



STRESSED?

STRESSED – spelled backwards is DESSERT – Dessert is good, not always good for you. Stress is bad, not always bad for you. If you cannot change the stressor - change yourself. Adjusting your attitude, expectations, negative thinking can help you regain your sense of control.

In our present culture, being stressed is seen as the proper way to react to too many issues, most of which are far from life and death. Some people actually feel they need a certain level of stress to do well. A reasonable attitude is imperative, allowing stress to become the constant condition may cause health and relationship problems. In addition, it does not feel good!

Living is stressful, however, recognizing when you are on overload and doing something about it in the present is important. Letting a stressful situation continue will erode your feeling of self-worth and impair your self-esteem. The results may be damaging not just to you, but also to those around you.

How you think can profoundly affect your emotional and physical well-being. Each time you think a negative thought about yourself, your body reacts as if it were in the throes of a tension-filled situation. If you see/think good things about yourself, you are more likely to feel good; the reverse is also true. Eliminate words such as "always," "never," "should," and "must." These are telltale marks of self-defeating thoughts.

- Judie Cotton, LMFT

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TIPS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS

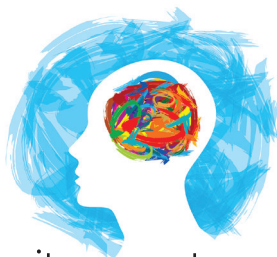


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TIPS

Here are some tips that you can use to fight stress. All of them are ENTIRELY in

your control. As hard as it seems at times, it is your attitude that can make the greatest difference in the fight against stress.



1. IDENTIFY WHAT IS STRESSFUL – THAT CAN BE AVOIDED!

Learn to say "no" - taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress. Everyone has limitations, identify yours and be prepared to let others help. We all know you can do "?????" better, however help is GOOD and reduces stress!

2. EXCELLENCE EXISTS – PERFECTION DOES NOT!

Adjust your standards - YOU judge doing YOUR best. If your standard is never good enough, you are chasing non-existent perfection. Stressing over it will not improve anything, being prepared and doing your best will. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection.

3. SET A SCHEDULE THAT WORKS FOR YOU

and fits your responsibilities. Let others know what it is and if possible get them to follow the plan. Use reframing, and focus on the positive. A positive perspective uses the "rule of 5"; will it matter in 5 years, 5 months, 5 weeks, 5 hours, 5 minutes. Take action according to urgency. Not everything is urgent.

4. YOU CANNOT CONTROL THE UNCONTROLLABLE.

Recognize facts and seek acceptance. Pay attention to what stresses you - some sources of stress are beyond your control. Getting over loss is an individual process, staying stuck in grieving keeps you from moving forward. Acceptance is the antidote - it does not wipe out all grief - it allows you and those around you to breathe, and reduces stress.

5. AVOID HOT-BUTTON TOPICS

- Cross-stressful topics off your conversation list. If you sense a conflict or confrontation developing, excuse yourself. If the evening news makes you anxious, turn it off! Catch up when you are less stressed. Use music, books on CD's, or visit with friends on HANDS FREE when in traffic.

6. GO OUT INTO THE FRESH AIR AND TAKE IN SOME DEEP REFRESHING BREATHS

for at least 20 minutes each day. Research shows that people who spend time in areas where there is grass and greenery have less stress. It can be at a park or if you live where homes have grass just take a walk around the block and breathe in fresh air.

7. LEARN TO FORGIVE

- accept the fact, this it is an imperfect world and people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentment. Free yourself of negative energy, resentment is toxic to you and to others.



8. FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

, take a moment to reflect and appreciate the positives including your own positive qualities. Give compliments and show your appreciation of others, reflect on how that makes both of you feel. Gratitude reduces stress and brings peace.

STRESS MAY LEAD TO ANXIETY!

Stress unlike anxiety is usually manageable with adjustments and thought from you! Anxiety is sometimes unexplainable, surprises the person and may be immobilizing. Chronic anxiety may be a chemical imbalance and/or a defense against a traumatic experience. It is often present in a person's life at a greater or lesser degree over a time. Anxiety and depression are fellow travelers, both needing treatment.

An anxiety (panic) attack is frightening causing immediate physical symptoms that must be dealt with. Continued severe stress may lead to anxiety. Seeking professional help is important; very few people will be able to reduce chronic anxiety without help. Attempting to control anxiety by yourself - in itself creates stress that leads to depression and more anxiety.

The cycle of stress, anxiety and depression is intertwined - which makes it difficult to treat - it often takes a combination of stabilizing medications and psychotherapy. Finding the right formula is literally life changing; do not give up on being your best self.