

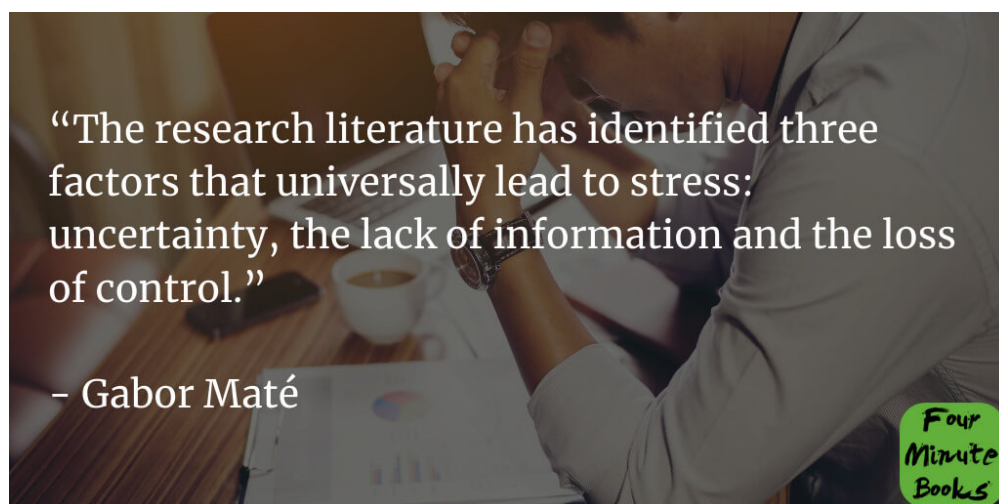
When The Body Says No Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *When The Body Says No* will help you become healthier by teaching you the truth behind the mind-body connection, revealing how your mental state does in fact affect your physical condition and how you can improve both.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Imagine you have a friend that called you and said he was in such terrible pain that he couldn't get out of bed. Would your reaction be to tell him he's being weak and to fight through it? Probably not. Likely you would take him to get looked at.

Now imagine that *you* were the one in crippling pain. Would you respond by ignoring it, repressing it, or even concerning yourself with other people's problems instead? Sometimes when we experience pain, whether physical or emotional, we just choose to tough it out. It might seem to work temporarily, but repressing pain actually endangers our health.

When we deny that we have a problem and we don't address it, often we wait until it's too late. In *When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress* by Dr. Gabor Maté, he uncovers the hidden connections between our mental health and physical illness.

Sometimes we imagine our minds and bodies as totally different entities when in reality, they are deeply connected. Mental stresses not addressed can actually manifest as a physical disease, which is why it's so important for the medical world to explore this fascinating connection.

Here are the 3 most significant lessons I've learned from this book:

1. When you're stressed, every system in your body goes on alert in response to a perceived threat.
2. Your body attacks itself when you're overwhelmed.
3. Negative thinking can help you beat stress.

Let's get right into it and learn how our bodies work under pressure!

Lesson 1: Stress happens when your body perceives a threat, and it affects every system in your body.

Many of us experience stress for a myriad of reasons. We all have the same basic processing system, but what makes a stressor for someone is very individual. For instance, losing a job can be an extremely stressful situation for a person living paycheck-to-paycheck, but for a person with a large amount of savings, maybe it's not so much. However, at the end of the day, most types of stress are the result of a perceived threat to our survival in some way or another.

The impacts of stress are felt across many parts of the body, some of which you might not even be aware of. The main places it affects are your hormones, immune system, and digestive system. When you perceive an imminent threat, a series of hormones stimulates the release of the stress hormone cortisol.

Cortisol acts on almost every single system in your body. It gets your heart beating faster, takes blood from your organs to your muscles, and suppresses your immune system. All of this is to make sure you react better to the threat at hand. It's a useful system in real, short-term threats. **But if you have cortisol chronically it can destroy tissue, damage the heart, and raise your blood pressure.**

One study examining the effects of chronic stress on immune cells called natural killer cells found that those experiencing chronic stress had significantly suppressed natural killer cells. These have the essential ability to destroy malignant cells such as cancer. Additionally, wounds on a chronically stressed person took an average of nine days longer to heal than the control group.

Lesson 2: When you get overwhelmed, your body begins to attack itself.

Our immune system needs to be kept at a specific balance, and it's easy for things to go wrong if things are off. Stress can cause your immune system to start harming the tissues it is supposed to defend. This can actually lead to the diagnosis of autoimmune diseases in some cases. Autoimmune diseases happen when the immune system mistakenly attacks the body and damages connective tissue, joints, and organs.

There are many things that can cause autoimmunity, but one thing in common with many autoimmune disorder sufferers is they struggle with boundaries. They tend to repress their own needs and put others first. **The stress of this emotional repression results in problems with the immune system, which starts to struggle to know which cells to attack and which to leave alone.**

In a study, scientists look at healthy relatives of women who had rheumatoid arthritis. Fourteen out of 46 tested positive for RA antibodies. This group scored much higher than RA antibody-negative participants on psychological scales showing the level of anger inhibition and concern about the acceptability of social behaviors. This suggested that emotional repression resulted in immune reactivity in these women.

Lesson 3: You can beat stress with negative thinking.

After learning how harmful stress is you may be wondering what you can do about it. Mate teaches we can overcome stress through negative thinking. When he was a palliative caregiver, the author came across many people who didn't understand why it was they who got cancer. One person wondered why this could happen when he'd always been so positive and not given into pessimistic thoughts.

The truth is, being positive all the time actually isn't very good for you. Positive emotions increase well-being but being constantly positive actually can turn into a harmful coping mechanism. **When you ignore your negative emotions, it increases stress, and we know this makes you more prone to disease.**

So instead, it's okay to indulge in negative thinking sometimes. We don't have to be constantly pessimistic, but it's healthy to embrace all of reality, including the bad. This helps us find a way to fix what's wrong rather than ignoring it.

A study found that melanoma patients who tended to suppress emotions had a higher likelihood of relapse and death. On the other hand, another study found those who resigned to their illness and had a harder time coping were actually less likely to relapse. Many of us react to illness by denying it or minimizing it. But science shows being "tough" isn't what we need.

When The Body Says No Review

I've always thought that physiology was fascinating and would have gone into the medical field had it not been for my inability to handle blood in any amount. That's why I loved When The Body Says No, because it's all the science without the gore! Jokes aside, this is a great book that gives some really useful information about stress, and I think you'll enjoy it.

Who would I recommend the When The Body Says No summary to?

The 56-year-old who has too many chronic health conditions and doesn't know what's going on, the 28-year-old that's curious about the connection between the mind and the body, and anyone who wants to know more about why stress happens and how to stop it.