

## February 2009 NEWSLETTER

### **THEME: Stress - Part One (of three)**

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SELF TRANSFORMATION  
THERAPY

#### **IN THIS ISSUE**

Welcome to a long overdue newsletter! The planning for my December workshop and the Christmas-New year break, led me to miss a couple of monthly newsletters.

However, when you see the topic of this month's newsletter, you will see that I have just been taking my own advice. That is, that organising the Dec or Jan newsletter wasn't going to be the right thing to do at the right time.

The topic of this month's newsletter is that stress is often caused by doing something the wrong way or at the wrong time, and that it is important to consult our own feelings and intuition as to how & when to proceed with our daily tasks.



#### **February 2009 'Thought of the Month': Stress – Part One**



"Stress is frequently a result of doing something the wrong way or at the wrong time. Feeling overwhelmed, exhausted or teary at the thought of doing something, may not simply be a suggestion of a lack of coping. It is important to consult your feelings and intuition as to whether you are doing something the way you wish to do it, or at the right time for you. If you get this balance right, stress can ease or disappear "

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### **Thought of the Month Article:**

This is the first of three newsletter topics on stress. It has been divided into three articles over three months, as each one reflects the three different triads in my [psychological models](#) (see website). Therefore, the three different focuses on stress will be:

- Stress in carrying out our everyday tasks, especially regarding paid work and running the home
- Stress within relationships and how we balance the needs of self and other
- Stress in context of a lack of life value, and the benefits of having some type of life philosophy or spiritual framework, to reduce the experience of stress.

Stress is an overused term and really belies the fact that stress is a great source of unhappiness, and in the long-term, can affect your health or shorten your life span.

The medical definition of stress is any external or environmental event, or your internal thinking, which results in an increased physiological response. It is our autonomic nervous system that regulates our unconscious functions, such as blood pressure, heart rate, digestions and breathing. This nervous system is responsible for the health impacts of stress and is divided into two parts.

The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for increasing our bodily functions for 'fight or flight'. Therefore it is the familiar experience of stress or adrenaline rush. This response winds us up, both physiologically and psychologically, causing the mind to think more, the emotions to be in chaos and the body to hold tension and be under physiological strain.

The other part of the autonomic nervous system is the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for slowing us down for repair and maintenance. This occurs during sleep or after a heavy meal. You know this part of the nervous system is taking over when you start to yawn and wind down. Therefore, it is vitally important to get adequate or restful sleep, to allow the body to do this. The more we are running ourselves down, the more we may need to take these rests to repair the body from the impacts of running on adrenaline.

The 'fight or flight' response refers to the event that when we feel a physical or emotional threat, we can choose to fight it with the energy of anger, or take flight (run or avoid) with the energy of fear. While this response is said to arise from primitive caveman times in response to physical danger, the dangers are now emotional threats. These emotional threats can even include running late and worrying about the problems of our day. Essentially, anything that threatens our equilibrium and sense of peace. As the 'fight and flight' response is associated with fear and anger, anxieties and frustrations are common experiences with stress.

The first point to consider is to reflect on **your own balance of being versus doing**:

1) While you go about doing the tasks of your day at home or work, are you also in a state of being, ie taking the experience in? Or are you in a sense of rush, worry or stress, focused on problems.

2) While you are in a state of being, such as trying to get some rest or time alone, are you able to actually relax, slow down and find that this is a restorative for you. I'm sure most of you will relate to the notion of finding it difficult to relax when the opportunity becomes available. Your capacity to relax or let go can be considered an indicator of the degree of busyness that occurs in your life, or your own habitual response to feeling stressed, such as through rushing, worry or perfectionism.

Another very important cause of stress, which is the main reason I wish to write this article, is that **stress is often doing something the wrong way or at the wrong time**. Is it important to consider this concept at any time that the thought of a task makes you feel overwhelmed, exhausted, teary or that you are avoiding the task. These feelings often do not need to be there. Rather than taking them as a sign of our lack of coping or effort, you can take them as a sign that you are not tuning-in to your own internal guidance. This guidance can assist you to decide what to do and when you do it. Obviously there are some restrictions on this freedom, but simply apply these principles as much as you can. Often they can be applied a lot more often than we think, due to being used to feeling rushed and restricted by our daily routines and demands.

Doing something at the wrong time refers to the fact that maybe we wouldn't experience as much stress if we did something at a later time - within reason. Often our own underlying anxieties cause us to need to get something done immediately or as soon as possible. We may be operating from an inability to let go of control, obsessive traits or excessive worry.

It is important to slow down and stop, take a few deep breaths, and reflect on whether this needs to be done now or indeed if at all. It is important to tune-in to your own intuition or gut feelings as to the answer to this question. Any logical analysis should only complement your consultation of your intuition. What I mean by that is, it's important to stop and listen to what is right for you, and then use your thinking processes just to check that you are not being unduly influenced by the fears or desires.

Doing something the wrong way refers to the fact that we need to consult our intuition and gut feeling as to the right way to go about tasks. This is equally applicable to important tasks and everyday household tasks. Doing things the wrong way means we are not being true to ourselves. It means we are being driven by some other person's standards, our own perfectionism, or our own fear of criticism etc. Having to do things immediately or perfectly suggests an issue of control, which may even manifest as more obsessive or compulsive signs.

A clue that you are being driven by a need is to ask yourself if you are happy with either way of doing things. That is, ask yourself: 'am I happy to both do the task, as well as happy to let it go at this time'. If you are happy with both options you can

make a peaceful decision.

Stress will occur if you are being driven forward into the only option that is palatable, or feel trapped because neither options are palatable. For example, if someone was too tired to do the housework, but feared their friends coming to visit may criticise their neatness, then neither choice may be palatable. This will cause a significant amount of stress. However, we are often willing to go into the realm of exhaustion, to avoid others thinking badly of us. Therefore, in this scenario, we are likely to clean the house and become exhausted. Then what chance do we have to enjoy the company of others.

Do not underestimate the very beneficial impacts these two concepts can have. You may wonder why simply doing something at the wrong time or the wrong way can be so stressful. The answer is alignment - meaning aligning yourself with that part of you that is connected to something greater than your ego. The ego operates out of fear and control and can become reactively angry. It is prone to feeling guilt and the inadequacy of shame. Stress is often caused by making decisions by consulting the ego and being driven by these imbalanced states of being.

Therefore, pausing, breathing and consulting your inner world can be a great source of stress relief as you are consulting a more centred and knowing part of yourself – a higher or deeper part of yourself. Consequently, doing this can increase the degree of peace and happiness in your everyday life.

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