

STRESSED TO SERENE

In a heartbeat

Have you ever experienced that out of control feeling of stress? Have you ever been taken over by a horrible anxiety that you can just feel is doing you damage on the inside? I know I have. In fact for me the worst time was first thing in the morning - just as I awoke I allowed my mind to start thinking about all the things I didn't like to do, should have done and didn't do. I would turn the tiniest and simplest of task into momentous earth shattering jobs that if I didn't do the world would collapse! I would allow myself to get into such a state that I was not a nice person to be around. I would then state quite clearly that it wasn't my fault, that it was outside my control because of the unfair expectations placed upon me.

The anatomy of stress

Let's have a quick look and see what it really is that creates stress and anxiety in our lives. Many people will blame external sources and circumstances; 'it is my bosses fault that I have so much work', 'it is my partners fault because they are always nagging me', 'it is the phone companies fault because they charge so much for my phone usage' and so on. If this is you then I would challenge you to try and look at things from a different perspective. The reality is that stress is simply created through our own individual perception of a situation, and not due to external sources. This can be proved simply; how is it that when two people are faced with the same negative situation, one is calm and solution oriented whilst the other stressed and blaming others?

Let's try a little exercise. Right now think of something that you hate! Something in your life that currently causes you a feeling of anxiety and stress. Think about how much you hate it and how it so negatively impacts your happiness and the other things you are trying to do. Have you got it? How do you feel right now? Are you feeling stressed and anxious? Has your heart rate started to rise? Yuck!!

Stop, stop...that's enough of the yucky stuff, now straight away think about something that you love, something or someone you are forever grateful for and something that brings great joy into your life. How do you feel now? Stressed or serene? Anxious or calm? How long did that take?...a heartbeat?

It is all about what we focus on

There are many different stress management techniques around, but the thing that has worked so wonderfully well for me is to simply change perspective on the thing that I am allowing to cause me stress or anxiety. We will absolutely get what we focus on, so if we are focussing on what we don't want and don't like we will be stressed and anxious. If we choose to focus on what we like or the positive & opportunity of the situation then the stress and anxiety is gone and anticipation and excitement takes it's place. This happens in a heartbeat



This is the key to longevity

I have already spoken in a previous article about the study that was done on 50 people who had lived beyond 100 years of age and continued to live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. I bet you would like to know that secret! Well, it had little to do with regular exercise and healthy eating (although those are very important), it had everything to do with attitude and thinking. 45 out of the 50 people said that they woke up everyday grateful for another day. They saw every day as a precious gift, they forgave themselves and others easily, they didn't hold onto resentment and they looked at the positive side of every situation. They were serene and it was their choice!

My challenge to you and to me is look at situations through a different filter from now on. Rather than get stressed because your partner nags, be grateful that they care enough to say anything. Rather than be resentful that your boss places demands on you, be grateful that you have a job and that your boss trusts you to do it. Rather than be stressed about your phone bill, be thankful you have a phone and think about all the cool things you can do with it. This same formula can be applied to any situation no matter how bad it may look.

Solution oriented

Rather than dwell in the negative of a situation, immediately start looking for a positive or a solution as there is always one there. Once you have found the solution stay focused on it and the positive feeling of success until it has been solved.

Understand we are totally responsible for our own peace of mind and we control whether we are stressed & anxious or calm & peaceful. This simple shift in thinking, in focus and in perspective will take us from stressed to serene in a heartbeat!

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