

# STRESS SOLUTIONS

HACK YOUR STRESS, CALM YOUR SYSTEM  
AND TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE



EVAN BRAND

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## STRESS SOLUTIONS

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# PREFACE

I've dealt with stress as long as I can remember. We all have! Most stress is somewhat enjoyable. Stress makes us feel alive. But in recent years, the types and amounts of stress we face has grown to unsustainable levels. People are burning out younger and younger each decade. It doesn't have to be this way.

With my background in health coaching and nutritional therapy, I've discovered that clients get better until a few key lifestyle factors were put into place. No matter how strict their diet is and how hard they avoid gluten, sugar and carbs like the plague, they are still broken!

I'm here to shed some light on why diet and fitness don't cure all of your ills and how to cultivate a more realistic approach that will result in a happier, longer and less stressful life.

Life is a beautiful thing and it's time for you to drop your stress levels and start living like you're in paradise. You are in paradise, you just might not know it yet.

~Evan

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# INTRODUCTION

Stress is a modern day epidemic. We haven't always been this way. Sure, we've dealt with stress in the past, but not stress like today.

Modern times present hundreds of new variables that we've never faced before. From the second you wake up to the second you go to sleep, technology, bills, work and the future itself loom overhead.

How are you supposed to move forward if you are held back by emotional and psychological handicaps? It's not an easy question to answer, but people like you are learning to deal with this new era of stress with great success. You can too.

Most people aren't taught a thing about stress until they discover it on their own.

College or starting your first full-time job may have given you the first real taste of stress.

Often times, our childhoods and social support groups are so comfortable that we become jaded by the reality of fending for ourselves and making big decisions.

My grandparents era didn't talk much about a mid-life crisis. Now it's discussed on social media like it's some sort of honor to take on so much stress that you break down.

Stress isn't that funny at all. Stress is a killer. It is silent, invisible and heartless.

Stress doesn't target you personally, nor does it care what it does to you. Its goal is like yours: to succeed. Its success depends primarily on a steady source of fuel.

### **Think of stress as a small fire pit in your backyard.**

It is pretty stable and controlled most of the time. You enjoy a small fire when the weather gets cold or you have some friends over. It's actually pretty stimulating and exhilarating to have a little stress around.

One night you decide to add more and more wood to the pit, exceeding its holding capacity and creating a blazing fire.

It's relatively safe inside of the fire pit, but one strong breeze and your whole backyard catches on fire.

You get the water hose ready and start to put the fire out, but it's too late. The fire is out of control and adding water seems to do nothing.

There's a fire extinguisher somewhere in the house, but you haven't touched it for years. You find it and realize you don't remember how to use it.

The fire spreads to the footsteps of the house and is beginning to threaten your very existence. The neighbors call the fire department. They arrive, put out the fire and save your precious goods. You live to see another day.

**Stress holds the same violent and destructive potential. It doesn't seem like much of a problem at first. You may even ignore it until it completely spirals out of control.**

You can't focus or muster up the energy to face life. Maybe you become sensitive and overwhelmed with fear and anxiety.

You seek out a doctor for your mysterious symptoms, aches and pains only to be told you're fine. Maybe you seek out a chiropractor, masseuse or acupuncturist to fix the physical manifestations of the stress.

Or you seek out a psychiatrist or psychologist who tries to work on the mental effects of stress.

**None of these people are wrong, but they're missing the point. Stress affects the mind, body and spirit. But you know that. That's why you're here.**

## **TYPES OF STRESS**

Our types of stress are usually never distinguished or separated. They are lumped into one single event or problem that has no defined edges, boundaries or rules. It's like a ghost in the sense that you know it's there, but you can't pinpoint what or where it is.

If you can't classify or identify the types and sources of stress that you're faced with, you can't manage them. It's like trying to explain what it's like to burn yourself if you've never done it.

There are probably hundreds of sources of stress you've encountered, but let's focus on the forms most impactful on your cognitive function, physical performance and overall health.

## **NUTRITIONAL STRESS**

We are nutritionally depleted on a global scale. The remaining hunter-gatherers may have remnants of micronutrient density, but us in the modern world have strayed away from quality food for convenience, taste, pleasure and a 99 cent price tag to go along with it.

We've created an abundance of food rich in calories that lacks nutritional quality. We're overfed but undernourished. The soil is depleted of minerals and our water is polluted with chemicals and heavy metals. The air is filled with mercury from coal-burning power plants, jet fuel exhaust and hundreds of other pollutants deemed safe by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Fighting against this reality, the demand for organic and nutritionally-dense food has seen quite the resurgence. People like yourself are beginning to understand the deep connection between our food and our health. The food-mood connection is undeniable.

Without certain raw materials obtained from your diet, production of key neurotransmitters, or brain chemicals that create positive emotions and allow you to deal with stress are gone.

Add sugars, refined carbohydrates such as breads, pastas, bagels, pastries, cookies, crackers, candy, soda, fast food, potato chips, diet drinks, oxidized and toxic oils (such as canola and rapeseed), and you have a recipe for disaster.

You simply cannot cultivate a healthy stress response if your body is sucked dry from these nutritional leeches.

**You can't tune up a vehicle with just a wrench. You may be able to tighten up some loose bolts and ensure that it's stable enough to keep you on the road, but you can't fill the tires or lu-**

**briate the engine to prevent you from crashing. That requires an entire toolbox.**

We will work on building and developing your "Stress Toolbox" later, but first we'll need to lay the groundwork of how stress works.

You may discover your fatigue, cranky mood and depression aren't caused from only emotional stress, but nutritional and spiritual stress as well.

## WE'RE OUT OF STRESS ANTI-VENOM

Stress isn't out to get you personally, it just acts like a virus. It needs a host to live and thrive in.

When we are depleted of minerals, vitamins and quality fats, we're left with no protection against stress. Vitamins and minerals act as the spark plugs of life that provide the fuel and vitality to engage in our day-to-day tasks.

When we're under stress, vitamins and minerals are burned up like jet fuel. Vitamins B6 and B12 are commonly depleted along with the mineral magnesium. These three make up an important system in the body that gives you stable but calm energy.

These vitamins allow you to have energy, but not in a jittery form like you would receive from a cup of coffee. When you lack these vitally important vitamins and minerals, your energy and ability to cope with stress suffer.

The body can receive a short lived boost from something like coffee and other stimulants. Coffee is a diuretic which causes a dump of wa-

ter and excretion of minerals. Without replenishing these levels as required, a daily coffee habit can begin to cause quite the deficit.

### **Adapting and managing stress is nearly impossible when you're deficient in minerals.**

To fully adapt and manage stress, we must have a full gas tank of vitamins, minerals, nutrients and hormones.

While it sounds daunting, it's a simple process that takes time and dedication. Once your overall nutrient levels begin to rise, your ability to cope with stress becomes more attainable.

**The goal of this program is not to make stress disappear. This isn't a course on magic and denial. It's a course on action and adaptation.**

We need to stack the deck in your favor and gain the upper hand against stress and the potential negative effects.

## **EMOTIONAL STRESS**

Gentlemen, don't skip over this section because you saw the word "emotion".

Emotional stress is a key player in the entire stress response. The health of our relationships and world response plays a significant role in our personal and professional lives. Emotional stress contributes to the highest of highs and the lowest of lows.

Attempting to repress emotions doesn't work forever. Eventually it seeps out and can lead to many serious health implications. But by numbing ourselves to bad emotions, we don't experience the positive emotions.

Society has taught men that it's "tough" or "cool" not to show emotion and just to brush your problems off. While this may be a good short-term strategy for your role in an upcoming action movie, it's not sustainable.

**Emotions are a good thing. Feeling emotion is what makes us human. Life is supposed to be felt.**

The distinction to make is whether you are ruminating on your emotional traumas or simply discussing and dealing with them.

Rumination is a term broken down into two parts, which are reflection and brooding. Reflection is an essential part of solving your stressor. Brooding is much more ominous in nature and is the act of replaying the stressor, event or situation in your head. Brooding is unproductive, obsessive and stressful.

Repressing stress is a common response because we lack the fuel to handle it. Facing stress turns to self-sabotage and self-destruction.

Realizing the impact emotional stability has on your overall state of health is crucial for long-term sustainability and proper stress-management.

Numerous studies point to the fact that women are more emotionally or psychologically stressed than men, but this shouldn't discourage you from enhancing your coping ability.

**Emotional stress is like a rain barrel. A little rain in the barrel is a good thing, it means you're alive and you have water available. If the barrel overflows, it floods and drowns the area around it.**

When emotions spill over, small arguments and disagreements that could have been responded to rationally are handled with violence, yelling, physical abuse and more.

The escalation of minor disagreements is preventable as long as you're prepared to face them when they occur. Disagreements are natural. It's okay to deal with them.

## SPIRITUAL STRESS

Spirituality does not automatically equal religion. You can have profound spiritual experiences without a particular interest or religious goal in mind. Nature itself is a limitless source of spiritual enlightenment and inspiration.

A lack of a faith or spiritual connection to yourself, your friends and family, or to the planet itself is a roadblock in healing the stress response.

Dr. Daniel Amen prescribes a hefty dose of faith in his healing programs, right after a healthy diet, lifestyle and detoxification protocol.

Prayer has a long history in indigenous cultures and is used today by Shamans who use a unique blend of plant medicines, prayer, chanting and music.

Shamans accredit their extreme results with the synergy that is created from such a combination of natural and healing therapies. Something that mainstream or western medicine should take note of.

We will need to incorporate the spirit world instead of isolating ingredients and patenting them for profit. Plants and natural medicines work

as a synergistic group of compounds, alkaloids and other constituents.

If de-stressing were as simple as creating a concoction from a test tube in a laboratory, it would have been long discovered.

A tree wouldn't stand if its roots weren't secured and grounded to the Earth. Humans are the same way. As we develop our roots and connect back to nature, we'll begin to understand what the term "spiritual" really means.

## THE IMPACT OF SPIRITUAL DEFICIENCY

Spirituality is literally essential for cultivating a desire for life. In a [study](#) with 51 depressed patients using spiritual and religious group psychotherapy, they experienced a 57% reduction in suicidal ideation. The spiritual therapy was said to open up new patterns of thought that led to this result.

If humans facing such dark thoughts are empowered by a spiritual setting, what can it do for a typical, over-worked and stressed out individual?

A walk in the woods can have a profound effect on your spiritual and emotional health. We will get further into the biochemical interactions between the natural world and yourself as we progress into the action section, but you don't have to wait to venture outdoors to begin the healing process.

## TECHNOLOGY OVER NATURE

The natural world has been replaced by technological innovation and obsession. It's a double-edged sword that hacks our neural pathways and programs our brain for what marketing experts call "pulling sensations".

Services like Twitter and Instagram don't directly tell you what's going on like the old forms of media, including television and the newspaper. These services "pull you" and allow you to be in charge of updates and new notifications as you desire.

The marketing industry considers creating a "pull" as a key goal when developing new applications, games and platforms.

If the "Fear Of Missing Out" or "FOMO" response is created, it almost ensures addiction, thereby success. It's a hijacking of our ancient wiring system that demands constant connectivity.

Society has been hollowed out with the loss of physical interaction, touch and other forms of personal connection. But, for every swing in one direction, a stronger swing in the opposite direction develops.

For example, a popular restaurant game for groups of people is to put all of your cell phones into the center of the table. Whoever can't handle their "FOMO Syndrome" and grabs their phone has to pay the bill.

This is just a light-hearted example of the effort it takes to restore our pastime of sacred interaction around a campfire with our loved ones.

Regardless of how advanced we become as a civilization, our hearts and spiritual nature will need to remain intact if we are to progress together in a sustainable manner through the centuries.

## PHYSICAL STRESS

Physical exercise continues to gain value as the modern, sedentary lifestyle grows. It's becoming "cool" to use a standing desk and to post pictures of how you're not sitting down anymore. These trends merely create large profit opportunities for companies creating adjustable desks.

Ex-NASA employee Dr. Joan Vernikos and I had a conversation about the importance of gravity. Your physical health isn't determined by how long you stand or how long you sit, but rather the number of times you alternate positions.

**Dr. Vernikos recommends going from a sitting to standing position at least 25 times per day. For those bedridden and pent up in hospital beds, she strongly encourages to arise to the sitting position with your legs off the side of the bed.**

Our physical deficiencies aren't hiding. They're visible anywhere you go.

Venture out to your nearest downtown intersection and witness the business executives strut across the street. If a car comes their way and they have to make a quick run for it, it appears to be one misstep from a fall. We can hardly manage our own physical bodies!

This isn't a soap box for complaining about the modern human's physical insufficiency, but rather a discussion of the weakness that has spread through the population like a sort of virus.

If we've lost the basic ability to sprint, taking a vacation to hike through the mountains and forests would be a joke. We're incapable of satisfying our genetic code.

Our mind and body operate in a two-way fashion. They send signals to “request” input and feedback. The signals sent for water, food and shelter are usually always met.

The more esoteric signals to seek and nourish love, spend time in nature and get physical activity are far easier to ignore than that of basic survival.

Once you begin exercising and spending more time in nature, the signal grows stronger and ignoring that new signal will result in a feeling of apathy.

The devil’s advocate jumps in and says, “well if I will feel like crap when I stop my exercise routine, then I might as well not start at all”.

Give these people a gentle tap on the head.

On the opposite end of the fitness spectrum, Crossfit and other high-intensity athletics have created an equal amount of athletes, addicts and burnout victims.

The combination of nutritional deficiencies, poor sleep, lack of spirituality and nature, combined with extreme bouts of high-intensity training on a regular basis create the perfect recipe for stress overload.

It’s those who become dependent on the surge of adrenaline and cortisol created from intense activity that lead themselves down the path to self-destruction. While this boost is natural and normal, if the foundations are not in place, the whole system collapses.

**Managing poor blood sugar regulation (a major stress to the system) with the dietary recommendations outlined later, you can return to your favorite intense exercise. Until then, it's best to**

**stick to walking, gardening, weight lifting, hiking or other low to moderate-intensity exercises.**

Conventional wisdom teaches people that exercise is the first place to start when it comes to losing weight, conquering stress and becoming healthier. While that advice contains some truth, it’s not the ivory tower of success.

**You can not out-exercise a bad diet, and you can't conquer stress if you're the one creating it.**

## IT ALL ADDS UP

The human body is capable of handling remarkably stressful situations and has done so for eons. It’s not that we’re incapable of handling stress, it’s just that the type of stress we face has changed drastically in the last hundred years, just like everything else.

**We are wired to respond to acute stress.**

**But, we face chronic acute stressors like traffic, phone calls, text message notifications, status updates, sirens, yelling people, noise pollution and more.**

If you lived on a secluded island and only ventured into the city once a month, these acute stressors probably wouldn’t impact you too much.

If you do live on a secluded island, invite me to join you and I’ll read you the rest of the book as I lay in a hammock sipping on coconuts.

You likely venture into a stressful environment on a daily or even constant basis, especially if you live near a downtown environment.

Even in the comfort of your home, apartment or condo, the sirens never stop.

Your nervous system wants to respond and get over the stress, but it can't. The stress is always there.

You don't have to continue the path towards burnout, midlife crisis, violence, anger, depression, anxiety and the other avenues that result from too much stress. There are solutions.

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## THE SUM OF STRESS

Your stress response isn't broken by default and you're not burned out by default. Well, you're not supposed to be.

Although, the combination of stressors your mother endured during pregnancy could have given you a bit of a stress handicap as you enter the world. Thanks mom!

The incidence of newborns born with adrenal fatigue is increasing. The science community considers this a controversial subject since the

Mothers use the adrenal glands of their unborn fetus as an alternative or dualistic fuel source to face the stress occurring in the outside world.

This occurs mostly in extremely preterm infants and the research shows [here](#) that most newborns' HPA axis adapts and recovers from the effect their mother had.

**A journal entry hypothesizes that overexposure of glucocorticoids to a developing fetus is one of the key mechanisms linking early life development with later life disease.**

A [study](#) shows that pregnant women receiving inadequate social support secrete higher levels of cortisol in response to psychological distress as compared to women receiving effective social support.

To raise a child capable of handling the stressors of the world, cultivating a calm and low-stress pregnancy is a way to give them a head start.

Think of your stress response as a house with only 3 solid corners. The house can probably stand, but when a storm comes along, the missing 4th corner will cause the whole thing to collapse.

**Similar to life, you can probably handle your minor stressors for the most part, but when you first experience a major life stressor such as college, moving out on your own, getting a career, having your first child or other adult experience, you may experience extreme distress, panic, depression, anxiety and mild emotional trauma.**

This begins the tumble of your stress response until your whole world is flipped upside down.

One could argue that life has always been stressful, but with the digital age in full force, we are just beginning to see the effects.

There's no reason to feel sorry for yourself or attach a label to yourself about your starting point. You could assume all of us in the 21st century are starting a little behind our less-stressed ancestors.

It's now about accepting this disadvantage, defining your starting point and working forward from there.

Managing and improving your stress response can prevent and even reverse some of the effects you've experienced.

Millennials facing a strange and difficult time to become a responsible and successful adult must take special note.

**Attempting to tackle all of the world's problems in a day by yourself is an impossible task; recruit your tribe first. Find someone with your same interests locally if possible. If you have trouble, head to the internet and network.**

## THE STRESS RESPONSE

The autonomic nervous system is primarily an unconscious system that regulates bodily processes. It's controlled by the hypothalamus which is a portion of the brain that also controls body temperature, hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleep and your circadian rhythm.

This system usually knows how to handle stress. Chronic stress causes the stress response to get "stuck on".

The modern world doesn't make sense to our nervous system. It's confused as to how there could possibly be so many acute stressors.

We are a species built for acute stressors, but from the moment the alarm clock goes off to the TV advertisement right before bed, we're on overload.

**The autonomic nervous system has two primary divisions which are the sympathetic (fight or flight) and parasympathetic (rest and digest).**

We are designed to operate in the parasympathetic, or rest and digest mode the majority of the time, with only a fraction of our lives spent in the sympathetic mode.

The process of digestive enzyme secretion, sexual arousal and the ability to relax and sleep all happen in the parasympathetic mode.

The sympathetic mode shunts blood away from your digestive organs and prepares your muscles and brain to make a quick decision to escape the presumed threat.

Except, the presumed threat is usually nothing more than a whistle sound from your cell phone letting you know you have a new message. Or, the neighbor uses a chainsaw to trim the tree in his backyard, or someone cuts you off on the highway and forces you to slam on the brakes.

Any of these seemingly mild modern stressors keep us stuck in a sympathetic dominant state.

We end up with impaired digestion, frustration, anxiety, and hundreds of other tangential symptoms that stem from overstimulation.

We'll discuss how meditation, yoga, forest therapy and other methodologies can engage a restful state, but it shouldn't be so difficult.

Relaxation and a calm lifestyle should be built into our daily habits. It's an attainable goal that is essential for coping in the long run.

Mid-life crises aren't due to age alone, but rather the result of 40 years' worth of sympathetic dominance. There has even been talk of quarter-life crises occurring in the twenties or even among teenagers and middle schoolers.

The results of overstimulation are revealing themselves younger each year.

You'll see toddlers and even infants playing with iPads, iPhones and other tech gadgets as electronic babysitters. We'll talk more about why this is so detrimental to such a young brain, but I'll let you mullate on that concept for now.

## THE RESISTANCE REACTION

The second stage of the stress response that comes after fight-or-flight is the resistance reaction. It's not often talked about, but it's usually the actively running operating system of the nervous system.

Let me explain how this system works.

First, nerve impulses from the hypothalamus release a group of hormones, corticotropin releasing hormone (CRH), growth hormone releasing hormone (GHRH) and thyrotropin releasing hormone (TRH).

CRH stimulates the pituitary to secrete another hormone called adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH), which stimulates the adrenal cortex to release more cortisol, the primary stress hormone.

GHRH causes the pituitary to release growth hormone (hGH) which stimulates the breakdown of triglycerides and glycogen. TRH causes the pituitary to release thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) to promote the secretion of thyroid hormones to stimulate the increased use of glucose necessary for ATP (energy) production.

This process is what provides the necessary fuel to fight off a stressor, even if that results in depletion of your body's key nutrients, vitamins and minerals over the long term.

Cortisol and DHEA are two hormones produced by the adrenal glands that are supposed to balance each other out.

DHEA protects your body from cortisol and the effects that stress causes. When the cortisol to DHEA ratio is high, there are various negative effects.

DHEA is a critical component of memory and brain function. This is why when stress levels (cortisol) is high, your memory and ability to focus becomes impaired.

A [study](#) comparing those who reported stress at work compared to a non-stressed group found significantly lower DHEA levels in the stressed group.

DHEA production peaks around age 20 and decreases with age. By the time you reach age 40, your body produces about half as much DHEA as it used to. So you're now fighting the same, if not greater amount of stress with only half the natural stress-busting hormone you had at age 20.

As cortisol overpowers DHEA, your detoxification ability and immune system are also compromised leading to a general lower level of vitality.

### The 3 stages of stress response:

- The fight-or-flight response
- The resistance reaction
- The exhaustion stage

The final stage of exhaustion involves high levels of cortisol and other hormones that eventually cause the wasting of muscle tissue, suppression of the immune system and other more serious symptoms.

**Stress-management truly is “as serious as a heart attack”.**

## THE SUM OF STRESS

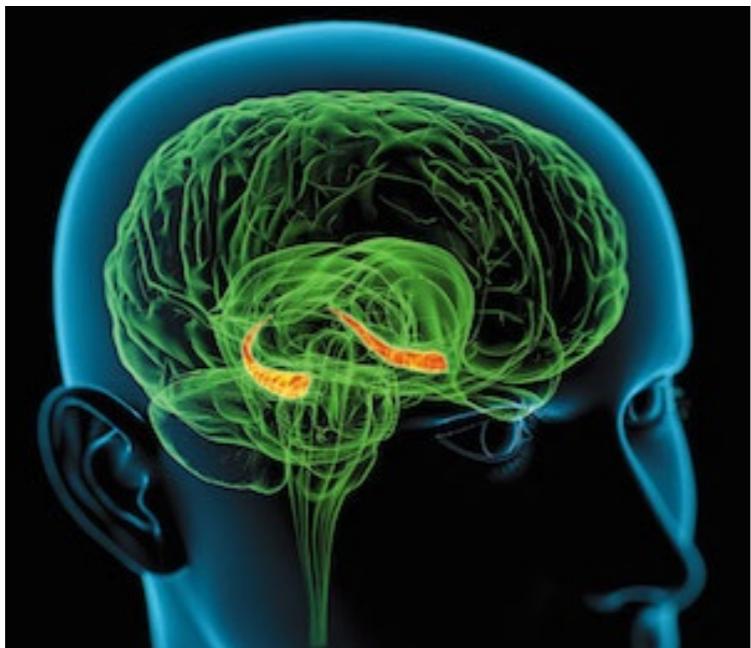
Stress has a contagious nature to it. You've probably walked into a room where someone was arguing and could almost sense your blood pressure rise.

Dr. Mark Hyman is one of the world's leading experts on functional medicine. We had a discussion about the influence on stress on overall health and he agreed that **95% of all health problems are either caused by or worsened by stress.**

**Evan's Experience:** I went from 170 pounds to 145 in one year of extreme change including a cross-country move, an engagement and wedding, new career and new surroundings. I didn't prioritize adaptation and stress-management and suffered the consequences of brain fog, IBS flareups, depression, anxiety, fatigue and muscle loss.

Most alarming is the link between chronic stress, insomnia and neuro-degeneration in the memory center of the brain, the hippocampus.

Humans and other mammals have two hippocampi that play a significant role in the consolidation of information, from short-term to long-term memory, as well as spatial navigation. Degeneration may be part of why stressed and older people tend to get lost!



Think of the hippocampus as the central processing unit in a computer with the comparable role of fetching memory, decoding information and executing commands.

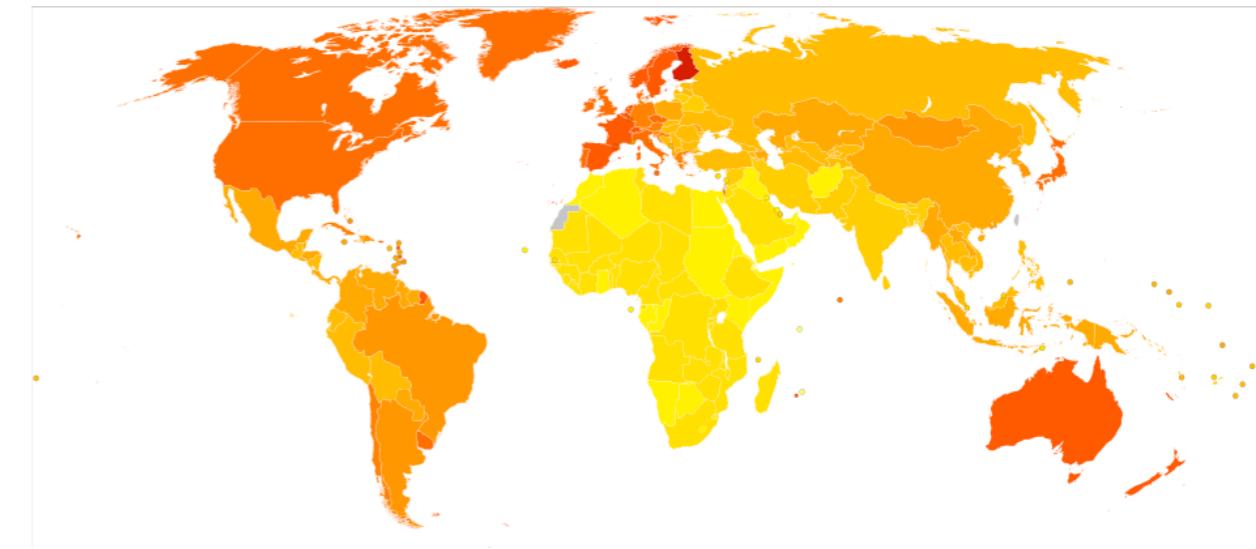
The hippocampus contains glucocorticoid receptors, which the stress hormone cortisol and others bind to. The hippocampus is the hotspot for cortisol accumulation, which makes this area more vulnerable to chronic stress than other areas of the brain.

The atrophy that occurs with chronic stress has been found to be reversible, as long as the stress is discontinued.

For example, a [study](#) tested those with insomnia (sleep stress) compared to those that were good sleepers. The insomniacs showed hippocampal atrophy, which suggests reduced neurogenesis, or reduced nerve cell generation.

In increasingly prevalent diseases such as Alzheimer's, the hippocampus suffers damage, with memory loss and disorientation as some of the first symptoms to appear.

A map from the World Health Organization shows the incidence of Alzheimer's across the planet. Notice that the most technologically advanced areas are the ones with the highest rates of Alzheimer's Disease. **The darker the color, the more common the disease.**



It's no surprise that Africa and the other parts of the planet with minimal or no cell phone towers, WiFi, electric fields, power lines and other modern innovation have little to no Alzheimer's disease.

An invisible group of stressors that we are all exposed to in modern times primarily in urbanized areas are electromagnetic fields, or EMFs.

A [study](#) has analyzed and answered the important question: **Do low frequency electric and magnetic fields act as a stressor and cause an effect on the brain?**

Epidemiological evidence that's currently available suggests an association between exposure to EMF and Alzheimer's Disease.

There are other factors at play, but doesn't it make you question the effect of technology combined with the Western diet?

Learning how to safely use and mitigate our exposure to these non-native electric and magnetic fields is arguably one of the most important issues facing mankind.

The work of Dr. Sam Milham, M.D. in his book [Dirty Electricity: Electrification and the Diseases of Modern Civilization](#), discusses the link between magnetic field exposure and various types of cancer. He goes on to reveal multiple published studies he's conducted on the subject. Dr. Milham completed one job in particular at Malibu High School and reversed thyroid cancers in the teachers affected by cleaning up "dirty electricity" and magnetic fields.

A [study](#) found that occupational EMF from radar in military personnel with service for over 10 years led to a decrease in melatonin levels.

A [research paper](#) by Dr. Neil Cherry documents multiple studies showing a decrease in melatonin levels caused from EMF.

**Evan's Experience:** Turning off my WiFi at night was the first change I made which led to less headaches, more energy and a generally brighter mood. My dream recall and intensity was also enhanced.

## LOSING YOUR LIBIDO

The sum of stressors doesn't just affect the brain and memory centers; it affects sexual vitality as well.

Erectile dysfunction in men is occurring at much younger ages than in previous generations due to poor diets, excessive stress and pornography addiction.

Pfizer, the creators of Viagra, the famous little blue pill, sold over \$1 billion dollars worth in 2013. Pfizer made a net profit of over \$22 billion dollars total in 2013.

The potential for profiting off men with erectile dysfunction is going to continue to rise (pun intended) without an emphasis on education and action geared towards naturally improving sexual vitality.

Women aren't spared from the loss of libido in the modern world either. These problems are both physical and psychological in nature.

**A large portion of libido issues are attributed to a fatigued stress response.**

Since the adrenal glands make sex hormones and respond to stressors, they must prioritize the task of survival and threat management before they worry about giving you enough genital blood flow to enjoy yourself.

Reproduction or sexual intimacy becomes a luxury when a stressor is present. The body puts this operating system on the back burner.

**Sexual vitality depends largely on a healthy supply of sex hormones.**

The master hormone pregnenolone is produced in the adrenal glands from cholesterol.

Pregnenolone is the precursor to male and female hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, cortisol and androgens such as testosterone.

This group of hormones provides our sex drive, good moods, inflammation response and the ability to respond to stress.

As the stress response weakens and slides into the resistance or exhaustion phase, pregnenolone levels begin to plummet, cutting off the fuel source for the production of these other hormones downstream.

In the movie *Titanic*, the Captain receives message of an iceberg ahead and sends a distress call to the engine room to reverse at full speed.

The engine crew tries to slow the engines and avoid collision with the iceberg. But, the ship is already too close and can't stop in time, hitting the iceberg and causing the eventual destruction and sinking of the ship.

If the captain had more time to react, this situation may have been prevented. I don't want you to mimic the *Titanic*, so we'll need to slow you down much earlier and be more cognizant of the stressors coming.

## INSULIN RESISTANCE

Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas that regulates your blood sugar, fat and carbohydrate metabolism.

Insulin regulates delivery of glucose into your cells to provide energy.

Controlling your insulin levels is one of the most powerful anti-aging strategies you can possibly implement.

Dr. Mercola is one of the world's leading experts on what I call "true health", that suggests insulin resistance is probably the single most important diet-related factor to consider.

Diets that contain excess carbohydrates and sugars cause an increase in insulin production to respond to the sugar, as too much sugar in the blood stream would be deadly.

These cells become deaf to the signal of insulin and require more to do the same job. This is insulin resistance.

This puts a significant strain on the pancreas which eventually succumbs to the stress and high demand, leading to pre-diabetes.

**Elevated cortisol makes the body more insulin resistant, causing the need to release more insulin to get the job done.**

Elevated cortisol can also cause food cravings, making it much more difficult to stop eating sugars and carbohydrates causing the issue in the first place.

After the blood sugar levels stay elevated with no improvement or changes made, the condition can progress to full blown type-2 diabetes. This long-term measurement of blood sugar is referred to as the A1C.

Luckily, type-2 diabetes is reversible with the proper pathways of healing, but it doesn't have to happen in the first place.

While weight gain and lack of exercise are two of the major contributors to insulin resistance, which often leads to pre-diabetes or type-2 diabetes, it's important to understand what other stressors may be at play.

What about psychological stress? Does it add to insulin resistance?

A pubmed [entry](#) studied the question and mentioned the lack of human studies. In animal studies, the link between stress and hyperglycemia is strong.

It's no surprise that this fight-or-flight response causes significant fluctuations in the blood sugar levels resulting in hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia.

### **What about a stressed attitude? Does that contribute?**

A [study](#) found that individuals with high stress and high hostility were more likely to have insulin resistance.

Correlation doesn't always equal causation, but from the hormonal cascade that results from any form of stress, it's easy to see why being a chronically angry person isn't the best way to live your life.

Practitioners and patients alike pinpoint one hormone or one unhealthy food and conclude it's the cause of all of your problems. It's not always that simple.

Cortisol is a buzzword that carries quite the negative connotation. But it's essential for getting through life! You just don't want it to be too high, or too low. Cortisol, like life, is about balance.

Later, we'll get into the specifics of emotional stress and talk about not only why it's better for your health to be happy, but how you can actually do it.



## 3

# STRESS IN THE FLESH

With an understanding of the mechanisms and sources of stress you're faced with, we can dig deeper into the real effects of them.

A seemingly benign cup of black coffee and organic yogurt can cause massive impact that manifests in many ways throughout the system.

From mid-day slumps to depression and panic attacks, the details of stress are what make your break your recovery potential.

Are you someone who internalizes your stress?

You may battle irritable bowel syndrome and anxiousness while the outside world thinks you're just the happiest and content individual!

It can be tough dealing with the more intense effects of stress and it's almost a taboo to talk about being burnt out or stressed.

Hopefully your social circle has uplifting conversations about emotions and the effects. This may relieve some of your anxiety.

The mainstream teaches you to cope with stress using nightclubs, bars, alcohol, entertainment and distractions such as impulse shopping.

While these industries aren't evil by default, they impact your wallet and your nervous system.

Alcohol causes intestinal permeability, or leaky gut, which reduces the protective barrier that is designed to keep your system free of toxins.

When a leaky gut is created, the potential for environmental and dietary toxins to enter the bloodstream is present, causing increased effects and damage. This combination of stress is a big component of conditions such as IBS and IBD.

A [study](#) looked at the effect of acute psychological stress on small intestinal permeability.

The stressor of public speech led to the most increase in permeability along with a rise in cortisol. More interestingly, a subgroup demonstrated that the effect of public speech on permeability was only present in subjects with a significant elevation of cortisol.

**By improving the way you respond to stress, you're directly improving the health of the entire system downstream.**

## NUTRITIONAL STRESS

The following list includes but is not limited to consumables detrimental to a healthy stress response:

- Sugars and refined carbohydrates
- Energy drinks (even natural ones)
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Artificial and natural sweeteners such as stevia
- Allergic foods due to the histamine response
- Stimulant drug use
- Aspirin or other NSAID use

Certain organic yogurt in the United States can contain as much sugar as half a can of soda!

**The body doesn't care whether sugar is organic, raw and local, sugar is sugar.**

By causing abnormal spikes and crashes in the blood sugar rhythm, the adrenals are taxed.

Excess stimulant use in the case of coffee, energy drinks and caffeine causes the adrenal glands to produce additional cortisol which

creates a short-term increase in mental clarity, energy and overall function.

Caffeine isn't evil, but it often leads to a steady increase of dosage and frequency.

Under times of stress, the best solution seems like a cup of coffee, an energy drink or a glass of wine, but this is precisely the opposite of what a stressed individual needs.

## ALCOHOL AND STRESS

A journal [entry](#) notes that stress can influence alcohol consumption and cravings for alcohol. But, you've probably discovered this without science.

Alcohol increases the production of cortisol which is important for the production of dopamine. The dopamine response encourages and rewards drinking.

Serotonin levels are also affected which we'll talk more about later.

Cortisol is supposed to be highest in the morning with exposure to bright light, but the additional boost of cortisol isn't necessary.

We modulate our neurotransmitters all the time. It starts with a boost of cortisol via coffee in the morning to get us going and hit at night with a glass of wine.

To pick on alcohol one more time, its consumption reduces sleep quality and stress tolerance. If sleep is an extreme issue, my premier program, [REM Rehab](#) covers this in great detail.

## FOOD INTOLERANCE

[Research](#) has documented the rise in food sensitivities and food intolerance in the last decade. It seems like it increases by the week since I've started work as a Nutritional Therapist.

Wheat, or specifically the wheat protein gluten, is a major culprit. Even if you don't have a known gluten sensitivity, the downfalls far outweigh any reason to consume it. It's found in nearly every processed food which causes confusion and stress over trying to avoid it.

Avoiding wheat is actually pretty simple as you'll discover in "Eating For Stress".

If your overall toxic load is minimal, a small amount of food intolerance may not destroy your health. You can tolerate them, but you may have a few symptoms that pop up and stick around until they are removed.

**Here's a list of inputs that add to a large toxic load:**

- The estimated 100,000 chemicals in the environment
- Skin care products
- Antiperspirants
- Smog
- EMF pollution
- Fluoridated water
- Antibiotics and synthetic hormones

- Chronic stress
- Artificial light at night
- Synthetic bedding materials and clothing
- Food toxins
- Leaky gut
- Lack of antioxidants and detoxification

The total load adds up to create massive health effects which can lead to autoimmune disease.

Specifically regarding food intolerance, exposure to histamine also causes issues for many.

Fresh meats and fish contain little to no histamine. But, fish that has traveled long distances without proper care, and processing of meats in the case of salting, smoking, marinating, preserving and creating things like salami and ham can cause digestive and stress-related issues.

### **Histamine increasing foods include:**

- Alcohol, particularly red wine, white wine, beer and champagne (have a wine headache? that's generally from the histamine response combined with dehydration and sulfites)
- Aged, smoked, canned fish and fish sauces
- Pizza
- Smoked and processed meats

- Certain vegetables including tomato, spinach, eggplant, avocado, mushrooms and canned vegetables
- Certain fruits including strawberries, bananas, kiwi, pineapple, mango, tangerine, grapefruit, citrus, pears, raspberries and papaya
- Soy sauce
- Cheese
- Mustard and ketchup
- Chocolate/cocoa
- Sunflower seeds
- Coffee and black tea
- Bread and yeast
- Peanuts, cashews and walnuts

A [study](#) found that histamine stimulates the adrenal glands to produce more cortisol. A glass of wine may be all it takes for someone to suffer an allergic reaction, rash, gastrointestinal distress or headache.

Stress is a plethora of visible and invisible threats that multiply, requiring a comprehensive approach. You see why cookie cutter plans don't work.

## **AUTOIMMUNITY**

With an estimated 50 million Americans suffering from an autoimmune condition, it's an important topic of discussion.

## **One particular route that leads to autoimmunity looks like this:**

Since autoimmunity is so much more common in women, we'll use a character named Sarah.

Sarah is a recent college graduate with a full-time job. Her job isn't what she had in mind, but it pays the bills. She gets a promotion and a pay raise enough to keep her around.

With her new responsibilities and management duties, she begins to experience some effects. She develops trouble falling asleep with the thoughts of the work day on her mind.

She ignores the sleep issues for a while and continues to drink a cup or two of coffee throughout the morning to get her going. Not paying much attention to her diet since she's so busy, she skips lunch a couple days a week just to stay caught up with work.

She rushes home in traffic to heat up leftovers or a pre-cooked meal. After dinner she pours herself a glass of wine and turns on the TV to relax.

One glass of wine turns into two and she eventually dozes off to sleep with the glow of a television.

Headaches, stomach cramps and random aches and pains begin to increase in frequency, but a simple dose of aspirin is usually enough to keep the symptoms at bay.

Her hair and skin are increasingly dry at this point, leading her to purchase the latest and greatest moisturizing lotion and conditioner.

A reoccurring cold and runny nose pop up. Depression surfaces, but she attributes it to the winter months and the fact that she had some relationship issues at home.

The stress and food sensitivities create the perfect opportunity for toxins and other pathogens to slip through her leaky gut, causing inflammation, irritable bowel, nausea and other symptoms.

Energy levels plummet and recovery is dismal. Her hands and feet are cold all the time and the slightest stressor turns her into a wreck. Her performance begins to suffer at work and she just wants to hide in her office and get through the day.

After her doctor sends her home with prescription strength ibuprofen and gas-x for her symptoms, she continues to degrade in health. After hearing of functional medicine from my [podcast](#), she finds a practitioner in her area that is familiar with autoimmune disease.

They suspect autoimmunity and run some diagnostics, finding thyroid antibodies and concluding that Sarah has hashimoto's thyroiditis, the most common cause of low thyroid function in the United States. The road to true recovery begins.

**Due to the leaky gut worsening with stress, I developed a sensitivity to eggs, coffee, peppers, tomatoes and a few other spices that are in the nightshade family. After pulling these foods out for several months and healing the gut with stress management and nutrients, I was able to successfully re-introduce these foods as desired.**

**Evan's Experience: After stress compounded in my life, a Paleo diet still caused health symptoms and I began to follow a diet closer to an autoimmune Paleo diet.**

If a food doesn't work for you right now, that's okay. You may be able to enjoy them after you lower the overall stress load. This is the fun part of focusing on your individual success.

## ARTIFICIAL AND NATURAL SWEETENERS

Monsanto was founded in 1901 by a chemist to manufacture saccharin, the world's first artificial sweetener. This was the first attempt to stray away from honey, sugar cane and other natural sources of sugar.

In 1974, the FDA approved aspartame. [Research](#) suggests aspartame as a culprit for the exponential rise in brain tumors since the late 1970's. We've likely all had exposure to aspartame, that happens to be a neurotoxin. Over 40 years later, it's still found in over 1,200 products.

In a [study](#) comparing saccharin and aspartame to sucrose, it was found that these two artificial sweeteners caused more weight gain than sucrose (sugar) itself!

Another [study](#) showed an increase in irritable mood, more depression and worse performance on spatial orientation tests when consuming a high-aspartame diet.

Additionally, a [study](#) found that aspartame increased levels of oxidative stress and inflammation in the brain while simultaneously inhibiting levels of brain levels of serotonin, noradrenaline and dopamine.

In the wake of such bad press against aspartame and other artificial sweeteners such as Splenda (sucralose) and Equal (dextrose, maltodextrin, natural sweeteners have surfaced and gained popularity in the last decade.

Natural sweeteners such as stevia, erythritol, xylitol, agave nectar and mannitol are touted as safe and effective alternatives to standard table sugar or artificial versions.

But, in a particular [study](#), even stevia has been shown to inhibit the growth of *Lactobacillus reuteri*, a beneficial strain of probiotics that is an important habitant of the human gastrointestinal tract. *Lactobacillus reuteri* is capable of fighting off the gut pathogen *Helicobacter pylori* (*H pylori*) that causes stomach ulcers.

This probiotic also has strong [documentation](#) for its effective treatment against rotavirus-induced diarrhea, especially in children. The more *L. reuteri* consumed, the faster the diarrhea stops.

Our addiction to sweetness is so strong and we'll do anything to justify it! The good news is that a simple and truly natural diet can provide all the sweetness you could ever desire.

## CHEMICAL STRESS

You don't have to work in a chemical factory to be exposed to chemicals. A comfy desk job in an office building can offer quite the potential for toxin exposures.

Stale air, artificial lighting, and off-gassing of plastics found in cubicles, new carpets and synthetic leather chairs are the main threats.

Additionally, the chemicals found in personal care and beauty products such as soaps, shampoos, conditioners, cosmetics, toothpastes, deodorants, laundry detergents and dryer sheets provide enough chemicals to cause allergic reactions, rashes and worse.

The myth that our skin is an impermeable barrier has long been disproven. In fact, many pharmaceutical companies are switching to topical applications to bypass the breakdown of the drugs by the liver and instead go directly into the bloodstream.

Lead, aluminum and other toxic metals present in personal care products accumulate in the body. Cells removed from a cancerous breast, in many cases, are full of aluminum. This toxic metal is the main ingredient of deodorants used by women across the world.

**Evan's Experience:** My wife had dense clusters of itching and raised bumps over her entire body for over a year. After going through doctors, dermatologists, biopsies and eventually a patch test, she discovered over two dozen allergies to chemicals including parabens, sodium lauryl sulfate and all fragrances. Replacing the toxic products for organic skincare products led to her immediate recovery and healing of the skin.

If you want a full list of harmful chemicals in personal care products, please read [Unreasonable Risk](#) by medical doctor, Dr. Samuel Epstein. Each item you remove decreases your toxic load and increases your potential to detox and eliminate their effects.

## WHAT ABOUT THE WATER?

Sodium fluoride is added to city tap water throughout the United States and is used as the active ingredient in conventional toothpaste. Even if you don't drink tap water and use fluoride-free toothpaste, if you eat rice or anything that requires water for cooking at restaurants, you're still ingesting this known neurotoxin.

**Sodium fluoride has been shown, even in low concentrations, to negatively impact children's intelligence and dental health.**

Organizations like the [Fluoride Action Network](#) have formed to end municipal water supply fluoridation. There is likely a local chapter you can join. Currently, Portland, Oregon and Houston, Texas are the only two cities in the United States to successfully ban water fluoridation.

Over 140 unregulated chemicals were found in public water supplies across 42 states by an Environmental Working Group [study](#). Another 119 unregulated chemicals--a total of 260 contaminants all together were found at nearly 40,000 utilities that supply water to 231 million people.

**The states with the most contaminants in their drinking water are California, Wisconsin, Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, New York, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Illinois--in that order.**

The biggest sources of contaminants are agriculture, industry and pollution from sprawl and urban runoff.

Chlorine is a toxin you've likely encountered at the neighborhood pool or hot tub. It's used as a disinfectant, but the side effect of adding chlorine to tap water to meet federal drinking water regulations is the formation of trihalomethanes, which have been linked to miscarriages, colon, rectal and bladder cancer.

**Risk exposure to trihalomethanes is actually highest during a shower due to the exponential increase in these compounds caused from warming the water supply.**

Researchers in Canada [found](#) inhalation and skin exposure from tap water increased cancer risks.

Swimming pools are another toxic source of chlorine exposure. Olympic swimmer Catherine Garceau developed severe depression and weight gain due to the chronic exposure to chlorinated swimming pools which she discussed on [episode 62](#) of my podcast.

## ONE BIG REASON WE CAN'T DETOX

In a world polluted with toxins in the air, food and water, our detoxification system becomes more important than ever. And it requires one key mineral that at least 80% of the Western population is deficient in: magnesium.

### Stress burns up magnesium like rocket fuel.

The body has wonderful mechanisms for dealing with detoxification both internally and externally as long as you have the raw materials necessary to perform these functions.

Modern farming methods have removed a large percentage of minerals such as magnesium and zinc from the soil, which are responsible for over 300 processes in the body, including testosterone production in men and normal neurological function.

### Every detoxification pathway requires a lot of magnesium.

Magnesium deficiency manifests in several stages of symptoms as outlined by [Got Mag](#):

#### Stage One

Fatigue, constipation, dizziness, facial twitches, sugar cravings, headaches, heart palpitations, hiccups, hypo or hyperglycemia, irritability, mood swings, poor appetite, muscle cramps and spasms, nausea, nervousness, poor memory/concentration and weakness.

#### Stage Two

Anxiety and panic attacks, arthritis, asthma, ADD, backache, ear infections, **gluten sensitivity**, hypertension, insomnia, pre-diabetes, migraines, PMS, TMJ and weight gain around the waist.

#### Stage Three

Arteriosclerosis, blood clots, bowel disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, **celiac disease**, cerebral palsy, kidney disease, depression, diabetes, epilepsy/seizures, heart arrhythmias, hormonal imbalance, hypo or hyperthyroid, liver disease, metabolic syndrome, miscarriage, multiple sclerosis, severe obesity and osteoporosis.

#### Stage Four

Alcoholism, ALS, Alzheimer's, cancer (breast, colon, prostate), cardiac a-fibrillation, congestive heart failure, COPD, Parkinson's, renal failure, sudden cardiac death (especially in athletes).

Magnesium deficiency also stimulates histamine production, making a person more prone to hay fever, asthma and eczema.

## EMOTIONAL STRESS

I'm an emotional guy. I've always been that way. It's a blessing when good times come around and tough when hard times pop up. The ability to feel emotions is something that many people long for.

The inability to feel or express your emotions, whether caused by repression or pharmaceuticals such as antidepressants, is far from the way you should feel.

A [study](#) observed 10,000 people that viewed an art exhibition produced by people with mental illness.

Over 90% of the subjects reported a better understanding of mental illness, a more sympathetic understanding of the suffering of people with mental illness and appreciation of the ability and creativity of people with mental illness.

Literally putting yourself in someone else's shoes through art can be an incredibly powerful way to increase your sense of empathy.

Emotional stress for me appeared as depression, but it can also appear as anger, anxiety or fear.

**Depression is expected to become the leading cause of disability in the United States by the year 2020 according to the Center for Disease Control. But we can slow these statistics.**

A [study](#) gathered 183 university students to learn the effects of positive and negative thoughts.

It was found that rumination was associated with negative automatic thoughts. Negative automatic thoughts also aggravated depressive symptoms.

**Positive automatic thoughts contributed to the reduction of depressive symptoms.**

So the million dollar question is, how do you stimulate production of positive automatic thoughts?

It's a process that happens with practice and dedication, not magic. Once you understand the power over stress that positive thoughts allow you, you'll be able to allot more energy to that process.

**People with intense and negative attitudes are also more likely to experience more health issues.**

**Evan's Experience:** I became extremely pessimistic while working a third-shift job; the combination of circadian disruption and my attitude caused a significant increase in my IBS flareups. Learning to manage my stress led to an immediate reduction in symptoms.

## WHERE'S OUR TRIBE?

Historically, we are a people of community, tribes and heritage. The communal way of life has been replaced with one of isolation and independence.

We've separated ourselves from others in an attempt to "be unique" or "do something different" when in fact, what allows us the strength to create change is the unity and strength of the group itself.

While the age of the internet allows single individuals to produce great content and value to society as a whole, on an emotional level, our minds do not recognize social media as a form of true friendship.

**We have lost sense of human contact so much that a face-to-face conversation can be intimidating, awkward or even alien.**

Like our physical performance, we are becoming incapable of using our basic communication skills with one another and are becoming recluses.

There are many reasons behind this phenomenon, but the fact is that if we intend to be happy, we must have a social support group.

With the changing job market causing families to separate in search of more money and security, trans-continental flights and “vacations” are becoming no more than a yearly family reunion event.

A [study](#) looked at how social support affects the relationship of depression and functional disability and found that out of 1268 subjects that were age 60 or older, the most stressed and depressed were the ones that had the least social support and therefore participated in less activity.

**A lack of social support led to a decrease in attempts to reconnect with the group, leading to stress and depression.**

Once you are removed from a social support group due to moving, leaving a job, or personal choice, it's tough to muster up the courage and willpower to seek out or create a support system of your own.

But, when it comes to your overall health, the necessity of building a tribe far outweighs the uncomfortable experiences and weird people you may come across in the process!

Another [study](#) looked at young adults that were treated for cancer and discovered that those with social support were far more effective at handling stress and had a greater instance of physical activity. It's never too late to start building your tribe!

## DO YOU FEAR HAPPINESS?

The fear of happiness sounds like the title of a self-help book, one that I may write. But, this is a real issue verified by researchers.

**The fear of compassion and happiness are directly correlated with depression and alexithymia, or the inability to identify and describe emotions in the self.**

Why would we fear compassion and happiness? It's likely that some sort of rejection or denial in our early years led to the development of fear. Maybe a bad relationship or marriage caused feelings of insufficiency or that you aren't worthy of love.

While love is a component of developing a healthy relationship with stress, it's a surprisingly important aspect that is likely left to the wayside in favor of magic pills and potions.

**What if opening yourself up to love and compassion was the catalyst for success you've been missing the whole time?**

You could spend so much time on stress management, yoga, meditation, a good diet, deep sleep and relaxing music, but the fear of these emotions could override all of that.

A [study](#) looked at 52 subjects suffering from moderate to severe depression and measured their fear of happiness, compassion from others and for self.

Researchers found that fear of happiness was the best predictor of depression, anxiety and stress, whereas fear of compassion from others was the best predictor of adult attachment. So, just accept happiness!

## WE NEED TO REFLECT

In a busy world, the need for reflection time doesn't go away, it actually increases.

One of the greatest feats of the human mind is the ability to reflect on our actions. We can pause, think about the past, the present and the future almost simultaneously.

This ability has slipped away in the age of productivity. Change does not always equal progress and we could both shout until we are blue in the face about the changes that have happened in our lifetime that are far from progress.

### **Spend 20 minutes a day reflecting.**

You can do this on a walk, while soaking in a warm epsom salt bath, during yoga and meditation or otherwise.

Some people find that reading puts them in a state of reflection and contemplation, depending on the subject matter. I'm not concerned about what allows you this mindset, but rather that you simply do it.

If we are trying to figure out how to conquer tomorrow before reflecting on today, how can we successfully achieve our goals? We may scurry along without bumping into the walls for a while, but eventually the lack of reflection will catch up to you.

### **For so long, the world was a quiet and dark place with plenty of time to think.**

With the advent of electricity and the lightbulb, everything was changed. The concept of "down time" was erased, as if it had never existed.

Now, social media and mass distractions fill the void that reflection once held.

What would happen if you and your social circle were to suddenly stop feeding into the constant stressor of the news, media and other outlets?

What would happen if you were to spend each night around the fireplace, talking and storytelling with your loved ones?

I can't possibly comprehend the benefits we would see spread throughout the population if this became the new cool thing to do, can you?

### **Accept the quiet times in life. Embrace alone time with your thoughts. They may realign your direction.**

Avoidance of alone time may contribute to those that "wake up" at age 40 to realize they've yet to accomplish their dreams.

I'm not suggesting we have ultimate control over every aspect of our lives, but if we can control the present moments and gain clarity in them, we can positively direct the future.

## YOU NEED TO RECHARGE

Some experts claim that 80-hour work weeks are the "secret" to success. I call B.S..

### **What were to happen if you drove a car with your engine revved at full speed on a daily basis? You'd blow a gasket!**

This is what happens to humans, except, blowing our gasket means we have a panic attack, fit of anger, depression or plain exhaustion.

Everyone has some downtime they can appreciate, even if it's just time spent in the shower singing. This is the time to recharge your batteries and stress response, allowing you to face the world with your head up and a smile on your face.

### **Life is a marathon, not a sprint.**

Your new business won't succeed overnight and it may not gain real traction for the first few years. Your new fitness routine may take 3 to 6 weeks to create real change. Even a decade is a short time span in the grand scheme of life.

You don't want to exhaust all of your resources in the beginning to only be passed by those that took it nice and steady.

You control the speed of your life. You may have to participate in the rat race, but that doesn't define who you truly are.

If you have the luxury of spending time at a cabin, lake, beach, mountain, desert or other quiet place in nature, go for it.

**The idea that lazy bums are those who relax and take time away from the working world is nonsense. That's the essential rest and recovery time that'll keep you going when the rest of the pack tires out.**

I wish I didn't have to create such an "us versus them" attitude when it comes to maintenance and recovery from stress, but unfortunately, the world laughs and pokes fun at those that "hide out" from hustle and bustle.

You and I could create a collage of high-profile people that have ruined their lives with overwork, high stress and high stakes. It's not

that anyone is equipped for that way of life, but they certainly could have made it more sustainable.

**If you're a high-profile person with management, ownership or leadership obligations, you need double or triple the time spent recharging as other people. Yes mom, that means you too.**

## **SPIRITUAL STRESS**

Early human existence relied on spirituality for explaining and understanding the intense times that life brought. From bad weather, sickness and death to the miracle of birth itself, spirituality is deeply rooted in aspects of life.

Spirituality played a significant role in health until the last century.

Technological innovation and the medical industry has almost completely sterilized the miraculous and spiritual nature of the human body.

**Developing a foundation of spirituality will positively impact our ability to deal with the stressors of life.**

Some stress relief tools are very tangible: exercising more, eating nutrient dense foods, reducing blood sugar dysfunction, sleeping well and talking with friends. Spirituality is a bit more complex.

Even the Mayo Clinic considers stress relief through spirituality as one of the most beneficial methods.

Spirituality has many definitions but essentially provides the same goal, which is to give purpose and connection to our lives.

It does not have to infer a connection to religion or even a belief system; it can simply refer to the connection with yourself, with others and your meaning in life.

For many people, spirituality is religion, prayer, meditation or other belief in a higher power. For others, it can be a connection to nature and the natural world including animals, birds, water and the trees.

Many Native Americans felt that the air, water, soil and all other facets of the natural world were alive, which they are, and that it provided a source of inspiration and breath that you could listen to.

**Whatever form spirituality takes in your life isn't the most important aspect, but rather the pursuit and nurturing of spirituality itself.**

## SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

What can science say to those who doubt the importance or simply deny the existence of spirituality on human health?

A [study](#) measured the impact of prayer on cardiovascular health in African American women and found that higher prayer as a coping mechanism was found to decrease stress and blood pressure while improving heart rate variability, a biomarker for the state of your nervous system and stress response.

Another [study](#) looked at 1,071 adults from Baltimore, Maryland and wanted to find the effect of spirituality on psychological distress and negative life events.

It was found that those with frequent “religious attendance”, presumably weekly church sermons, did not show any improvement when facing negative events and distress.

The only decrease in distress was found in those that scored high on spirituality.

In other words, you can't fake it!

**Just showing up to church or other spiritual event may not make a difference in your stress response if your heart and faith are absent.**

## FINDING YOUR SENSE OF HOPE

When President Obama was running for office, he had one of the most inspirational and easy to follow messages in history; hope.

You may remember the commercials, speeches, meet-and-greets and more. Just repeating the word hope and printing stadium-sized posters with those four letters was enough to create a landslide victory for presidency.

What is it about the word hope that captured our hearts?

It's part of the human spirit to nurture hope, whether you like it or not. It's almost as if we have a genetic switch that is susceptible to the promise of the word hope.

Creating your own sense of hope is one of the first steps for truly enjoying your present and future life.

**Here are a few ways to encourage hope:**

- **Find an organization you believe in.** I recommend the [Organic Consumers Association](#) to start.
- **Listen to inspiring music.** Browse iTunes under your favorite genre and let loose.
- **Create a vision board.** Apply a combination of aspirations, goals and future plans to a board you'll stick to your fridge.
- **Just let it go.** Harboring your stress internally will not improve or speed up the situation.
- **Ask yourself what is the worst that can happen?** You will be surprised at the relief a little role-playing can create.

## PHYSICAL STRESS

Crossfit gyms, mixed-martial arts and high-intensity training have gained extreme popularity over the last decade. Pushing the boundaries of the mind and body have revealed the incredible potential of the human body.

Is our newfound obsession with fighting and the tough-guy culture a defense and coping mechanism for our feelings of helplessness and pent up aggression caused from a society that is out of balance?

Compare this to the Roman gladiator matches, which increased in violence and often resulted in death; historians estimate the peak of these matches occurred in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, precisely during the period of the fall of the Roman Empire.

There's nothing wrong with creating the physique of a warrior and developing incredible strength over your own body and others, but many people are simply too depleted (stressed) to do this.

**Those at risk for stress burnout from physical exertion are those that have a poor diet, mineral deficiencies, high stress load, lack of spirituality, high toxin load and poor sleep.**

The body requires minerals, vitamins, nutrients and high quality fuel to run optimally, or at all. Expecting the performance of a race car with low quality fuel will result in disappointment and nearly impossible.

The combination of these variables severely impacts your training capacity and especially your recovery ability.

It's true that heavy weights and high-intensity have great benefits, including strengthening and forming new bone tissue and significantly increasing levels of human growth hormone, which aids in anti-aging and overall health and longevity.

**But, if you're sore for more than 3 days after an intense workout, you'll need to tone it down.**

It's worth repeating that the modern lifestyle presents a plethora of new variables that wear down the stress response, variables incomparable during the times of the original samurai.

If chasing the title of a champion, warrior or otherwise excites you, alright, that's fine. Just make sure your stress load is under control before attempting to become one.

**The effects of overtraining include:**

- **Chronically elevated cortisol.** This is what allows you to perform, but in excess it causes sleep disturbance and muscle loss.
- **Persistent muscle soreness and fatigue.** The lack of recovery time exhausts the nervous system.

- **Reduced heart rate variability.** The spacing in between heart beats measures the health of your nervous system. The higher the better.
- **Increased susceptibility to infections.** High cortisol depresses the immune system function, especially in the gut.
- **Irritability, depression and mental breakdown.** Exercise is one of the most powerful anti-depressants, as long as the dose is right.
- **Catabolism.** It sounds similar to cannibalism for a reason. The body essentially breaks down and eats muscle tissue to supply adequate energy to the system. Picture the physique of a cross-country runner.

## HIGH-INTENSITY OR STEADY-STATE?

Most people think that rigorous aerobic activity is one of the main ways to staying healthy. You see people stomping down the sidewalk with their earbuds in, as if it were the only way to achieve health.

The Crossfit and “paleo-fitness” camp says it has the best fitness with high-intensity interval training, also known as HIIT, or natural movement.

The argument is that chronic cardio in the case of jogging, cardio machines and marathons create significant and unnatural stressors on the body, especially the joints and the heart.

Mark Sisson of Mark’s Daily Apple has written extensively about his history with marathons, chronic cardio and the negative side effects.

Mark recalls the time he knew something was wrong with his form of training:

“The first signal I had that something was wrong was when I developed debilitating osteoarthritis in my ankles...at age 28. This was soon coupled with chronic hip tendonitis and nagging recurrent upper respiratory tract infections. In retrospect, it is now clear that my carbohydrate-fueled high-intensity aerobic lifestyle was promoting a dangerous level of continuous systematic inflammation, was severely suppressing other parts of my immune system and the increased oxidative damage was generally tearing apart my precious muscle and joint tissue.”

Mark is a science nerd like myself and states the following conclusion:

**Neither chronic cardio nor too much intense, interval exercise is good for you.**

However, high-intensity training shows great potential for improving the antioxidant status in humans, thereby reducing the impact of physical stress.

A [study](#) found that HIIT led to an increase in glutathione, “the mother of all antioxidants”, which is arguably the most important molecule you need to stay healthy and prevent disease.

**The most exciting fact about this research is that these beneficial effects of HIIT were noted after only nine training sessions totaling 22 minutes!**

To give more support towards a short duration, moderate to high-intensity training session, another [study](#) found that carotid arterial stiffness was reduced. Or in laymen's terms, the health of the main arteries that carry blood to the head and neck were improved.

## RECOVERY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT

You can exercise, exert and exhaust yourself as much as you please, but if you aren't resting and recovering properly, you're likely causing more harm than good.

**Specifically regarding high-intensity interval exercise, a study found that it can suppress the conversion of thyroid hormones T4 to T3.**

The fact that completely draining and trashing yourself has become popular worries me. I'm a big supporter of enthusiasm, inspiration and determination, but set some boundaries before you kill yourself!

**Be a trendsetter. When your friends post pictures on social media about how they are “crushing it, dominating it and killing it” in the gym, send a picture back of you snuggled in a hammock with grass-fed beef jerky and a puppy.**

Part of why your thyroid function slows with chronic overexertion is to turn down the engine speed. If you don't apply common sense to your workload, your engine speed controller will.

More commonly, the majority of people don't exercise enough, but I needed to address the steadily increasing population that is the over-achievers and box-addicts.

If you are dealing with a high stress load in a multitude of ways you're now aware of, pay close attention to your exercise frequency.

**We'll talk more about hacking your fitness recovery, but for now, take an epsom salt bath at least once a week to help detoxify and recover.**

## EXERCISE ADDICTION

Exercise addiction sounds like a good thing to those that can't seem to get out of the computer chair. But, the effects can be just as detrimental to the stress response over the long term.

A [study](#) notes exercise addiction is found in those that have personality types of excitement-seeking and achievement striving whereas those who are straightforward and compliant in their lifestyle seemed to have no exercise addiction issues.

Exercise is beneficial for boosting the levels of endorphins and other natural painkillers, which is why it becomes so addicting for some. Also, the boost of cortisol that results from the action can provide a short-term energy boost.

**Similar to overtraining, exercise addiction can lead to excess hormone levels in the blood which then deplete the body of vital nutrients including B vitamins, magnesium, zinc and trace minerals.**

Without proper rest and a nutrient dense diet, people eventually crash into a wall, usually after a period of plateaus.

For hardcore athletes and competitors, the distinction between under-working and overtraining must be made, as the effects on the body are similar.

A stagnation in weight loss, muscle, or strength gain does not automatically mean you need to lift more and lift heavier, it just means something isn't dialed in.

Reevaluate sleep, recovery and pre- and post-workout nutrition, and then look at the actual workout. Often times, sleep deprivation and a basic lack of calories are the culprits, not under-training.

Next time your coach tells you to perform high intensity training until you vomit, because “that’s what it takes to get results”, find a new coach and take a look at the other aspects of your health routine that may be out of place.

## NEUROTRANSMITTERS ARE TOAST

Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals that communicate information throughout the brain and body. Your brain uses neurotransmitters to tell your heart to beat, your lungs to breathe and your stomach to digest.

**Neurotransmitters are more often known for their impact on mood, sleep, concentration, weight and enjoyment of life.**

A poor diet, stress, toxins, poor sleep, alcohol and caffeine, drugs (prescription and recreational), negative emotions and more all have an impact on neurotransmitter function which have caused widespread deficiencies on a global scale.

An estimated 86% of Americans have suboptimal neurotransmitter levels. Due to our fast food lifestyle and lack of nature and stress management, this number is likely higher.

When stress adds up, a depletion of your brain chemicals takes place, causing fatigue, depression and illness.

**The two types of neurotransmitters are supposed to be in balance.**

**Excitatory neurotransmitters are what stimulate the brain and allow us to focus. Inhibitory neurotransmitters are what balance the mood and are easily depleted when the excitatory neurotransmitters are overactive.**

As of late, people are fascinated with the idea of boosting or altering these brain chemicals to achieve more focus, energy and superpowers. It’s not that simple.

Neurotransmitter systems do not operate in isolation. Therefore, it’s important to pay attention to the relationship between them.

## SEROTONIN

Serotonin is an inhibitory neurotransmitter that is necessary for a stable mood and to balance out excessive excitatory neurotransmitter firing in the brain.

An estimated 80% or more of your serotonin levels are produced in the gut. [Here's](#) an interesting clip from Scientific American talking about what low serotonin did in a test on fairness.

Those suffering from digestive distress, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Chron's disease and other gut related issues are usually also depressed. When the gut isn't functioning right, neither are the happy chemicals.

**A diet that contains allergenic or damaging food components such as gluten, pasteurized dairy, some grains and refined foods negatively impacts serotonin production.**

Using stimulants such as caffeine and commonly prescribed medications, like the amphetamines Adderall or Vyvanse, has the potential to down-regulate neurotransmitter function.

A [study](#) notes the failure of drugs such as Adderall in the treatment of ADHD and anxiety, although their quarterly sales are a quarter of a billion dollars.

Even more common than Adderall are the antidepressants Abilify and Cymbalta that are commonly used for stress-related sickness.

Abilify is marketed as an “add-on” antidepressant that is generally taken in combination with another one.

These two drugs alone account for over \$2 BILLION dollars in sales each quarter, a sum of \$10 BILLION dollars per year. These drugs have such poor success that Abilify’s marketing campaign is the following statement:

**“A large study showed that 2 out of 3 people taking an antidepressant still experienced unresolved symptoms of depression”.**

This is a red flag.

Our moods are linked to our guts and in an age of rancid fats, hydrogenated oils, genetically-modified crops and pizza delivery services at every corner, our stress and depression epidemics aren’t surprising.

## GABA

You may have heard of GABA as a supplement before knowing it is actually one of the most important neurotransmitters in the brain.

GABA is the chief inhibitory neurotransmitter in the nervous system that balances out excitatory neurotransmitters.

When we are jacked up on caffeine, stimulants, sugar, stress and engaging in a fast pace of life, we severely deplete GABA.

The catabolism of muscle tissue that we discussed with high cortisol may also be attributed to imbalanced GABA levels as it is directly responsible for the regulation of muscle tone.

Anxiety and its related issues have increased in the general population and will continue to do so. That is until we cultivate a lifestyle that nourishes optimal GABA balance.

Think of a semi-truck barreling down the highway at full speed. A concrete wall lies ahead but the semi-truck should have time to stop before crashing and burning. But, the semi-truck was outfitted with bicycle brakes and is traveling at 100 miles per hour.

The driver pumps on the brakes and realizes the situation. The driver then slams on the brakes as hard as possible, with no reduction in speed. The semi-truck collides with the concrete wall and is completely destroyed.

The modern human is so driven and compelled to “crush it” and “dominate life” that we literally can’t stop to smell the roses. Everyone needs a good sniff.

## DOPAMINE

Dopamine is a special hormone and neurotransmitter that plays roles in both the mind and body. It’s unique due to its inhibitory and excitatory actions.

In the brain, dopamine gives us the willpower, motivation and oomph to tackle life's challenges. In the body, it plays a role in the immune system, kidneys and pancreas.

Dopamine helps memory and alertness and is tightly linked to our reward system. Food, sex, music, drugs and anything that may give us pleasure goes back to dopamine.

An imbalance in dopamine manifests as forgetting where our keys are and having trouble mustering up the energy and alertness to pursue life.

**If we return to instinctual actions beyond eating, sleeping and sex, we can enhance the dopamine response.**

When people seek relief using sugar, alcohol, sex and drugs, these pathways become the only way to cope. It's a hijack of sorts that prevents the individual from seeing the other alternatives to managing stress.

Once an exercise routine or yoga practice, for example, becomes a habitual and enjoyable way to reduce stress, new pathways are formed, allowing a stronger sense of willpower to choose the "good way" or the "bad way" to deal with stress.

## NOREPINEPHRINE AND EPINEPHRINE

Interchangeably called noradrenaline and adrenaline, these two excitatory neurotransmitters are responsible for stimulatory processes and the stress response and are made in the adrenal glands.

Norepinephrine (NE) is chemically similar to dopamine and is responsible for the concentration part of the mind, whereas dopamine is more about general alertness.

Norepinephrine is actually synthesized from dopamine and plays a key role in the fight or flight system.

It's natural for stress to create an increase in this neurotransmitter to help us become focused and alert to solve a situation, complete a hunt or other pressing task.

**Fasting also increases levels of NE which can be the final straw for an already stressed person.**

To produce adequate NE, the amino acid L-tyrosine, which is found in meat, nuts, dairy products and eggs should be consumed.

You can't produce dopamine without tyrosine and you can't produce norepinephrine or epinephrine without dopamine.

With this cascade disrupted, you end up exhausted, brain fogged incapable or too tired to ask for help. It's a scary spiral that is completely preventable.

Epinephrine, or adrenaline, is released during exercise which allows you to lift heavy weights and perform at a higher ability.

**Evan's Experience:** A lack of quality meats and subsequent leaky gut leads many vegans to my health practice. They almost always show signs of sympathetic dominance, burnout, overwhelm, brain fog, anxiety and depression.

Epinephrine also helps the stress response and helps increase blood sugar levels when you are low or need a boost of energy to deal with a fight or flight situation.

In excess, epinephrine results in the emotion of fear. A [study](#) took 26 male students and injected them with either epinephrine or a saline placebo and were shown six film clips that were known to induce fear, anger or amusement.

The students injected with epinephrine showed greater fear and overall emotional intensity than the control subjects.

**People with elevated levels of adrenaline and chronic stress can quiver and panic when exposed to loud movies or intense situations.**

Sensitive emotions and crying while watching a TV commercial, for example, can be another indicator that your system is on overdrive.

## ALCOHOL AND NEUROTRANSMITTERS

Alcohol is one of the oldest and most abused of all psychoactive drugs. It's touted as one of society's greatest stress-relievers and social lubricants.

**Alcohol affects many neurotransmitters in some fashion, but it has significant effects on serotonin and GABA. This is partly why it's so hard for people to stop with just one drink.**

At first, alcohol boosts blood sugar and serotonin levels, causing feelings of happiness, general enjoyment and pleasure. It also boosts GABA levels, resulting in an overall feeling of calm and a smoothness to life.

The perception of music, arts and any auditory or visual stimulus is enhanced when GABA is boosted, making colors seem brighter and more vivid. Social interaction becomes more natural, food tastes better and the sense of touch is enhanced. Alcohol sounds awesome on the outside, and can be! As long as its consumption is minimized and respected.

Serotonin plays a key role in decision making and impulse control which is the reason why people engage in risky behavior and do stupid things.

The personality of the person before they consume alcohol plays a part in their actions, but many regrettable actions are the result of combining a risky personality with serotonin modulation.

As alcohol gets processed by the liver, the serotonin and blood sugar levels drop, causing irritability and cravings for more alcohol (sugar) and sweets in an attempt to restore balance.

After a habit or full blown addiction to alcohol develops, GABA levels are depleted.

Without adequate GABA levels, feelings of anxiety, nervousness, panic and thoughts of doom and gloom may result.

If you're a nervous wreck without that glass of wine and dark chocolate at night, it's time to restore balance.

**When learning to successfully manage stress, alcohol should be strictly avoided or limited to 1 shot or glass of wine or non-gluten containing beer or cider per week.**

## YOU AREN'T BROKEN BY DEFAULT

Humans aren't broken by default. We've just lost the owner's manual.

Regardless of your starting point, there are universal laws that dictate the stress response and can allow you to shift yourself from a stressed-out emotional train wreck to a stable, calm and enthusiastic participant of life.

## DEFINE YOUR STARTING POINT

Now is a good time to identify your starting point. Examine your life from the outside and come to a consensus. Evaluate the amounts of inputs and stressors in your life and how they are affecting you.

Take a look at what you can remove and do it.

Whether it's where you live, who you associate yourself with, the types of food you eat and how much caffeine and alcohol you consume, there is likely something that sticks out to you as a root cause of your stress.

Although the stress picture sounds complicated and can become multifactorial as life progresses in complexity and confusion, it doesn't have to be that way.

Life for most of human existence was characterized by nature immersion, whole foods, a social support group and a relatively relaxed and uneventful workload.

Times of stress happened and were dealt with when necessary. Injuries, infections, hunts, fights, illnesses and death are inevitable, but

we were equipped to deal and cope with these events up until modern times.

With the invention of electricity, the segregation of the tribe and family unit and the emergence of a 24/7 technological and global economy, we have lost our sense of safety and home.

You don't have to feed a system that sucks your life blood. It's not anarchic to suggest that the current system isn't working and that a better solution exists.

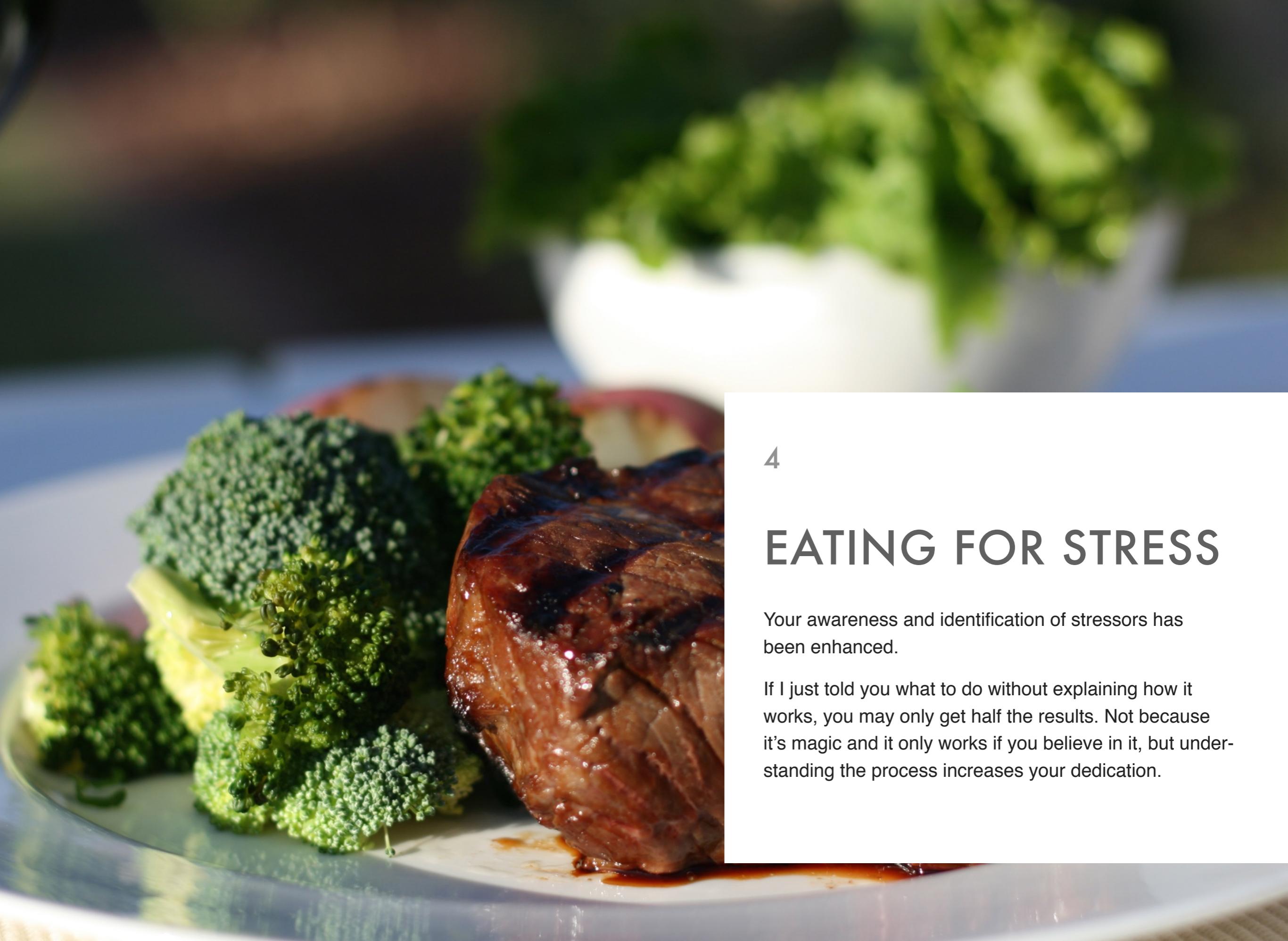
Developing an off-grid encampment may be a short-term solution, but is it realistic for you?

If you live congruently with yourself, those around you and your environment, you won't need an escape. Although an off-grid tropical resort sounds pretty awesome. Call me!

If society begins to cultivate a calm and grounded existence, nightclubs and shopping malls will surely see a decrease in traffic.

If we continue to ignore the laws of nature in pursuit of materialism, glitz and glamour in replacement of love, family and purpose, the effects will spread like a virus. They already have!

I have hope in the sheer fact that you've embarked on a journey to become a more resilient and adequately equipped individual. You're ready to stand up to the stressors that come your way. Let's do it.



4

## EATING FOR STRESS

Your awareness and identification of stressors has been enhanced.

If I just told you what to do without explaining how it works, you may only get half the results. Not because it's magic and it only works if you believe in it, but understanding the process increases your dedication.

Nutrition is a foundation of life essential for both a healthy stress response and longevity.

If you're lacking in raw materials or nutrients necessary to produce neurotransmitters and hormones, you're gonna feel it.

Remember the human owner's manual we talked about? The one that's missing?

Well inside of that owner's manual was a chapter on how humans are supposed to eat. It's obvious that we've lost it. Every other creature on the planet instinctually knows what to eat, except for us.

It's not your fault.

**The same raw materials, nutrients and cofactors necessary for optimal sleep are the same ones required to nourish and balance the nervous system.**

Your body needs grass-fed and pastured meats to provide a long-burning fuel for the brain and body. The quality is far more important than the quantity.

You might feel like eating a 12 ounce grass-fed ribeye, but satiation can occur with only a palm-sized portion of these quality meats.

Save yourself from overconsumption and overspending when it comes to quality meats. They are still more expensive than the conventional, hormone-laden meat served in grocery stores, but there's no comparison. If someone tells you grass-fed beef isn't important, visit a factory farm where cows are fed corn. Actually don't do that, you might get sick. Conventional feeding operations are full of sick and toxic animals. It's a living wasteland, sadly.

## 10 GUIDELINES TO EATING FOR STRESS

- 1. Reduce isolated sugars.** This includes table sugar, corn syrup, artificial sweeteners, candy, sweets, cereal, pastas, breads, refined foods, dressings, sauces with sugar and natural sweeteners such as erythritol, stevia, coconut sugar, and especially agave nectar. We want to reduce any blood sugar fluctuations that negatively impact the nervous system and stress response. Use 1TSP of raw honey at bedtime if sleep is an issue.
- 2. Eat 3-9 cups of organic vegetables per day.** Yes, 9 cups. Dr. Terry Wahls reversed Multiple Sclerosis with 9 cups of vegetables per day among other protocols. We need to support glutathione production to encourage detoxification and eat sulfur-rich foods to enhance GABA production. This includes but is not limited to: broccoli, onions, garlic, leeks, shallots and avocado. Good leafy greens include kale, spinach, chard, arugula and mustard greens.
- 3. Eat a 1-2 handfuls of organic nuts and berries per day.** This includes but is not limited to: blueberries, cranberries, tart cherries, raspberries, mulberries, black currants, blackberries, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, chia seed, flax seed (if desired). We need to add healthy fats, zinc, selenium and antioxidants found in berries to support oxidative stress protection.
- 4. Eat 2-3 palm-sized pieces of organic quality meat or fish per day.** This includes but not limited to: grass-fed beef, bison, chicken (skin on or dark meat), turkey, lamb, duck, venison or other game meats. We need to provide quality, long-burning fuel for the brain and body to feed on. These provide omega-3 fats,

zinc, conjugated linoleic acid (burns fat), vitamin B12 (provides energy) and other crucial micronutrients.

**5. Liberally add herbs and detoxifying ingredients.** Cilantro has been found to bind to mercury and should be added to as many of your meals as possible. Lemons and limes should be juiced onto your salads or in a cup of spring water before your meals to improve your digestion via increased hydrochloric acid production, the secret to optimal digestion. Turmeric and black pepper together make up the most detoxifying combination available. Organic, grass-fed whey protein should also be added a few times per week to support detoxification and healing.

**6. Consume pre and probiotics weekly.** Whether you want to drink kombucha tea or sodas, organic miso soup, organic pickles or sauerkraut, organic kefir or yogurt, consume one or more of these each week to support healthy gut flora which is necessary for detoxification.

**7. If desired, consume caffeine only before noon.** Cortisol is highest in the morning and naturally falls throughout the day. The last thing we want is to cause a spike when the nervous system is calming down. Stick to organic green or matcha tea if possible. Only 1 cup of organic, shade-grown coffee if you must. Caffeine can have a very long half-life depending on the individual and can impair sleep.

**8. Eat 2-4 times per day and don't intentionally fast.** Taking the workload off the adrenals to let them heal is essential to recovery. Be sure to eat a protein-rich breakfast like leftover beef and vegetables. You don't want to skip meals or intermittent fast purposely. It's only healthy to do when your stress response is healed.

**9. Eat slowly, calmly and while sitting only.** Sampling your meal over the stove is fine, but please avoid eating while driving, reading, walking, standing, reading email, scrolling on social media or otherwise distracting yourself. Your body needs to know that it's feeding time so it can adequately digest and assimilate nutrients.

**10. Try removing nightshades.** Foods and spices in the nightshade family can cause reactions. Try excluding eggs, potatoes (sweet potatoes are OK), tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers such as bell pepper, habanero, jalapeño, serrano, chili pepper, cayenne and pepper-spice blends and paprika, a commonly added spice to blends.

**Evan's Experience:** Nightshades don't affect everyone, but when stress is high, I can't tolerate them! Even taking the adaptogenic herb for stress, ashwaganda, can sometimes upset my stomach. Being specific is crucial for finding that one final food or ingredient that is causing your system to flare up.

If you've come from a low-fat, high carbohydrate diet in your past, following these guidelines will provide your body with a long-lasting energy.

**This combination of foods naturally balances your blood sugar, the foundation of a calm nervous system.**

The goal here is to increase your fat intake by consuming grass-fed meats, healthy fats from avocado and coconut and with nuts and seeds. By increasing your fat intake and maintaining a moderate protein intake, you'll be supporting your energy levels and restoration process.

By consuming these foods rich in amino acids, probiotics, anti-inflammatory and detoxifying compounds, you're reversing heavy metal toxicity, antibiotic use, food toxins and more.

By eating more frequently and while in a calm or sitting state, you're encouraging optimal digestive enzyme production.

With the lemon and lime water before your meals, you're supporting hydrochloric acid sufficiency, the key component necessary to break-down food without heartburn, gas, digestive distress, GERD and more.

By experimenting with removing nightshades, you're increasing your awareness about how individual ingredients affect your cognition and stress response. Depending on your unique makeup, you may notice extreme or only minor changes by removing them.

## STAY CONSISTENT AND ADAMANT

There will be times on a weekly or even daily basis where the opportunity arises for you to consume foods outside of these guidelines. While these guidelines are more opportunistic than restrictive, some can feel like they need a "cheat meal".

My friend and gastroenterologist, Dr. Rodney Ford says it best:

**"You control your health with your fork. Every bite you take either helps or hurts your health. The idea of a neutral food doesn't exist. There are none".**

Conventional health programs use an assortment of packaged, powdered and magic solutions to help you "cheat" and "enjoy yourself".

The reason these companies rely on these cop-outs is because their program are unsustainable. They are a joke.

### Accept the facts:

- You shouldn't and don't have to count anything
- Calories aren't the devil and don't matter unless you're not eating enough of them and are becoming frail
- If you eat quality proteins and fats, you won't need snacks
- Real food is cheaper and healthier than any magic pill or powder
- The need for cheat meals won't exist if you're eating according to these guidelines which supply micronutrients, minerals and vitamins
- Binging on wheat products, sweets and otherwise detrimental foods doesn't just impact your health for that day, it can trigger a cascade of effects lasting weeks
- Gut health takes time and requires strict avoidance of irritating foods
- The attitude you put towards the foods and ingredients you consume enhances or detracts from their effects. Savor these foods, they are truly miraculous
- People that make fun of you for being a "health nut" or otherwise are just jealous of your passion for becoming a healthier and happier person
- Taking "just one bite" makes no difference. It takes only minute amounts of gluten to cause certain individuals to have a reaction

**Evan's Experience:** The people closest to you, including friends and coworkers are almost always the ones that make fun or poke at attempts to improve your diet. Continue what you're doing and allow your smile and glow speak the message you'd really like to say.

## THE DEEPER SIDE OF DIET

You may recognize some or even all of the foods mentioned. But, do any of us truly understand the incredible and overall benefits of these ingredients? Absolutely not! We've barely scratched the surface.

For example, we know that vitamin C is good for us and can support our immune system and adrenal glands in the stress recovery process, something we'll talk more about later. But, vitamin C isn't just ascorbic acid! Vitamin C is a unique combination of many forms and bioflavonoids and additional components that make up the "real vitamin C".

Industry makes their profit by isolating and synthetically manufacturing a particular form of a nutrient. Take almost any vitamin or compound found naturally in foods and you'll find a pill version you can take.

### **Take the first definition of a supplement to heart:**

"Something that completes or enhances something else when added to it".

Supplements play a big role in my health practice as well as my personal life, but they are additions to the foundation of a whole-foods diet.

**If a particular time of stress or poor quality food in the case of traveling for work or going on vacation is coming up, that's a great time to add in additional nutritional, digestive and nervous system support.**

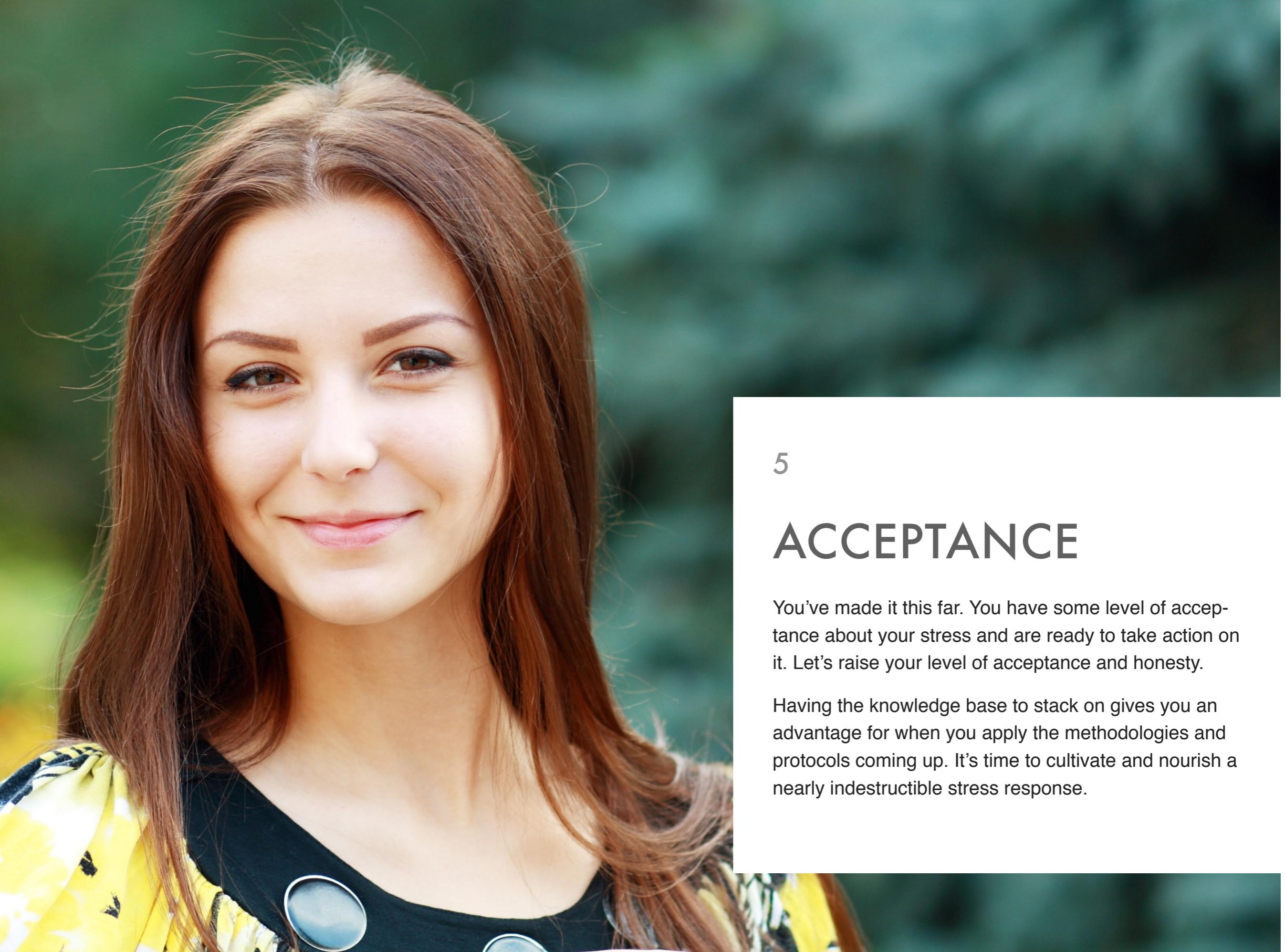
Science has done a great job in identifying, isolating and recreating natural substances to help us. What science can't do yet is develop a replica of the exact nutritional, mineral, vitamin and energetic content of any foods.

If you have the option to take a "greens tablet" or eat a handful of spinach, go for the spinach. You probably knew that, but in an age of quick-fixes and shortcuts, it's worth repeating.

Our ancestors had far superior instinctual and cultural knowledge about animals and plants and their role in health maintenance and recovery. They utilized and applied many methodologies in natural medicine that naturopaths are years away from figuring out.

Ancient knowledge was lost relatively recently when Julius Caesar burned the World's Greatest Library of Alexandria in the year 48 BC.

Diet is a foundation that has the ability to significantly improve your stress response. With a more routine eating schedule that's full of quality nutrients and long-burning fuels, you'll be on the path to greater health and less stress.



5

## ACCEPTANCE

You've made it this far. You have some level of acceptance about your stress and are ready to take action on it. Let's raise your level of acceptance and honesty.

Having the knowledge base to stack on gives you an advantage for when you apply the methodologies and protocols coming up. It's time to cultivate and nourish a nearly indestructible stress response.

## AN HONEST STARTING POINT

This is a time to let your heart open up to change. We all need help at some point in our lives. We as humans are programmed to reach out to others when we need help; this is what birthed civilization.

If you were an expert at growing vegetables but didn't have the time or interest in raising cattle, that's where a friend comes into play. If you're an expert at crunching numbers and need someone else to teach you how to reduce your stress, that's fine too. You can't do it all. Let that idea go.

Allowing a new perspective to happen can make the process of applying new techniques a smoother experience. If you were shoved in this direction and ended up here via force, take a deep breath. You're in the right place.

**Evan's Experience:** As a Nutritional Therapist, the issue of a client accepting responsibility for their health is the first hurdle that makes or breaks long-term success. Repeat the words: "Even though I may be stressed, I deeply love and accept myself", even if you don't believe it yet.

## LET THE GOOD FACTS SINK IN

Neuropsychologist Dr. Rick Hanson discussed why people tend to focus on the negative side of life.

He uses what's called "fact-immersion technique", which has been highly successful in my personal and professional life with clients.

This method is a way of breaking negative thought patterns and shifting one's perception about their current situation.

You can be surrounded by great facts each day, but with a misguided focus of energy, you can create roadblocks, stress and depression.

It's human nature to focus on seeking constant improvement.

If we weren't this way, civilizations may never have flourished. If our ancestors decided that the cave, hut or village was good enough, maybe that's all we would have been left with.

Instead of trapping yourself with the weight of your problems, free yourself with an abundance of facts about your blessings.

Here are some good facts to get you started:

- I woke up this morning to a blue sky and sunshine. This is going to be a good day!
- My car started this morning! I'll be able to drive to work and provide for myself and family.
- I have a delicious lunch today of bison, vegetables and spring water. I cannot wait to eat this!
- I have a loving family and/or spouse. I'd be lost without them.
- I have my vision, my hearing and the sense of touch. These are the gifts and tools that allow me to enjoy my existence.
- I just took a really nice bath. I feel great. Relaxed. Content.

Use these or brainstorm a few. Your facts can be simple or complex. They can be anything that causes you to grin, laugh or smile.

Take a fact you've discovered and focus all of your attention into it. Stay present on this fact and allow your emotions to take over.

Allow this fact to grant you power, strength and contentment.

**The fact-immersion technique is similar to positive thinking, but it's more powerful. It's used to increase your meaning of life.**

A group of 232 students and adults were [studied](#) and found that those with high levels of positive thinking had high meaning of life. Conversely, those with high levels of negative thinking had low meaning of life.

Positive thinking is a related tool that can be helpful. But, I find that it's difficult for many to conceptualize. They brush this technique off and want the quick fixes, magic pills and powders.

The preference for consumable medicine is the result of pharmaceutical company conditioning.

Psychiatrists and doctors alike throw a pill at the problem long before focusing on diet and lifestyle. They aren't evil people by nature, they just follow the standard accepted method of treatment set by their industry.

Those that prefer a holistic approach equally prefer supplements, herbs and quick fixes. It's just easier that way. But, until the diet, mindset and lifestyle are focused on, results will be limited.

## FIRST WORLD PROBLEMS

If you frequent social media, you've likely seen a meme, a graphic with text discussing "first world problems".

The term first world problem was recently added to the Oxford Dictionary in 2012.

It's defined as "a relatively trivial or minor problem or frustration, implying a contrast with serious problems such as those that may be experienced in the developing world".

Examples include:

- I had to watch a 3D movie because the regular movie was sold out
- I am hungry, but for nothing that's in my fridge or pantry
- I had to get off the couch to get my laptop charger since it was about to die

There are some hilarious graphics you'll find shared on social media. This is a silly but real issue when recovering from stress.

Even though these problems can be laughed at, they trigger the same stress response that a significant stressor can cause. Your body doesn't know the difference from waiting in line to having to deal with poverty.

The nervous system only does what it's told to do by the brain. If your perception of a situation is serious and stressful, the body will respond accordingly by elevating and secreting stress hormones.

If you instead realize that a problem or situation is relatively harmless, you can forego the emotional response attached to it.

Next time your burger is served with the tomato when you clearly stated the opposite, take a breath and be cool about it. It's a simple example that applies to the greater picture.

# CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES

There are likely daily opportunities for you to get upset about something. Whether you dropped your coffee or you're stuck in cold weather for the season, a little acceptance goes a long way.

If there's something than can be done about the situation, do it. If you have minimal power over the situation, it may be best to let it go.

If you have a strong dislike for the winter and have the opportunity to go somewhere warm during that time, go for it! If you don't have this luxury and you're serious about getting out of the cold weather, look for job opportunities closer to the equator.

It's amazing what happens when you realize that you're in charge of your life. You have the opportunity each day to face the world with a humble but vigorous attitude, or to bask in melancholy.

If you've lived with a short-fuse for most of your life, it may take longer than someone else to change. But, we're all capable.

The adage of "think before you speak" fits perfect into this message. You can save yourself from drama and altercations by allowing the other person to reveal their weaknesses.

You're not a weak person for starving an emotional fire. You don't have to feed into someone else's situation. You don't even have to feed into your own mind.

Even if you're relatively unsocial and don't come across many people, it's likely that your mind plays battles back and forth all day. You can acknowledge the thoughts and self-abuse that pops up, but you have the option to believe it or not.

I'm not close to perfect and have my own battles of mental chatter, but I've discovered that they're merely a ploy to destroy your self-confidence and instill fear.

**Remember that fear paralyzes action which then stops the potential for success.**

Next time you're faced with a battle, (you may even have one in mind right now), allow yourself some distance and perspective.

## ONE STEP AT A TIME

As we head into the true actionable steps, understand that you can't conquer stress and rebirth yourself overnight.

If focusing on the mental stress feels like the right place for you to start, that's fine.

There are no right or wrong steps to approach the issue of stress if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Diet must be in your top 3 starting points, but it doesn't have to be number 1. Diet has a powerful effect overall, which is why the 10 guidelines for eating for stress were outlined first.

Other therapies, strategies and specific actions can be added together or in isolation from diet as you move forward.

You are a unique individual with a unique history and situation, so your history will determine your first point to target.

Take one step each day, even if that only means adjusting your posture, lifting your chin up with confidence to relax and breathe.



## 6

## STRESS BUSTING 101

It's time for action. You have the identification skills, the understanding of the effects of stress and the mindset to allow yourself to heal.

This section is to uncover actions, tools, therapies and other solutions that don't involve supplements. That will be covered in specific detail in chapter 7, stress busting 201.

# USE THE EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE

While the idea of mental and emotional stress is fresh on the mind, we will delve into the Emotional Freedom Technique, or EFT.

Proposed by Gary Craig in 1983, Emotional Freedom Technique is a form of counseling intervention that draws from various therapies including acupuncture, energy medicine, neuro-linguistic programming and Thought Field Therapy.

EFT is very easy to learn and will help you:

- Reduce food cravings
- Reduce or eliminate pain
- Implement positive goals
- Remove negative emotions and much more

A [study](#) conducted at the Headache Clinic at a hospital in Athens took 35 patients with frequent tension-type headaches and instructed 19 of them to use the EFT method twice a day for two months.

**EFT showed promising results for not only the frequency and severity of headaches but also other lifestyle parameters.**

Another [study](#) examined 83 subjects and put them into groups including an EFT group, a psychotherapy group receiving supportive interviews and a no treatment group.

**The EFT group showed:**

- 58% decrease in anxiety
- 49% decrease in depression
- 24% decrease in cortisol levels

This is compared to the psychotherapy group that saw a 14.25% decrease in cortisol. The other biomarkers were not mentioned in the study for the psychotherapy group.

If these numbers were the result of a pill, it would be the best selling product on the market! But, it's a free method of tapping various points and adding affirmations to solidify your intentions!

## **Basic information for using EFT:**

1. You'll be using all of your fingertips to tap various points
2. You should tap with moderate force 5-7 times for each point, but not enough to hurt yourself
3. You'll want to remove your glasses before performing EFT if applicable
4. You'll want to repeat this action 10 times per day for the greatest effect. Takes only 20 seconds for each round.
5. You'll increase the effectiveness by saying a verbal affirmation at the end of your tapping routine

## **Tapping order for EFT:**

1. Top of the head
2. Inside of your eyebrow
3. Outside of your eye

4. Under the eye
5. Under the nose
6. On the chin halfway between bottom lip and point of chin
7. Collar bone
8. Under the arm on your side below the armpit
9. Tap inside of wrists together

To visualize this, view my EFT demonstration video [here](#).

## USE TAPPING AND AFFIRMATIONS

Although it's not required, tapping on the points while stating a positive affirmation gives the best results.

**Traditional EFT phrases go like this:**

"Even though I have this (insert condition, emotion, fear, stressor), I deeply and completely accept myself".

or

"Even though I have this (insert condition, emotion, fear, stressor), I deeply and completely love myself".

You don't have to believe the affirmation you're saying, you just need to say it. It's best to put your heart and emotion into these statements, but you can simply state them with no emotion as well.

Science supports the connection between gratitude and stress. In this [study](#), health-care practitioners created gratitude entries twice per week for 4 weeks. They exhibited far less chronic stress than

those who did not complete journal entries. Whether you choose to think, say or write what you're grateful for, it's a good practice to integrate with the emotional freedom technique.

## EFT CAUTION AND ADVICE

If you've done emotional work before, you may be familiar with the cognitive shifts that can occur. Some people may tear up as emotions are released.

This happens from the energy shift that happens when going through a tapping routine. It can be tears of sadness or joy.

Only a small percentage of people I've worked with have teared up, but other common effects are the feeling of a weight lifting off one's shoulders and a release of guilt on a physical or emotional level.

Muscle tension may release and the stiffness in your neck and upper back may dissipate. This isn't anything to be alarmed about, but just to be aware of.

After your first tapping session, pause and notice any difference in your emotions. If you feel like you've "dislodged" an emotion and need to run through a second round of tapping, do it.

**Evan's Experience:** I've used this technique after experiencing feelings of overwhelm at a large stadium concert full of thousands and thousands of people. I simply repeated the affirmation, "although I'm feeling overwhelmed, I deeply love and accept myself" while literally walking through the crowd. No one knew a thing and I was able to reduce my anxiety level.

**Often times, two or three sessions in a row can completely clear a particular emotion.**

EFT can be used nearly anywhere and anytime. This is what makes this technique so valuable.

**I also recommend using EFT:**

- Before going on stage for a speaking event or other act
- Before a meeting with your staff
- Before an interview
- While on public transit, especially before a flight

Be creative with this technique and keep it in your stress toolbox. The benefit that my wife and I have personally received from EFT is priceless.

Learning to take control of your emotions is crucial for business owners, entrepreneurs, parents and anyone that has to deal with life.

That means everyone.

You can still use your counselor or other practitioner to help you work through your stressors or other points of concern.

**I'm confident this technique will give you the upper hand and can potentially lift the need for other therapists. You've now become your own emotion-management team.**

If you do need that extra bit of help, I offer 15 minute complimentary consultations for you to get your questions answered [here](#).

## PRACTICE DAILY MEDITATION

You knew meditation was coming up. This form of stress-relief is not only good for those that have too much on their mind, but for those that are striving to achieve better things. That means all of you.

Meditation is essentially the act of bringing your awareness to the present moment.

The state of meditation can be attained in nearly a thousand ways.

**To enter a meditative state with nearly no effort:**

- **Listen to the sound of water flowing.** If you have a community pool near you or a natural source of flowing water, this can stimulate a calm nervous system. The sound and sight of a waterfall can almost immediately bring anxiety levels down.
- **Sunbathe.** Women are often in a meditative state when laying out at the pool or the beach. The sense of daydreaming and the loss of time perception are two common experiences that occur while basking in the sun. You can synthesize over 10,000 IU's of vitamin D during a 15-20 minute session in the sun. Download the app "D Minder" to input your zip code and determine what time of the day your vitamin D window is open.
- **Listen to music.** Certain "New Age" music and soundtracks that implement birds, water, bells, harps and other instruments can have a profound impact on the nervous system. Some clinicians have recognized the therapeutic benefit and have used music to help Alzheimer's patients.

- **Make art.** Whether you doodle, color, paint, sculpt or otherwise, the act of creating art can relax you and allow some separation from your stressors.
- **Breathe through your heart.** Heart Math Institute's Vice President, Howard Martin, discusses the importance of heart-focused breathing on [the podcast](#). Hold your hand over your heart and imagine you are inhaling and exhaling through your heart.
- **Close your eyes.** Inhale normally through your nose. Minimal effort creates an almost instinctual sigh of relief here.

## TRY A FLOATATION TANK

Although float tanks, also known as sensory deprivation tanks, have been around since the 1950's, Dr. John Lily's invention lacked popularity as a form of therapy until the early 2000's.

Also known as REST Therapy, [research](#) from over 30 years ago documents the reduction in cortisol levels attained from a session.

A float tank is essentially a giant bathtub filled with water and an average of 1000 pounds of epsom salt, otherwise known as magnesium sulfate. The temperature of the water is tuned to around 96 degrees, the temperature of your skin.

Due to the high salt content, you float on top of the water, giving a sense of weightlessness. It's a highly comforting and relaxing experience in itself and will make you giggle the first time you get in.

Most float tank spas use music and lights to relax you for the first 5 or 10 minutes of your session. Sessions are typically an hour long. The time will fly by.

Once your session is over, lights and music will usually fade back in, creating a beautiful display. Since you've been light, sound and gravity for an hour, your senses are noticeably enhanced. Your shower feels much more pleasurable than normal. You then dry off and head back into the world.

### The most notable benefits of a floatation tank are:

- **Decreased stress.** You won't need the science to prove it. When you get out of the tank, you'll experience a profound sense of relaxation, calm and general contentment. I might even say mild euphoria. Heading outside after a float always creates a smile.
- **Improved sleep.** Due to the transdermal absorption of magnesium, you'll have no trouble falling or staying asleep the night after a float session. This is a great way to restore depleted magnesium levels in those that are chronically stressed, have a diet with low amounts of leafy green vegetables and who drink coffee regularly.
- **Increased creativity.** Artists, musicians, entrepreneurs, scientists and anyone who simply likes to use their creativity will benefit from a float tank. Your problem solving abilities will be improved since you have nothing to focus on but your thoughts.
- **Decreased pain.** Many pregnant women use floatation therapy as a tool for relieving back pain, muscle tension and other stressors caused from carrying around the extra weight. Bodybuilders, athletes and exercise enthusiasts will also benefit from not only the magnesium absorption which speeds recovery and reduces soreness, but the stretching and elongation of the spine experienced as you sprawl out in the tank.

Use the website [floatationlocations.com](http://floatationlocations.com) to locate a float spa near you. If there isn't one near you, it would be an almost guaranteed successful business opportunity if you had the time and resources to open one.

## USE ESSENTIAL OILS

Essential oils are extracts of bark, flowers, fruit, leaves, seeds or roots of a tree or plant that are used in a variety of ways for their health benefits.

These oils are usually created by steam distillation, which results in a highly concentrated solution that requires only a drop to use.

**I recommend using essential oils via topical application and inhalation.**

The Ebers Papyrus is an ancient Egyptian medical text from 1550 BC that describes the use of various essential oils for different conditions.

When King Tut's tomb was unsealed in 1922, archeologists discovered nearly 50 alabaster jugs used to store essential oils. Tomb robbers left these containers nearly empty! After 3200 years, the oil residues were tested and found to still contain medicinal constituents.

A famous French chemist named Rene-Maurice Gattefosse was experimenting in his cosmetics laboratory when he severely burned his hand. He quickly plunged his hand into the nearest tub of liquid, which happened to be lavender essential oil. He recalled being amazed at how quickly the burn healed and how little scarring occurred.

He began experimenting on World War I soldiers in military hospitals using lavender, thyme, lemon and clove essential oils, which sped up the healing time of wounds, likely due to their antiseptic properties.

He published a book that's available, but I find Valerie Worwood's [Complete Book of Essential Oils & Aromatherapy](http://www.valerie-worwood.com) to be the best resource overall.

## OILS MUST BE THERAPEUTIC GRADE

Before trying out some of the following essential oils, you must seek out only certified therapeutic grade essential oils.

Also you will want to use a carrier oil, which is "carries" the scent and therapeutic value of the essential oil onto the skin. Some essential oils can be too potent for topical use in some people. Avocado oil, hemp seed oil, fractionated coconut oil, jojoba oil, olive oil and sesame oil are all good choices.

**A good ratio for topical use is 3 drops of essential oils to one teaspoon of carrier oil.**

**Most important essential oils:**

- **Frankincense.** Frankincense was mentioned in the Bible as a gift given to Jesus by the wise men. A wise choice indeed, as frankincense essential oil in this [study](#) shows its ability to kill pancreatic cancer cells.

Another [study](#) shows frankincense oil distinguishes between healthy and cancerous bladder cells, killing cancerous ones without causing DNA fragmentation, a common result of cell death.

A third [study](#) shows frankincense oil kills cancerous breast cancer cells and is recommended as a treatment for even advanced stages of breast cancer.

- **Peppermint.** I've used peppermint oil while writing this program to help maintain focus, energy and concentration by putting two drops on my hands and inhaling through the nose. A [study](#) compared peppermint and ylang-ylang essential oils and found that peppermint enhances memory while ylang-ylang impairs it. Peppermint oil increased alertness, while ylang-ylang decreased it but significantly increased calmness.
- **Eucalyptus.** You've likely smelled eucalyptus oil inside your gym sauna for improving respiratory function. More importantly, in a place where people are sweating and touching the same equipment, eucalyptus oil has been shown in this [study](#) to protect against multi-drug resistant bacterial pathogens.

Also known as "The White Plague", tuberculosis is an infectious and often fatal disease spread by airborne transmission from infected people. The United States didn't successfully manage tuberculosis until 1946 when the first double-blind, placebo streptomycin antibiotic trial was proven to effectively treat it.

In October 2014, PBS aired a special "[The Trouble With Antibiotics](#)" discussing the increasing number of deaths caused by antibiotic and multi-drug resistant bacteria and diseases. Some of the United States' best hospitals have debated closing down due to their insufficiency to handle this issue.

I mention this because a [study](#) on eucalyptus oil found 32 active, anti-tuberculosis compounds that showed over a 90% effectiveness rate for neutralizing airborne tuberculosis. A sigh of relief.

- **Citrus.** A [study](#) took 114 undergrad students and put them into four groups; a control group, a soft music listening group, a citrus inhaling group and a soft music AND aroma group. By measuring heart-rate variability, an tool for determining the state of the nervous system, listening to soft music and listening to soft music shifted the nervous system into a more relaxed, parasympathetic state.

**Remember when we talked about the destruction of your memory center, the hippocampus, that results from chronic stress?**

Well, hopefully you do! But, a [study](#) found citrus oil to act as an antioxidant in the brain, showing promise for protecting against neurodegenerative diseases.

## YOUR PORTABLE MEDICINE KIT

I had to go deep into the science and benefits of essential oils. They have given me extreme hope for the future of medicine and can be used for assisting and dare I say treating or potentially even curing certain ailments.

The ability for you to take action on stress relies on your "stress toolkit" that we've begun to build together. I recommend keeping a vial of peppermint, citrus or even a blend of oils in your purse or backpack.

### Quick and easy ways to use essential oils:

- **In traffic.** There's nothing more stressful than rush-hour traffic. Use a drop of peppermint or citrus oil on your hands and inhale through the nose. Find your favorite blend of oils and be sure to have it when you're driving. Truck drivers and those on the road for a living

should have peppermint oil nearby at all times to promote wakefulness and concentration.

- **While meditating.** Combine therapies and use soft music, meditation, the sound of running water and a drop of essential oils all together. Your stress levels can decrease exponentially, just like they were created.
- **In the bath.** Start with only 1 drop in a warm bathtub to prevent any skin irritation, but lavender essential oils and epsom salt make quite the healing solution to soak in.
- **On your abdomen.** Put a drop of peppermint oil on your abdomen and rub in a clockwise motion to soothe IBS, improve digestion and to put a damper on cramping and aches. Peppermint oil is also helpful for PMS symptoms.

## LAY ON AN ACUPRESSURE MAT

Acupressure mats are essentially a base layer of foam covered with fabric that has thousands of little plastic spikes on them. Don't be alarmed, these mats are one of my secret weapons for not only stress reduction, but sleep induction and pain elimination.

These mats are smaller than a yoga mat and can easily be transported with you on vacation or wherever you're headed. I take one in my suitcase when I travel to help me fall asleep faster.

When I injured my low back from working at UPS lifting 100 pound packages, an acupressure mat was a savior in relieving muscle tension and physical and emotional stress associated with the injury. It had far greater benefit than the prescribed anti-inflammatory medication.

Depression, anxiety and stress are highly prevalent in people with renal disease. A [study](#) used acupressure on patients with renal disease for 15 minutes, three times a week.

**The acupressure group showed significantly lower physiological stress, depression and anxiety than the control group.**

This tool can be added on to your meditation practice. The acupressure works best when your bare skin is touching the spikes. You can use a small sheet or thin t-shirt at first to get used to the sensation, but work your way up to putting your bare back, feet, stomach, etc on the mat. I've laid my head on a mat to reduce tension headaches.

After about 5 minutes on the mat, the sense of mild irritation and uncomfortableness will dissipate, leaving behind a profound sense of relaxation and stress relief. You'll probably fall asleep soon after.

## LAUGH YOUR ASS OFF

Laughter has been called the best medicine for a reason. Multiple studies have looked at the biochemical reactions caused by laughter. This should make you smile; all those cat videos on the internet aren't such a waste of time after all. You've been "dosing yourself" with medicine without knowing it.

A [study](#) took two groups and exposed one group to a 60 minute humor video (I wonder what it was), and found that cortisol and epinephrine levels were significantly decreased.

**Laughter couldn't possibly be an anti-cancer agent, could it?**

An 88-year old woman with advanced gastric cancer is our next research subject. Due to her age and desire not to undergo cancer

treatment, the Society for Healing Environment recommended the use of laughter therapy.

Their program wasn't fully explained, but it consisted of stages including making her feel safe, relaxing her and more.

One year and 7 months later, it was found that the "gastric adenocarcinoma" a cancerous stomach tumor, turned into a "gastric adenoma", a benign tumor and later into gastritis, the inflammation of the stomach.

### We could infer that laughter therapy plays a role in reversing cancer.

Although this recovery may be an isolated event, the powerful effects of laughter are unknown to the masses and is an essentially non-existent form of illness treatment

#### Ways to encourage laughter:

- **Watch funny videos.** You have a unique sense of humor; you know what you think is funny. Search the internet for those videos and lose yourself in the laughter.
- **Tell funny stories.** If you don't have any, I'll tell you one. My Grandfather was wearing those Sketcher's "shape-ups" shoes that had a ridiculously large piece of foam on the bottom of them that was supposed to improve your balance, burn more calories and strengthen your leg muscles. A miracle shoe.
- He just got done telling the clothing store worker how good his balance has been since he began wearing the shoes. Within less than a minute after, he loses his balance, stumbles backwards, reaches outwards like a bird looking for something to grab onto,

falls over a bench and into a clothing rack, burying himself in t shirts!

- His sense of humor allowed him to literally laugh his ass off at the situation. When my Grandmother found him, she died laughing and helped him up. Still to this day, we can hardly get through the story without crying. Talk about a stress-reliever.
- **Fake it.** Laughter yoga is a practice where particular movements like rubbing your stomach and saying "ho ho ho" are done in a group setting. Eventually, the silliness of the exercises begin to catch on, causing the spread of real, genuine and extreme bouts of laughter. Look up a couple videos and get some tissues ready.
- **Choose laughter.** Next time you're faced with a stressful situation, choose the option to laugh at it. Someone in customer service gives you bad service, your order at the restaurant comes out wrong, your tire pops as you're driving home. All of these situations aren't too serious, but it would be easy to take them that way. Instead, laugh it off and tell your nervous system that it's okay!

## WALK IN NATURE ONCE A WEEK

Japanese culture has a fascination for Shinrin-Yoku, or "taking in the atmosphere of the forest". Researchers looked at blood pressure, pulse rate, heart rate variability and salivary cortisol levels in those walking in the forest and those walking in the city.

#### The forest walking group showed:

- Significantly lower blood pressure and pulse rate

- Increased heart-rate variability, a sign that the parasympathetic nervous system was engaged
- Significantly lower salivary cortisol levels

**The group that walked in the city did not experience these results.**

The times you've been told to "go take a walk" in the middle of a fight or otherwise tense situation are correct.

**Your natural killer cells and anti-cancer proteins are increased for more than 7 days after time spent in a forest. Visiting a forest each weekend would be a great anti-stress and anti-cancer strategy to protect you during the workweek.**

But, what if you don't have access to a forest? Is there a way to hack this with modern technology? I would prefer you to get exposure to the real thing, because isolating compounds misses out on capturing the full medicinal value of the forest.

But, essential oils of Hinoki Cypress (Japanese Cypress) were vaporized with a humidifier in a hotel room with 12 healthy male subjects.

I'm picturing a funny image of full-grown men hovering over a humidifier taking huge inhales of these oils.

**It was found that natural killer cell activity was increased. Levels of adrenaline and noradrenaline were significantly decreased.**

These plant chemicals, known as phytocides, are your new secret weapon for times of travel, hotel stays and daily life. Use Cypress oil at your desk to balance out an artificial work environment.

## BOOST YOUR OXYTOCIN

Oxytocin, commonly referred to as the "cuddle or love hormone" is a potent chemical produced by the brain during times of love and experiences that would induce happiness.

Oxytocin is capable of reducing stress and anxiety while boosting trust levels.

**Simple ways to boost oxytocin include:**

- **Touch.** Physical touch can increase levels of oxytocin. A massage would be a great way to boost your levels.
- **Get aroused.** This goes along with touch. Orgasms have been shown to increase oxytocin levels in both men and women.
- **Smile.** Like laughing, faking a smile can be a great way to boost your oxytocin levels, which may lead to a real smile.
- **Compliment yourself and others.** A [study](#) measured oxytocin and cortisol levels in children that were complimented with physical, verbal and non-verbal contact with their mothers. Even the sound of the mother's voice was enough to boost oxytocin levels.
- **Cuddle.** Couples that cuddled for 10 minutes in a [study](#) were found to have higher oxytocin levels and lower blood pressure. Men need to realize the importance of this for ourselves and our partners.
- **Hug.** I love hugging and am glad to see that science does too. Women's oxytocin levels were measured before and after hugging their husbands/partners in a study and found boosted oxytocin and lower blood pressure.

You're probably wondering about how drugs boost oxytocin levels, since this pathway plays a role in use and habitual use.

MDMA, the main component of the drug ecstasy is used recreationally to increase feelings of sociability and closeness to others. Universities across the United States are currently holding MDMA studies for use in treating PTSD, chronic depression and anxiety.

But, MDMA use is illegal and finding a quality source is a risky and potentially dangerous process.

A more accessible option is the use of nasal oxytocin spray. A [study](#) compared the levels of oxytocin that result from use of MDMA and nasal oxytocin spray. MDMA led to oxytocin levels much higher than placebo. The nasal spray boosted levels to at least half the amount that MDMA did.

Obtaining oxytocin nasal spray is relatively easy, but I would wait until more established products hit the shelves. The "oxytocin supplement industry", is still in the early stages and mass production and quality control is a bit crude at this point.

## GET MORE SLEEP

I'll spare you the science on this section; it's a no brainer. Sleep is the time for rest and recovery. You simply can't beat stress if you're sleep deprived. Your body enters a catabolic state rather quickly from sleep deprivation, causing muscle breakdown and a reduced stress response.

Go to bed at 10PM at the latest and if you're on a swing-shift or third-shift schedule, do your best to get enough hours of sleep, even if they are at strange times.

Sleep has nothing to do with being lazy or unproductive. Without this crucial rest and recovery time, your perception of life itself will begin to shift into one of fatigue, fear, anxiety and depression.

I know this because I experienced it for over 2 years while working third-shift. This may not happen for everyone, as some people seem to be well-adapted to the vampire schedule.

Either way, humans are not designed to live opposite of the sun schedule. We are also not designed to stay up long past sundown. Follow a natural sleep cycle as close to the sun schedule as you can.

If you live in Alaska or other sun-deprived locations, do your best to get light exposure when it's available. Consider use of a light therapy box to stimulate energy production and set your circadian rhythm.

If you want more in-depth and critical steps for improving sleep including the use of light therapy, view my sleep program [REM Rehab](#).

## EXERCISE TWICE PER WEEK

Walking in the forest is great for reducing stress, but it's helpful to balance out your stress-reduction efforts by inducing positive stress in the form of weight lifting.

Exercise will help reverse the effects of the dietary stress you may be under. Exercise helps reverse insulin resistance. Exercise allows your muscles to absorb more glucose without the need for insulin.

**The more muscle you have, the more glucose you can burn. Building adequate muscle should be a top priority for anyone that is overweight, dealing with sugar cravings and pre-diabetes. Physical exercise is a basic human necessity.**

Free weights are the best choice for stimulating extra muscle fibers that may remain dormant during the use of machines and other structured exercises. Small stabilizer muscles that are activated during free weight exercise can help you in other daily activities like bringing in the groceries, picking up your child or other daily tasks.

### **Some of the best free-weight exercises are:**

- **Dumbbell bench press.** This exercise is applicable for both men and women. Stick to 3 sets of 10 reps. If you can go to 15 reps with your weights, that's fine, but no more. If you find yourself only getting to 4 or 5 repetitions, lower the weight.
- **Dumbbell shoulder press.** This exercise requires a bit more balance as you'll be sitting at a near 90-degree angle. Follow the same set and repetition schedule as the bench and start with a light weight. This exercise can help you develop great upper body strength.
- **Dumbbell row.** This exercise develops core, arm and back strength that can help improve your overall posture and stature. You'll want to ensure your back is flat and straight as you perform this exercise.
- **Pull-ups.** Managing your body weight is a great way to beat stress. Even if you can't successfully complete a pull-up, grab a bar, tree branch or other horizontal object and hold yourself up.
- **Dumbbell squats.** Many people dislike a barbell on their back. You can hold two dumbbells close to your chest and perform a squat this way. You can't go as heavy, but that's fine for most.

- **Pushups.** Another body weight exercise that can help improve confidence and basic fitness ability, pushups can be helpful for any and all levels of exercise. If it hurts your wrists, take it easy.

## **REMOVE YOUR TOXIC LOAD**

To remove chemical toxins from your water supply, ensure that you use a chlorine filter for your showerhead and bathtub. Most shower filters that advertise 99% removal of chlorine will be sufficient.

### **Other toxin removal steps:**

- **Use fluoride-free toothpaste.** Toothpastes that use xylitol, stevia or other natural sweetener are safe choices. Some use activated charcoal which has a highly effective teeth-whitening ability.
- **Drink and cook with spring water.** Spring water may be sourced locally, which is a fun experience. More realistically, your local grocer should have a supply of gallon or bigger jugs of spring water. Stock up and use it for everything.
- **Vitamin C dechlorination tablets.** If you don't want to use a bath water filter, you can add 1 of these tablets to your water supply. I haven't measured the effect these have, but it can't hurt!
- **Remove toxic people.** You have control over who you spend your time with. If you have toxic coworkers or a toxic boss, it can cause severe health symptoms. My IBS and chronic back pain was lifted after leaving my desk job to become a full-time health advisor.
- **Remove toxic thoughts.** Don't beat yourself up anymore. Allow some freedom and separation from your emotions with simple thought work and the Emotional Freedom Technique.

- **Eat organic food.** Organic cookies don't count. Ensure your fruits, vegetables and meats are organic as much as possible. Pesticides and fungicides have a toxic synergistic effect that can counteract your other efforts.
- **Remove toxic media.** The news is negative. Many popular songs are negative as well. All of these have a profound influence on your emotions that becomes more evident the longer you remove them. Limit your news consumption for your sanity and well-being. The world isn't that bad.
- **Remove negative beliefs.** You believe what you want. Not what you're told. If you have a stuck belief that is preventing you from enjoying life, go through the EFT technique and release it. It may take some time, but it's definitely possible.



7

## STRESS BUSTING 201

Did you skip right to this section? I don't blame you. I felt like I tried everything and still suffered from extreme stress for many years.

If you haven't taken the simple steps yet, especially the dietary section, you'll want to. The following therapies are powerful additions and supplements to the previously mentioned forms of action. Let's get to it.

Your stress toolbox is almost full. But you may have the desire or need to take it to the next level.

## BOOST YOUR GABA

Your calming neurotransmitter, GABA, is a highly depleted brain chemical under times of stress.

There are many supplements that claim to calm the nervous system, reduce stress and anxiety and allow you to relax.

But, what they don't tell you is that you can further deplete your GABA levels when using these substances on a medium to long-term basis, causing even more anxiety and stress than you started with.

Use of prescription benzodiazepines for stress and anxiety related issues are extremely common and should be a last resort. They act on the GABA receptors and cause extreme down-regulation of GABA, resulting in dependence and withdrawal effects as extreme as panic attacks and seizures.

Supplements and prescriptions should not be mixed.

### How to boost GABA levels:

- **Eat sulfur-rich foods.** Broccoli, cauliflower, garlic, onions, shallots, leeks, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, eggs and grass-fed beef all support the production of GABA.
- **Meditate.** Seek out your preferred forms of relaxation and calm down your nervous system.
- **Supplement with topical or oral magnesium.** This mineral is incredible for calming the nervous system and can be taken topically

with lotions, oils, epsom salt baths, float tanks and supplementation. A [study](#) showed great improvement in sleep quality with magnesium supplementation. I take 400mg of magnesium citrate in a drink before bed on stressful days. Magnesium improves the binding of GABA to receptors.

## USE SMART SUPPLEMENTATION

**Understand that you don't have to take any or all of these supplements, nor would I recommend you to for cost and hassle reasons.**

My goal is to provide you with the most recent research and sound recommendations for stress, anxiety and health supplements as a whole.

**There are two categories of supplements here for two types of situations:**

1. If you're more focused on increasing your general health that can lead to long-term reduced stress levels, the "other helpful supplements" category is going to be helpful for you
2. If you're someone who is completely overwhelmed with stress and need a little bit more help than that, these first bundles of supplements will be more suitable.

## BASIC SUPPLEMENTS

- **Vitamin D.** Although vitamin D doesn't directly reduce stress and anxiety, a [study](#) notes benefit in reducing inflammatory bowel is-

sues and multiple sclerosis, two common and extremely stressful issues, with adequate vitamin D levels.

- **Krill oil.** Krill oil shows greater benefit and requires less to achieve the same effect as fish oils in reducing inflammation.
- **Dandelion.** The cute little yellow flower that your parents probably sprayed as a kid had benefit after all. This [study](#), among many, has proven dandelion extract to be a potent anti-cancer, anti-flu and digestive remedy. Women swear by dandelion capsules for post-pregnancy rash; that counts as a stressor to me! **There are several possible interactions with dandelion so do your homework on this and all supplements before purchasing.**
- **Probiotics.** A [study](#) found that women who drank a fermented milk product had increased brain activity in areas that control emotion and sensation. Another [study](#) shows the healing power of probiotics from Irritable Bowel Syndrome, a key recovery tool for my personal struggles. Stress management was the other key.
- **Milk thistle.** A [study](#) showed that milk thistle can protect hippocampus cells against oxidative stress and cell death in rats. Even better, silymarin, the active component in milk thistle shows benefit in this [study](#) to protect against sodium fluoride consumed in water. Silymarin is also a potent liver detoxifying agent and can be used to protect against alcohol and herbicide exposure.
- **Turmeric.** Used in cooking, or more commonly in supplemental form, this is a great anti-inflammatory and health supportive nutrient.
- **Spirulina.** This potent, blue-green algae was found in a [study](#) to protect against sodium fluoride-induced thyroid issues in offspring.

Although this study looked at rats, the antioxidant benefits give spirulina a real “superfood” status.

- **Vitamin C.** The adrenal glands secrete vitamin C during their response to a stressor. Chronic stress depletes vitamin C stores, and if you’re not consuming dietary vitamin C, you could use some supplemental support.

## SHORT-TERM STRESS BUSTERS

Most stress and anxiety related issues stem from GABA deficiency issues. The first group of supplements are things that you CAN take, but I recommend only for short-term and acute use.

**Let me say it again: the following GABA agonists and reuptake inhibitors are safe for short-term, acute and cycled supplementation only:**

- **Valerian.** Valerian root teas and supplements are effective for stress, anxiety and sleep. Liquid and capsule versions are found almost everywhere and can be highly effective for a “stress emergency kit” for acute stressful events and panic attacks.
- **Kava.** Kava bars have gained popularity in recent times. In high doses it can affect the liver. Stick to infrequent use if at all.
- **Taurine.** This amino acid is likely added to energy drinks to balance out the excessive stimulatory effects of caffeine. This amino acid is abundant in the brain and is a potent GABA receptor activator. A [study](#) shows chronic supplementation depletes GABA in mice.

- **Ashwagandha.** This herb is great for healing a fatigued nervous system. Like most herbs, it's a good idea to cycle on and off. Those with a nightshade allergy may not tolerate it.
- **California Poppy.** This distant relative to opium poppy contains sedative alkaloids that can help nervous tension and anxiety related to stress. It's a natural, short-term sleep aid as well. Liquid tinctures are common.
- **Skullcap.** There are various forms of skullcup. Medical [research](#) uses the *Scutellaria lateriflora* variety.
- **Phenibut.** This is a highly effective supplement that quickly leads to dependence, tolerance and withdrawal symptoms. It's only mentioned here to make sure you are aware of the risky potential. A [study](#) mentions a patient that couldn't fulfill his work duties without it and required help in an addictions clinic by substituting the muscle relaxer baclofen, a commonly prescribed GABA antagonist. They then tapered the patient off baclofen.
- **GABA.** GABA supplements are cheap and common. The GABA molecule should be too big to have an effect on you. If GABA calms you down, it's likely that you have a leaky blood-brain barrier caused from food and other toxins. It's similar to leaky gut. If it works for you, ensure you're doing your best to avoid toxins to heal this barrier.
- **Gotu Kola.** This plant is incredible for preventing stress, anxiety and fatigue. It's also been used in anti-aging and joint supplements.
- **Picamilon.** This synthetic substance can cross the blood-brain barrier, leading to anxiety-relief and a lift of depression. It's sold as a prescription drug in Russia but as a vitamin in the USA.
- **Chamomile.** This flower is commonly found in calming teas. If you have a ragweed allergy, you'll want to stay away for cross-reactivity issues. The National Institute of Health urges pregnant women not to consume chamomile due to uterine contractions that can invoke miscarriages.
- **Lemon Balm.** This herb is also found in teas and is used for stress and anxiety. A [study](#) shows that it inhibits GABA production in mice.
- **Passionflower.** This flower is beautiful and helpful for reducing acute stress in the instance of traffic, staff meetings and more.
- **Cannabis.** Vaporization and edible consumption of cannabis that contains THC can spike GABA levels, but is said to cause an eventual lowering of GABA levels that can create the desire to get another dose to reduce anxiety and induce a calm state of mind. Pure cannabidiol, or CBD, commonly found in liquid form is highly effective for stress, anxiety and a host of health issues as seen in Dr. Sanjay Gupta's documentaries, *Weed* and *Weed 2*.

## STRESS BUSTING SUPERSTARS

**The following are NOT GABA agonists meaning they are much safer and better long-term choices for stress and anxiety:**

- **Rhodiola Rosea.** This herb is found in root extract form. It has been used in Russia and Scandinavia for centuries to cope with the cold climate and stressful life. A [study](#) using 1375 subjects found that 200mg of rhodiola extract showed significant benefit even after 3 days of treatment. Continual improvements were seen after 1 and 4 weeks. This is my all-time favorite herb for daily use.

- **L-Theanine.** This amino acid is found naturally in green tea. The dosage is generally too low to provide significant stress-relief which is why I recommend drinking organic matcha, which is the whole, ground leaf of green tea that contains much more L-Theanine. 200mg L-Theanine capsules are easily found and can be useful.
- **Relora.** This patented blend of bark extracts is used for weight loss and cortisol management. Although this [study](#) and this [study](#) show positive effects for safely reducing stress and anxiety, it didn't have much effect on me. This is a reminder that **you are different than everyone else. Results with any supplement may give the opposite or no effect.**

## TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

You've just discovered some of the most advanced and effective stress-busting methodologies known to mankind. I know there was a lot of scientific reference involved, but on the topic of stress and effective methods for measuring and mitigating it, it's my duty to provide the most valid and useful evidence that exists.

Our awareness on the topic of stress is quickly reaching the mainstream. Our fast-paced and overworked way of life is killing us in droves. We're burning the candle at both ends and are seeing the first generation effects.

If we continue to live a life that's high in stress and low in relaxation, we will quickly degrade our mental capacity to handle potentially serious and catastrophic issues that affect us all.

If our obsessions and addictions to social media, stimulation, caffeine, overwork, fast food and more continue to grow, we'll surely experience "death by a thousand stressors".

It's not that the ring of a cell phone destroys your stress response itself, but it slowly and exponentially destroys your ability to cope.

As you combine the notification sounds of your phone with the many other forms of daily stressors we've covered, your understanding of the big picture becomes very clear.

## NEVER GIVE UP ON STRESS

Even if you're overwhelmed with the information presented here, understand that you as a human have incredible abilities to recover and heal yourself, regardless of your starting point.

We didn't make it to the top of the food chain by being weak, anxious and fearful creatures. Imagine the feats that our ancestors accomplished when tackling buffalo and saber-tooth tigers to protect their families and provide food for nourishment.

We are the decedents of these incredible humans and still have the genetic ability to be confident, secure, stable and vigorous individuals.

You can't beat stress with anger and guilt as it will kill you long before you make real progress. But, you can outsmart stress by cultivating a lifestyle that relaxes you, calms you and heals you.

Stress is the fire that remains lit throughout our lives. It's good to have a little flame burning at all times. That means you're alive!

But, we need to constantly keep an eye on that fire and make sure that as soon as it flares up, we have a tool to keep it from raging out of control.

A stressful week of exams at school can flare up the fire. A fight with your loved one can stoke the fire. A death, divorce, new career, promotion, demotion, layoff or other major life event can add a barrels' worth of gasoline to the fire. These are usually the events that cause complete emotional breakdowns and subsequent illness.

**Anytime you feel that your stress level is beginning to get to an uncomfortably hot level:**

- Ensure that you're eating enough food to fuel your mind and body
- Make sure you're having a healthy relationship with caffeine
- Slow down while driving
- Take a sniff of your essential oils
- Go for a walk on a trail
- Close your eyes and breathe through your heart
- Drink a glass of cool spring water
- Pet your animals
- Hug your significant other, friend or who ever will give one back
- Reframe the situation
- Take a warm bath
- Use your supplement recommendations

- Allow yourself to let it go
- Pray
- Forgive yourself and the stressor
- Smile and laugh, even if they're fake
- Go for a swim
- Visit the ocean
- Put your hands and feet in the dirt
- Call someone and tell them you love them
- Use the Emotional Freedom Technique
- Compliment yourself
- Dance
- Go for a sprint
- Lift some weights
- Get some sleep!

I could go on and on, but this should be a good quick-reference list for you to fall back on when stress overwhelms your memory.

Take baby steps each day to make your life a less stressful event. There are always going to be things that you can't control or change, but you have to trust that things do happen for a reason.

It's much easier to go with the flow of life than to stand against the current.

This doesn't mean that you need to live as a docile person, submitting yourself to the desires and recommendations of other people that tell you how to live your life.

You don't even have to listen to me. But, I am positive that this guide had resonated with you in a beneficial way. Maybe it has created a mysterious spark of energy and motivation to make a change.

Maybe this guide has opened up a new avenue of thought that you had no idea existed. The connections between your daily habits and your stress response are highly connected and determine the outcome of your overall health.

Next time you're faced with a stressful situation, take a breath and determine the first step of action to solve it, no matter how tiny that step is.

Cheers to health and a healthy stress response,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Brand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Anna" on the top line and "Brand" on the bottom line.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Evan Brand is the writer and podcast host behind [Not Just Paleo.](#)

Evan is a Nutritional Therapist and Personal Trainer specializing in whole-foods nutrition, blood sugar regulation, digestive health, cognitive enhancement and stress management.

He performs 1-on-1 consultations locally and internationally via Skype. He offers 15-minute complimentary consultations [here](#) if you'd like to connect on a more personal level. This is the time to get your health questions answered.

From his time working in the 4,000 acres of the Temperate forests to his experiences drifting away in a sensory deprivation tank, Evan ex-

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plores all realms of life to discover the true potential for human health and happiness.

You can keep up with Evan and his top-rated show at

[NotJustPaleo.com](http://NotJustPaleo.com)