

STRESS MANAGEMENT



Stress. Who can deny feeling stressed at some point in their lives? And to be fair, it is necessary to have some level of stress in our lives, both to act as a warning signal and to signify that we are indeed alive!

But where it all begins to go pear shaped is when stress dominates our lives like an unwanted guest at a party. It won't let us get on with our lives, and it interferes with our passion and purpose. High levels of stress can lead to depression. And depression is always a signal that our lives are not as they should be.

Stress is also responsible for creating inappropriate behaviours. This then upsets and alienates those around us, and a vicious circle begins to spiral out of control. It's not a nice place to be.

On a daily basis we operate on a Beta brain wave level, which is resonating at 13 – 100+ Hertz. When it starts to move over 30Hz you will begin to feel stressed. Your body produces high levels of negative chemicals. This in turn feeds our stress. Your brain goes into chaos, and you may begin to display dysfunctional or inappropriate behaviour.

In the corporate world it would be interesting to conduct a survey into the brain wave levels of an average executive. Imagine an office where a team is hovering dangerously close or above 30 Hertz. I wouldn't want to be there. Would you? Are you?

It's a fact that just by closing your eyes you will automatically lower your brainwaves to an Alpha state. This resonates at between 8 – 12.9 Hertz. The brain starts to produce positive endorphins. We start to feel calmer. We can deal with situations easier and upset less people.

One thing that concerns me with the stress that I see is that, in most circumstances, the crisis is imagined. It is not life and death, but a mere blip in a life. If one of your team has made a mistake, it is probably rectifiable. We make mistakes. We are human.

We also bring the stresses from home with us into the office. Again, I have to say that what I see is mostly preventable. Most stresses are 'caused' by poor communication with others, and with your 'self'. If we consider that everything that is happening to you is being created inside your head, then it starts to put things into perspective. We have a choice as to how we react to stress. We can blow up, making ourselves and others around us feel bad. We can deal with it calmly, focusing on finding a solution. We can laugh and reduce the tension to lesser proportions.

It sounds easy and it is. Simply allowing ourselves to be stressed creates stress. There are many things that we can do to reduce our levels of stress. I have listed a few below: -

- ♣ Chill out. Is this crisis a life and death situation? If not let the importance go.
- ♣ Be honest with yourself. Are you suppressing your real feelings? Is the reaction a smokescreen for other stresses in your life?
- ♣ Be honest with others. State your facts calmly.
- ♣ Do not react defensively. If someone is accusing you of something, ask for facts. If you are 'guilty' put your hands up.
- ♣ Learn to communicate with others in a better way. There are thousands of courses and books available, which can help.
- ♣ Learn to communicate with yourself. Stop the knee jerk reactions and look at what you are really feeling.
- ♣ Start to think about how other people are feeling. By taking the focus off yourself, you will appear as more of a team leader and an aspiration to others.
- ♣ Delegate – don't take on tasks which others would be glad to do.
- ♣ Do not micromanage. Trust your team. Allow people to make their own mistakes. That is how we learn.

- ♣ Get into the habit of having some quiet time to yourself. Most people don't like the idea of 'meditation'. But find the time to sit for half an hour [or 2 x 15 minutes a day] Let your thoughts ebb and flow, and do nothing other than remain quiet. This will have a dramatically positive effect on your behaviour, as your brain gets used to being in an Alpha state more regularly. When a stressful situation does then occur, you will find yourself responding more positively.
- ♣ Exercise – the body produces a mass of great endorphins during exercise and will leave you feeling fantastic. I have noted that executives who exercise regularly express less stress than those who do not.
- ♣ Sort your life out! If you are in an unhappy personal relationship, make it work or leave. Life is too short to spend time with people who you don't truly want to be with.
- ♣ A primeval need for all of us is to feel important. Start to focus on the positives in work colleagues. Try to get to know them more. Praise their good work and help them if they are struggling. Defensiveness is a very real problem in the workplace. Be the first to break that cycle.
- ♣ Get a life! Don't devote every waking thought to work. Develop interesting hobbies and get involved in them. We all need time out for restoration
- ♣ Develop the ability to detach. This will teach you to distance yourself from unpleasant feelings. It is an excellent way of combating external stress or dealing with destructive emotions. Many successful people have developed this way of thinking. It enables them to manage strong emotions.

{A} Think of a time when you were stressed or had strong negative thoughts or feelings.

[B] Imagine that you are stepping out of your own body. Leave behind all those responses. Notice how you become calmer, cooler and more rational

[C] When you have completed the above for a minute or two, return to point A & repeat.

Notice how you can keep a sense of detachment while returning to this point. When you can do this easily, start to put into practice during your daily transactions

- ♣ Let go of the need to be 'right'. This is the cause of much prolonged arguing and discord. It really doesn't matter, and is purely a sense of over inflated ego that keeps us determined to be right and to prove the other person wrong. Just by doing this one thing, you will dramatically reduce the stress in your life [assuming that you do this]

This is just a small selection of ideas for you to try, based on my experience as a Life Coach, and working with Emotional Intelligence techniques. There are many more options available, which are covered in coaching sessions and seminars.

I will leave you with a few questions you can ask yourself during times of stress

- ♣ Is this a life or death situation? If it isn't then react appropriately
- ♣ What is the worst that can happen?
- ♣ What could I do if the worst did happen?
- ♣ How can I find a solution?
- ♣ Is there anything else that I need to know?
- ♣ How is the other person feeling?

Many thanks for reading

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