

The Meeting That Wrecked Your Afternoon: Mind-Body Bridging at Work

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Have you ever had one bad meeting take down your entire afternoon?

The meeting ends.

You're technically free to move on.

And yet you're still replaying it an hour later, still tense, still half-writing the comeback you didn't say out loud.

Work stress rarely stays contained to the moment it happened. In Mind-Body Bridging (MBB), that's because the I-System, the stress-driven part of the mind-body system, doesn't clock out just because the meeting did.

What's Really Driving the Afternoon Spiral

Underneath most lingering work stress is a Requirement that got violated: "I should have spoken up." "They should have valued my input." "I should never look unprepared in front of my team." When the moment doesn't match the rule, the I-System reacts as if something important is actually at stake, because to your sense of identity, it is.

From there, the pattern is familiar. The **Depressor** supplies the storyline: "I always freeze up." "They probably think I'm not capable." The **Fixer** follows with urgent, exhausting fixes: rehearsing what you should have said, drafting an overly long follow-up email, taking on extra work to prove your worth.

None of this is a character flaw. It's a mind trying to resolve discomfort the fastest way it knows how.

How It Shows Up at Work

- Before a meeting: overpreparing to the point of exhaustion, rehearsing worst-case scenarios.
- During a meeting: a single moment of feeling unprepared spiraling into a much bigger story about your competence.
- After a meeting: replaying a comment for the rest of the day instead of moving on to the next task.
- With email: overexplaining, over-apologizing, or rereading a message five times before sending it.

A RELACS Reset at Your Desk

You don't need to leave the building to interrupt the loop. A short **RELACS** pause works at your desk, in your car, or on a short walk.

Mind-Body Bridging uses a practice called **RELACS** to help calm the I-System and reconnect with the present moment.

Recognize

Notice the tight chest, the replaying, the urge to fire off a defensive email.

Label

Notice the tight chest, the replaying, the urge to fire off a defensive email.

Come to Your Senses

Feel your hands on the keyboard or the desk under your arms. Notice a sound in the room. Look at something real in front of you instead of the meeting replaying in your head.

The Work Doesn't Have to Follow You Home

Mind-Body Bridging doesn't ask you to stop caring about how you show up at work. It just interrupts the part of the process that keeps you stuck in a meeting that's already over.

Ready to Bring These Skills to Your Workday?

The I-System Institute offers [free MBB Clinic sessions](#) and [virtual workshops](#), including options for individuals and teams looking to bring these skills into the workplace.

You can't always control what happens in the meeting.
But you can decide how much of your afternoon it gets to keep.