

Change Your Stress Response - Managing Your Reaction to Stress at Work

What is stress? Over the years I've learned that *change creates stress*. So what is stress? Well, it's that intangible pressure you feel when put in a perceived situation. I say perceived because we can manage how we react to the feelings a situation can bring.

These feelings can be positive or negative but are still considered stressful because they produce a physical response. For example, you feel elated because you just got the 'yes' phone call regarding that sale you tried so hard to get. Your heart starts pounding and you breathe heavier, your stomach knots up, and your muscles tense up – ready for action. That's the fight or flight response, the same one that kicks in during negative situations or when trauma occurs.

In the holistic (mind/body/spirit) way of dealing with health, these mental, emotional, or physical traumas reside in your body's cells and cause blocks in the natural flow of your healing energy pathways resulting in dis-ease. Over time these accumulated blocks can cause major disease or chronic illness.

So knowing this, we can manage our health! The key elements are:

- Managing our reactions to change or stress
- Healing traumas before they become disease

To manage our body's response to our feelings we need to recognize them and the body responses they bring. Notice physical responses to situations. Take a few deep breaths to trigger the relaxation response. If you practice meditation, a few deep breaths will bring you right back to that place of peace and calm.

When the time is right, allow those feelings to come. Take the time to feel and stop being busy to cover up your feelings. Be in the present moment. Explore why you feel this way then examine if this is an appropriate response according to the situation.

Ask your higher self if you can let it go. Ask for the lessons to be learned swiftly. Forgive and ask to be forgiven. Give thanks for the learning and express gratitude to those that helped with the learning.

Not easy to do, but a necessary part of the healing process! This requires honesty with yourself and an openness to change. You are connecting your mind with your emotions, higher self, and physical body. This is holistic health.

Other methods to help you make this connection include:

- Meditation or prayer
- Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, gardening, nature walks
- Reiki and other energy healing modalities
- Gratitude, affirmations, forgiveness.

All of the methods mentioned above work to remove the blocks in your energy pathways encouraging cell regeneration and restoring your body's natural healing abilities. Your body wants to live in stasis. It struggles daily for balance and healing. Just think of the reactions that take place when you catch a simple cold for example.

How do you start this process of change? Through education, awareness, and practice. Education is the catalyst for change; awareness brings the "ah ha" moment, and practice makes it habit. Do you want to change?

Just think of a situation that was stressful for you. Remember what your mind chatter was saying to you – probably not very positive. Now consider different reactions that result in a less stressful way of reacting like taking a moment to calm down, take a deep breath, use positive encouragement, trust yourself that you will handle this with full confidence, and view the situation realistically.

Remember, it's your perception of the situation that causes the stress!

SIMPLIFIED DEFINITIONS

Meditation: turning attention to a single point of reference for a deeper state of relaxation or awareness

Reiki: the laying on of hands to channel "healing energy" (a form of ki, chi, or prana) through the healer's palms

Tai Chi: a Chinese soft martial art for health and longevity

Qi Gong: breathing and movement exercises to increase chi, reduce stress and benefit health

Yoga: the practice of asanas (postures) and meditation in order "to yoke", or "to unite"

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