. Many of my students share that taking a few minutes to practice the 2x Breath is enough to keep anxiety attacks at bay if they catch them early enough. Now give yourself a big internal high five and go about your day knowing there is power and integrity in tending to your mental fitness.

Let’s take a moment to do a side-by-side comparison of the days of two hypothetical people we’ll call Suzie Stressbox and Peggy Performer. Peggy has a twice-daily meditation practice; Suzie does not.

	Suzie Stressbox	Peggy Performer
6:00 A.M.	Exhausted from the day before, Suzie hits snooze on her alarm until 6:45.	Peggy wakes up before her alarm goes off, brushes her teeth, and settles in for her 15-minute meditation.
8:00 A.M.	Frantic because she’s overslept, Suzie races to drop her daughter off at school. They are late and Suzie doesn’t have time to grab coffee or breakfast—which she desperately needs.	Peggy packs herself a healthy lunch and gets her daughter dressed, fed, and off to school on time. She arrives at work a few minutes early.
11:00 A.M.	Suzie’s boss changes the due date on a big project. Panicked because she’s already behind, Suzie works through lunch to get it done.	Peggy’s boss changes the due date on a project. She remains calm and uses creative problem-solving to get the job done in 90 minutes. She pauses her work to eat her lunch and enjoys a few minutes outside.
3:00 P.M.	Barely squeaking in before the deadline, Suzie turns in her project. Not having eaten all day and now behind on the day’s work, Suzie runs to Starbucks for a coffee and a slice of banana bread.	Peggy uses a spare conference room for her afternoon meditation. Having filled up on adaptation energy and feeling refreshed, she dives into her tasks for the rest of the workday.

	Suzie Stressbox	Peggy Performer
6:00 P.M.	Head pounding and ravenously hungry, Suzie hits traffic on the way home and angrily honks at the cars in front of her.	Sitting in traffic on her way home from work, Peggy listens to a favorite podcast and enjoys her extra time alone.
8:00 P.M.	Suzie and her husband have a difficult conversation about his aging mother. Suzie breaks down in tears; it feels like too much to handle after a tough day.	Peggy and her husband discuss the health of his aging mother. Peggy listens compassionately, then she and her husband calmly work together to come up with solutions to this difficult situation.
8:30 P.M.	Suzie's daughter interrupts. With no patience left, Suzie snaps and yells at her daughter to get in bed and go to sleep.	Peggy's daughter interrupts. Peggy scoops her up, grateful for the joy she brings to their lives. Peggy reads her daughter a book before bed and kisses her good night.
10:00 P.M.	Suzie is mentally fried but stays up late working because she's frustrated with how little she accomplished today. She hopes tomorrow will be better.	Peggy puts down her book and reflects on how much she has to be grateful for. She feels proud of how she handled her high-demand day and looks forward to tomorrow.

Eyes-Open Exercise

What Is Stress Costing You?

I want to get really practical here. The question I asked above regarding how much stress costs you was not a hypothetical one. Now it's time to write it down. You will be so happy you have this information a few months into your meditation career.

Look over your past six months of expenses and make note of the ways that stress slows you down and drains your bank account. If there are other things I didn't list here, feel free to add them in.

Over the past six months, how much money have you spent on the following?

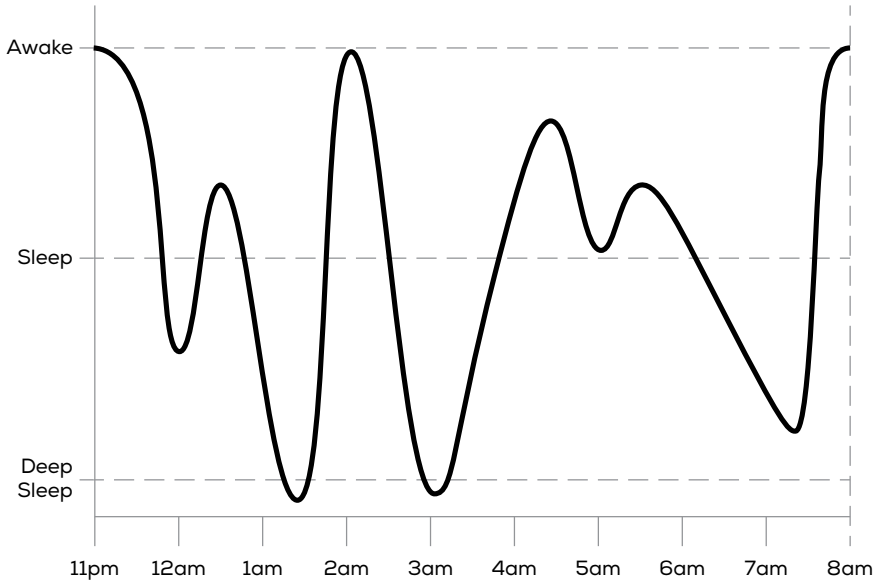
alcohol
therapy
coffee
cigarettes
binge shopping
anonymous sex
medications
recreational drugs
missed appointments
lost job opportunities
sick days

Now I'd like you to tally up what you think those out-

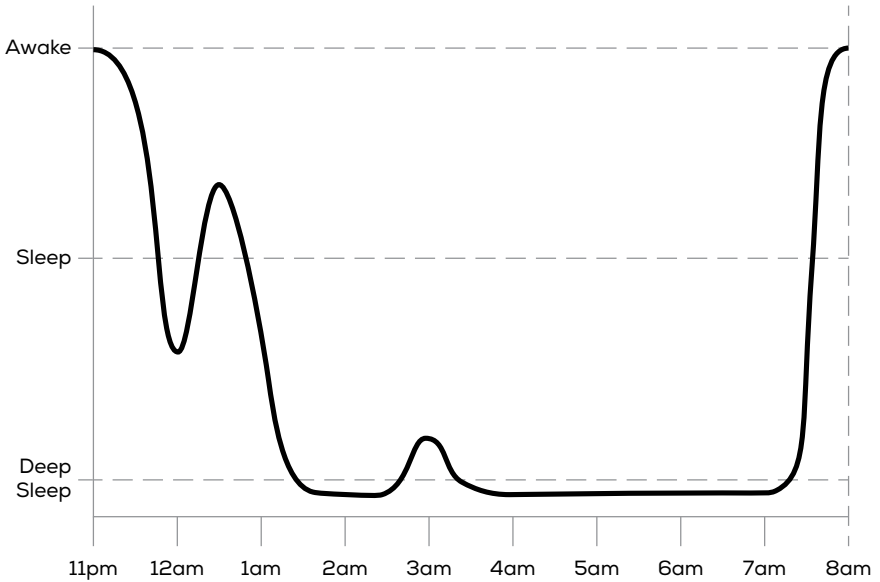
lets are costing you in terms of time (how much is your time worth, after all?) over a six-month period. Surveys among my students have revealed that the number comes out to almost \$6,000—that's nearly \$12,000 a year! Now take a moment to write down what you could do with that extra money. Take your dream vacation? Hire a personal trainer? Invest in your child's college fund? Does it seem worth it to exchange fifteen minutes twice a day for that money?

If your numbers are causing you to have a stress reaction, feel free to engage in this simple but enjoyable exercise for getting out of feeling overwhelmed: Breathe in through your nose and imagine you're smelling the scent of freshly baked cookies. Hold that breath for a moment, then exhale out through your mouth, imagining that you're blowing out birthday candles. Repeat this exercise for at least three breath cycles.

Sleep Before Ziva



Sleep 3 Days After Starting Ziva



Eyes-Open Exercise

Cooling Breath

Use this exercise the next time you're on the verge of losing your cool (read: temper tantrum) or feel like you have too much acid in your belly.

Roll your tongue like a straw, then breathe in for a count of 5 and out for a count of 5, letting both the inhale and the exhale flow through your tongue straw. Allow the sensation of the air moving over your tongue to create a cooling sensation in the body and the belly.

This is a simple but effective way to calm down the next time you feel like you might lose your temper with your kids, a coworker, a customer service rep, or the driver next to you in rush-hour traffic.

Eyes-Closed Exercise

Healing Affirmations

When you're coming down with or already have an illness, use these healing affirmations as you drift off to sleep. You could record your own voice saying them, or if you prefer to have me guiding you through, visit www.ziva-meditation.com/bookbonus. This link will also give you access to my very favorite guided visualization for healing.

My body knows exactly how to heal itself.

My cells are strong.

This sickness is cleaning house so that I can be even stronger.

Thank you, body. Thank you, Nature, for the lessons this is teaching me.

I'm open to receiving and incorporating these lessons.

I deserve this time to rest.

I deserve this time to heal.

I give myself permission to surrender completely to this experience because I know it's temporary.

I allow myself to experience any discomfort fully because I know the more I surrender to it, the faster I move through to the other side.

I'm already becoming stronger than I was before.

My body knows how to heal itself perfectly and quickly.

My healing is already in progress.

My healing is already in progress.

My healing is already in progress.

Eyes-Open Exercise

Water the Flowers, Not the Weeds

Gratitude Exercise: Every morning and every night, write down three things you are grateful for. You could do this on your phone (my personal preference), so you always have your journal with you to reflect on when you need it. Oprah says this is the most important habit she ever adopted. This exercise helps train your brain to look for things that are going right instead of constantly searching for problems you think you have to solve.

Gratitude is one of the fastest ways to break yourself out of “I’ll be happy when . . .” syndrome. You’ll already be practicing this every day as you transition between the meditation and manifesting portions of the Z Technique (which we will discuss in chapter 8), so this exercise should get easier until it becomes second nature. Don’t worry too much about getting it “right.” Even on the days when you feel there is nothing going your way, simply asking the question “What am I grateful for?” is enough to change the chemistry of your brain!

The Z Technique Daily Program

1. Set your alarm to wake up 20 minutes earlier than usual.
2. Freshen up.
3. Hit the chair:
 - Back supported, head free.
 - Have a timepiece near you.
 - Don't worry if the room around you isn't silent.
 - Before you begin, know what time you want to come up and out. Do the math on your 15-minute end time.
 - **MINDFULNESS:** Start with 1 to 2 minutes of Come to Your Senses.
 - **MEDITATION:** Let the mantra come to you, gently. This is not a focusing tool, and thoughts are not the enemy—effortlessness is key. If the mantra doesn't bubble up on its own, pick it up as a faint idea. If it slips away, let it go. Other thoughts will come in. That is great. When you are curious how much time has passed, open your eyes and check your timepiece as often as you like. Don't set an alarm; start to train your internal clock. (If you like, you can set a backup alarm for 22 minutes as an extra precaution so you don't worry about sleeping through your whole day.)
 - **MANIFESTING:** In the 2-minute safety stop after you put down your mantra, take a moment of

gratitude, then gently transition into visualizing a dream or goal as if it is happening right now. Give yourself the gift of feeling how you want to feel on the other side of the goal.

4. Enjoy the rest of your day at peak performance levels.
 5. Rinse and repeat midafternoon/early evening. Until it becomes second nature, schedule your second meditation on your calendar as you would a call with your lawyer or a lunch date with your best friend.
 6. Don't let perfect be the enemy of good. Don't let good be the enemy of done. Just get your buns to the chair twice a day and let the mantra do the rest.
-

HOMEWORK: Take out your phone or calendar and schedule your next twenty-one days of meditation. For real. It will only take you five minutes, but it will make or break your meditation career. If it isn't scheduled, it won't get done. Schedule your morning alarm for twenty minutes earlier than you usually wake up so you have time to do your morning practice before breakfast. Then look at each day and decide where on your oh-so-full calendar you will prioritize yourself, your brain, and your performance.

You can't pour from an empty cup, so get in the habit of making yourself a priority. Trust me, everyone else will thank you.

Eyes-Closed Exercise

Superpower Pose

While writing this book I often imagine stress as the villain, you as the hero, and these powerful mental techniques as your new superpower. In this exercise we're going to activate the brain, the breath, and the body to get into the mind space of success right off the bat. Our body language is affected by our mental state, and conversely, our mental state is affected by our body language, so let's create the physical posture of victory so we can get into that mental state. Start by bringing your arms over your head to make a giant V shape or what referees do to signal a touchdown. Make sure your palms are open and facing each other.

Holding this pose, we are going to start something called "breath of fire," a fast in/out through the nostrils. Begin by softening your jaw; let your lips part. Soften your brow and begin to quickly inhale and exhale through both nostrils at the same time. You can start slow, but eventually you want to build up to a quick pace as if you are an excited, panting puppy. (But pant through your nostrils, not your mouth.)

Breathe quickly for 30 seconds, softening the face and letting the impulse for the breath start with the belly. If you take a peek at your belly, you should see it quickly rising and falling. Your arms may start to ache a little, and that's okay. If you're standing and start to feel

light-headed, you may want to sit down. (This will all get easier the more you practice.)

Now lower your arms, close your eyes, and take a moment to check in. What is the most prevalent body sensation happening right now? How do you feel now compared with how you felt before you started? Can you feel the blood flowing back into your arms? Take a moment to assimilate that feeling of joy and victory into every cell of your body.

Begin again. Bring your arms over your head into the V shape, palms open and facing each other. Now begin the breath of fire again, this time for 45 seconds.

Allow yourself to be a vessel for Nature to work through you. Imagine yourself as a channel for energy, ideas, and intuition to flow through. Get your ego, your doubts, and your attachment to outcome out of the way. You are simply the conductor. Picture yourself as a giant antenna with energy entering your body through your arms and the top of your head, traveling down your body, and grounding through your feet. Enjoy the simultaneity of lightness and groundedness happening in your body right now, then finish the breath of fire and drop your arms.

Take another moment to substantiate that sensation and see how you feel different from when you started. Do this exercise as needed when you desire a confidence boost or ahead of a big event.

For a demonstration and guidance on this, visit www.zivameditation.com/bookbonus.

Eyes-Open Exercise

Breaking the Apology Addiction

Many of us have varying degrees of apology addiction, and it shows up in a lot of different ways, from mindlessly saying “sorry” when someone bumps into you to qualifying your work when you present it. So here’s a challenge for you:

For *one whole week*, challenge yourself not to apologize. To keep track, find a special place in a journal, or even make a note in your handy smartphone, where you can keep a tally of each time you unnecessarily apologize and catch yourself after. See how many times you apologize *unnecessarily* in a week.

Pro tip: Don’t turn into a nightmare person. If you’ve actually wronged someone, or hurt someone, or if an apology is actually relevant and needed, then by all means ask for forgiveness. What I want you to keep track of for one week is how many times you mindlessly fall into an old habit of accepting blame for something that has nothing to do with fault. Notice how your self-perception changes when you stop engaging in this behavior for only a week, then decide if you want to keep the challenge going.

Eyes-Open Exercise

Heart to Heart

This exercise is about establishing a bond with your partner, creating that sense of generosity and openness that inevitably leads to heightened intimacy and connection. This exercise might be out of the norm for most couples, so I recommend asking first. You could try something like, "Hey, do you want to try something new that might enhance our sex life?" If your partner agrees, then follow the steps below.

1. Face your partner, place your right hand on their heart, and have them do the same with their right hand over your heart.
2. Both of you place your left hand on top of your heart, and look into each other's eyes. It may (read: probably will) be uncomfortable, but continue to hold eye contact even through the laughter and nervousness that arises. Once that passes (I promise it will), ask your partner to say their biggest dream or goal. Then you share yours.
3. Now spend 2 to 3 minutes imagining this dream of your partner's as if it is happening now. Imagine them stepping into their full potential, the confidence and sexiness that comes with that. Manifesting is powerful work to do on yourself, and it's even more powerful to do for someone else.

4. Imagine harnessing all the energy of this dream and give it to your partner like a gift. Take a deep inhale, and as you exhale, imagine your breath filling them with the energy of this dream, as well as blasting them with love. Now switch roles and then be open to receive what they are giving to you. Let it be a cycle, enjoying the give and the take. You are keeping eye contact this whole time. If possible, favor your partner's left eye and have them do the same with yours.
5. After 2 to 3 minutes, or when it feels like things have come to a natural conclusion, thank your partner, hug it out if you feel inspired to, and let things progress as they will with this new, profound sense of intimacy and generosity.

For a guided visualization for better sex, head to www.zivameditation.com/bookbonus.

Eyes-Closed Exercise

Love Bomb

Take a moment to get settled with your back supported, head free, eyes closed (after you read this, of course). Now start with the 2x Breath (see page 37 for a refresher), doubling the length of the exhale from the inhale, so inhaling for the count of 2 and exhaling for the count of 4. (As you start to build on this practice, you could actually inhale for 3 and exhale for 6.) Do this for 4 breath cycles.

Start the Love Bomb by imagining that someone you love very much is sitting about three feet in front of you. Don't worry too much about choosing the right person; usually the first person who comes to mind is the most powerful. If you can't think of anyone who inspires an intense feeling of love in you right now, you could even use your dog or cat—anything or anyone that allows you to enjoy the sensation of love.

Take a moment to imagine their face. What do their eyes look like? What does their hair look like? What are they wearing? And how does the simple fact that you're connecting change them? Are they present with you? Do they want to be seen? Are they shy? Are they hiding?

As you notice this person across from you, this person whom you love so, so much and who has brought joy to your life, allow the sensation of love to start to permeate and radiate through your entire body on the next

inhale. Allow this person to wake up a feeling of love inside of you. Enjoy this wave of love and oxytocin washing through your body and, as you inhale, supercharging this feeling of love inside of you. Now, as you exhale, imagine blasting this person with as much love as you can possibly muster so that it fills every cell of their body.

Take a moment to check back in with their eyes. Did your sending them love change their eyes? Do they seem softer? Do they seem kinder? Do they feel more connected to you?

On your inhale, allow yourself to receive the love flowing back from this person, supercharging every single cell in your body with this feeling of love and gratitude. As you exhale, imagine sending that out to the entire room. Wherever you are right now, blast the whole room with love. Some people will picture this as a golden light radiating out from their body, or a white light, or even an actual wave of love.

With each inhale, you're fanning the flame of this love sensation in the core of your body, and it gets bigger and stronger and brighter, so that it cannot be contained by the room you're in anymore and starts to spill out to the entire building—your whole house and every person in it, covered with love every time you exhale.

Now on each inhale, imagine strengthening the frequency of love in your core and on the exhale, send love to your entire city. Every person, place, and thing—all your friends, all your family, even all your enemies. I want you to blast them with love. Love is one of these beautiful resources that the more we give of it, the more we receive.

On your next breath, breathing that sensation into your body and then letting it spill out, let it radiate out to your entire country. All the different political parties, all the different religions, all the different races, sending them all as much love as you possibly can—everyone in your whole country.

If you seem to be losing that sensation of love internally, come back to that one person whom you love very much, and imagine seeing their face as they sit a few feet from you, and let that rekindle the sensation of love internally.

Now imagine wrapping the entire planet with this beautiful feeling of love. This might sound a little cheesy or hippie-dippie, but really, truly, the only antidote to fear is love. You cannot fight fear with fear; we can only do that with love. So as we inhale, we supercharge every cell in our body with love, and then we blast that out to the entire planet Earth, letting it create a space of unity and connection. Imagine that, for just a moment, someone you know or someone you love, or even a stranger, can actually feel this love that you're sending, that you're allowing to navigate the globe. Maybe someone's feeling a little down or all alone; maybe now they start to smile or somehow feel less alone.

On your next breath, breathing in and feeling the sensation of love in every single cell in your body from the top of your head to the bottom of your toes, send that love to the entire universe as you exhale. Beyond the solar system, beyond the galaxies, beyond the clusters of galaxies, and out into the entirety of all that is—allowing

your imagination to expand as far as it can conceive, reminding yourself that you are a part of the universe, and the universe is a part of you.

According to the Vedas, there's only one thing, and we're all it. Think about that for a moment. *There's only one thing, and we're all it.* This means that the exact same matter and energy that makes up every star, in every galaxy in the entire universe, is the exact same matter and energy that makes up every cell in your body. So take a moment to surrender into that sense of expansiveness and connectedness, and know that as you blast the entire universe with love, it's simultaneously sending it back to you.

Now, from this space of expansiveness, surrender, and connectedness, start to bring your awareness back into your whole body. Allow yourself to undulate between an awareness of the whole body and the whole universe, playing with the simultaneity of individuality and totality, of left brain and right brain, of body and universe, imagining for a moment that you are one wave on a giant ocean of consciousness. The wave is a part of the ocean, and the ocean is a part of the wave.

Set your intention to take this feeling with you throughout the rest of the day. If you start to get frustrated or angry with someone, come back to this and remind yourself, *I already sent you love today, so I can tap back into this even when things start to get frustrating or overwhelming.* Taking a delicious, deep inhale, wake up your body, move your hands, move your feet, and, in your own time, start to slowly, gently open your eyes.

It's kind of fun, right? Blasting the whole planet with love. I find that it really helps in situations of conflict. If I start to get angry with a taxi driver, or someone behind the counter, I remember, *You know what? I already sent this person love today. They actually are a part of me, and I am a part of them.* It's a nice way to come back to a sense of connection. If you would like to sit back, relax, and enjoy me leading you through the Love Bomb, you can listen here: www.zivameditation.com/bookbonus. You could also make a recording of you reading this exercise and listen to your own voice guiding you through.

Inspired to Learn More?

Do you want to be personally guided through your meditation journey?

For guided visualizations and audio versions of some of the exercises in this book, visit www.zivameditation.com/bookbonus.

You can learn the full Ziva Technique through our fifteen-day online training, zivaONLINE. Visit www.zivameditation.com/online.

To join our global community of Ziva Meditators and get your meditation questions answered, request access to our Facebook group, zivaTRIBE, at www.facebook.com/groups/zivaTRIBE/.

» About Ziva Meditation

» www.zivameditation.com

Ziva is a school for high performance. We are all about giving people tools to perform at the top of their personal and professional game.

Over twenty-five hundred students have learned the Ziva Technique with us in person, and over nine thousand people around the world have learned from zivaONLINE. All of them have graduated with a powerful practice to take with them for life. The Ziva Technique is a trifecta of mindfulness, meditation, and manifesting. We are partnering with some of the world's leading neuroscientists

and creators of body-tracking technology to make ancient tools accessible and easy to adopt into your fast-paced life.

Ziva graduates include winners of the Oscar, Grammy, Emmy, Golden Globe, and Tony awards, as well as CEOs, NBA players, Navy SEALs, military veterans, entrepreneurs, and full-time parents. Ziva is based in New York City, where we offer our in-person training, zivaLIVE, once a month; courses in LA are offered several times per year. Corporate and private courses can be customized to your needs. This practice can revolutionize how you work, live, and love.