

Why You Can't "Fix" Your Way Out of Stress

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Have you ever noticed that the harder you try to "get it together," the more overwhelmed you feel?

You push harder.
Work longer.
Try to stay productive.
Overprepare.
Overthink.
Overfunction.

And yet somehow, the pressure never fully goes away.

In Mind-Body Bridging (MBB), this pattern is called the Fixer. The Fixer often looks productive on the surface. But underneath, it's usually fueled by stress, urgency, pressure, and fear. Understanding the Fixer can help explain why so many people end up exhausted while trying so hard to feel okay.

What Is the Fixer?

In Mind-Body Bridging, the Fixer is the part of the I-System that tries to "fix" the discomfort created by stress and self-criticism.

When the Depressor creates painful storylines like:

"I'm failing."
"I'm not enough."
"I messed everything up."

...the Fixer immediately jumps in with action plans.

It says things like:

"I'll work harder."
"I'll prove myself."
"I'll make everyone happy."

"I'll finally get organized."

"I just need to try harder."

The Fixer believes relief is always one more accomplishment away. But often, instead of creating peace, it creates more pressure.

The Fixer Can Look Helpful

This is what makes the Fixer difficult to recognize.

It can sound:

Responsible.
Driven.
Successful.
Productive.

But underneath the productivity is often:

Urgency.
Fear.
Rigidity.
Exhaustion.
Pressure to prove yourself.

You may accomplish things while your Fixer is running the show, but it rarely feels calm or satisfying for long. The Fixer is driven by the belief that something is wrong and needs fixing. That's why the cycle can feel endless.

How the Fixer Shows Up in Daily Life

The Fixer can appear in many different ways.

At work:

Overworking.
Perfectionism.
Never feeling done.

In relationships:

People pleasing.
Overexplaining.
Trying to control outcomes.

With health:

Rigid routines.
Pressure to "finally get it right."
Constant self-improvement.

At home:

Feeling unable to rest.
Always needing to stay productive.
Feeling guilty for slowing down.

You may recognize your own Fixer in the pressure to always do more.

The Problem Isn't the Action

Mind-Body Bridging doesn't teach that working hard or setting goals is bad. The issue isn't the action itself. The question is:

Who is driving the action? Your Fixer? Or your Natural Functioning?

Natural Functioning is the calm, grounded state we return to when the I-System settles. In Natural Functioning, you can still work hard, solve problems, apologize, prepare, and care deeply. But the energy feels different.

Less panic.
Less proving.
Less urgency.
Less exhaustion.

Instead of reacting from fear, you respond from clarity.

Why the Fixer Leads to Burnout

The Fixer keeps telling us:
"Once I finally get this right, then I'll feel okay."

But the finish line keeps moving.

There's always:

One more task.
One more goal.
One more thing to improve.
One more way to prove yourself.

That's why the Fixer often leaves people mentally and physically drained. No matter how much gets accomplished, it rarely feels like enough.

How to Interrupt the Fixer

The first step is simply recognizing when the Fixer has taken over. Mind-Body Bridging uses a practice called RELACS to help calm the I-System and reconnect with the present moment.

Recognize

Notice the urgency, pressure, racing thoughts, or body tension.

Label

Identify the storyline underneath the pressure.

Maybe

"My Fixer wants me to overwork so I can feel good enough."

"I have a Requirement that I should never disappoint people."

Come to Your Senses

Pause and reconnect with the present moment.

Notice sounds

Feel your body in the chair.

Feel your feet on the floor.

This creates space between you and the pressure. Over time, you begin noticing that you don't have to constantly push yourself to deserve rest, worth, or peace of mind.

You Don't Have to Earn Rest

Many people spend years trapped in the belief that they must constantly improve themselves to finally feel okay. But peace doesn't come from finally becoming perfect. It comes from recognizing what is driving the pressure in the first place.

As you begin recognizing your Fixer, you may notice:

Less urgency.
Less exhaustion.
More flexibility.
More balance.
More self-compassion.

And maybe, for the first time in a long while, you allow yourself to pause without feeling like you're falling behind.

Ready to learn more?

Want to learn how [Mind-Body Bridging](#) can help you work with stress, perfectionism, pressure, and mental overload with greater awareness and balance?

Join one of our [workshops](#) or sign up for [10 free MBB Clinic sessions](#) to experience how these practices can support everyday resilience and well-being.

You don't have to keep pushing harder to deserve rest, peace, or self-worth. Sometimes healing begins by stepping out of the pressure instead of trying to outrun it.