

Stress Points: Wisdom to Reward Your Health

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Attitude and Altitude

“People are disturbed not by things but by the views they take of them.”
Epictetus, first century

“Perception — the lens through which we view life — is at the root of how we deal with all of it. As Victor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor and author, put it so eloquently, “everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”
~ Doc Childre and Bruce Cryer, Chaos to Coherence

“Demand not that events should happen as you wish, but wish them to happen as they do, and you will go on well.” ~ Epictetus

“Our cells are constantly eavesdropping on our thoughts and being changed by them. A bout of depression can wreak havoc with the immune system; falling in love can boost it. Despair and helplessness raise the risk of heart attacks and cancer, thereby shortening life. Joy and fulfillment keep us healthy and extend life. This means that the line between biology and psychology can't really be drawn with any certainty. A remembered stress, which is only a wisp of thought, releases the same flood of destructive hormones as the stress itself.” ~ Deepak Chopra

“You feel you have too much to do; but you know, it is not the amount of work, it is the way you do it that causes you to be battered and worn out; it is your attitude of mind towards that work. If you are interested and put the God within you into whatever you are doing in that moment; if you do one thing at a time quietly, and do not have a million other things in your mind at the same time, then you will find that you will get through all the work you have to do quite calmly, and you will feel refreshed instead of worn out at the end of the day.” ~ White Eagle, The Source of All Our Strength

Drags on Our Journey

“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.” ~ Corrie ten Boom

“The brain is capable of having a conversation with the body that ends in death.”
~ Russian proverb

Going Deep to Get Above

“The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them.” ~ Einstein

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” -- Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

“This ability to choose our response is at the heart of what makes us human. Animals have no space between stimulus and response; they operate out of instinct, an instantaneous reaction to stimulus.” ~ Stephen Covey, “Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit,” *Priorities magazine*

Any time one person makes an effort to contact a deeper part of him- or herself, balance his or her emotions, and deflect the stress momentum, others benefit. As more individuals learn to maintain their poise and balance and refrain from adding to the incoherence around them, they help to counterbalance the frequency of stress. ~ Doc Childre and Howard Martin, *The HeartMath Solution*

“When people become difficult, or when circumstances become stressful, it is much more challenging to maintain clarity and compassion - and that much more crucial. It takes tremendous concentration and force of will to stay connected with the quiet, aware, caring, peaceful place at the center of our being from which a positive, constructive solution will emerge, than it is to revert to the reptilian brain from which we will either snap back or swallow our adversary whole.” ~ Phil Milgrom

“In the same way that isometric exercises use resistance to build muscular strength, so difficult circumstances that pull us away from our center offer us an opportunity to strengthen the spiritual muscles that bring us to our center. Physical muscles lift weight; spiritual muscles lift humanity.” ~ Phil Milgrom

“Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened, but go on in fortune or misfortune at their own private pace, like a clock during a thunderstorm.” ~ Robert Louis Stevenson

“When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds. Your mind transcends limitations. Your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties, and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.” Patanjali, *Yoga Sutras*

“Examining your own character, you pick some distinct defect in it. You then ask yourself, what is its exact opposite, the virtue which is its antithesis. Let us say

that you suffer from irritability; you select patience. Then, regularly every morning, before going out into the world, you sit down for from three to five minutes and think on patience — its value, its beauty, its practice under provocation, taking one point one day, another, another, and thinking as steadily as you can, recalling the mind when it wanders; think of yourself as perfectly patient, a model of patience, and end with a vow, “This Patience, which is my true Self, I will feel and show today.”...

The irritable impulse will grow feebler and feebler, until you find that irritability has disappeared, and that patience has become your normal attitude toward annoyances.” ~ Annie Besant, The Riddle of Life

“Calmness of mind does not mean you should stop your activity. Real calmness should be found in activity itself.” ~ Suzuki, Zen Master

“Only in quiet waters things mirror themselves undistorted. Only in a quiet mind is adequate perception of the world.” - Hans Margolius

“Because we do not rest, we lose our way. We miss the compass points that show us where to go, the quiet that gives us wisdom... We have forgotten the Sabbath... Sabbath time honors the necessary wisdom of dormancy. If certain plant species do not lie dormant during the winter, the plant begins to die off. Rest is not just a psychological convenience; it is a spiritual and biological necessity. In our desperate drive to be successful and care for our many responsibilities, we can feel terrible guilt when we take time to rest. The Sabbath gives us permission to stop, to restore our souls.” ~ Wayne Muller, Sabbath: Remembering the Sacred Rhythm of Rest and Delight

“When you slow down, step back a moment and put things in perspective, you can then move on with more efficiency. It only takes a moment to adapt and control how you respond.” ~ Doc Childre, Freeze-Frame

“Difficult things of the world can only be tackled when they are easy. Big things of the world can only be achieved by attending to their small beginnings. Thus, the Sage never has to grapple with big things, yet he alone is capable of achieving them!” ~ Tao Te Ching

Riding the Waves

“Give up to Grace. The ocean takes care of each wave till it gets to shore.” ~ Rumi

“You cannot smooth out the surf, but you can learn to ride the waves.” ~ Anonymous

... and Bumps

“Laughter is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles. It won’t take the potholes out of the road, but it sure makes the ride smoother.” ~ Barbara Johnson

... and Really Big Bumps

“There are two big forces at work, external and internal. We have very little control over external forces such as tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, disasters, illness and pain. What really matters is the internal force. How do I respond to those disasters? Over that I have complete control.” ~ Leo Buscaglia

“Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh.” ~ George Bernard Shaw

“Humor is a way of saying, ‘The tragedy has happened to us, but it does not define us.... You did not destroy us. We are still here. We are still laughing.’ We have life and hope.” ~ Peter Weingold, M.D.

Wellness

“We are coming to understand health not as the absence of disease, but rather as the process by which individuals maintain their sense of coherence — that is, the sense that life is comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful — and the ability to function in the face of changes in themselves and their relationships with their environment.” ~ Aaron Antonovsky, Unraveling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well

“Medical commercials’ are ... disease-promoting. Many, meaning to offer you relief through a product, instead actually promote the condition through suggestion, thereby generating a need for the product itself...Nowhere do any medically-oriented commercial or public service announcements mention the body’s natural defenses, its integrity, vitality, or strength. Nowhere in ... television or radio matter is any emphasis put upon the healthy.” ~ Jane Roberts, The Individual and the Nature of Mass Events

“A relaxed body, relatively free of the burdens of mental stress and emotional turmoil, enjoys good vital energy and a strong immune system. So, relaxation isn’t just a desirable frill at the edge of our lives; it may be a key to our potential.” ~ Dan Millman

“Relaxed muscles generate more strength with less effort than chronically tense muscles.” ~ Dan Millman

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” ~ Jack Howell, Proverbs (1659) (It doesn’t do anything for Jill, either!)

“Look at life as an energy economy game. Each day, ask yourself, ‘Are my energy expenditures (actions, reactions, thoughts, and feelings) productive or nonproductive? During the course of my day, have I accumulated more stress or more peace?’” ~ Doc Childre and Howard Martin, The HeartMath Solution

“When we are able to get out of the shell of our small self and see that we are interrelated to everyone and everything, we see that our every act is linked with the whole of humankind, the whole cosmos. To keep yourself healthy is to be kind to your ancestors, your parents, the future generations, and also your society. Health is not only bodily health, but also mental health.” ~ Thich Nhat Hanh, For the Future to Be Possible

“Love and intimacy are the root of what makes us sick and what makes us well. I am not aware of any other factor in medicine — not diet, not smoking, not exercise,... not drugs, not surgery — that has a greater impact on our quality of life, incidence of illness and premature death.” ~ Dean Ornish, MD; Love and Survival: The Scientific Basis for the Healing Power of Intimacy