



Managing Stress

Any overload of a system is called stress. In the body, stress becomes a fear reaction. In Chinese Medicine fear is the emotion of the kidneys and adrenals. That is why when you experience unmanaged, unrelenting stress, you start to feel exhausted all the time and you head into adrenal fatigue.

What do we fear? Not getting it all done, not being the best, not getting somewhere on time, that things will never get better, etc. We can choose the opposite reaction of fear: **trust**. Once we have done all that we can, let it go and trust that things will work out the way they are supposed to.

What can be done?

- 1) **Be aware of what stresses you and make a conscious choice.** Awareness creates choice, and *stress is a choice*. You choose how you feel, your attitude, how you behave or react, the meanings you assign to what is happening, and the people and situations that you attract.

*"You cannot control what happens to you,
but you can control your attitude toward what happens to you;
in doing so you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you."
- Brian Tracy*

Ask yourself, what is the worst thing that could happen? By really examining our fears, we see that many of them are quite unrealistic.

*"We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong.
The amount of work is the same."
- Carlos Castaneda*

Make a choice to reduce stress. Make a change, even if it is just your attitude. Feeling stressed is a choice: choose to feel empowered rather than pressured.

- 2) **To alleviate worry, take action with what you can affect and let go of what you can't.** Worry is a useless waste of energy; use this energy to take action. Feel that you have power over your life, rather than feeling the pressure from the things that you cannot control. Release your need to control everything; this is perfectionism which is not sustainable.

Be “in the moment” to relieve worry. We worry about what has happened in the past. The past is gone and there is nothing that we can do about it. **Your point of power is in the present moment**, and **this** is where you can affect what happens in the future.

- 3) **Practice gratitude** daily to remain positive about life. Focus on the good, not just the bad.
- 4) Practice **saying NO**. Give yourself permission to say “**Enough!** I have done all that I can and I am satisfied with that.”
- 5) **Smile more and laugh every day.**
- 6) **Breathe deeply into your belly.** The sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight) is turned on when we breathe shallow. By breathing deep into your belly, you can activate the parasympathetic nervous system (rest & digest).
- 7) **Meditate at least 10 minutes every day.** This can be a contemplative walk outside, eating your meals slowly and consciously, doing deep breathing exercises or yoga practice. No multi-tasking allowed!
- 8) **Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day.** You can put *Rescue Remedy* in your water if you like.
- 9) Make smart, **conscious food choices** to support your health and keep your energy going for the long haul. Eat according to the seasons.
- 10) Get enough **quality sleep**. Practice good sleep hygiene.
- 11) Take a **relaxing bath** with lavender essential oil. This is especially useful before bed. If you find that sleep is an issue, Biofeedback can be helpful.
- 12) Get **regular massage and/or acupuncture** to rebalance and relax the body and mind.
- 13) If you are a parent, remember that you **lead by example!** Watch the documentary “**Race to Nowhere**”.
- 14) **Reflect** on why we constantly have to keep ourselves busy. Are we afraid of down-time because we might have to get to know our true selves? Are we afraid that we won't like what we see? Is this why we keep so busy and running from one activity to the next?

“Reduce the complexity of life by eliminating the needless wants of life, and the labors of life reduce themselves”. - Edwin Way Teale