

First Responder Shifts into New Ways of Being

How practicing mindfulness in community helps Nate to respond (and NOT react!) to stress



When Nate moves, he moves quickly. As a paramedic and firefighter, he can wake from a dead sleep and be out-the-door in minutes, without any change in his heart rate.

He comes to Shyft to slow things down. His yoga practice is helping him to shift into new ways of being.

“You hear all these cliches about being open and living in the moment. They were just words to me. How do you actively embrace those cliches you’ve heard a thousand times?”

Nate smiles, and admits he’s in the middle of a huge personal transition.

“Now, I actually am. I’m taking those deep breaths. I’m able to be in the moment.”

A Tipping Point

Nearly 90% of calls Nate’s team responds to are not because of a fire.

“So many of the calls we get are people who think they need help. We get calls from older people who have run out of their prescriptions. Or, it’ll be a young person who is incapable of helping or taking care of himself. It happens all the time, and it’s a big problem,” he said.

Nate grew up on the East coast. He’s blunt.

“For the longest time, I just wanted to tell people to get their shit together.”

Nate reached a tipping point. He knew it wasn’t good for his peace of mind to be so annoyed and frustrated with other people. It’s why he started practicing mindfulness.

“I’ve never been an anxious or stressed out person,” he said. “But I was tunnel visioned. I’d react. I wanted to change, not because I wanted to be a better person or anything like that. I just wanted to let go of the anger and frustration.”

“I recognize it. I catch myself when judgment comes up. I catch myself feeling angry. I just don’t act on it.”

From Reacting to Responding

Nate takes a Yin Yoga and Yoga Nidra class at Shyft. During the Yin portion, participants move slowly and meditatively. They hold postures for a long period of time. Many are able to experience a physical release while turning inward. Yoga Nidra is practiced lying down. Participants are guided into a meditative state through a body scan and visualization. Participants find their body and mind can come into a deep state of rest and relaxation.

“The mental shift I’m in—it’s a conscious thing that I’m figuring out. Yoga-yoga nidra, in particular, has subconscious benefits to me. I don’t feel any different initially, but internally, things are shifting. I’m letting go of my resentments and judgment.”

He’s experiencing other unexpected benefits as well.

“The practice is opening up a curiosity about the world that I didn’t have before. It’s so cool, because normally I don’t like talking to strangers or people. I respond to calls and am tempted to get frustrated, but I’m starting to embrace the idea that everyone has a story. Everyone has something that they might be amazing at. Maybe it’s a hobby that I could never do, and one that I could benefit from, too.”

It’s also opening him up to gratitude.

“I have an amazing life,” he said. “I’ve worked hard for it. I’ve had my struggles and times where I was just scraping by. But I feel like if anything happens in my life, I’m in a position where I can handle it. I have a strong foundation.”

Despite the changes, Nate insists he’s not changing his personality.

“I still have conflict at work. I still get angry or frustrated. I’m not in a peaceful state of mind 24/7/365.”

So what’s the biggest difference?

“I recognize it. I catch myself when judgment comes up. I catch myself feeling angry. I just don’t act on it.”

Nate’s grateful for the space he’s been able to make through classes at Shyft.

“I love the atmosphere and environment. I’ve been to yoga studios where I felt called out for being a novice. But that’s not the experience here. The teachers are calming and welcoming.”

Shyft at Mile High is a private events space with a mindful mission. Learn more at shyftatmilehigh.org

Shyft Happens

How Mindfulness Helps First Responder Nate at Work



Nate is a paramedic and firefighter. Nearly 90% of calls his team responds to are not because of a fire.

People call 911 when they need help, but more and more it's not the kind of help a first responder can provide. For example, he's gotten calls from older people who have run out of their prescriptions, and young people who are just incapable of taking care of themselves.

It's frustrating. Nate used to get mad. But he knew it wasn't good for his peace of mind.

Nate takes a Yin Yoga and Yoga Nidra class at Shyft. The practices are helping him on a subconscious level. He's more curious about the people he encounters each day, and he's also finding more gratitude for his own life.

Nate still gets frustrated at work. But he recognizes it before he acts on it. He's grateful for the space he's been able to make through classes at Shyft.

"I love the atmosphere and environment. I've been to yoga studios where I felt called out for being a novice. But that's not the experience here. The teachers are calming and welcoming."

First Class FREE!
View our schedule.

Shyft Social
**Examples of
 using
 storytelling to
 illustrate a
 nonprofit brand
 promise.**



1. Yoga novice? Shyft is your space. Nate says he's felt called out for being a beginner at other studios. But he loves our atmosphere and environment. "The teachers are calming and welcoming," he says. Your first class is free! Link in bio.
2. It's normal to get angry at work. REACTING to it will get you in trouble. There's a better way. See how first responder Nate is learning through his mindfulness practice to notice resentment building, which allows him to RESPOND. See our stories for more!
3. First responder Nate can go from a dead sleep to out-the-door in minutes, without a noticeable change in his heart rate. But work-related frustrations were beginning to impact his peace of mind. He found a Yin Yoga and Yoga Nidra class at Shyft, and he's finding a new way to be in work—and life. Could mindfulness help you? Link to Nate's story in our bio.
4. Our nonprofit offers true pay-what-you-can classes. Shyft student Nate is feeling more curious about the people he works with, and it's opening him up to more compassion. When you take classes at Shyft, you choose to be part of something bigger than yourself. Open up to the possibility of new ways to being. Read Nate's story—link in our bio.
5. How can #yoganidra benefit you? Shyft student Nate shares his story. "Yoga Nidra has subconscious benefits to me. I don't feel any different initially, but internally, things are shifting. I'm letting go of my resentments and judgment." Join us for Yoga Nidra at Shyft, every Friday from 12-1!