

[No Surprises](#)

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I guess it's true that we fear what we can't predict, so businesses and government agencies scramble to promise us "no surprises". They know that we love predictability—especially when we're not in control. Neurologically and socially we're built for paying attention. My friend John Medina, author of [Brain Rules](#) says our ancestors kept two questions handy, "Can I eat that?" and "Can it eat me?"

But when the volume of reporting includes waves of speculation, ("Should you be worried?!" "Could it happen here?!") we face, in the words of Gordon Crovitz in today's Wall Street Journal, a data tsunami. We hate not knowing but then get swamped with the fix! So the questions become, How do we stay calmly resilient enough to recognize a true emergency? And how do we use that same calm resilience as a filter to let in useful information along with happiness and possibility and good surprises and growth opportunities?

The longer I live and the more people I listen to, the more I think of "calm resilience" as a spiritual practice. I think it involves:

- *Practicing breathing differently. In the words of the philosopher, Lily Tomlin, "For fast-acting relief, try slowing down."*
- *Considering where this moment or decision is on the line between recklessness and opportunity.*
- *Accepting your limits.*
- *And "seeding" the elements of happiness into our hours and days.*

No matter what their agenda, I find myself working on this stuff with all of my clients. Most of them are very fast-paced and very smart, so I promise them that if they practice these things, they will get even smarter (also happier).