

STRESS

What is Stress and what are the root causes of stress?

Stress is directly proportional to the end result - if things go the way we want, according to our plans and desires then we are happy. However, if they go against the way we expect, then it leads to more stress.

Now, these expectations could be related to our materialistic life or emotional aspect but the end result (stress) is the same. Thus, balancing our life in extreme situations is important and this is an art one needs to learn.

A very common misconception we tend to believe in is that rich and successful people are stress-free. Of course, it is false, as **success and failure are two sides of the same “stress-coin”**.

Success or failure tend to depend on the amount of risk one takes. So, higher the risk, higher the reward and concomitant stress; lesser the risks begets lower rewards and consequent stress. Thus, a person who attempts to play safe by opting for low-risk and low reward scenarios have a larger fulfilment gap in the long-run, leading to inevitable stress. Therefore, stress follows us like a shadow and is a part of life regardless of the relative success, or the lack of it in our lives.

This means we need to be mindful of our own behavioural pattern and understand what causes us stress/ what triggers stress. We can take help from our friends or mentors who can help us understand ourselves better by helping us identify the stressors. However, **introspection is the key to improve our lives**.

How does Stress affect us?

Human mind is wired in such a way that we have expectations in all things. When a mind learns to distinctly perceive the body, mind, and soul, it can easily dismantle any emotional stimulus, maintain its composure, and effectively respond to it with vigour and vitality. Stress is not just mere over-thinking but also the majority of the stress and its endless pain originates from the “make-believe” creations of your own mind rather than genuine events at hand.

Stress saps away your positive energy and fills you with negativity. Stress breeds anger, impatience, and your health which then, creates doubt and weakness which would otherwise not be associated with you. All the dimensions of your life, physical, mental and emotional are adversely affected by stress resulting in intangible losses in a person's performance and productivity (i.e. effectiveness), social image (i.e. respect), and self-esteem. **The more you experience stress, the weaker you become, which in-turn leads to more stress – and thus the vicious circle.**

Effects of Stress on Family and Professional Life:

Apart from stress affecting your individual self, it also has its effect on your family life. The latent and enduring love of our families, often taken for granted, unconsciously gives us the ability to soar, thrive, and smile in the world outside. Either way the change in your demeanor, however subtle, invariably passes on the pressure to your loved ones and eventually creates disagreements between family members and this is where we start to play the blame game.

In our professional lives, success is measured by results, not efforts, bottom lines matter, while the rest of the narrative fades into the background. This rat race ends with us being stressed.

The ability to absorb stress is what differentiates a leader from the rest of us. If the leader can imbibe & absorb stress, he can cocoon his team from it and allow the team to function optimally. On the other hand, if the leader only amplifies stress and transmits it, he automatically stunts his team's ability to perform.

Professional life requires a balance in both positive and negative situations; if you can maintain equanimity when confronted with stress, you can prevail over it, conquer stress and you conquer the world!

Effect of Stress on Physical and Mental Health:

When a person is not able to identify the stressors in life or is unwilling to accept the stress, then it leads to a cycle of stress and eventually into a vortex of confusion and negative emotions that will affect the person. Stress throttles energy, focus, enthusiasm, motivation, and innovation, which yields negative returns (or zero at best) on your mental energy and affects the results, taking you on a vicious downward spiral.

We have to be careful as the mind creates 'what if' scenarios which can trigger stress and thus, we have to train our mind to avoid such make believe situations. The internal stressors such as anxiety, fear, ignorance, immaturity etc. have more impact on individuals as compared to changes in the environment. Stress builds up on either end, when the thought process is either too negative causing a depressed mental state or when it is too positive causing a hyperactive or aggressive mental state.

Imbalances in mental health caused by stress invariably spill over to the physical realm. Stress impacts the immune system by disrupting the four pillars of our health i.e. sleep, diet, physical activity, and mental wellbeing. The combination of all these factors lead to an impoverished body and mind which result in loss of motivation, enthusiasm, and spirit. These aspects have a dynamo effect in a persons' professional and social spheres, thereby compounding his loss of effectiveness and general direction in life.

Stress leading to Toxicity and Addiction:

To escape these unhealthy feelings, we tend to take shelter from toxic substances. Alcohol and nicotine offer a fleeting sense of relaxation. This relief is short lived, leading to frequent and

increased dosages of consumption; the habit soon outlasts the underlying issues that triggered it and entrenches itself in the person's life in the form of a toxic addiction. **Substances may tempt you with temporary relief but offer no solutions to the underlying causes of stress.**

Stress is a way of life:

Every person on this planet is stressed because of something or other from the time the baby is born till you draw the last breath - stress follows like a shadow. When we change, our behaviour changes, which affects people and incidents around us- this leads to a vicious circle of stimulus-stress- reaction - stimulus - stress. Stress has its own way of spreading into our inner and outer world. Since stress is second nature to human beings, have you wondered how we can ever have fulfilling, happy lives?

Stress Management:

Stress is just like a lifestyle disease. When we are ill and make dietary, behavioural changes we start to get better. In a similar way, if we make changes in our lifestyle, stress can be reduced or even conquered.

Here are few steps that you can take to manage stress effectively:

Step 1: Understand stress, accept stress, and resolve to consciously get out of a stressful lifestyle. We can resolve the feeling that **'I want to live with stress, but I don't want to feel stress'** which is the first step towards transformation. This will help you to manage stress effectively and keep you away from its negative impact.

Step 2: Anticipate stress and stay mentally prepared to stave off a heavy shock.

Step 3: Have a wholesome approach to your physical, mental, and emotional health.

Step 4: Be with people who are a source of positivity and can create positive vibes around you. These could be your well wishers who will motivate you to right actions.

Step 5: Be an observant and observe yourself from a third person perspective. Stay balanced and take life as it may come.

Step 6: Instead of intentionally manipulating external factors in pursuit of happiness, it is high time we realize that our happiness is only dependent on how we maintain our balance in life. Let go of comparison, competition and just be yourself.

Start living a **simple and sustainable life**. Follow your dreams and passion. Do what makes you feel happy. Once the balance is achieved between happiness and sadness, you can aim for sustainable living which has the ability to balance our life better by creating an emotionally stress free environment.

How can you help your child to manage stress?

Instead of expecting a child to behave like an adult, parents can think from the child's perspective. **As adults, we need to understand the difference between talking to the child versus talking down to him/her.** Thus, this will help the parent to instill good character traits in the child which will develop the relationship between the parent and the child where the child is able to share his/her fears with you. This will help them to face the realities of life. Answer their questions with kindness and candour as these are the windows to the child's hopes, fears, anxiety, and curiosity.

When the child is groomed with positive attitudes, your child will be aware of how to handle pressures and stress. Prepare them for tomorrow. As a gardener who merely is a guardian and custodian of a seed, you must invest and nurture the child with your expertise and affection; in the blind hope but not expectation of it bearing you fruit and shade for the rest of your life.

Topic	Information	Additional notes
What exactly is stress?	<p>Stress is a physical and emotional reaction that people experience as they encounter changes or difficulties in their lives.</p> <p>Stress saps away your positive energy and fills you with negativity. Stress breeds anger, impatience, and your health which then, creates doubt and weakness which would otherwise not be associated with you.</p> <p>All the dimensions of your life, physical, mental and emotional are adversely affected by stress resulting in intangible losses in a person's performance and</p>	<p>“Stress in addition to being itself, was also the cause of itself, and the result of itself.”</p>

	productivity, social image and self-esteem.	
What is the root cause of stress?	<p>Stress is not just mere over-thinking but also the majority of the stress and its endless pain originates from the “make-believe” creations of your own mind rather than genuine events at hand.</p> <p>Stress is experienced when a person perceives that demands in life exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.</p> <p>If things go the way we want, according to our plans and desires then we are happy.</p> <p>However, if they go against the way we expect, then it leads to physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension.</p>	

<p>I hear many people around me say that they are stressed...is it something that's very common?</p>	<p>Every person on this planet is stressed because of something or other from the time the baby is born till you draw the last breath - stress follows like a shadow. When we change, our behaviour changes, which affects people and incidents around us- this leads to a vicious circle of stimulus- stress- reaction - stimulus - stress.</p> <p>Stress has its own way of spreading into our inner and outer world. Stress is a normal reaction for human beings.</p> <p>This means we need to be mindful of our own behavioural pattern and understand what causes us stress/ what triggers stress.</p>	<p>We can take help from our friends or mentors who can help us understand ourselves better by helping us identify the stressors. However, introspection is the key to improve our lives.</p>
<p>How does stress affect us?</p>	<p>Effect of Stress on Physical and Mental Health:</p> <p>Imbalances in mental health caused by stress invariably spill over to the physical realm. Stress impacts the immune system by disrupting the four pillars of our health i.e. sleep, diet, physical activity, and mental wellbeing. The combination</p>	

of all these factors lead to an impoverished body and mind which result in loss of motivation, enthusiasm, and spirit. These aspects have a dynamo effect in a persons' professional and social spheres, thereby compounding his loss of effectiveness and general direction in life.

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Apart from stress affecting your individual self, it also has its effect on your family life. The latent and enduring love of our families, often taken for granted, unconsciously gives us the ability to soar, thrive, and smile in the world outside. Either way the change in your demeanor, however subtle, invariably passes on the pressure to your loved ones and eventually creates disagreements between family members and this is where we start to play the blame game.

Stress leading to Toxicity and Addiction:

To escape these unhealthy feelings, we tend to take shelter from toxic substances. Alcohol and nicotine offer a fleeting sense of relaxation.

	<p>This relief is short lived, leading to frequent and increased dosages of consumption; the habit soon outlasts the underlying issues that triggered it and entrenches itself in the person's life in the form of a toxic addiction. Substances may tempt you with temporary relief but offer no solutions to the underlying causes of stress.</p>	
<p>What are some steps I can take to manage stress?</p>	<p>Step 1:</p> <p>Understand stress, accept stress, and resolve to consciously get out of a stressful lifestyle. We can resolve the feeling that ‘I want to live with stress, but I don't want to feel stress’ which is the first step towards transformation. This will help you to manage stress effectively and keep you away from its negative impact.</p> <p>Step 2:</p> <p>Anticipate stress and stay mentally prepared to stave off a heavy shock.</p> <p>Step 3:</p>	<p>Start by simplifying your life. Follow your dreams and passion. Do what makes you feel happy. Once the balance is achieved between happiness and sadness, you can aim for sustainable living which has the ability to balance our life better by creating an emotionally stress-free environment.</p>

	<p>Have a wholesome approach to your physical, mental, and emotional health.</p> <p>Step 4:</p> <p>Be with people who are a source of positivity and can create positive vibes around you. These could be your well wishers who will motivate you to right actions.</p> <p>Step 5:</p> <p>Be an observant and observe yourself from a third person perspective. Stay balanced and take life as it may come.</p> <p>Step 6:</p> <p>Instead of intentionally manipulating external factors in pursuit of happiness, it is high time we realize that our happiness is only dependent on how we maintain our balance in life. Let go of comparison, competition and just be yourself.</p>	
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<p>How can I help my children to manage the stress they're facing?</p>	<p>As adults, we need to understand the difference between stress in a child versus adults.</p> <p>This will help the parent to instill good character traits in the child which will develop the relationship between the parent and the child where the child is able to share his/her fears with you.</p> <p>This will help them to face the realities of life.</p> <p>Answer their questions with kindness and candour as these are the windows to the child's hopes, fears, anxiety, and curiosity.</p> <p>When the child is groomed with positive attitudes, your child will be aware of how to handle pressures and stress. Equip them for the present and prepare them for the future.</p>	<p>As a gardener who merely is a guardian and custodian of a seed, you must invest and nurture the child with your expertise and affection; in the blind hope but not expectation of it bearing you fruit and shade for the rest of your life.</p>
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