

Finite Resources: Energy, Stress, Pain

1) Preamble:

“A wise man calibrates himself to his limits. A lazy man doesn’t go near his limits. A fool surpasses his limits, to his detriment.” -Illimitable Man

Many ambitious men like to believe they have an infinite supply of energy, stress tolerance, and pain tolerance. Tragically they are all wrong. Many learn this the hard way.

You find out where the limits of your energy are when you collapse with exhaustion. You find the limits of your stress tolerance when you either explode in rage or become overwhelmed by fear. You find out where the limit of your pain tolerance is when suicide becomes appealing.

2) Stress, One Dimensional:

Stress is a one-dimensional phenomenon in the sense that your brain does not distinguish between different sources of stress. So far as your brain is concerned, cortisol that is induced by a man holding a gun to your chest, or a neighbor playing loud music, is identical.

Your brain does distinguish between the *intensity* of different stressors, but not between *types* of stressors.

Every person has a finite stress tolerance, and when they hit the limit of it they will either explode in rage or become paralyzed by fear.

Anger and Fear are 2 sides of the same coin; anger is the offensive expression of stress, fear is the defensive expression of stress.

Stress is the 'Fight or Flight' response; anger tells you to fight, fear tells you to run away.

Meditation can be used to train yourself to have a higher stress tolerance; meditation will decrease your baseline level of neuroticism.

Think of meditation as a means of preparing yourself for the worst day of your life; sooner or later the most stressful day of your life will arrive, and when it does the hours you spent meditating will prove to be a worthwhile investment.

It seems to be the case that testosterone suppresses cortisol; having high testosterone levels causes a person to be lower on neuroticism.

This in large part explains why men average lower on neuroticism than women.

It also seems to be the case that when men with high testosterone levels hit the limit of their stress tolerance, they almost always express anger, never fear; their bias is towards 'fight' rather than 'flight'.

3) Great Men Breaking:

"Many men seem great, until you get to know them personally." -Baltasar Gracian

To be invincible is impossible. To appear invincible in front of those who don't know you personally is easy.

The more you get to know someone the harder it is for them to conceal their weaknesses. Conversely, the better someone gets to know you the harder it will be for you to conceal your own weaknesses.

Powerful men are usually far more admired by the general public than they are by their close friends and family members.

Why?

Because most people see the mask they present to the public, their family and friends see the real version of them; who they actually are is far inferior to the mask they present to the world.

It is both terrifying and exhilarating to see a powerful man hit the edge of his limits; they all seem invincible, right up until the moment they don't.