

Stress Management Through the
Every Day Pursuit of Happiness and
Being Well

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How can you use this information?

- Try it on yourself
- Try it on others close to you
- Look for opportunities to give it away
- Raise the Happiness levels of everyone around you

*** Improves resiliency ratings

Where are you?

- On a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 being not-so-well and 10 being very well) how well are you managing stress, right now in your life?

General ideas about happiness

Happiness assists stress management through:

- ✓ Living with purpose and mission
- ✓ Becoming the best version of yourself (realizing your potential)
- ✓ Feeling capable
- ✓ Adding value, and knowing that you are making a difference
- ✓ Recognizing what's important



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What Good is Happiness?

- Smarter, more creative
- More stable, and have positive relationships
- Make more money
- Healthier and live longer
 - Nun study...only positive feelings predicted longevity
- Generous
- Experience more...stereotype less



Jim Loehr says....

(co-founder of the Human Performance Institute)

"We must balance intense periods of focus with intermittent periods of recovery and development...if we don't take time for recovery; our mind and body will do it for us in the form of depression, apathy, illness, etc."

PRINCIPLE

- Psychotherapy makes miserable people less miserable, but not happy.
- Positive psychology makes ordinary people much happier.



Signs of Stress...

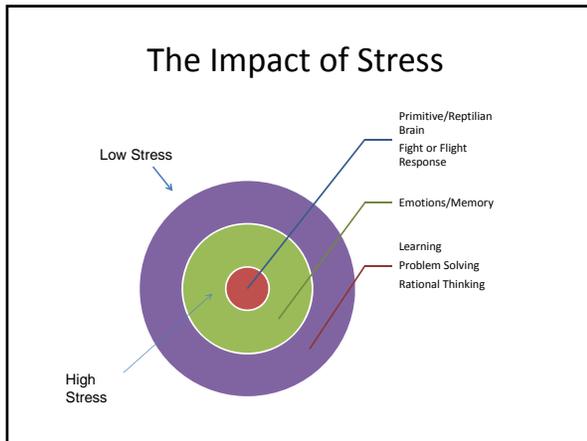


- Long hours of work
- Unhealthy Habits
- Irregular behavior
- Psychological symptoms
- A general feeling of being overwhelmed
- Feeling like your life is empty and devoid of purpose

*It is very reversible

Individual Variables

- Traits & Predispositions
 - DNA and the Motherboard
 - Resiliency and Temperament
 - Startle Response, Anxiety Traits
- Experience and Learned Responses
 - Family Patterns
 - Traumas



A Basic Human Need

“A human moment occurs anytime two or more people are together, paying attention to one another. These connections are the key to what counts in life, from a happy family to a successful business to a sense of inner peace, even to physical health and longevity.”

Edward M. Hallowell, M. D., *Connect*, 1999

“We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.”
-Virginia Satir

What and how we decide

Within less than a second...

people make what are called “spontaneous trait inferences...”

how people perceive and categorize others (friend or foe)...

warmth and competence...

accounts for 80% of our overall evaluation of people



[Source: Dr. Amy Cuddy, quoted in “The Psyche on Automatic,” by Craig Lambert, *Harvard Magazine*, November/December 2010]

Happiness & Relationships

- Happier people cause happy relationships.
 - More likely to have a large circle of friends.
 - More attractive, independent of physical beauty.
 - More likely to be in a significant relationship.
 - Easier to feel passionately committed.

Lynbomirsky, S. (2008) *The How of Happiness*. New York: Penguin, pp 138-146.

What can we do something about?

- 40%-50% is genetic
- 10% is circumstance
- 35%-50% is under our control and can be intentionally used

Can you change your happiness, your performance, your feeling states? You Bet!

- the habits you cultivate
 - the way you interact with coworkers
 - how you think about stress



(Source: Positive Intelligence, Shawn Achor, *Harvard Business Review*, January-February 2012)

Simple. Disciplined. Powerful. Thoughts. Actions. Habits.

It's the little things

The psychologist Ed Diener talks about...

the **frequency** of your positive experiences is a **much better predictor of your happiness than** is the **intensity** of your positive experiences...

Somebody who has a dozen mildly nice things happen each day is likely to be happier than somebody who has a single truly amazing thing happen.

[Source: The Science Behind The Smile, Daniel Gilbert, Harvard Business Review, January-February 2012]

It's the little things (continued)

So...

- wear comfortable shoes
- give someone you care about a big hug
- sneak some ice cream, a piece of chocolate...



It sounds like small stuff,
and it is.

But the small stuff matters.

[Source: The Science Behind The Smile, Daniel Gilbert, Harvard Business Review, January-February 2012]

Rapid Exercise

What are five "little things" you do,
or could do?

2.9 Positive to 1 Negative: The Magic Ratio

Fredrickson and Losada reviewed high functioning individuals, families, and work teams.

When we observe the positive to negative communications, a common fact emerges:

Languishing: >.4:1
Flourishing: >2.9:1
Ideal: 4 or 5:1



Barbara Fredrickson
Marcial Losada

Fredrickson, Barbara L.; Losada, Marcial F. (2005) Positive Affect and the Complex Dynamics of Human Flourishing. *American Psychologist*. 60(7), 678-686

Be an Exhorter (not an extorter)

- Praise others.
- Give out compliments freely.
- Recognize and talk about the good things around you.
- Give someone a thank you.
- Do something nice for someone and don't tell them.



“Today’s thought of the day is to encourage 30 students. “The more we strive, the more we strive.”

“Could we please have a thoughtless day?”

Brain, diet and mood

- Essential Brain chemicals prevent depression, tension, irritability, anxiety and cravings
 - Our body cannot function without them

Recent Research suggests...

- Sanchez-Villega's large study of Spanish college students found that **one's chances of becoming depressed while in college were directly related to how they ate**. She followed over 10,000 student for four years. Those eating the traditional Spanish diet, emphasizing fruits, vegetables, and fish, were quite unlikely to become depressed. Those who ate American-style fast foods were more at risk.
- **People who eat more vegetables and fruits have significantly better mental health**. Those who eat seven servings a day seem to do the best.
- **There are several good studies on the Mediterranean diet reducing your risk of depression**... a huge reduction in depression risk. That diet does NOT support eating red meat. Protein is generally from fermented milk products (kefir, yogurt) and fish. The fish are rich in omega-3 PUFAs (polyunsaturated fatty acids). Those are great, they are likely why people on the Mediterranean diet are much lower in depression.
- **We get a lot of omega-3 from grass-fed beef. In fact, they have the same ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 as Alaskan salmon. Grass-fed beef MIGHT be just as healthy for us as eating salmon and other fish**

Genetics & Stress Management

- Both are involved with healthy brain function
- Inherited predispositions
- Prolonged distress uses up natural sedatives, stimulants and pain relievers

Four Key Neurotransmitters

- **Dopamine/norepinephrine**: energy & mental focus
- **GABA**(gamma amino butyric acid): nature's valium
- **Endorphin**: painkiller and feel-good properties
- **Serotonin**: mood stabilizer and sleep promoter

- All made of amino acids
 - Twenty-two amino acids in protein foods
 - Nine amino acids are considered essential for humans

Improving Energy & Focus:

Dopamine/norepinephrine

- L-Tyrosine provides fuel for brain
- Foods rich in this amino acid include:
 - Fruits & vegetables (avocados, bananas, watermelon, apples, pineapples, pumpkins, seaweed, dark green veggies, beets)
 - Legumes, grains & Seeds (quinoa, soybeans, lima beans, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, wheat germ)
 - Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, cottage cheese)

Assisting Our Ability to Relax:

GABA(gamma amino butyric acid)

- Fueling GABA's ability to soak up excess adrenaline and other stress-induced byproducts(cortisol)
- Foods rich in glutamate/glutamic acid that aid in reducing panic/anxiety and produce relaxation in the body include:
 - Almonds, walnuts, lentils, whole wheat, oats, rice bran, halibut, beef liver, potato, broccoli, spinach, bananas, and oranges

A Sense of Well-Being & Feeling Good:

Endorphins

- Pick foods that contain natural feel-good properties (*foods that elevate endorphin levels can also be addictive)
 - Chocolate, strawberries, ice cream, pasta, french bread, bananas, grapes, oranges, nuts and sesame seeds

Improving Moods & Sleep:
Serotonin, the natural Prozac

- Is made from the amino acid L-tryptophan
- Choose from the following foods:
 - Poultry (turkey & chicken)
 - Grass-fed Beef
 - seafood (shrimp, tuna, halibut, salmon, sardines, cod & scallops)
 - Dairy (cheese, milk, yogurt)
 - Nuts & Seeds (pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, cashews, almonds, walnuts)
 - Quinoa
 - asparagus

Alcohol & Diet

- Diet quality decreases as alcohol intake increases
- Alcohol is a depressant and a toxin
 - Thiamin, zinc and other nutrients are depleted
 - Eat more processed foods, carbohydrates and fats
 - Eat less proteins
- National Institutes of Health research emphasize the importance of safe drinking guidelines and a greater awareness of healthy food choices

Other Happiness Boosters

Your brain grows like a muscle

- Journaling
- Expressing Gratitude & Being Optimistic
- Exercise
- Volunteering & Practicing Compassion
- Savoring everything
- Surround yourself with 3 “P’s” Photos, Plants, and Pets
- Relaxation

Optimism & Health

- Top third of men 65-80 had half the heart attacks than men in bottom third
- Strongest health predictor
- Reduces risk of developing type II diabetes
 - Men high in worry were 2.2x more likely over a ten year period
- Reduces cancer risk(study with women were 25% less likely...2 or more traumatic events raised risk by 62%...meditation helps
- Depression proof

Savoring...

- Focus on the sensory impressions in a moment-to-moment fashion.
 - Food
 - Activity (walking, running, sports)
 - Conversations
 - Friends
 - Recall & nostalgia

Inducing Gratitude

- Choose a significant person in your life that you can talk and visit with.
- Write a letter of appreciation to them
- Keep a journal

Contemplate Compassion:

"a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering"

- Raise the energy levels in the left frontal lobe(happiness center)
- Buddhist meditators & Carmelite nuns are the happiest people

» UW lab; Richard davidson

Hector's Happiness List

- Pick one that has brought joy to you...

In Summary...

- Moderate pleasure.
- Savoring (antidote to habituation)
- Social skills - be involved w/ people:
 - Wide range of acquaintances; Appreciate & enjoy others; Deep connection with significant other.
- Optimism & Zest:
 - Expect good to multiply & bad to pass quickly.
- A sense of mission.
 - Do more of what you are good at.
- Gratitude (the gratitude journal) & service
- Physical Exercise
- Nutrition

Resources

- “Enjoy Life, Healing With Happiness: How to Harness Positive Moods to Raise Your Energy, Effectiveness, and Joy”, Lynn D. Johnson, Ph.D.
- “Creating Your Best Life, The Ultimate Life List Guide”, Caroline Adams Miller
- “Who Switched Off My Brain, Controlling toxic thoughts and Emotions”, Dr. Caroline Leaf
- MAPP—Master’s in Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania

www.pennpositivepsych.org One semester study.
